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Fitzgerald's and Hemingway's Muses of Disillusionment

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FITZGERALD'S AND HEMINGWAY'S MUSES OF DISILLUSIONMENT

by

ALLISON ROGERS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master's of Arts
English Department

Karen Sloan, Ph.D., Committee Chair

College of Arts and Sciences

The University of Texas at Tyler
May 2015

The University of Texas at Tyler
Tyler, Texas

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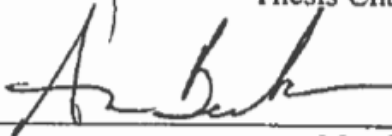
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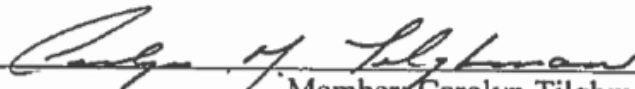
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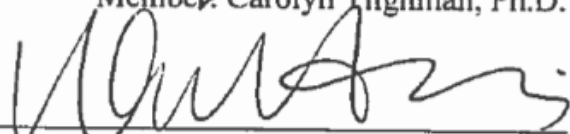
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Abstract

FITZGERALD'S AND HEMINGWAY'S MUSES OF DISILLUSIONMENT

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This paper examines how the main female characters in three F. Scott Fitzgerald novels, *This Side of Paradise*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Tender is the Night*, and three Ernest Hemingway novels, *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, and *The Old Man and the Sea*, function as muses of disillusionment for the protagonists of those works. First, I analyze the extent to which each of the protagonist's female complements can be defined as a muse in accordance with qualities ascribed to the ancient Greek mythological muses. Subsequently, I assess how each muse functions in her respective novel first to inspire delusion and later to reveal reality for the man, who in each case becomes her absolute devotee since she reflects an ominous seed of hope within him. In looking at these women in this context, I hope to illuminate one of Fitzgerald and Hemingway's potential purposes in characterizing them: to reveal the utter devastation and isolation of the post-WW I generation as they were forced to accept the inevitable chaotic cruelty of the world.

Chapter One Defining the Form

Even during F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway's respective lifetimes, many critics hailed them as the voices of an entire generation—a generation lost between its yearning for and remembrance of pre-war times dominated by traditional American values (hard work, heroism, true love, and roots) and its new post-war reality. The nation's armor of optimism may have endured chinks over America's 150-year history, but each time the country seemed to emerge stronger, more affluent, and more successful on the international stage. Just in the 30 years leading up to the Great War, the average per capita GDP (gross domestic product) in the United States had climbed by over 60 percent (Balke and Gordon 84), proof of the "economic dynamism" that Zbigniew Brzezinski claims was the "necessary condition for the exercise of global primacy" (23). The United States had ushered in its first legitimately American literary movement, Transcendentalism, and by the second decade of the twentieth century, Europeans began to accept culture and art in and from the United States as independently valuable and therefore worthy of both criticism and appreciation. Generally speaking, Americans had seen the American spirit triumph. According to Music Professor Brian Dykstra, Ragtime music ruled the club, saloon, and party scene across America because of its "joy, energy, and jaunty bounce" (qtd. in Schulslaper 92), which made it "great music for both listening and dancing" (Argyle 24). The good-times atmosphere, fueled by prosperity and peace, reinforced the innocence of a people ripe for the ruining.

With America's participation in its first overseas war—its first war in two generations, and its first outside war with a draft—came a brand new understanding of the world.¹ American

¹ When the war began, the United States only had a standing army of around 100,000 men. President Woodrow Wilson immediately signed a selective service draft. Eventually,

men who fought in WW I, even those who were not physically injured, returned confident only in their uncertainties as to the best way to deal with their broken ideals. They saw for the first time the world's bitter injustices as well as the inadequacy of traditional measures for tackling those injustices. Returning to a nation whose ideals seemed as rigidly promising as ever, many of these men felt caged by their hope for the truths they had once innocently revered and their realization of the fallacies holding up those hopes. Consequently, as Hemingway cites on the dedication page of his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, Gertrude Stein dubbed these men members of "a lost generation." Her observation does not only apply to the American writers and artists of the interwar period, but it does accurately describe those writers and artists. Fitzgerald and Hemingway were not just members of the Lost Generation though; they used their member status as a platform, a platform most efficiently revealed by considering three of each master's most influential works: Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Tender is the Night* (clarified by Cathy Barks as his most important and critically acclaimed works in her article "F. Scott Fitzgerald's Critical Reception") and Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, and *The Old Man and the Sea* (enumerated by Robert Evans as three of "the works on which his reputation most depends" in his article "Critical Contexts: In His Time (and Later): Ernest Hemingway's Critical Reputation" [5]). In these works, Fitzgerald and Hemingway define the reasons for their generation's feelings of isolation, loss, and bewilderment through the struggles of their protagonists. They capture these characters' (and thereby their generation's) failed attempts to regain the deeper meaning through their nostalgic longings for

around 4.8 million men served in WW I, and an estimated half of those were drafted. The other half were soldiers who volunteered for the cause. More than 110,000 American soldiers died during the war ("Selective Service Act"). However, these American soldiers fought in battles that killed a combined 10 million soldiers and wounded 20 million (Liulevicius 20).

the idealist values of their pre-war Edenic America. We can see one outcropping of this nostalgic longing in the relationships both authors' male protagonists form with female characters in their respective books. In the past, critics have focused on these relationships as shallow and superficial evidence of a derogatory authorial disease or system of values, such as in Richard Fantina's "Hemingway's Masochism, Sodomy, and the Dominant Woman," as castrating symbols like in Tiffany Joseph's "Non-Combatant's Shell Shock," or in a more recent feminist literary critical lens, as victims of the masculine criticism of almost a century as in Leland S. Person's "Herstory." However, in examining the women of Fitzgerald's and Hemingway's novels instead as muses of disillusionment, projecting and inspiring the short-lived, hopeful fancy and inevitably resulting cynicism of the men they foil, we can all the more clearly feel the hopelessness of a modernist's ruined reality in the wake of all they have lost, including themselves.

In Greek and Roman mythology, the muses were the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory), and though they started out as merely three: Melete (muse of practice), Mneme (muse of memory), and Aoide (muse of song), in the later and more famous mythological tales, there are nine of them, each encouraging and inspiring performative endeavors in their patrons (Skarsouli 210). The nine we reference today are Calliope (muse of epic poetry and eloquence), Erato (muse of love poetry), Euterpe (muse of music or lyrical poetry), Polyhymnia (muse of oratory or sacred poetry), Clio (muse of history), Melpomene (muse of tragedy), Thalia (muse of comedy), Terpsichore (muse of song and dance), and Urania (muse of astronomy).² Even in the original three, we can see the beginnings of a framework for Fitzgerald's and Hemingway's use. The leading women in their novels, their protagonists' muses, guide men to remember, practice,

² This list is compiled from Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* (37).

and perform in hopes of recapturing a dream that can never be. In this way, Fitzgerald and Hemingway, godlike, send these women as projections of unattainable possibility for the lost male characters they beguile. Their role is to first inspire greatness and chivalry in these men and then, through their imperfections, infidelity, or death, to inspire the realization that no matter the traditional intentions or ideals, aspiring to greatness and nobility yields the same emptiness as isolation, the same hopelessness as hedonism. Thus, in each of the novels, the main character is forced to re-face the voided nature of the romantic pre-war reality he longs for and in so doing, to resign himself to life in a world void of guarantees or absolutes, a life without the potential for eudemonia, a life whose only promise is pain and disenfranchisement.

If we look at these female characters as a trope then, we can examine them as projections of men's idealistic notions rather than trying to support criticisms of either Fitzgerald or Hemingway's personal lives as reasons for the oddly similar and shallow behaviors of their most famous muses.³ For the purposes of this study, in order to qualify as a literary muse in either man's works, a female character must meet a supermajority of the following characteristics (15 of 20⁴)⁵:

A muse must--

1. Be divine in the split between mortal and divine worlds

³ One of the best cases for this is *The Old Man and the Sea*, in which there is not a single real woman in the book. Instead, the ocean is feminized and endowed with the same qualities discussed in reference to the other muses. Critics have rarely examined *The Old Man and the Sea* in terms of gender (outside of homosocial experience) perhaps because in Hemingway's last novel, it is most clear that he holds no anti-women leanings; rather, he uses the female persona as a technique in his works to reveal things about man's experience (not necessarily a gender-specific man, but humankind altogether).

⁴ While not every female character meets all 20 criterion—nor would she in the individual Greek and Roman stories of the muses—75% adherence clearly establishes an identity.

⁵ This list is compiled using a combination of the roles of the mythological Greek and Roman muses as discussed by Faraone, Hamilton, Hardie, Skarsouli, Stoddard, and Van Der Woude (see Works Cited).

2. Be a physically alluring female
3. Showcase beauty of sound or speech
4. Be linked to music or performance
5. Display superior airs or charms
6. Be desired by many other men
7. Appear omniscient at times
8. Be a creature of persuasion
9. Emphasizes the lowliness/beastliness of humanity by way of juxtaposition
10. Cause men to forget trouble or grief
11. Be able to tell the truth and/or lies that look like the truth as well as differentiate between the two
12. Give mankind a way to make meaning of new experience
13. Showcase the interplay of love and strife
14. Be a source of inspiration, both inspiration to uplift and to degrade
15. Cause men to beg for her inspiration
16. Be selective as to who should receive inspiration
17. Be strongly linked to water, rivers, liquid of some sort
18. Provoke mindful memories rather than enabling passive memory
19. Enable judgment without deciding it
20. Be presented in a group, though perhaps singled out as superlative example (as in the case of Calliope).

Although skeptics may contend that neither Fitzgerald nor Hemingway had an overly stellar classical education, the evidence that each man valued classical literature has been established in earlier essays. (For example, Ward Briggs analyzes the significance of Virgil's Golden Age and underworld and Petronius's Trimalchio in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. In reference to Hemingway, Kathleen Morgan and Luis Losada discuss *The Old Man and the Sea* as a Homeric Epic in which Santiago plays the hero.) While the stories from whence the muses originate are complicated, Western artists and literati have long appealed to muses for inspiration, and to suggest that either Fitzgerald or Hemingway did not understand the concept of a muse would be asinine. The question then becomes one of intentionality—that is whether Fitzgerald and Hemingway meant for their female characters to act as muses, in the mythological sense. I would argue that both authors in fact knew they were using the women as illusory projections to further denigrate men's certainties or showcase their already broken dreams, and

thus, because their characters do act as inspirational muses, the question of whether they would have used that word or not is moot. The structure fits and exists in the texts and is therefore worthy of its assertion and analysis; in order to defend this idea, we must first consider whether each of Fitzgerald's and Hemingway's main female characters accurately fit the mold of the muse. After establishing that in the following pages, I will examine how the authors use each of these muses to further their protagonists' disillusionment and thereby convey the failed purpose of an entire generation.⁶

⁶ I discuss Fitzgerald's female characters first, in order of publication and appearance followed by Hemingway's female characters in order of publication.

Chapter Two The Muses

1. Rosalind Connage

In Fitzgerald's first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, published in 1920, the protagonist, Amory Blaine encounters two muses in fairly rapid succession. The first, Rosalind Connage, appears midway through the book amidst absolute fawning from her family on the night of her debut. The daughter of a well-to-do family with significant social currency (though to hear Rosalind's mother tell it, not enough monetary currency left to afford her marrying a man below her status) Rosalind serves a muse's performative role from the start. The chapter named for her, "The Debutante," is the first chapter in which Fitzgerald shifts his genre to drama in lieu of the book's dominant style: narrative prose. The narrator explicitly characterizes her as a men's lady—"one of those girls who need never make the slightest effort to have men fall in love with them" because she is irresistibly beautiful (125). Claiming that "all criticism of Rosalind ends in her beauty," the narrator supports his contention with an impressive list of her overwhelming physical attributes, ranging from "that shade of glorious yellow hair" to her "small, slightly sensual, and utterly disturbing" mouth (126). She has "unimpeachable skin" and a "slender and athletic" figure "without underdevelopment" (126). In essence, she is beautiful, almost supernatural with her "gray eyes" and "eternal" kissability (126). She is the woman of Amory's dreams, and as such, she becomes his creative inspiration. Most importantly, her charming voice is that of a muse lending her vision and beauty to the writer, which in this case Amory literally embodies. With a voice described as "musical as a waterfall" (127), Rosalind claims that "everybody falls in love with her mouth" (130). While Fitzgerald's simile comparing her sound to a waterfall is the only articulated relation between Rosalind and the muses' sacred springs of

inspiration, it is a significant analogy because the Greek spring of Castalia had the purported power of inspiring poetry in anyone who drank it (“Castalia” 176), just as the lips and music of the muses inspired poetry in any man who drank from them, as Amory does when he confesses that he “really [*wants*] to kiss [her]” (129) and then begs for her to “kiss [him] again” (130).

Even other men suggest her persuasive influence, such as Howard Gillespie, who admits climbing to the top of “a rickety, thirty-foot summer-house” to see the place where a girl had one day jumped into the lake and later even admits to jumping in from there himself because Rosalind did it first (140). As Amory and Rosalind’s relationship progresses, she gives him a new sense of himself, a new way to make meaning from his previously jaded experiences. For him, “all life [is] transmitted into terms of their love, all experience, all desires, all ambition, were nullified” as “their former love-affairs seemed faintly laughable and scarcely regretted juvenilia” (138). Convinced of her power “as life and hope and happiness” for him, he feels that because of Rosalind’s inspiration, “he [has] closed the book of fading harmonies at last and stepped into the sensuous vibrant walks of life” (138). However, by the end of their relationship, Rosalind has perfectly embodied the interplay of love and strife in her relationship with Amory. He admits that without her encouragement, “he can’t work or eat or sleep” (142), but as with any muse, she has to be selective as to the recipient of her gifts. At the reminders of her mother regarding Amory’s financial status and her lavish needs, she chooses Dawson Ryder and his reliability over her romance with Amory. In so doing, she instills in him the painful memory of the world’s reality reflected in her transient affections, remembering “not the beauty of it while it lasted, but just the bitterness, the long bitterness” (143). It is this memory of his bitter loneliness which eventually drives Amory to the “fields of Maryland” and into the arms of the next muse (164).

2. Eleanor Savage

Even the narrator's story of Amory's infatuation with Eleanor begins as a memory, just as all stories inspired by the muses are in essence the most admirable acts of mimesis, writings that are "a record of things" and, in the case of Eleanor's writings as remembered by Amory "for years afterward" (166), "the imperative that produces the things themselves" (Sanders 108). From the moment that Amory meets her, she is linked to music and poetry once he hears the beauty of "a strange sound . . . a song, in a low, husky voice, a girl's voice" coming from a haystack along his walk; he listens as it "[soars] and [hangs] and [falls] and [blends] with the rain" (168). Enchanted with her singing and her mysterious hint of omniscience, Amory is easily persuaded to join his newfound muse atop the haystack, following her directions as to how he should climb and relying on her "white hand reached out" to "[grip] his, and [help] him onto the top" (169). Just as a muse pulls the artist or art up into a realm of heavenly stimulus, so Eleanor pulls Amory into a makeshift tent above the rest of the world to discuss Don Juan and Psyche and Ulalume—things he has never even fancied discussing with any of the superficial frippets before her. She seems to read right into Amory when she assures him that she is "not mad" before he even suggests she might be (169) and diagnoses him with a fear of himself that no one except his confidant, Monsignor Darcy, has ever really deduced (171). She is one of the few intellects in Amory's life (the only female intellect) who sees through the seeming-truths to reality, refusing to indulge in a "summer love" with him because "so many people have tried [it] that the name's become proverbial" (173). Seeing his inability to love after the bitter realization of Rosalind's abandonment, she turns his experiences to a new type of meaning in poetry—

meaning expressed and defined through “fine and finished and rich and imaginative” language with which they could “bend tiny golden tentacles from his imagination to hers” (173).

However, her psychological and literary acumen are not her only superior qualities; just as each of the muses in Fitzgerald’s and Hemingway’s novels, Eleanor is strikingly beautiful. The narrator in *This Side of Paradise* describes her as “magnificent” with “pale skin, the color of marble in starlight” and “eyes that glittered green as emeralds” (170). Even as they leave their “perch” on the haystack, Eleanor’s superior charms (even over nature itself) stand out all the more as every “pool of water” through which they traipse sparkles with “transcendent delight,” lifted to another realm as a result of her fancy. On a walk one night, the narrator reveals how her presence transformed the garden into a fairyland “expressing eternal beauty” like that of the gods “and curious elfin love moods” (175). Her effect on nature is mirrored in her effect on Amory; like Shakespeare’s dark lady (about which Amory ponders one night), Eleanor is more valuable in the inspiration of “divine despair” she produces in Amory than she is as a flesh-and-blood woman (177). In this sense, on their last night, Eleanor becomes a realization for Amory of the connection between love and strife: “as [he] had loved himself in Eleanor, so now what he hated was only a mirror . . . strewn about like broken glass” (180). In Eleanor, his muse, he is inspired both to admire and love the human potential for creativity and achievement latent within him and to hate its irreconcilably broken nature.

3. Daisy Fay Buchanan

Introduced for the first time almost in the image of a Grecian goddess or Judeo-Christian angel, Daisy Fay Buchanan embodies the muse in Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*. The novel’s title character spends his entire adult life inspired by his memory of falling in love with her in Louisville, Kentucky, before the war began. After falling in love with “by far the most popular of

all the young girls in Louisville” (80), Gatsby has to abandon her for the war and as a result of his misrepresented heritage. Fitzgerald makes it clear that Daisy is just one of innumerable beautiful party girls in Louisville, even in America as a whole, but Jordan, her friend, explains to Nick, the narrator, “of all the older girls, [she] admired [Daisy] most” (81). Thus, while Daisy does work as the quintessential figure of the pre-war romantic beauty of the All-American unattainable girl, she stands out as the superior example because she never leaves Gatsby’s mind. It is the power of his memory of her that inspires his aspirations. She becomes a mindful memory, the following of which he knew he must commit himself to as he would to “a grail” (159). Fitzgerald’s Arthurian allusion comparing Daisy to a grail clarifies Gatsby’s dedication to the memory of his long lost love, but it also helps to highlight her divinity in the same way that Nick’s initial descriptions do. Beginning in the first chapter of the book, Nick imagines his cousin Daisy as “buoyed” to the couch in her living room “as though upon an anchored balloon” and depicts her white dress as “rippling and fluttering” (10). The visual symbolism of her figuratively floating above the house and above him in pure and innocent white is reminiscent of her place in the book as a divine inspiration. Later that evening, she refers to Tom as “a brute of a man” and “a great hulking physical specimen” (15), both of which contrast starkly with the ethereal effervescence of her presence in a room. Tom, representing mankind, is depicted as a beastlike creature, while Daisy, a heavenly muse “[floats] above” him and everyone else, free to inspire whom she likes. Since one of the requirements of the muses’ superiority is in the choice of whom to use as a vessel of performance, though many men have desired her—embodied by the “excited young officers from Camp Taylor” who once “demanded the privilege of monopolizing her” for an evening (or an hour) in her youth (80-81)—she had chosen just the right devotee in Gatsby. In his memory, her inspiration “had gone beyond her, beyond

everything,” leading him to “[throw] himself into [his dream of regaining her] with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way” (103). He becomes so driven to call this exotic and pricey bird of status and freedom his own that he moves into a house directly “across the bay” from her (99). The water between them is a sacred fount of inspiration (much like the sacred springs of the muses), one across which Gatsby reaches toward his dream every night with his arms and every day with his contrived plans to rekindle their love affair.

Interestingly, Daisy’s greatest stimulation is not in her physical appearance, but just as with any muse, in her performative capacity. Her most intoxicating charm is her voice—sometimes a “husky and rhythmic” sound (116), other times an “exhilarating ripple” of indiscretion (84), a few times just a murmur perhaps “to make people lean toward her” (11). Fitzgerald critically links Daisy with aural allure even more frequently than with physical beauty because as a muse, the poetry of her voice is tied to the art of persuasion that has convinced Gatsby of the possibility of regaining her love through the creative means he uses to gain money, the sound he hears and appreciates in her voice, the “inexhaustible dream that rose and fell in it” (128). Though one of the things that attracts Gatsby to Daisy is her wealth, a wealth like he has never nor can ever hope to experience, he falls in love with the promise that both she and it represent for him—happiness and fulfillment. Believing that if he could have money and thereby have Daisy, he could define himself meaningfully and achieve a sense of personal purpose, Gatsby turns his memory of Daisy into his inspiration for all of his actions. Throughout the novel, there are two fleeting moments in which he truly thinks that he has captured her heart. In the first one, before the war, when he sees the sidewalk on their stroll together, he envisions it really as “a ladder” that he could climb and there “suck on the pap of life” and “gulp down the

incomparable milk of wonder” (119). This upliftingly romantic American ideal of climbing the ladder of success is stirred by his relationship with Daisy, but so is the degrading realization of its end when, in Gatsby’s other moment of assuredness, she declares that she “did love [Tom] once—but [she] loved [Gatsby] too” (142). With this declaration, Daisy solidifies her role as a muse, capturing the interplay of love and strife, desire and failure. Even after she drives home with Gatsby, killing Myrtle and effectively framing him for her death in the process, one man is still left begging for her inspiration in the bushes outside her house. Little does Gatsby realize as he stands sacred “vigil” outside the window that his muse, as mythological beings often do, has already disappeared (156). Nick admits that he “[leaves] him standing there in the moonlight—watching over nothing” (156). Daisy sparked Gatsby’s creativity in developing an entire persona that revolved around the dream of getting to have her, and with the chance of that spark igniting into fire, she granted him the brief opportunity to sculpt his memory in such a way that it allowed him to forget his troubles. Nick describes him as “literally [glowing]” along with the “twinkle bells of sunshine in the room” when Daisy comes to him in West Egg (95, 96). Unfortunately, with the power of inspiration, Daisy inherits the muses’ ability to manipulate others with her simultaneous truths and beautiful lies that look like the truth. In Daisy’s opening scene, Nick observes that “the instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel [his] attention, [his] belief, [he] felt the basic insincerity” of Daisy’s beautiful words (20), but her most impressive art of illusion comes in the interchange at her house before the trip to New York that ends the entire romantic affair between her and Gatsby. As Tom leaves the room, she goes “over to Gatsby and [pulls] his face down kissing him on the mouth” and murmuring, ““You know I love you”” (123). Fitzgerald reminds us of Daisy’s duplicity here in two ways. First, he references Daisy’s murmuring, which Nick already admitted many people believe she uses just to draw her listener toward her, and

then, instead of saying that she loves Gatsby, she allows his judgment to form the story, claiming that he knows that she loves him. This is not the only judgment she enables but refuses to make for herself; after all, she also enables Wilson's belief that Gatsby killed his wife, a belief that leads to the final judgment of Gatsby's dream as he lies dead in his pool.

4. Nicole Warren

In Fitzgerald's final finished novel, *Tender is the Night*, he depicts another protagonist shaped by the inspirational relationships with the women in his life, specifically his lover and wife, Nicole Warren. While Dick Diver does indulge passion for other women, especially American actress Rosemary Hoyt, in his final encounters with Rosemary he "[discovers] that he [is] not in love with her" (216). Thus, she does not make the best muse for examination because her influence is merely temporary; in fact, his infatuation with Rosemary is perhaps an extension of the initial inspiration Nicole stirs in him due to the tension between youth and experience encapsulated by her father's sleeping with her as a teenager. Ironically, it is Nicole's mental illness (or neurosis) resulting from her incestuous relationship with her father that first makes her the perfect muse for Dick. As a psychiatrist (one especially interested in Freudian psychoanalysis), Dick cannot help but be intrigued by the characteristics Nicole showcases in illness and in health. She inspires him in the memory of his work, but also, he himself develops somewhat of a complex in terms of wooing young girls, especially Americans.⁷ Hence, Nicole comes to represent a memory of broken innocence in the post-war world, and that trait makes her Fitzgerald's muse for Dick.

Because the novel is organized into three books (whose events do not occur in chronological order, the Nicole we first meet is one living on the Riviera, a confident woman

⁷ Rosemary's first movie, after whose filming Dick meets her, is even called *Daddy's Girl* (68).

who has already been married to Dick for years. She is lounging on the beach near the water writing a list. Rosemary, her soon-to-be rival, easily isolates her from the group of beachgoers around her by describing how each of them “sent out antennae of attention,” striving to hear the jocund burlesque of their friend down the beach while Nicole is “the only person on the beach not caught up in it” (6). Even her friends are described as insects, while Nicole is the class “young woman with the string of pearls” (6) responding “to each salvo of amusement by bending closer to her list” rather than giving into the common temptation of admiring someone else (7). This separation from and superiority to others echoes throughout the book. At the first Diver party to which Rosemary is invited, she notices Rosemary as “one of the most beautiful people she had ever known” with “the face of a saint, a viking Madonna” that “shone through the faint motes that snowed across the candlelight” (33). In comparing her to a Madonna amidst the other guests, Rosemary acknowledges Nicole’s superiority and celestial power, carrying divinity within her as the birth-mother of salvation. In addition to her physical attractiveness, Rosemary credits much of Nicole’s superiority to “her attitude about money” (54) since she comes from one of the founding families of Chicago industry. She even describes “some of the people who gave a tithe to Nicole” as though Nicole represents a voice of the gods herself and therefore receives offerings for her inspiration (55). Furthermore, just as in the case of the original muses, Nicole uses her alluring voice to motivate her devotees. In the midst of listening to conversations, Rosemary is “caught sharply by the rich clipped voice” of Nicole Warren (32), and when her younger self—though later in the book—asks Dick for a chance at earning his love, he is captivated by how her “voice [falls] low, [sinking] into her breast and [stretching] the tight bodice over her heart” (154). It is as though he is drawn inside her by her voice, and simultaneously, she becomes a part of his voice (for example, in the story when she suddenly

begins narrating for both of them in reference to finances, happiness, work, and fun [159-162]), almost an omniscient presence in his life. In one of these moments, she even reminds him, “I can tell when you’re away from me, even a little” (159), assuring him of her almost clairvoyant insight. Even in the first days of their love at Dr. Dohmler’s clinic, she can see through Dick’s attempt to dump her gently for her own good and stops seeing or calling for him to prevent him from administering the “coup de grace” he had imagined (145). Similarly, later in the novel, after Dick’s affair with Rosemary, Nicole confronts him (albeit insanely) about a potential relationship with a young patient. Though he may not have slept with that particular patient, Nicole reminds him that he always considers her opinions “[delusions] when [she] sees what [he doesn’t] want [her] to see” (190). In this account, she is the consummate reminder to Dick of his real problem, one he doesn’t see: his attraction to, and desire to save, younger women.

Whether in her Lake Forest, Illinois, childhood home, at the lake where she meets Dick on vacation with her sister, on the beach along the Riviera, or in the end atop “the motor yacht of T. F. Golding” (268), Nicole is constantly near the water, and with each body of water, she inspires and attracts the men around her (her father, Marmora, Dick, Tommy Barban). Dick even describes her eyes as wet when he falls in love with her as though she had just emerged from the mythological springs of inspiration (155). She inspires Dick as a potential mental case to solve while he waits for her letters “eagerly in the last dull months” before the armistice (121). However, she also clarifies for him a way to make new meaning out of both of their existences. She “[drowns] and [engulfs]” him and herself in love, but in that overflowing death, she raises him to new life with her, “solaced and triumphant, . . . thankful to have an existence at all” even if it is only the one reflected by her (155). This kind of ambivalent inspiration is pervasive in the middle section of *Tender is the Night* because Nicole’s inspiration for Dick demands constant

performance either as a doctor or as a lover/husband, and that performance constantly reminds him of the inherent connection between love and strife. She has the intrigue and beauty of a carnival, “at times primly coy, posing, grimacing and gesturing,” but “sometimes the shadow [falls] and the dignity of the old suffering [flows] down into her finger tips” (149). He has to be ready at a moment’s notice to act the proper role to satisfy “Nicole sick and Nicole well” (168) because he can never predict when each scar of the past may rise to the surface. Even in the moments he feels the most strife in his relationship with Nicole, “thoughts about [her], that she should die, sink into darkness, love another man, [make] him physically sick” (217). He completely defines himself in terms of what she, his muse, has inspired in him: his financial status, his love for younger innocent women, his profession.

5. Lady Brett Ashley

Hemingway first introduces the Lady Brett Ashley to the reader when Jake, the narrator, sees her amidst “a crowd of young men,” “[looking] very lovely and . . . very much with them” (11). Jake repeats that she was with them twice before the reader even realizes who she is, and by doing so, he immediately reveals the way in which she absolutely arrests his attention with her mere presence. The fact that she comes in with an entire crowd of young, cocky, virile-looking men “some in jerseys and some in their shirt-sleeves” clarifies that he is not the only man desirous of her attention (11). In fact, during the course of *The Sun Also Rises*, every male that meets her at some point obsesses over her and/or her approval; the only main male character with whom she does not have some sort of affair is a visiting friend, Bill, and even Bill admits that ““you [couldn’t] blame [anyone] such a hell of a lot”” for being ““pretty excited”” about having Brett as his girlfriend (42). Just as the muses are described as beautiful demi-gods, so Brett is from the start declared “damned good-looking,” a flapper femme fatale wearing “a slipover

jersey sweater and a tweed skirt, and her hair . . . brushed back like a boy's" and "built with curves like the hull of a racing yacht" (12). By comparing her to a luxury competitive boat, Jake highlights the decadence of her beauty and the sleek promise of her body, a body that could make any man not just a competitor, but a champion. Her white face "and the long line of her neck" illuminated by the "bright light of the flares" when Jake walks along the street with her separate her from the beauty of each of the narrative's other women (14). She is a divinely superior presence, one that commands attention and inspires admiration from all around her. After meeting her once, Jake's expatriate Jewish friend, Robert Cohn, explains to him that she has "a certain quality about her, a certain fineness" that makes her seem "to be so absolutely fine and straight" (20). Even Jake's concierge, who is so irritated by Brett's drunkenness one night, is won over by her and the money she inspires Mippipopolous to share the following evening, declaring to Jake upon his return home, "That lady, that lady there is some one" (28). Her looks persuade others to take action—her fiancé, Mike, to whisk her away to their hotel room rather than going to the fights, Robert Cohn to follow her to Pamplona, Romero to drink with her and then sleep with her the night before a fight, but most importantly, her looks inspire Jake to reach back for the potential of his memories. In the beginning, as he dances with her, Jake confesses to the readers that when he asks her if she wants to go, he has "the feeling as in a nightmare of it all being something repeated, something [he] had been through and that now [he] must go through again" (34). Being around her inspires him to find creative ways to be what he once was (masculine, strong, complete) since he cannot physically regain the genitalia it would take to be the virile man he once was and have her. Instead, he tries other passions to replace the passion she will not share with him, the passion that he cannot share with her.

Hemingway frequently casts Brett in dancing scenes, especially scenes where the other characters are transfixed by her. When Jake dances with her “to the accordion,” he describes the atmosphere as “hot” and his state as “happy,” one of only two moments in the book he defines his mood as happy (12). Her suitor at the time, Count Mippipopolous tells her that he likes “to watch [her] dance” (34), and even the Spanish festival dancers want Brett “as an image to dance around” (81). The consummate performer herself, she instills in everyone else the desire to perform, to reach for an outlet through which they may find happiness. Men beg for her inspiration. In the opening Bal scene, for example, Robert Cohn asks her to dance, is refused, and then proceeds to ask her, “How about the next?” (12). However, Brett, as the mythological muses before her, does not merely succumb to any man at any time; she has to see some worthiness, some need for her inspiration. Even prior to the novel’s opening, with Lord Ashley she saw a psychologically damaged war veteran, with Jake, a physically damaged war veteran, with Mike, she was “looking after [him]” (107). After meeting Cohn, she thinks going to San Sebastian with him “[will] be good for him” (53), and with Romero, she sees a naïve 19-year-old who captivates her eyes in “those green trousers” and piques her interest (86). She chooses each of her shepherds-turned-poets wisely, and since the story is told through Jake’s eyes, we see her stimulation in him most strongly. He thinks “about Brett and [his] mind [stops] jumping around and [starts] to go in sort of smooth waves” (17). These waters of inspiration bring the muse to him and endow her with power over his mind as she becomes the only salve for his damaged idea of himself as a man; he projects his ideas of fulfillment on her and constantly seeks a new ingenuous way to engineer a future with her.

Brett reminds him of both what he loves most in her vulnerability (and the power she implies he has over her when she proclaims that she turns “all to jelly when [he touches] her”

[14]), but she also reminds him of the pain inherent in love when she reminds him that their situation is “hell on earth” because they can never be together (15). He feels most powerful when he can give her what she wants, such as when he arranges a clandestine affair between her and Romero as a result of her desperation for the bullfighter. But in those same moments he is most powerless because it is Romero and not he with whom she has left “when [he comes] back and [looks] in the café (98). Nevertheless, Brett uses the impetus of memory even in the end to direct Jake’s energies when she reminds him that they “could have had such a damned good time together” (130). That story of what could have been that Brett stirs in him is what drives and defines Jake throughout the novel, and in that way she is the muse for his reveries of romance, completion, and lost masculinity.

6. Catherine Barkley

A Farewell to Arms showcases the loss Hemingway seeks to express perhaps even more substantially than any of his previous works because the action in it takes place during WW I, depicting the horrors that Americans, and the world at large, witnessed. The protagonist’s, Frederic’s, muse inspires love and romance in a man who begins the story by going on an ambiguous tour of Italian brothels and even begins his relationship with her in hopes of sexually conquering another woman. He first meets Catherine with “another nurse,” Ferguson, on a trip to the British hospital in town (15), and right away, she stands out as physically superior. The beauty of the muses shines through her regal height, blond hair, “tawny skin and gray eyes” (16). With an allusion to the grey-eyed goddess, Athena, Hemingway characterizes Catherine as a mythological deity rather than a normal earthly girl (like the kind that Frederic toyed around with during his leave). Frederic’s friend, Rinaldi, even suggests later in the novel that there is nothing a man can “do with a woman like that except worship her,” reinforcing the idea of her divinity

and inspirational power (57). Initially, Rinaldi planned for Frederic to help him make a “good impression on [Miss Barkley]” in the hopes that she might begin seeing him (15), but she immediately turns her interest to Frederic instead; Rinaldi even comments that her preference for Frederic is “very clear” (18), a strong preference of a muse for the mortal she wishes to move. She reiterates this preference throughout the book, declaring, “There’s only us two and in the world there’s all the rest of them” (121). Though the rest of the world may seem cold, hostile, and uncertain, Catherine frequently reminds Frederic of their existence above that plane because of their love for one another; while he does not originally believe in any type of better future, as the story progresses, Catherine plants the inspirational seed of romance and reason in his heart and mind. Even when he leaves her after his knee injury, he cannot stop remembering her. He tells himself not to think about her as the ambulances trudge along in the convoy, but he can only picture his “sweet love Catherine” (172) and how she “was in bed now between two sheets” (171). In recalling her, he even imagines her with him and speaks to her. When he escapes from certain death at the hands of the disenfranchised lower-ranking Italian troops, he remembers Catherine. Even though he is a defector, he jumps on a train toward the one place he can imagine her being—Milan—and thinks about “a good meal and sheets and never going away again except together” with Catherine (201).

By this point she has become an absolute source of motivation for him to continue believing in life. With her, he thinks about a life bigger than the war, a life where “[their] children will have fine temperatures” (89), a time when “maybe the war will be over” (90), a reality in which people can “come to [their] wedding” (94). Desperate for her, sure that she can provide the only real purpose in his life, Frederic spends much of his time in the hospital begging for her physical presence in the same way writers beg for the inspiration of the muses. During his

first two days there, he only seems concerned with two questions: “Is Miss Barkley here?” (74), and, “When does the doctor come?” (75). Looking to the doctor for physical healing, Frederic looks to Catherine for a more spiritual type of stimulation, though that stimulation of love and belief might be manifested physically, as when Frederic begs Catherine to consummate their feelings for one another, pleading, “Come on. Please. Please, Catherine” (80). Her physical presence and their physical intimacy mirror the change she has inspired in him moments earlier when he admits that upon seeing her, “everything turned over inside of [him]” (80). Whereas before he was driven purely by selfish desires and needs, when he sees her in the Milan hospital, he becomes completely devoted to the idea of an actual future happiness he sees for himself in her.

She paints this illusion for him, saying that they “won’t think about [the front] until [he goes]” (100) and taking his mind from the war with constant offers to be and do “anything to please [him]” (101). With her, he is able to forget his troubles and grief; even though he is recovering from an injury, Frederic describes that summer in the hospital as “lovely” (97), explaining that “all he [wants is] to see Catherine” (102). She becomes his obsession and assurance of a future full of promise. Watching her “take out the last two pins [in her hair],” seeing how “it would all come down,” enclosing both of them “inside of it,” she temporarily severs him from the dark realities of the war (98). Inside the compass of her hair, he feels like he is hidden from the outside dangers and realities of the world; he is “inside a tent or behind a falls” (98). As an injured soldier—albeit an ambulance driver—the metaphorical tent of her hair represents a status, warmth, and protection above the deadly fortune of the trenches (almost an underworld unto themselves), and the falls, a cleansing natural barrier separating the pure, idealistic love he and Catherine share from the brutality of the world outside.

Catherine is also linked to another important and inspirational body of water in *A Farewell to Arms*, the lake that provides an escape route from Italy into Switzerland for Frederic and Catherine after he defects from the Italian army. As he rows, she bails the water from their boat, rinses the bucket, and then hands it to Frederick “dipped full of water” (236). Just as the sacred springs of the muses at Castalia were believed to inspire poetry in those who drank from it, Catherine inspires and empowers Frederic to escape the stakes of his reality with water from the lake. She provides him with physical refreshment, but she also refreshes him throughout the trip, offering suggestions to ease his aching hands and even persuading him to let her row for a few kilometers herself despite the fact that she is pregnant. She is not only his immediate impetus for escape and enabler in escaping, she is the reminder for him of the value of life—why he even sees escaping as worthwhile.

7. The Sea

Hemingway published his final novel, *The Old Man and the Sea*, in 1952 while living as an expatriate in Cuba, nine years before his death (“Chronology of Ernest Hemingway’s Life” 340). Its publication after WW II makes it perhaps even more powerful as an example of man’s inevitable disillusionment with life. More than with any of Hemingway’s other works, critics have deemed *The Old Man and the Sea* a parable of loss (Burhans, Jr. 446), and Morgan and Losada point out that several critics over the last 60 years have noted its classical qualities (35). Since a parable is a story of metaphor, analyzing the sea as a metaphorical woman is logical if not necessary; in fact, the book’s narrator clarifies that while some of the young men call the sea *el mar*, the book’s protagonist calls it “*la mar* which is what people call her in Spanish when they love her . . . as though she were a woman” (29). Like each of the previously described literal women, Hemingway portrays the sea as visually stunning, “kind and very beautiful” (29). Even

in his dreams, Santiago can hear “the surf roar,” far away from just his isolated fishing grounds (24). That roaring is an alluring sound for him that beckons him to a distant shore of lions in Africa, ones that he saw “when he was a boy” (24). In this way, the sea sings to him, inspiring him with the power of memory, the mother of all of the muses, refreshing him to face another day of fishing among her other admirers. As any other much-sought-after mythical beauty, the sea along the shore of the small fishing village is a source of inspiration for many men. Even before the sun comes up in the morning, Santiago notices “other boats from other beaches going out to sea” and hears “the dip and push of their oars even though he could not see them” in the dark (28), each begging for the bounty they could retrieve from her if she were willing. However, the sea is choosy, and she always exercises her “feminine” power to “[give] or [withhold] great favours” to (or from) the desperate men (30).

Santiago’s response when he hooks a fish is to pray “that [he] should catch [that] fish,” to “promise to make a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Cobre if [he] catches him” (65). Hemingway twice mentions this Virgin of Cobre, and she is the only woman mentioned by name in the book. Her picture hangs in Santiago’s house, and she is a reminder, a “relic of his wife” (16). While this Virgin of Cobre is significant because she is a worshipped female emblem like the muses, she is even more important in identifying the sea with divinity, since she originated from the sea. (Thus, it is all the more important that she is a memory for Santiago because the sea’s role as a muse is largely to instill the power of memory in Santiago.) After her statue was found in the waters off the shore of Cobre in 1611, the Virgin of Charity became a “unifying force” for Cubans like Santiago (Poviones-Bishop 1).⁸ Though there are several different versions of her

⁸ Though Santiago is not an American like the other protagonists discussed in this paper, he does represent the same sensations of loss, and as far as literal connection, he relates to the

discovery, in each of them, the Virgin is brought to them by the sea, making the sea a divine vessel in the same sense as the muses delivering artistic vision.

In contrast to the other women who put on airs of superiority as a result of their holiness, the sea projects her superiority in the physical airs that grace her surface. The narrator describes the “sea rising with the wind coming up from the east” (64) and “the added drag . . . from the easterly breeze” on the water (66). These descriptions of the wind explain the sea’s dominance in that they are generated largely by the temperature differential between the land and the sea around it, and the resulting breeze dictates when and where Santiago’s boat will roam, and whether a storm will blow up or not. His time on the sea, just like men’s time in the presence of the muses, reminds him of his own lowliness and inadequacy even though the waves cannot literally speak to him about it. He sees that “the ocean is very big,” and his presence on it “is small and hard to see” (124). As he attempts to catch and reel in the largest fish of his life, he ponders how “man is not much beside the great birds and the beasts” like the one he is fighting from the depths of the ocean, but he admits to himself that he “would rather be” one of them because they get to live “in the darkness of the sea,” in the heavenly arms of the expansive muse he sees around him (68). The sea functions as that persuasive mistress throughout the book, coaxing Santiago further and further away from shore as he holds on to the rod linked to the determined fish. Though he quickly recognizes that “no land [is] visible behind him,” he convinces himself “that makes no difference” because he will be able to “come in on the glow from Havana” (46). That night the glow is imperceptible, but he still trusts that the ocean will deliver his bounty to him and return him home. Regardless of how far out to sea he goes, he tells himself that “a man is never lost at sea” (89), and the sea relieves him of his worries and physical

quintessential American dream and identity several times with references to Joe DiMaggio, the “grand leagues (48), and baseball in general.

ailments, easing the pain in his hands with “the dark water of the gulf” that Santiago sees as “the greatest healer that there is” (99). Beyond just relief, the sea offers the uplifting and degrading inspirations of a muse to Santiago. In the moment when he feels his entire body beginning to cramp up, the sea motivates him with the giant fish’s first jump: “He came out unendingly and water poured from his sides” (62). Here the water highlights the beauty of the possibility of Santiago’s accomplishment, and the possibilities seem eternally (“unendingly”) significant. Nevertheless, in the exact opposite measure, the sea degrades him with its reminders of his failure. Although he manages to bring the fish alongside the boat and kill it, he cannot get it into the boat because it weighs almost a ton; thus the sharks brought to the boat by the sea as Santiago makes his way back to shore. Instead of the magnificent fish darting admirably from the sea with water cascading from its skin, the first shark “[comes] up from deep down in the water as the dark cloud of blood had settled and dispersed in the mile deep sea” (100). The metaphorical “cloud of blood” the sea brought to him as a triumph in allowing him to catch the big fish now signifies the coming storm of sharks that feast on his bounty. In the end, after the old man has lost everything, the sea plays muse to a different viewer along the beach—showing a woman the relics of greatness to inspire new questions and a new story with the “great long white spine with a huge tail at the end that lifted and swung with the tide” (126). Still, even in this same closing moment, the sea brings Santiago the memory of his lions in his sleep.

Chapter Three Form Conclusions

Fitzgerald and Hemingway's seminal works discussed here, *This Side of Paradise*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Tender is the Night* and *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *The Old Man and the Sea* respectively, each feature a male protagonist who acts as a prototype for the Lost Generation of writers and more importantly a lost generation of Americans. Each of these men is complemented by at least one significant female character. While the male characters are inspired by these women, the women themselves are constructs based on the Greek and Roman mythological muses who inspired literature and performance throughout the ancient world. As such, they must meet certain criteria in addition to just being used as vague inspirations; in analyzing each woman individually, it is plausible to consider Fitzgerald and Hemingway's willful employment of classical muses in their works, but it is also unimportant. What is important is that the women demonstrably function as muses in each text, motivating their chosen lovers to establish or renew hope in traditional avenues for making meaning in life. Both authors then use the disappointments in these relationships, orchestrated by the women themselves, as the true inspiration—one of disillusionment that plummets the male protagonists further into their initial feelings of separation from the romanticism and idealism of their pre-WW I world and hopelessness to regain it.

Chapter Four Applying the Form: Delusion before Disillusion

Having established each of the central female characters in Fitzgerald and Hemingway's selected works as reimagined ancient Greek and Roman muses, we must then consider how these muses achieve their inspirational purpose in the lives of those they inspire, in this case, the male protagonists. While Fitzgerald and Hemingway do use feminine beauty and sound traditionally as impetuses for men's actions, the more important function of their muses is ironical. Capturing the essence of a generation of Americans who felt lost amidst the destruction of their hopeless idealism after the physical and mental atrocities of WW I, Fitzgerald and Hemingway use the leading women in their novels to elicit hope from their already jaded male counterparts only to smash that hope all the more utterly when the women turn out to be, just like their American promised land, shadows of redemption only, dreams that must be destroyed in order to understand the nightmarish reality.

It is integral that each man begins the novel seeming to have already relinquished his belief in justice, hard work, and romance. A man with happiness and fulfillment has no reason to look for inspiration or hope outside himself; his very existence yields hope in the triumph of the human spirit or at least its potential. This second kind of man is the one we see in the Transcendental and Romantic works of the 19th century. Even in acknowledging mankind's propensity for sin, morality—ethical, natural, or religious—reigned. The nation returning “home” after World War I no longer saw any sufficient morality in the world around them. Thus, they largely turned to materialism, using worldly pleasures to substitute for spiritual and national disenfranchisement. It is in or after this historical moment that each male protagonist begins; none are inspired; none are satisfied with the stringent answers of their childhood, answers they might have accepted innocently before their experiences and the brutality of the world shattered

them. However, each man still yearns to believe in something, and that is the tendency that Fitzgerald and Hemingway reveal ends only in further pain and loss. The authors embody that desire to believe in the form of female muses that make the protagonist in each novel start to hope again, to work diligently for the nostalgic perfection these women represent despite the promised failure with which each man already understands the world. In this way, Fitzgerald and Hemingway force their characters, and all Americans, to indulge in the secret sin they hide beneath the calloused exterior they show to the world: aspiration—for meaning, for love, for happiness, for freedom from the unjust and pain-ridden world they see. Then, as each man dares to dream of fulfillment possible through the beauty he sees in his muse, the muses use death, infidelity, or deception to reaffirm the tangible void in which modern man finds himself. Without morality and justice, love and fulfillment, each man is adrift on the sea of loss and disillusionment in an inadequate vessel that Fitzgerald and Hemingway depict as the actuality of human existence.

Chapter Five Two Sides of One Muse

Amory Blaine, the protagonist in Fitzgerald's first novel, is perhaps the most initially jaded and calloused of the characters examined in this study, even before meeting his muses. His early years spent trotting around the globe with his effervescent and superficial mother and his formative teenage years shaped more by the private school system than by his parents, Amory is not easily self-deluded except in his devotion to his indisputable superiority. The book's title, *This Side of Paradise*, already portends the aching lack of its main character, cast aside almost immediately from the paradisiac vision of America. We do not necessarily know which side of paradise we are on, but the only really important fact is that wherever this book begins and ends is not paradise; it is in fact post-paradise, thereby post-lapsarian. Hence, paradise is unattainable, and every grasp that Amory has at it serves as a further reminder of his removal from it, as in the case of the original sinners, Adam and Eve. Fitzgerald seems to imply that all humans are trapped on this side of paradise, searching for moments of happiness, believing erroneously that happiness will guide them to fulfillment.

With that cynical background established from the beginning, the muses in *This Side of Paradise* must first inspire in Amory (and the reader alike) a sense of promise, a return to the American faith in opportunity. He likes women and certainly enjoys manipulating their sentiments, but by virtue of their nature, the muses must be above Amory's earthly sphere of experience. With their heavenly personas, it is facile for them to ensnare Amory in their web of hope because he believes himself incapable of it and therefore makes himself all the more vulnerable to it. Both of the muses that Fitzgerald incorporates in the book bind Amory to their creative service from the very first meeting, and both meetings follow his service in WW I. As in each of Fitzgerald's examined works, the physical war plays only a background role in this

novel, but it serves to highlight the war inside man against his own natural inclination to believe in a greater purpose, a moral and ethical truth, and a potential personal fulfillment. Fitzgerald reflects loss of life, sanity, and vision as a result of the factual war through his Amory's emotional loss at the hands of Rosalind Connage and Eleanor Savage.

Immediately before introducing Rosalind in a sort of play-action scene, Fitzgerald closes the previous chapter with a letter from Amory on the war front, addressed to "Baudelaire" and signed "SAMUEL JOHNSON" (Fitzgerald 121). In it, Amory confesses to his friend Tom that instead of the war inspiring him to a more orthodox faith in God, it has made his faith more agnostic and his approach to life more restless. In his allusion to Johnson, Fitzgerald foreshadows two realities: uneasiness and desire, one following hard on the heels of the other. In Johnson's conception of the human condition, "our desires always fall a step short of the possibilities for present satisfaction, and all our pursuits are doomed . . . to inconclusiveness" (Johnson 569). This summation speaks directly to Amory's—and by extension, his generation's—sense of loss upon returning from the war. However, even in the moment of his farewell to Tom before the war, Fitzgerald expresses the unfortunate truth awaiting Amory and mankind at home: "*Here, Heraclitis, did you find in fire and shifting things the prophecy you hurled down the dead years; this midnight my desire will see, shadowed among the embers, furlled in flame, the splendor and the sadness of the world*" (115). In Book Two, "THE EDUCATION OF A PERSONAGE," it becomes the muses' job to stoke the embers of hope left in Amory's breast into furling flames of desire until he can truly experience the "sadness of the world."

From the outset of Book Two Fitzgerald makes it clear that the role of the women in this book will be that of the teacher while Amory is the "personage" to be educated; he is the object,

and they are the subjects who will manipulate his creative energies and shape his understanding of the world through their inspiration. Fitzgerald even plays with the idea of a personage as a character in a play, an artistic art form motivated first in ancient Greece by the muses, by beginning Book Two as a scene from a play. Upon seeing his first muse, Amory “melts into instant confusion” before he can even say a word (128). Because he represents every man in this interaction (and perhaps because his character is being shaped through this interaction with the “glorious . . . sensual . . . unimpeachable” creature before him [126]), Fitzgerald labels his character merely as “HE” and Rosalind as “SHE” (128). Though Amory has frequently jaded himself with his worldly cynicism, when Rosalind says that her “mother’ll be right in—(*under her breath*) unfortunately” (128), Amory admits almost hopefully that his experience with her, even so far, “is a new wrinkle for [him]” (128).⁹ He tries to sell himself to the muse by bragging stiltedly about his capacity for the arts she might admire, “I’m—I’m religious—I’m literary. I’ve—I’ve even written poems” (129). Similar to the reactions of the mythological muses, her mouth arouses his curiosity both in establishing her superiority by mocking the type of paltry poetry to which he might be referring and in leaving him begging for her to “kiss [him] once more” (130). More important than her physical attractiveness is the desire she spurs in him to be something more than what he was before he met her. Her youth and determination quickly convince him that he wants the dreams of domestic happiness she represents. Rather than

⁹ In considering each of the muses a type of projection of WW I—in inciting glorious ambition and astounding bravery while promising utter devastation—Rosalind makes one of the most interesting comments, responding to Amory’s “new wrinkle” comment with, “This is No Man’s Land” (128). Fitzgerald’s capitalization here suggests a reference to the specific, original place “outside the north wall of London, formerly used as a place of execution” (OED) and/or an allusion to the term as used in WW I—the space in between the front-line trenches where thousands of men were killed trying to advance their line against the enemy. Either way, Rosalind’s comment is a clear warning as to the dangers of heroism.

viewing her as a fool when she asks him to “say something sweet,” Amory is “*frightened*” and seeks divine guidance in this new quest for happiness with his accompanying “Lord help me” (130). Because he has not dared to hope for any semblance of fulfillment for some time, Amory is terrified at the consideration that he may be beginning to feel something for Rosalind.

Amory is far from the first man in whom Rosalind has inspired this kind of temporary bliss, this brief belief in romance. As a muse, she has “kissed dozens of men” with poisonous hope that a relationship with her could lead to contentment regardless of the broken systems of the world (129). Even her brother knows that Rosalind will break his heart,” Fitzgerald’s entire purpose for her as a muse (135). Amory, however, cannot see it despite the fact that he cuts directly into the middle of her conversation with a previously inspired man later that night when he goes to find Rosalind for a dance. Howard Gillespie is already crestfallen over Rosalind’s boredom with him, and Amory becomes her rescuer, saving her from a terribly awkward conversation with someone she has already abandoned. Even the competition of stealing her out of the hands of another man, Gillespie, and out of the dancing arms of another man, Dawson Ryder, makes Amory feel almost like the American self-made man that he should know can no longer exist in this world of senseless loss. He thinks he can win her love rightfully by fighting for her; she even enthuses him to make up creative love stories as though he “was Louis the XIV and [she was] one of [his]” mistresses (136). The narrator of their play comments that “*the battle [is] lost*” when Amory gives in to telling Rosalind he loves her (137). Although Amory seeks Rosalind’s love even more fervently after that revelation, as readers, we have to know it is all for naught because his gallant show of fighting is for a war already ended; he cannot be the hero or find happiness because in the moment he is drawn in by the hopefulness of his muse, his own optimism has already defeated him. She, like Gatsby’s Daisy later, only responds that she loves

him “—now” (137). While he continues on about how he has loved her from the moment he saw her, she can only let out an “*odd burst of prophecy*” in saying, “Poor Amory” (137). She knows he is already filled with faith in their future relationship, and Fitzgerald displays her purpose as a muse with the chapter title later on that page: “KISMET.” Initially, this fate chapter seems to promise tremendous growth in Amory’s life because like her mythological predecessors, this muse inspires grand dreams in her writer. A wave of love for Rosalind “[sweeps] Amory into an advertising agency early in March, where he [alternates] between astonishing bursts of rather exceptional work and wild dreams of becoming suddenly rich and touring Italy with Rosalind” (137). Fitzgerald describes their love as a “spell,” a “paradise of rose and flame” (137). The juxtaposition between delicacy and destruction in this newfound paradise of love with Rosalind perfectly characterizes the intent Fitzgerald means for her to serve in sculpting Amory. She has to first encourage the growth of a fragile, beautiful, budding prospect in Amory; he has to believe he can have more than the shell of nothingness he thought encapsulated life, but in the end, it has to be that very hopefulness that causes him to crash aflame into the surface of the emptiness that real life holds. At the end of this chapter, Fitzgerald describes Amory’s fall into love as a “bouleversement” that leaves Amory “hurrying into line with his generation” (138), which clarifies Fitzgerald’s position that the hopefulness instilled by love was an attempt to fill the lack left by the realization of loss and evil in the war. With heroism dead, chivalry was the next choice.

As Amory falls to completely worshipping his muse, he admits to Tom, the friend to whom he wrote before the war, that Rosalind is “life and hope and happiness, [his] whole world now,” leaving him completely vulnerable to the lesson his muse really needs him to convey to the world—bitterness and loss. Before he even realizes the complete hovel of hope he has

convinced himself is a fairy tale castle, Rosalind begins his final instruction with the declaration that “beauty means the scent of roses and then the death of roses” (139), a conclusion that seems awfully foreboding in light of the comparison of her love to a paradise of roses. Gillespie, Amory’s hopeful predecessor from that first night at the dance, tries to warn him of her power to make a man do anything she wants and then still be more impressed with herself than with him, but Amory just stands there “smiling delightedly,” leaving Gillespie with an impression of him as “one of [those] hollow optimists” (140). Amory cannot help but be optimistic because he thinks he has achieved the dream, the dream that he long ago thought unattainable. It all seems within his reach for weeks until she starts to withdraw her brilliant beauty and instead exercise her brilliance in destroying his façade of faith. She begins seeing Dawson Ryder seriously, so seriously in fact that she decides (with a push from her mother) that she should marry him. In spite of Amory’s inability to “work or eat or sleep” without her, she makes no secret of her infidelity (142). On the contrary, she calmly explains to him why they can never be together, after which he explains the power her memory will hold over him: “just the bitterness, the bitterness” (143). His repetition of the phrase almost functions as an iteration of the after taste in his life left by her and perchance a foretaste of the experience he will have with Eleanor. This power of memory is one she relishes as she instructs him, “Don’t ever forget me, Amory—” (145). Far from being worried about him without her, she seeks to ensure that he has learned his lesson. He has to understand the consequences of seeking happiness: unhappiness. He descends into a spiral of loss, so frustrated that he has “los’ idealism” that he “[loses] the thread of his discourse” in absolute drunkenness, realizing that he will have to embrace a philosophy something like: “Seek pleasure where find it for tomorrow die” (148). However, even in that new nihilistic acceptance, he cannot forget the sadness of losing “the vanished spring” because those

moments of happiness “make him react even more strongly to sorrow” (150). Describing moments with Rosalind as those from a vanished spring works to describe his time with her as one that inspired new growth and beauty only to scorch it with the flames of summer (like the season) but also to characterize it like a spring of water, which flowed freely in him, suggesting “unplumbed depths of tenderness that had surprised him, gentleness and unselfishness that he had never given to another creature” only to dry up and dash his expectations with cruelty (155). Fitzgerald clarifies that Rosalind’s cruelty is nothing more than a “mirror of a mood” in Amory.¹⁰ She shows him his frailty in emboldening it only to smash it with reality, unveiling the truth that the dream world can never co-exist with the actual world, and further emphasizing the loss that Amory (and his generation of American men) feel inherent in their quest for purpose in a purposeless life.

Even in that experience though, Amory is not entirely cowed by the incompatibility of his delusion and the dread confusion of human experience. Like Dick in *Tender is the Night* and many of the characters in Hemingway’s novels, he just attempts to find a cure for his “feeling very much alone” in moving (164). In that journey “up through the luxuriant fields of Maryland into Ramilly County” (165), he meets his other muse: Eleanor Savage. It is after his encounter with her that he truly accepts the confounded realities of existence. From the outset of the story about her, Fitzgerald explains that on Amory’s last night with Eleanor, “he [loses] a further part of him that nothing could restore; and when he [loses] it he [loses] also the power of regretting it” (166). Moreover, the speaker informs us that “Eleanor [is], say, the last time that evil [creeps] close to Amory under the mask of beauty . . . and [pounds] his soul to flakes” (166). One of the

¹⁰ Fitzgerald later refers to the dream Amory sees in Eleanor as a “mirror of himself that he found in in the gorgeous clarity of her mind” (166). This admission further underscores the “dream” of belonging, love, and purpose as a flaw in Amory’s mind, reflected by the disillusionment he suffers at the hands of each female muse.

most interesting words in that opening paragraph is the command or petition for the listener to “say” that this is the last time. While this could be a colloquial use of the term, “say,” as in, *We will say so for the moment being that Eleanor was the last (though we know it is not be likely or true)*. That is possible but arguable, due to the lack of later love interests in the book and the phrase’s similarity to the way ancient Greek artists hailed the muses at the beginning of a tale—and its exact similarity to how John Milton hails Urania in the opening line of his epic, *Paradise Lost*—is a tantalizing alternative. This invocation would seem to suggest that Eleanor’s job is to inspire false hope through her beauty until her final show of truth, thereby destroying Amory’s “wild fascination” with contentedness (166). Fitzgerald’s title cleverly displays Amory’s cynicism after his time with Rosalind; however, his adventures with Eleanor in this chapter embody the “young irony” of his life—still hopeful in its young outlook and ironic because Amory has already had the chance at enlightenment via heartbreak once.

The beauty of the very first song with which Eleanor inspires Amory to worship her promise of creativity is in itself a warning for it is Verlaine’s “Autumn Song,” a song that describes the danger of memory (in looking back on summer in spring) when the dreamer has already gone beyond the dream “like the leaf / which has died” (the ending lines to the only stanza she doesn’t recite (trans. Siegel). Loving Eleanor is also a form of symbolic fall for Amory, his fall to the sin of romantic aspirations yet again. The association with the season of fall implies the death of his encouragement in the coming winter. Though Amory initially returns Eleanor’s unalarmed call about who is wandering around below the haystack where she’s perched without seeing her (like an artist hailing a muse), even he identifies himself as Don Juan, a lover and sinner who is eternally damned for his refusal to repent killing a lover’s father. Selling himself as this kind of libertine does indeed confirm Amory’s jaded view of love, but it

also foreshadows his foolish fall to its power. Eleanor tries to warn him of what he already knows about the destructive nature of hope and love by referencing the poem she has heard him reciting, “Ulalame.” She even says, “I’ll be Psyche, your soul “ (169). In Edgar Allan Poe’s poem, “Ulalame,” Psyche attempts to dissuade the speaker from following after a path that seems to be lit by Astarte while yet the tears from lost love “are not dry on / [his] cheeks” (line 42-43). With that declaration, Eleanor’s job as muse becomes one of inspiring an internal journey in Amory through which he will return to the tomb of death at the hands of his dream love and purpose.

Amory falls in love with her once he is atop the haystack and can truly see her goddess-like magnificence: “alert and dreamy and with the tell-tale white line over her upper lip that was a weakness and a delight” (170). In the same manner as Rosalind’s alluring traits, Eleanor’s youth (“only eighteen” [171]) and intrigue (leaving Amory “in a trance” [171]) draw in a desperate Amory Blaine, disappointed by his inability to find a path thus far in life, and visualizing in Eleanor the promise of a new understanding, a new answer to his unhappiness. In fact, part of what draws him to try to please Eleanor is her high standards; she is not pleased with the “epigrams” he offers about sentimental people vs. romantic people like himself; she sparks new and “transcendent” creativity in him with her touch (172). Instead of just feeling the warmth of passion around her, he grows cold “with deadly fear lest he should lose the shadow brush with which his imagination was painting wonders of her” (172). She becomes a figure of perfection to him, motivating him to imagine a world with beauty once again. Interestingly, like Dick Diver later, part of what makes Amory so hopeful in his relationship with Eleanor is her hopelessness; he is encouraged by his ability to be the positive one for both of them. Even in their untraditional attitudes about life, Amory is finally finding a relationship in which he thinks he can play the

savior figure, the hero, that he has grown up believing he should be (a residual American Dream ambition). Nevertheless, she is constantly reminding him of the impossibility of his saving them. As they toy around with which days are best to fall in love in each season, she suggests that summer has no perfect day. After Amory asks her, “What could fulfill the promise of spring?” (173), she supposes, “Heaven would if there was one” (173). In Amory’s failed promise of spring with Rosalind, he has now found some of what he considers fulfillment in his summer relationship with Eleanor, but she warns him that what feels heavenly is merely an illusion—one he continues to embellish as he turns himself into Rupert Brooke “as long as he knew [Eleanor]” just because she suggests he “[looks] a great deal like the pictures of [him]” (173). Not only does the muse encourage his poetic creativity with this comparison, but she also encourages him in his embodiment of the consummate poetic warrior, patriotically heralding the cause of heroism (an embodiment doomed to destruction in its pitiable prime much like Rupert Brooke, who died less than a year after the war began from an ill-treated minor wound). Joseph Bristow comments in his article in *English Literary History* that thanks to Churchill’s political savvy, “Brooke’s perished body came to stand for indomitable patriotic values” (663), values that were crushed by the end of the war, leaving an entire generation of lost souls in their wake. Eleanor brings out in Amory the creative capacity to love and hope once again, not through passionate embraces—though they share those, too—but through the “chance to make everything fine and finished and rich and imaginative” through the eyes of poets like “Brooke, and Swinburnes, and Shelley” (173).

As Amory begins to spend more time with Eleanor, “[floating] lazily in the water,” Amory “shut his mind to all thoughts except those of hazy soap-bubbles where the sun splattered through wind-drunk trees” (174). His time in the refreshing and inspirational water with Eleanor

cleanses him of worry, and he exiles all “sadness and memory and pain [to recur] outside” while “here, once more, . . . he wanted to drift and be young” (174). Even in this polysyndeton, Fitzgerald reveals how heavily each of these emotions had hung on Amory and how welcome is the relief as the “stream of love or fascination” washes them away. Eleanor draws him into an eddy of contentment where he feels saved from the painful chaos of the world by her “eternal beauty and curious elfin love moods” (175). Then, just at the moment that Amory finally takes hold of his confidence in the tranquility and promise of his love, crying wildly, “You *are* mine—you know you’re mine!” to Eleanor as they hold each other in the moonlight, Fitzgerald brings it all to a screeching halt with an instant interruption: “THE END OF SUMMER” (175). In this final episode, Eleanor disillusion Amory from his confidence in his ability to save her and thereby himself with one wild jump from a horse “before he could interfere” (179). Despite how speedily he “[wheels] and [starts] after her, his body like ice, his nerves in a vast clangor,” he is unable to save her; only her capricious “plunge from her horse” saves her from going over the cliff along which they are riding (179). In that moment, she rips away entirely his sense of control over his own life, and that horrifies him, especially as he realizes that “as [he] had loved himself in Eleanor, so now what he [hates is] only a mirror” (180). He has to come to accept that both of them, like the rest of humanity, are “but naked souls . . . poor things ever” (180). In betraying him to chance, Eleanor shatters Amory’s ideal images of love and potential in life, but it is a lesson of pain he needs to learn as he goes off into the world to confront his own failure romantically, financially, and socially. Years later, in reflection on the ““Dark Lady of the Sonnets”” (176), Amory realizes that the power of love is that loss of it inspires art, which he has already experienced with Eleanor, and he honors her in a poem he writes her by describing how the storms they experienced together “tear [him], teach [him]” that just when he thinks of love

and comfort as real, he is left with only “faint winds, and far away a fading laughter . . .” (182). After Eleanor, Amory seems to descend into the madness of his time rather than follow any purposeful track: ruining his reputation in saving a friend at a hotel with a prostitute, facing Rosalind’s engagement to Dawson Ryder alongside his false incrimination, deciding that that he never wanted “any beaten, broken woman that his imagination brought to the door” (190), hearing of Monseigneur’s death, and losing all of his money. In the end, Amory’s experiences with his two muses teaches him “self-reproach and loneliness and disillusion,” leading him to the entrance of the labyrinth of progress only to end up arguing meaninglessly with two strangers nice enough to pick him up along his walk back to Princeton (200).

Chapter Six Dreaming in Daisy

Though we do not find out the truth about James Gatz's upbringing until nearly the end of the book, after his hopeful investments in Daisy have come plummeting down around him, Fitzgerald clarifies his inward dissatisfaction and longing through not only the physical reaching across the bay that Nick witnesses when he returns from Tom and Daisy's house one evening but also through the overwhelming materialistic pursuits he is first introduced as orchestrating. Just as with each of Fitzgerald's protagonists examined here and perhaps with many Americans who had lost their faith in the traditional values of society (Bolton 78), Jay Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby* turns to wealth and opulence as the means of compensating for the lack he feels in his life. He feels disconnected from his former idealistic, ambition-oriented self because all of the things he drove for now seem worthless or unattainable. From the very first time Nick sees Gatsby's house, he calls it a "factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy" (7). This initial oxymoron clarifies Gatsby's overall existence, a façade with no substance; though he may try to obtain status and happiness through showing off with giant parties and an expensive house, the "thin beard of raw ivy" does little to mask the reality of his illegitimacy (7). In the novel, much of this illegitimacy stems from Gatsby's illegal bootlegging, false name, and novelty, but considered as a symbol for modern man to be inspired by the muses, Gatsby's illegitimacy serves as a symptom of a much larger disease. He creates for himself the image of the American dream, almost like a movie set, running all of the actors through it that should guarantee a blockbuster hit, but his plot has no substance; the traditional promises of fulfillment through hard work, determination, even wealth, all leave him even emptier than he was when he began. His soirees sound so fantastical with "men and girls [coming] and [going] like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars" (43), but their very charm is in the ephemeral nature they

possess, and despite the guest names that Nick enumerates for the reader, there is little gravity or permanence to any of them, most especially the host. The only permanent drive in Gatsby life, we learn later, is his memory of his life before the war, a life epitomized by his fantasy romance with Daisy Fay.

When Nick begins looking for Gatsby at one party, Gatsby's own guests "vehemently deny any knowledge of his movements" (46), setting Gatsby up as a Christ figure, denied and betrayed by those supposed to have been his friends. Paradoxically, while the Biblical Christ dies for the immoral and hedonistic sins of mankind, Gatsby dies for the moral and sentimental sins of a nation—belief, hope, and love: all things Gatsby, and thereby the modern man, must learn are hollow and meaningless in the face of death and destruction. While those at the party refuse to acknowledge their relationships with Gatsby, they do not hesitate to malign his lost identity continually, discussing how they heard that "he killed a man once" or that "he was a German spy during the war" even though he was in the American military (48). In this way, his adherence to the traditional expectations for American men even betray him, robbing him of individual character and purpose. Gatsby is so misunderstood at the start of the book that a drunk guest in his library is so astonished at the books in it having real pages in them that he assures Nick and Jordan of it five times during their brief visit to the room (50-51), so lost and isolated that Nick doesn't even recognize him as his host when he is talking directly to him. Fitzgerald depicts Gatsby's humanity as becoming more and more inconsequential as a result of the importance of his material accumulations; ironically, exactly the belongings he tries to use to give value to his life actually further rob him of meaning. To reintroduce that meaning, Gatsby looks to reclaim the romantic idealism his muse initially inspired in him years before Nick introduces us to him.

At the end of the novel, we find out that James Gatz's quest for wealth as a vessel for meaning began when he was a child, probably issuing forth from the impoverished and unsuccessful relics of his parents. Describing his self-image as that of "a son of God" (105), Fitzgerald explains how "a universe of ineffable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain" (106). As a result, Gatz births Gatsby, rowing out to help the affluent metal man, Dan Cody, along the shore of Lake Superior; he knew that by working with him on his yacht, he would learn how to define himself through money and excitement, both of which he felt were important, but neither of which promised personal fulfillment. Gatsby thrust aside all traditional avenues to meaning in life until he encountered his muse in Daisy, and then she became that meaning for him. Because he sees her as superior financially and therefore superior personally, Gatsby takes her before she can realize the "colossal accident" of his presence in her life (159). He thought he was engaging in another meaningless tryst, acting as all jaded men do, "under false pretenses" (159), but instead, he found that in worshipping her and everything she represented, "he had committed himself to the following of a grail" (159). Before leaving for the war, he passes the most profound night of his life talking and bonding with her, and she cements herself even further in his memory as his inspiration, so much so that he actually begins to see all of his other ambitions as worthless without "time telling [her] what [he] was going to do" (160). He begins to live for her; despite every success he has in the military and an accident that sends him to the gentleman's school of Oxford (his only real way out of his for-the-time-low social status), he is only worried about "the quality of nervous despair in Daisy's letters" (161). In that moment of desperation for love and hope, Fitzgerald uses Daisy as the muse of disillusionment for the first time when she betrays Gatsby and marries Tom. Her infidelity should end his romantic notions about their future together, but because of what he perceives as their all-prevailing love, he has

committed the sin of hoping for a future he can never have. He “felt married to her” (159), but in reality, though he had led Daisy to believe that he could provide for her, “he had no such facilities, . . . he was liable at the whim of an impersonal government to be blown anywhere around the world” (159). Thus, even though Gatsby is not injured in the war, the emotional loss it costs him equates to the emotional loss of his entire generation. Fitzgerald conveys this loss through Gatsby in the form of a physical love lost, physical infidelity, but in considering the example of Gatsby and Daisy’s love metonymically, we see that in reality, the war shatters Gatsby’s idealistic interpretation of his relationship with Daisy. Fitzgerald (through Nick) clarifies that Gatsby never could have had Daisy, which he knew at the time, but was able to blame it on the war when she got engaged and married to Tom during his absence. We can see the changing perception of the American government as a sign of the changing regard for the traditional American superstructures. This government is described as “impersonal,” holding no real value for any one soldier’s life (as Gatsby’s is theoretically ripped apart by the war and then destroyed by the government’s mistake in sending him to Oxford during the Armistice). By using the word “whim” to characterize governmental decisions, Fitzgerald underscores Gatsby’s ironic view of the government as careless. Even though Gatsby was the one who thoughtlessly misled Daisy into inspiring his everlasting devotion from the beginning, the hope in a tangible and substantial happiness that she represents for him is destroyed by his absence during the war; therefore, he projects an entire generation’s dissatisfaction with the solutions of their government through his own personal crisis in the novel.

In her choice to marry Tom, Daisy, acting as Gatsby’s muse, only more fully pulls him into an unsustainable fantasy realm, one in which Daisy needs his rescuing because she never really even loved him, or always “loved [him] more” even when she did love him “just for a

minute” (162). Far from reality, what Daisy has inspired in Gatsby is creativity, both of ambition and measures needed to achieve that ambition. Nick even confesses that there was no proper argument against Gatsby’s assertions because he had such an “intensity in his conception of the affair that it couldn’t be measured” (162). Through the impetus of his love for Daisy, Gatsby had created a new story of his life, much like authors inspired to write epic poetry by Calliope, one in which he determines that “if he had searched harder” upon returning to Louisville, Daisy’s hometown, after the war, “he might have found her” (163). Thus, he makes it his mission to give every last ounce of himself to his dream, committing an even more grievous sin than hope: trust in justice, a justice he should already know (that he already knew) does not exist. As a result of his love for Daisy and all she has stirred in him, he chooses to believe that if he works diligently toward making their fairy tale into a reality, he will in the end achieve his happily ever after. His vision is underscored by his purchase of the mansion across the bay from Daisy’s house. Over the connective bay, he sees the opportunity to reconnect with Daisy, and he uses his love for her as inspiration to make enough money to support her and provide the security of which he once falsely assured her. Scholars have argued that the green light at the end of Daisy’s dock, toward which Gatsby reaches, could represent anything from jealousy to money, but in all cases, it represents the inspiration of Daisy, a divine creature at whose feet he worships (Rea 28). Even his house is a mortal mockery of Daisy and Tom’s Olympian palace, and part of what makes her such an inspiration to Gatsby is the fact that he can never be like her, but he thinks that by believing in her (and everything she represents: America’s prosperity, beauty, and promise), he can work himself into a god, one that could win Daisy back in his own right.¹¹ Materially, he

¹¹ One of the chief traditional American ideals is self-determination—that is the belief that through hard work and discipline, an individual can supersede, or transcend, class divisions and define himself in a new way. In so doing, he can earn the respect of every

does so. He becomes the most talked about party host in the suburbs of New York City. He can afford anything Daisy could ever desire, and he has plenty of connections to ensure continued prosperity. Unfortunately, because Gatsby is not one of the immortal American elite like Tom and Daisy, born into families of old money and near royalty, all he can ever really do is dream of a romantic metamorphosis (Weinstein 27). He begins by constructing a more respectable history for himself, like the one he shares with Nick of a dead family that left him “a good deal of money,” enough to “[live] like a young rajah in all the capitals of Europe” while he tried to “forget something very sad that had happened to [him] long ago” (71). Just as in his real life, the stories climax with his time in the war; only, the war he presents is the romanticized version from “a dozen magazines” (72). Of course, Gatsby has the material medals and pictures to back up his outlandish stories and just enough truth in each to make his listeners both skeptical and assured of his sincerity simultaneously. He has written himself back into reality as a different character, a creative exercise inspired by Daisy. He buys “that house so that Daisy would be just across the bay,” then “half [expects] her to wander into one of his parties, some night” (85). Every “[crate] of oranges and lemons” (43), every “buffet [table], garnished with glistening hors-d’oeuvre, spiced baked hams . . . and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold” (44), every “celebrated tenor” performance (51), and every “finger bowl of champagne” (51-52) added to the allure Gatsby wanted to fashion for Daisy, but when she never comes, he is forced to compose a plan to get her to his house via her cousin Nick’s invitation. Before Daisy even shows up, Gatsby sends over a man to mow Nick’s lawn for him, and “at two o’clock a greenhouse [of flowers] arrive[s] from Gatsby’s, with innumerable receptacles to contain it” (90). While the flowers literally

class, both the one from which he came and the one to which he ascends. Though this concept has already proven faulty in Gatsby’s own life when Cody’s lover, Ella Kaye, stole the legacy money that Cody left to Gatsby before the war, Daisy inspires a new, stronger round of belief in him.

convey Gatsby's intense desire to impress Daisy, the unnecessarily hyperbolic quantity perhaps signifies the unrealistic expectations Gatsby has not only for the tea party he has planned but also for his rekindled romance with Daisy.

As a tool used by Fitzgerald, Daisy's character enables and encourages this behavior until Gatsby is so close to holding her again that he sees himself as the victor and has forgotten all of the impossibilities that keep that victory from being legitimate. She immediately expresses her pleasure with the size of Gatsby's house (and thereby the size of the fortune he has amassed) with "enchanted murmurs" as she "[admires] this aspect or that . . . , [admires] the gardens, the sparkling odor of jonquils and the frothy odor of hawthorn and plum blossoms and the pale gold odor of kiss-me-at-the-gate" (97). The imagery Fitzgerald uses here emphasizes two important aspects of the farcical romance Daisy inspires in Gatsby. First, all of the flowers' odors are described as visual, highlighting both the temporal, empty quality of their allure—since the odors have no substance and even the substance they have is misidentified with visual impressions—and the focus Daisy has as a muse on the creation rather than on the creator. Though Gatsby's goal may be to motivate her to love him in the same way he worships her, she is only interested in the product of Gatsby's adoration, his work of art(ifice) dedicated to her. Second, the fact that Gatsby leads Daisy through the blooming garden rather than taking the shortcut to his house suggests his attempt to regain what he lacks in life without Daisy's influence, a grasp at an Edenic new beginning from one of the exiled sinners. He looks to ignore the realities of the world and begin again in a paradisiac garden of potential with his celestial muse. We see Daisy's interest in Gatsby again only as a producer when she collapses at the beauty of the shirts he has shipped to him every season; she cries not out of love for Gatsby or the time she has spent away from him, but only out of the wonder at the "thick folds" of the "beautiful shirts" he has

produced in her honor (99). With every encouragement, his creative illusion grows stronger, but part of the way we can determine that Fitzgerald uses Daisy not so much an individual character to be analyzed but more as an allusion to the muses' physical manifestation of artists' inspiration is in Nick's description of Gatsby at the end of his first evening with Daisy in five years. Even when Daisy has done nothing whatsoever to disappoint Gatsby, her mere reality falls short of his vision, causing "a faint doubt . . . as to the quality of [Gatsby's] present happiness;" she couldn't help "[tumbling] short of his dreams—not through her own fault but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion," which "had gone beyond her, beyond everything" (103). Nick describes Gatsby as "[throwing] himself" into pursuing Daisy "with a creative passion (103). Hence, the narrative he creates for his life, though inspired by the muse, is bigger than the muse, more fantastical.

Just as mythological muses chose to spark the works of men with great imaginative potential, Daisy here chooses a man with the remaining potential to realize romance, to reach for a dream well beyond his scope in almost unwavering belief despite the obvious impossibility, and she speaks to him. It is that beauty of sound and voice that "held [Gatsby] most with its fluctuating, feverish warmth because it couldn't be over-dreamed—that voice was a deathless song" (103). Tragically, just like Gatsby's illusions of love with Daisy, the voice is but a dream, and that is the only thing that makes it deathless; it has no substance and no home in reality. Fitzgerald uses the collapse of this dream to echo the collapsing idealism of a nation upon realizing that its best attributes could only exist in a dream world and therefore carried no weight in real life, which is more like the nightmare that Gatsby's muse would finally reveal. Only in his absolute devotion to perfection and hope in the form of the fictional Gatsby could he be

absolutely crushed as a representative of his people in his time—left alone, lost, and destroyed by the cruel certainty of uncertainty in this world.

To disillusion Gatsby from his refreshing, romantic fantasy, his muse first introduces him to a physical impediment that keeps his nostalgic dream of the past from being carried to fruition: her child. Daisy's child is a living representative of her infidelity to his notion of their happiness because she was conceived with Tom as the father, and unlike Gatsby's financial and professional constraints, she cannot be undone. Nick relates how Gatsby cannot help but "[look] at the child with surprise" because he had probably never "really believed in its existence before" (124). Fitzgerald refers to the child as "it" here because Daisy's daughter is not a character so much as an impediment, a realization of Daisy's physical creative capacity evidenced through her relationship with another man. As Tom re-enters the room and the nurse takes Daisy's daughter away, Gatsby is racked with "visible tension" (125). He wants to maintain his narrative of hope and happiness for himself and Daisy, the one where she will pull him down and romantically kiss him in front of her friends, but seeing the reality of the problems he must surmount leads to an intellectual tension that Daisy suggests escaping, just like the heat, by going to town; after all, it is only "Daisy's voice" that gets the group "to [their] feet and out on to the blazing gravel drive" on the way to New York City (127). In so doing, she removes him from the idyllic grounds he has used to prove his creative genius to himself and to her and instead provides the perfect alien atmosphere in which to completely alienate Gatsby from his efforts and the longed-for desires he thought they would yield.

From the beginning of the experience in the hotel suite parlor, Fitzgerald paints the afternoon escape as a failed quixotic endeavor. They think it would be refreshing to rent out baths, but end up just looking for "'a place to have a mint julep'" (134). They think it would be

cool inside that place with open windows, but “the room [is] large and stifling” and the number of windows is limited. They think it would be relaxing to have some drinks on ice, but instead the jazz music drifting up from a wedding downstairs distracts them. While the wedding plays no literal role in wrecking Gatsby’s illusions, it does serve as the perfect inspirational backdrop to make him see the foolishness of his hope. Daisy may have ridden to the hotel in the car with him, but the memories she begins discussing in the hotel are memories from her wedding to Tom, which had also been in the heat of summer. Sadly, Gatsby has so fully devoted himself to the inevitability of his love story with Daisy materializing that he blinds himself to reality until Daisy, the very muse that initially sparked his devotion and belief, hurls it in his face. Nick later recounts that Gatsby “had broken up like glass against Tom’s hard malice” (158), but in reality, it is Daisy’s words and actions that disillusion Gatsby. Though he has convinced himself of Daisy’s purity of motive—that she only ever loved him and only had to marry Tom based on circumstances—Daisy reveals that “even alone [she] can’t say [she] never loved Tom” because “it wouldn’t be true” (142). Seeing her as still imprisoned by Tom’s presence, Gatsby continues to trust her; she is the only muse he has ever had, and she has stirred his greatest creation: a self in which he can believe and for which he can work to achieve happiness and purpose. Nevertheless, she breaks him with her final two-part act, killing Myrtle and then allowing Gatsby to take the blame as she runs away with Tom. While Gatsby is worried about Daisy, “as if Daisy’s reaction was the only thing that mattered” (153), Tom and Daisy are sharing “an unmistakable air of natural intimacy” at the kitchen table, and Nick confesses that “anybody would have said that they were conspiring together” (155). Even in that moment, Gatsby cannot see that he is “watching over nothing” (156). He has been so fully blinded by the delusion Daisy represents that while it falls around him, he still clings to it. On the day he dies for the lies Daisy

has allowed him to embody, he continues to believe she will call him, but the only call he gets is from George Wilson, who shoots him for the crime Daisy committed, running down his wife in Gatsby's car. Only in death could Gatsby completely reveal the lost man's disillusionment with the painful reality of life. Daisy's role as merely a muse is clarified in her disappearance once her inspiration is complete. Gatsby turned her into every reason to reach for betterment. He sought riches for her, sacrificed all of his identity for the love he imagined having with her, and even constructed an entirely new reality in which he could satisfy her, but the creative truth that he has to portray is one of disappointment and disenfranchisement. The only way Fitzgerald can convey the depth of his generation's loss is to have Gatsby first believe. Without hope and morality, there is nothing for the pain of Daisy's betrayals to crush. Hence, her inspiration is two-fold. She must give him reason to rebuild his belief in a system, and then, once he has devoted all he has to that system, she must prove its failure and in so doing, prove the frailty of mankind and his inability to find permanence and value in his life. He has to mirror the hopeful shred of humanity that Lost Generation writers like Fitzgerald and Hemingway saw crushed and then be crushed himself in order to represent a meaningful creation—one inspired by Daisy Fay Buchanan.

Chapter Seven
Tender Tidings of a Promised Land

Tender is the Night blends perhaps the best elements of *This Side of Paradise* and *The Great Gatsby*, episodic revelations and work-length significant relationships respectively.

Fitzgerald revisits the idea of the muse as a falsely vulnerable master, one whose seeming need for the male protagonist's creative energies endows him with hope and power—albeit fleeting—in exercising them (like Daisy does for Gatsby or Eleanor does for Amory). One of the chief differences in his final novel is that Fitzgerald includes two main love interests with which the protagonist must contend throughout the novel, only one of which acts as a muse for Dick Diver: Nicole Warren. In order to establish Nicole Warren as the primary muse and thereafter analyze her importance in building Dick (or convincing him of his ability to build himself) and later shattering his confident romanticism, we must first dispense with Rosemary, the young girl he meets on the beach along the Riviera in the first section of the novel, as a potential muse. While Fitzgerald does introduce her perspective earlier in the novel than he does Nicole's perspective, even this sequential manipulation underscores the permanence of Nicole's impression and lesson in Dick's life when compared to Rosemary's troublesome influence.

From the outset, Rosemary is inspired by Dick, rather than in the case of a muse, where the woman would inspire him. She almost immediately falls in love with him on the beach (and admits as much to her mother upon returning to her hotel room) when “he [looks] at her and for a moment she lives in the bright blue worlds of his eyes, eagerly and confidently” (12). Instead of his chasing after her, she chases after him. She sees his group (including his wife, Nicole) as “self-sufficient” when she is inspired to think of them later that night at the sound of “music through the ghostly moonlight of her mosquito net” (16). She does not make her own music or draw men to her with the beauty of her voice; she is in fact drawn to the absolute superiority of

the real muse herself, just as we later learn Dick is. Describing Nicole in the image of a marble Grecian goddess that Rodin might sculpt, “made first on the heroic scale with strong structure and marking, . . . and then chiseled away in the direction of prettiness to the point where a single slip would have irreparably diminished its force and quality” (17), Rosemary is intimidated by, envious of, and drawn to her inspirational adversary because she can see that Dick “[is] already possessed” by her (20). Hence, any tittle of love she may be able to draw from him is merely an escape from or fulfillment of what Nicole inspires in him.

Unlike Rosemary’s case, where she silently stares at Dick admiringly (19), the ease of Nicole’s first spoken interaction with her husband across their own garden terrace “[belittles] his megaphone” so that she has to “[raise] her voice and [call], ‘Can you hear me?’” in an effort not to undermine his confidence and strength that her vulnerability have allowed him to realize (27). Rosemary is one of the people “swept” up into Dick’s excitement, while Nicole understands the “form of melancholy, which he never displayed” that “inevitably followed” (27). Here, Fitzgerald gives us one of his first clues as to Nicole’s role in Dick’s life: she can instill excitement and stir ability in the protagonist, but, as in the case of her mythical predecessors, she also sees the utter sadness to follow when she, the foundation for both of them, is ripped away from him.

As Fitzgerald’s embodiment of the creative and optimistic muse within Dick (and within every man), Nicole’s first task in teaching man to see the heights from which he has fallen—the lost hope of permanent morality—is to make him believe that he can once again scale the steps to that expectant view he, and an entire people, once embraced. Dick returns from his time in WW I unaware of the “intricate destiny” into which he “is ready to be called” as a hero, just “like

Grant, lolling in his general store in Galina” (118).¹² Ironically, Fitzgerald compares the arrogant Dick Diver, who “didn’t see any of the war” to General Grant prior to joining the Union forces and fighting in the Civil War (119). While this reference could suggest Dick’s future successes—after all, Grant went on to become the general of the Union forces and President of the United States—it seems more likely that Fitzgerald relates Dick to Grant not only in his rise to heroism, but also in his death in political and civilian failure (most notable for appointing unscrupulous advisors, alcoholism, and bankruptcy) before his memoirs could even be published. Furthermore, this analogy implies that the moment of Dick’s discussion with Franz Gregorovius regarding “that girl” (119) is really the beginning of the war for him (an echo of the impact of the historical Great War on changing a generation and robbing them of their egoism as well as their trust in the justice of life).¹³ As with the other muses, Nicole is perhaps a projection of Dick’s own need to confer the utter brokenness of his time upon himself, as we see when he suggests to himself in the third person that “he must be less intact, even faintly destroyed” even “though it would be nice to build out some broken side till it was better than the original structure” (116). Fitzgerald uses this pattern for Dick’s fall. In his attempt to rescue and restore a broken Nicole to a better version than the original delivered to Zurich as a teenager, he actually finds himself “less intact, even faintly destroyed,” and utterly lost as to his purpose (116). However, as with each of the muses of disillusionment, before he can truly experience the depths of lack each of us must

¹² Though the book’s episodes are not chronological, in order to best show Nicole’s impact on Dick as his psychological muse, I have started the analysis of her significance with the chronological beginnings of their relationship and will continue to discuss events tied to their relationship in the order in which they happen.

¹³ Interestingly, Fitzgerald himself had a similar experience to Dick Diver, “around the edges of the war” (115), but he later became known as one of the chief writers of the Lost Generation, so this idea of “non-combatant’s shell shock” that Fitzgerald’s protagonist realizes one night represents the effect of the time on the author, the character, and probably society as a whole (180).

confront in this world, he has to fully embrace and invest in the promise of Nicole after at first facing the world as a realistic, reasoned scientist, jaded from his foreknowledge of Nicole. Even though he initially fancied her “the prettiest thing [he] ever saw,” by the time he arrives back in Zurich, he has come to fancy her as more of a medical case than a heart case—one that still bothers him because he cannot rectify the “beautiful shell” with “what’s inside it” (120). What he doesn’t realize is that, because of his own calloused expectations of life, this psychological appeal that Nicole holds for him necessarily acts as her first stride in capturing his heart and creative energies. While he is stationed during the war, she writes to him constantly, expressing her belief that “love is all there is or should be” but also offering him at least some trite pleasure in the fact that “[his] interest in examinations keeps [him] busy” (123). Fully aware that she is one of those examinations, Nicole piques Dick’s interest by manipulating his one plan in life: “to be a good psychologist—maybe to be the greatest one that ever lived” (132). It is in this arena that Nicole first and best inspires Dick to love her and to believe in his own ability to shape his future. Fitzgerald uses her youth and vulnerability as a representative of everything that we would want to save in the world and everything that we must realize we can never fully find in the world. Thus, those who trustingly reach for it, work for it, and pine for it must be shattered and instructed in the honest nature of the world.

As they meet again at Dr. Dohmler’s mental health establishment, Dick knows the medical allure she holds for him, but he is “dazzled” by the persuasive power she has over him (135). She feigns gratitude at his indulgence and susceptibility to his charm during every meeting, but “as [he becomes] less and less certain of his relation to her, her confidence increased” (135). During their initial rendezvous, the narrator suggests that her excitement “[reflects] all the excitement of the world,” but in their second meeting upon his return to Zurich,

she transports him to America with her music—a romanticized America made up of clandestine meetings and mysteries (135). Fitzgerald describes the music she plays for him as “holding lost times and future hopes in liaison” (136), which is exactly what Nicole does for Dick. Though he has long been away from America and the dreamy idealism of his country should have been negated by the chaos and immorality of absolute war, he senses in Nicole the promise of what used to be and what could be again. Like his feelings for her, the two worlds become tangled in his mind. Though scientifically, all he wants to do is cure his incurable patient, this grows into a sentimentalized dream in which he confesses to Dr. Dohmler and Franz that he is “half in love with her,” that “the thought of marrying her has passed through [his] mind” (140). She has inspired him to glimpse that childlike, hopeful side of himself that he “always [tries] to discipline . . . into molds of attentive seriousness” (142), and despite the fact that he is able to run from her at the advice of Dr. Dohmler this time, it is too late for him in the long run. Nicole has watched him, seen the beauty he imagines obtainable in her physical manifestation, and as a result, she “[expropriates] without question” the trained part “as most women [do],” claiming it for her own at a later date (142). Dr. Dohmler convinces Dick that it is in Nicole’s best interest for him to avoid her, to leave her entirely, but there are two problems with this assertion. First, because Nicole is the muse and a representative of Dick’s own helpless inner dreamer/sinner, she withdraws before Dick can affect any real change. He tries to break things off with her, and in feeling guilty for using Nicole’s emotions unfairly, he begins to wonder “if they turned out to be his own” (145). This suggests the second problem with the doctor’s prescription: no dreamer can prevent the return of a dream as long as they believe in its possibility. Dick continues to literally dream about Nicole “walking on the clinic path swinging her wide straw hat” and projects on her his very sense of felicity, from which he confesses “he must absent himself . . . a while” (145),

implying that he already intuitively feels his return to Nicole once some arbitrary amount of time has passed, enough so that he feels that he has regained control of the situation.

When Dick comes face to face with his dream again, she is riding up to the top of a mountain with the Conte de Marmora. In a school-girl “white tennis skirt—she [is] the first morning of May and every taint of the clinic was departed” (148). Comparing her to the first morning of May signifies the dewy morning youth and late spring promise she represents, but it also alludes to the celebration of May Day, the day still celebrated in many countries, when hundreds of thousands of workers in late nineteenth-century America walked off their jobsites in a show of solidarity against the unfair economic and power structures in place in the United States. To Dick, this new appearance of Nicole seems to be liberated from the confines of clinic and society’s expectations, and that independence in her spirit lures him just as the “young intimacy” of her and Marmora does (148). However, she knows that showing this domineering strength is not the way to inspire Dick, except in so much as it convinces him that a recovery is possible for her with the right antidote administered. She must show him she still needs him so that he will exercise his belief in his ability to shape his own fate and find purpose and happiness in his life, thereby damning himself to utter disappointment. After walking away from the climbing car platform at Glion, Dick is left “feeling Nicole’s eyes following him, feeling her helpless first love, feeling it twist around inside of him” (150). Amidst this triad of desperately culminating feelings that stir Dick as a result of Nicole’s influence, every other voice becomes unimportant; the only voice he hears is the one that tells him from within “how much he [is] loved” (150). Just the whisper of her favor, like with any muse and artist, is enough to whet the palette of creativity; he goes that night to dinner with Nicole and Baby, her sister, and Nicole escapes the crowd to lure her conquest outside, where she first kisses him. Fitzgerald describes

her voice “[falling] low, [sinking] into her breast and [stretching] the tight bodice over her heart as she [comes] up close” to Dick (154). He can feel the “young lips, her body sighing in relief against the arm growing stronger to hold her” (154-55). The interplay of body and spirit in this image is mirrored both by the metaphor then used to describe it (“some indissoluble mixture, with atoms joined and inseparable” [155]) and by the reality of change Nicole stirs in Dick. With her youthful body and irresistible sensuality, she allows Dick to embrace his feelings of innocence and romanticism, no matter how unrealistic, and in contrast, her exposure allows him to “[grow] stronger” (155). Thus, she brings about in him a feeling of faith in his ability to protect and preserve, perhaps even restore, the promise of the pre-war world (inseparable in *Tender is the Night* from curing Nicole and returning her to a pre-neurotic state). With that ability, Nicole, as Dick’s muse can boast “a better hold on him and she [holds] it” (155). Regardless of what happens later in the book, the speaker clarifies that Dick can never be completely his own again with his chemical comparison, explaining that, once combined, “you could throw it all out, but never again could they fit back into atomic scale” (155). He needs Nicole’s inspiration to accomplish his dreams of love and professional success, which in her are now linked, a fact that Nicole affirms with her letters to him after their engagement announcement to Baby Warren, Nicole’s sister. She describes their relationship together as “funny and lonely . . . no place to go except close,” questioning whether they should “just love and love” and claiming that she loves “the most,” which is exactly what assures Dick’s personal value (159). Simultaneously, she represents his professional opportunities to make a name for himself as a psychoanalyst with her pleas for him to “help [her] . . . so [she] won’t feel so guilty” (161). With this supplication, she motivates Dick’s greatest hopeful sin, believing that he can come up with the steps to keep them “young together” (161). That idealism is exactly what

Nicole fosters in him and what she will destroy once he has proved his undying and quixotic devotion to its existence by completely abandoning the affair that starts the whole book in favor of preserving his inspiration in Nicole.

As Fitzgerald reunites the story lines, he gives us yet another clue that Rosemary is not a muse to inspire Dick when Dick realizes that all of Rosemary's charms "[are] things with which he had endowed her" rather than heroic aspirations she stimulated in him (165). From the very first party the Divers throw along the Riviera that summer when Rosemary first arrives, she notices his devotion to Nicole; when Nicole disappears, "Rosemary [notices] that Dick [is] no longer there" (35). We know later that he has gone to handle one of Nicole's episodes, each of which solidifies his role as her doctor and savior and thereby his inability to love or worship anyone else. Rosemary is but the proof Dick unknowingly offers to Nicole of how thoroughly she has doped him with the elixir of youth. He cannot help but yearn for youth and vivacity, but even symbolically, she is always a sacrifice to the power Nicole has in his life to move his convictions. He laughs with Rosemary on the beach, but that "laughter [sweeps] them up toward the terrace where he [delivers] her to Nicole" (38). Literally, he delivers her for a day of shopping, but the image of him down on the beach and Nicole up on the cliff terrace above signifies the role each plays in their relationship. Nicole, the heavenly muse, inspires Dick, the ruddy mortal's, stirrings down below, and he brings his works to her feet to survey for her pleasure or disdain. Whether she chooses to accept his sacrifice or not, she maintains her influence on his life until he is willing to take crazy risks to reach for a happiness he only believes exists because of Nicole. As he finds himself following after the youth and Hollywood fiction of a dream America in Rosemary, the form of an unadulterated Nicole, the speaker compares him to a man "[standing] in front of a church in Ferrara, in sackcloth and ashes" (91).

Though it may seem that Dick has lost sight of Nicole in this desperate romp through town trying to find Rosemary at her film set, the narrator then clarifies that “Dick was paying some tribute to things unforgotten, unshriven, unexpurgated” (91). Those sins “unforgotten, unshriven, and unexpurgated” perhaps refer to the American dreams of youth, determinism, and happiness that Nicole first inspired him to seek, and she will be the only character capable of ruining Dick in the pursuit of them. By seeking Rosemary, he reveals his absolute cratering to these romantic ideals that Nicole sparked in him, ideals for which he still yearns, though supposedly older and wiser, ideals that he has not confessed to himself nor removed from his character because just as Nicole taught him the promise of reaching for these things, she must unveil their folly to him throughout the rest of the book. Fitzgerald again clarifies his belief in a new hope for Nicole, for America, and for himself when Dick takes both Nicole and Rosemary to dinner and sees the Gold Star mothers on pilgrimage, he is impressed by the maturity of “an older America” that he sees in them, an America “come to mourn for [its] dead, for something [it] could not repair,” but he eventually “[turns] back to his two women at the table and [faces] the whole new world in which he believes” (101). In the midst of this nostalgia for what’s lost in America, we see Dick’s inspiration in his women to push onward in hopes of creating a new, self-made world of innocence and possibility despite having living representatives of how the old one came crashing to the ground right in front of him.

Unheeding, Dick continues worshipping Nicole and pursuing Rosemary as an exercise of creativity until Nicole unceremoniously returns him to her retinue by having an psychotic episode in the bathroom where, even as Dick tries to control her, she confronts him with crazed ramblings: “I never expected you to love me—it was too late—only don’t come in the bathroom, the only place I can go for privacy, dragging spreads with red blood on them and asking me to

fix them” (112). In that moment, Nicole uses her “illness as an instrument of power” to remind Dick of his responsibility as her creative savior, marrying her, moving her around, and watching over her to cure her. Overhearing this clearly intimate exchange between husband-doctor and wife-patient drives Rosemary away at least temporarily until, on a future visit, Dick can determine her worthlessness for himself (except as an extension of his relishing and longing for Nicole’s nascent state, which is after all, an extension of all men’s longing for his pre-war optimism and opportunity). This moment comes as Dick runs from another of Nicole’s episodes where she nearly kills both of them and their children in her jealousy, thinking that Dick thirsts for a young patient at his new clinic or a young woman working at the Agiri Fair they visit, all the while encouraging him that “[he] *can* help her” that “[he’s] helped her before—[he] can help her now” (191). After spending years trying, though he’s exhausted from the effort, those are still the words that make Dick eager to exercise his energies in addressing Nicole’s needs. Like any good muse, Nicole uses Dick’s anger to force him to realize how much his passion for her has sculpted his life even when he is in the midst of trying to escape her by taking a brief hiatus in the arms of Rosemary along the Riviera. Rather than finding solace in her youth and beauty, he remembers only remnants of how Nicole’s inspiration for him had been a “wild submergence of soul, a dipping of all colors into an obscuring dye” (217). By contrast, “time with Rosemary was self-indulgence” only (213), from which he gained nothing, and in which he did not need to expend any kind of psychological ambition or energy; therefore, he deduces that time spent with her is a waste while “certain thoughts about Nicole, that she should die, sink into a mental darkness, love another man, made him physically sick” (217). Ironically, that sickness is the exact realization of life’s nauseating chaos that Nicole has yet to confer on him.

When he returns to her, he indulges more and more in alcohol, but regains his full commitment to her and as a result, the family decides to “return to the Riviera” (256). There, in the very place that he hopes to regain the dream he has for their stability if nothing else, Nicole begins to pull away from him, first with her assertion that “[they] can’t go on like this,” followed by her immediate rhetorical offering of the decision up to him, the artist of this artifice of romance and ambition, by proffering, “Or can we?—what do you think?” (267). He responds teasingly, but she next delivers one of the most telling lines of their relationship: “I’ve ruined you . . . you used to want to create things—now you seem to want to smash them up” (267). Nicole claims responsibility for both impulses that drive Dick to his destruction and realization of loss. He has never achieved the great works after his initial publication that he thought he would with Nicole as his muse, and his aim at personal fulfillment with her by his side, returned to innocence and cured, has missed the mark entirely as that night, for the first time in their relationship, she begins to pull away from him and into the arms of Tommy Barban, physically, emotionally, and mentally. Some critics have suggested the additional pain caused by this betrayal since Tommy represents “the apparent embodiment of social expectations of manhood” and can therefore easily “replace [Dick] as Nicole’s lover, husband, and protector” (Joseph 73). Interestingly, during the closing section of Nicole’s turmoil over leaving Dick and her subsequent marriage to Tommy, she does not showcase any of her signs of illness. In this way, Dick’s muse completely removes her psychological inspiration and feminine vulnerability from him; he now has no reason to create a cure or return her to some former dream self, as he wishes he could do to the post-war world she represents. He tries to retain some semblance of his ability and potential when given the opportunity for Nicole and him to go out on one of Rosemary’s friend’s boats. He tries to perform an old trick, lifting a man on his shoulders while boarding

behind the boat, but two tries later, “at the instant when the weight of his partner was full upon his shoulders he became immovable . . . tried again—lifting an inch, two inches . . . then he was simply holding his ground, then he collapsed back down on his knees with a smack” (284). This attempt and failure mirrors Dick’s entire experience with Nicole in his desperate belief in beauty and achievement and the resulting fight to make meaning of his life through her. In the end, he is back in the water, confessing afterwards to Rosemary that he’s “gone into a process of deterioration” (285). The next day, Nicole is rising from the ashes as a freshly “bathed and anointed” goddess, preparing “ [to greet] Tommy as if he were one of the many men at her feet” (290, 291). The clear contrast in Dick’s descent timed in unison with Nicole’s ascent to a new conquest clarifies the inspiration and destructive role she has played in his life. She took his best years of strength and ability and thwarted them on a lost cause only to leave him completely shattered and alone as he “[becomes] a dot and [mingles] with the other dots in the summer crowd” (311). He becomes physically lost in the crowd, figuratively one with his generation, lost and ruined with no remaining hope to restore the old world or formulate a new ideal paradise. Though Nicole certainly pities her abandoned artist, her pity is almost her final act of disillusionment because even though she does not physically impede his accomplishments—even continues to send him money and write to him—he lives out the rest of his life “without success” (314), writing a treatise that is “almost in the process of completion,” “entangled with a girl[,] . . . involved in a lawsuit about some medical question” in the Northeast United States, “in one town or another” (315). The promises of the Riviera and Nicole and heroism all fade as the muse’s lesson concludes with Dick’s utter displacement even in his own homeland and his own profession.

Chapter Eight The Sun Also Rises to Reveal Disillusionment

Hemingway's first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, has remained one of his most critically acclaimed works since its first publication, but more importantly, many critics designate it as the defining Lost Generation work. Even before the story opens, Hemingway includes Gertrude Stein's conversational proclamation that the American modernist writers of the early twentieth century "are all a lost generation" right alongside Solomon's Biblical teachings from Ecclesiastes. This initial contrast helps to set up the disappointment many modernists expressed with traditional morals as well as the alienation and loss they felt in experiencing life without them. In his article about the book in *The Journal of Academic Studies*, Alpaslan Toker describes *The Sun Also Rises* as "the prevailing work of literature which most efficiently seized the disorder experienced by the every day man subsequently after the First World War" (19). That everyday man's representative in the novel is Jake Barnes, an American expatriate and veteran of World War I. Unlike the other muse and artist relationships in this study, Jake's relationship with his muse, Brett, is an intermittent struggle. Rather than building up his creativity and performance consistently until it reaches a crescendo only to absolutely obliterate it with infidelity or death and thereby disillusion the artist, she inspires her devotee in the literary style of a bullfight, Hemingway's metaphor for their relationship throughout the novel. Brett constantly encourages Jake's obsessive pursuit of her and the beautiful idealism she represents (like a bull fighter does his victims) only to thwart it by abandoning and betraying him. In the end, she achieves the same effect (though by a thousand cuts rather than one heroic thrust), inspiring Jake to realize his absolute loss and purposelessness in a life that he cannot control and in which he is isolated from everything meaningful to him. With each minor inspiring remembrance of power and accompanying slam of impotency Brett instills in Jake's life, he

grows closer to his final awareness: a resignation to a reality of self-alienation, originating from his repeated encounters with “the contradiction between [his life] and one of full realization” (Toker 21).

When Jake begins the novel as the first-person narrator, he avoids mentioning his own past and instead introduces Robert Cohn in the first chapter. His characterization of Cohn does help, however, to relay his incredulous and jaded nature. After only a paragraph regaling the reader with Cohn’s faith (a Jew), traditional academics (Princeton alumna), and machismo (middleweight boxing champion), Jake proclaims that he “[mistrusts] all frank and simple people, especially when their stories hold together,” revealing an apparent bitterness toward all three ideals (Hemingway 3).¹⁴ When we meet the previously described Cohn, Jake further differentiates himself from the dreamer by berating Cohn’s enthusiastic reading and re-reading of “The Purple Land,” which he calls “a very sinister book if read too late in life” because “it recounts splendid imaginary adventures of a perfect English gentleman in an intensely romantic land” (5). Jake views Cohn’s choice to embrace this kind of idyllic romanticism as dangerously naïve, comparing it to a man “[entering] Wall Street direct from a French convent” and thereby revealing his own opening cynicism as well. Hemingway reveals the roots of this cynicism in a dialogue between Jake and Georgette, a prostitute he recruits for entertainment, when she asks, “What’s the matter with you anyway?” (9). Jake responds that “[he] got hurt in the war” (9). Later, we come to understand his physical injury, a war injury rendering him literally impotent, but in this scene, Hemingway clarifies the universality of his embittering experience both with

¹⁴ Even the drink that Jake drinks at the beginning of the book underscores his bitterness. “Pernod,” the drink both request, is actually the name of the company that first developed absinthe. With its bitter licorice taste and the hallucinogenic wormwood mixed into the alcohol, the drink underscores Jake’s calloused view of the world and sharp judgment of others while suggesting his desire to escape that harsh reality by envisioning an alternative.

Georgette's reply and Jake's reflections on it. Georgette does not even bother to ask how, where, or when Jake was injured; instead, she just despairingly acknowledges "that dirty war" (9).

Sarcastically, Jake goes on to deride the entire conversation as one representing the undeniable and irreversible understatement that the war "was in reality a calamity for civilization, and perhaps would have been better avoided" (9). This truth is so pervasive and the war's effect on him already so profound that the idea of talking about it bores him. Reality has become so obviously grim that he sees himself as beyond emotional response to it. It is not until we meet Brett that we see any trace of his own hopefulness and passion.

With Georgette, Cohn, and a few other friends, Jake ends up at the Bal, and while he is at the bar, he notices a group of young men enter. In its own telegraphic sentence, the realization hits him that "with them [is] Brett" who "[looks] very lovely and . . . [is] very much with them" (11). No matter what they say, all he can hear is Brett's presence echoing through the venue as he repeats it again, growing angrier and rushing to escape his rising emotions to have "a beer at the next Bal" (11). Even when he comes back, he cannot address her immediately. Though it is Brett that first reminds his calloused spirit of the emotion still latent within him, he does not blame her for it. He looks at her as an inspiration. Seeing Cohn look at her from the bar, he compares him to how "his compatriot must have looked when he saw the promised land" (12), equating her with the land of milk and honey, which thousands of Jewish men and women endeavored to reach for years before actually inheriting the inspiration that drove them. Appalled by Cohn's look of "deserving expectation," Jake still understands what Cohn sees in that inspiration because he has to admit, "Brett [is] damned good looking," a fact that he suggests no one could miss "with that wool jersey" (12), and even though he is frustrated with her for coming in with all of those men (who immediately ruin his fun with the prostitute by stealing her as a

dancing partner), he is also wooed by her beauty and his feelings for her when she lies to Cohn and tells him that she cannot dance with him because “[she’s] promised to dance this with Jacob” (12). Furthermore, she hints at the promise she sees in his faith (albeit in her) when she jokes that he has “a hell of a biblical name” (12). Although he knows that Brett is using him and her compliment to avoid and insult Cohn, who actually is Hebrew but who does not have a Biblical name, Jake obliges. When Jake hints that Cohn is another worshipper she has made with her beauty, her admission that she does “like to add them up” cannot dull the happiness he feels with her (12). In fact, it is the first time in the novel that he expresses any sort of happiness at all. She encourages him to embrace romanticism by suggesting it is the reason why Jake brought Georgette, and when he says that was boredom, she immediately shoots back the question of whether he is bored dancing with her “now” (12). When Jake says, “No,” she instantly recommends that they get out of there together (12). Straightaway skeptical, Jake cannot believe that he has a right to hope that she would really want to abandon her new found groupies for a love like his, a love that can give her nothing, but Brett encourages him that she wouldn’t ask him to leave with her if she didn’t want to be with him. As the waiter informs Jake that their taxi has arrived, they look at each other, Brett “[pressing] his hand” before they get in the car (13). Alternatingly passing through spaces of darkness and bursts of city light where he can see Brett’s face,

Jake “[kisses] her” (14).¹⁵ In that moment, when his hope seems achievable, and she has inspired him to reveal its remaining existence despite his earlier jaded affections, “she [turns] away and [presses] against the corner of the seat, as far away as she [can] get” (14). She continues this

¹⁵ The image of the dark and the light playing in this scene helps to elucidate what Brett does to Jake’s creative vision. As his muse, she chooses at times to show herself to him, enough beauty and love to light his way to fulfillment forever, but as they drive along, she constantly leaves him in the dark, painfully aware again and again of his own inadequacy.

pattern for the rest of the drive as she tells him, “We’d better keep away from each other” (14) and then, “Kiss me just once more before we get there” (15). When they get there, Jake essentially delivers her into the hands of the next man with whom she will prove her infidelity to him (all while she continues to command his). This pattern of Muse-like inspiration continues in much the same way throughout the novel. Each time, Brett reaches out for Jake, needs him, wants him, and makes him believe in his own potential to create something meaningful in a relationship with her only to push him away at his moment of greatest vulnerability. As with the other muses, she projects an affected need for expression that only the protagonist-artist can fulfill. Other men may see her as confident, a real, independent flapper-type, but with Jake, she makes him believe that “really she [is] afraid of so many things” (14). Thus, just as the ancient artists begged for the responsibility to express the beauty of the muses through the creative gifts of expression the women instilled in them, Jake yearns for the opportunity to fulfill Brett’s needs regardless of their privacy. However, what he does not yet realize is that her real lesson for him is one of disillusionment, ripping that romanticized vision away, and replacing it with the cold truth of loneliness, powerlessness, and emptiness. She has to inspire him to see the bullfighters’ cape for what it is, life and their relationship for what they really are—artifice. There is no substantial consummation or achievement that will help Jake; rather, he must resign himself to that utter loss for her inspiration to be fully realized.

The first in the series of inspirational cuts Brett uses to inspire Jake during the course of the novel is her relationship with Count Mippipopolous, which begins right after the taxi drops them off at the bar. Jake decides to go home, and Brett agrees to meet him at the Crillon the next

evening.¹⁶ To assuage his doubts of her remembering, she asks him a poignant rhetorical question: “I’ve never let you down, have I?” (16). The unspoken answer—one Jake already knows—is clearly revealed the next day when Brett does not show up at the Crillon, but for that night, he accepts the temporary healing of thinking about Brett. Only she can make “[his] mind [stop] jumping around and [start] to go in sort of smooth waves” (17). Thinking about her cleanses his self-loathing in considering his war wound and the impotency it represents in his life since. Unfortunately, right when he finds peace in the inspiration of her memory, his concierge calls to report a drunken woman downstairs insisting on seeing him. Brett has already procured Mippipopolous; in the time it has taken Jake to get home and get ready for bed, the count has already “wanted [her] to go to Cannes with him,” then “Monte Carlo” (18). Instead, she tells Jake, she “told [him she] was in love with [Jake],” which she then asserts is “true, too” (18). Her reassurance of it right after she says she loves him is what makes Brett’s claims dubious in addition to her actions. While she might kiss Jake on the stairs that night as she leaves, she gets in the “big limousine” with the count, a clear phallic statement of manhood as contrasted with Jake’s own condition. Over the next few days, Brett fails to show up to the one meeting she plans with Jake, but continues to spark his creative interest by continually bringing the count around, asserting her motivating power over him by doing things like showing up at his apartment and gaining entry before he can even get home from dinner with Cohn and his fiancé. She calls Jake her “own true love” (29) but insists on leaving him permanently (by way of San

¹⁶ Jake explains Brett’s pre-novel history to Cohn later when he visit’s Jake’s office to inquire about traveling together (and to pump him for information about Brett). She has already married somebody she didn’t love twice (one of whom is Lord Ashley, a marriage that Brett is dissolving at the novel’s opening), had a true love that “kicked off with the dysentery” during the war (20), and became engaged to Michael (who is in Scotland when the novel begins). None of these involve her current emotional affair with Jake or her physical affairs with other men since the war.

Sebastian first) for reasons she suggests “[he knows] as well as [she] does” (30).¹⁷ She takes him to dance with her and the count, showing him off like a puppet that she can manipulate for the count to watch as she looks at him and inflates his hope by “[looking] at [him] and [wrinkling] up the corners of her eyes” (31). A few minutes later, she looks to him for expression and rescue like when she first danced with him at the Bal, telling him that “[she’s] so miserable” (33). As is his custom as the muse’s disciple, Jake tries to solve her problem by borrowing the count’s limousine and taking her home, but at the end of the night, his power is only borrowed, and she once again fades into the darkness, kissing him as they “[stand] at the door” but then “[pushing him] away” (34). He has no authentic autonomy to develop a genuine relationship with Brett just as he has no authentic agency in his life since the war, but he is far from accepting that fact, and therefore, Brett’s lessons are far from over when she “[turns] quickly and [goes] into the hotel” that night (34).

In Brett’s absence, Jake’s creative expression stalls; his story does not continue until her return (with the opening sentence of the next chapter). After a brief respite in San Sebastian, Brett returns to Paris and once again plucks Jake from his ordinary life back up into her heavenly realm of opportunity and hope, passing him and a friend, Bill, in her cab only to back up, stop for a drink, and plan to meet with them later. During their brief conversation, Brett mentions what “a fool” she was “to go away” and echoes it with her summation that “one’s an ass to leave Paris” (39). Jake seems to interpret her comment as metonymical rather than literal since she did claim that she was leaving for San Sebastian to stay away from him forever, and now, in her return, she nearly admits that abandoning him was foolish (if we consider that her only motivation for being

¹⁷ Her suggestion of his foreknowledge of her nature to betray him supports her identity as a reflection of the inspirational hope within him that leads him to continue exerting effort to gain some sort of value in life by pursuing traditional values (represented by his love for Brett and his *aficion* for bullfighting).

in Paris is Jake). Unaware of the context, Bill interjects, comparing his time in Vienna to Brett's in San Sebastian. With her admission, they resume their relationship exactly where she left it: inspiring devotion in Jake as he asks all about her time away while she smiles at Bill and invites them both to join her that night for drinks with her and her fiancé, Mike, who makes another meaningful manipulative for Brett in motivating Jake's eventual disillusionment. Drawn by her desirability, Jake suggests after dinner that they go, and the first thing that he notices as they walk into the Select is "Brett, who was sitting on a high stool, her legs crossed" with "no stockings on" (41). The clear physical temptation and impossibility she represents for Jake mirrors the sin of hope he nurses in his continual romantic vision of the world where they could be happy together. He sees the unattainable fulfillment she promises with those bare legs, but because the war has rendered him impotent, he can never claim it for his own—only continue to hope because of its existence and beauty, seemingly poised right in front of him for the taking if only he can sufficiently please her. However, he is not the one who she leaves with. Throughout the night, Mike continually comments on what a "lovely piece" (41) Brett is (perhaps Hemingway's coy pun on "piece of flesh" and "piece of art"), and at the end of the night, Jake is left with only bitterness at the affectionate, engaged couple heading back to the hotel while he is left with Bill, frustrated at how "Mike was pretty excited about his girl friend" (42).¹⁸

Nevertheless, on the very next evening, when Mike asks Jake if they can join in on a trip to Pamplona for the bull fights, Brett asks Jake to "walk up to the hotel with [her]" to discuss a major complication (43). Fearful that it might make the trip awkward once she finds out that Cohn is also going, she confides in Jake that she had an affair with him when she stayed in San Sebastian. While her calloused discussion of sleeping with Cohn hurts Jake, his emotional

¹⁸ According to the OED, relating a "piece" of a woman to sexual conquest is common in American slang dating back to the 19th century ("Piece of Tail").

reaction—suggesting she take up sexing men as “social service” (44)—shows how thoroughly Brett inspires him to believe better in people and to want love and fulfillment for himself. Furthermore, Brett uses this discussion as an exhibit of her hidden vulnerability (like telling Jake that she is miserable in the middle of a dance floor). By sharing her weakness, she encourages him to be strong for her. Especially in *The Sun Also Rises*, we see the female muse inspire an attempted return to traditional and moral behavior, albeit through her own untraditional and infidelities. These infidelities make Jake want to understand and protect her as well as ironically bolster his trust in her because she is sharing a secret with him, even if that secret is one of betrayal.

Bill, Cohn, and Jake leave first with the plan to check in at the Hotel Montoya, meet Brett and Mike, and then go fishing for a few days. When the men arrive, Cohn suggests that Brett and Mike will likely be late; they may not even show up on the agreed-upon day. His knowing airs irritate Bill and Jake, but unfortunately, he bets correctly on their delayed arrival. Brett and Mike “[stop] over in San Sebastian” to spend the night (52). Even though Jake also knows that Brett tends toward tardiness, Cohn’s insider information goads him into devilling him when Jake receives the telegram announcing Brett and Mike’s situation. He views Cohn as a rival for Brett’s trust and character now. Jake admits that “he [feels] blind, unforgivingly jealous of what had happened to [Cohn]” (52). By describing Cohn’s relationship with Brett as something that “had happened to him,” Jake clarifies his view of Brett as the powerful one in the relationship, and Hemingway relays her inspirational role as a muse. Her actions stir hatred, jealousy, and dishonesty in the protagonist as he fights to defend his claim on her inspiration, to maintain the power of narration in Brett’s mythology. He attempts to regain this function later that night when Bill asks why Cohn would feel he knew anything about Brett that would allow him to predict her

actions so arrogantly. Jake explains the logic behind Brett's disloyal actions in that "she wanted to get out of town and she can't go anywhere alone" and "she thought it would be good for him" (53). Bill's response, though humorous and initially thoughtless, immediately re-establishes Jake's right to Brett as he asks, "Why didn't she go off with some of her own people? Or you?" (53). He "[slurs] that over" quickly, but his question reinforces what Jake sees as his legitimacy as an equal seeking Brett's stimulation despite his powerlessness to do so (53). After the two of them decide to go fishing alone (since Cohn wants to stay behind and wait for Brett and Mike), Bill even extends this situation to the entire Lost Generation, cynically describing expatriates. He explains how they "get precious," embrace "fake European standards[,] . . . drink [themselves] to death[, and] . . . become obsessed by sex" (60). As one, "You don't work. One group claims women support you. Another group claims you're impotent" (60). Interestingly, both ideas are true. It is the romantic vision of a woman that keeps Jake afloat, but his lack of agency to ever consummate that romance simultaneously sinks him. This antithetical summary of Jake's existence and the lives of American men looking for agency by leaving their homeland in pursuit of the very idealistic happiness it promises them clarifies Brett's part as muse. Bill characterizes expatriates as exiles from home that find only temporary superficial pleasures while they ignore the substantial reality that they can never compensate for the lack they feel in a post-WW I wasteland. As their representative, Jake vacillates between absolute infatuation with his idea of Brett and painful understanding of that idea's nonexistence, which he even admits to Bill when he asks Jake if he was "ever in love with her," and he says, "Off and on for a hell of a long time" (65).

Once the two of them rejoin the others in Pamplona for the bullfights, tension mounts between the men vying for Brett's affections in proportion to the rising action of the festival of

the bullfights. While Mike and Cohn vie for Brett's affections and inspiration by touting their own masculinity—Mike by putting Cohn down as an enervating steer and Cohn by maintaining his presence—despite the fact that Brett's fiancé is right there with them. Jake allows only Brett to control his creative energy. With the same images Hemingway uses to depict the bullfighters cutting the bulls each time they run full-speed for the red, blood-burdened cape, he captures Jake's romantic death-match with Brett. Just as the cape holds no substance for the bulls as the bull-fighter rips it away and replaces it with a hidden knife, Brett encourages Jake long enough to encourage his love for her and the fulfillment she represents only to rip into his heart with the reality of his inadequacy. Moreover, she enjoys motivating Jake's charges just as she calls the bulls goring the horses "simply perfect" (86). As soon as she sees him coming, she waves, and "her eyes [crinkle] up as [they] come to the table" (71). Jake sees his relationship with Brett as the only substantial one at the table each time the four acquaintances meet up, and the way others long for her favor—favor he views himself as having—only increases her allure in his eyes. He notes how the locals call their friends to look down, "staring at Brett" (73), "[form] a circle around [her] and [start] to dance," wanting her not as a participant, but "as an image to dance around," almost like a deity whose worship guarantees a potential for fortune's favor (81). With him, she shares an intimacy that she makes him believe he can experience in a way none of the other men can (though he is the only one who cannot be with her intimately). She goes to church with Jake just "to hear [him] go to confession," a desire that betrays her purpose to instill in Jake a faith in her as the goddess worthy of his worship (79). He tries to forget her many times, but even in his aggravation at Brett, he chastises himself for "not . . . thinking about her side of it," for "getting something for nothing" (78). Dreaming of her as the perfect vision of all he has lost, he blames everyone else for their unhappiness. He feels pleasure at Mike tearing Cohn apart, and

then “it [makes him] disgusted at [himself]” (78), but he is never disgusted by the way Brett has misled each of them. Instead, he takes on a leadership role in her sadistic nature by teaching her about the rules of bullfighting, explaining the relationship between the bullfighter and the bull as “something that was going on with a definite end” more than “a spectacle with unexplained horrors” (87). In so doing, he is echoing the exact storyline Brett inspires in his life, keeping his ultimate disillusionment as the “definite end” that must come, and that does come with her relationship with a literal bullfighter: Pedro Romero. In front of Jake and all of the other men, she continually exclaims “what looks” Romero has when he is in the ring (88). Then, in typical muse fashion, she uses Jake as her mouthpiece to achieve the great work of art her beauty inspires, getting him to use his Spanish and his *aficion* to lure Romero into a relationship with her. Asking him to “introduce his friends” to Romero (91), Brett moves Jake to exercise his passion for her by sacrificing Romero (who represents Jake’s passion for his own masculinity and power via bullfighting).

Despite the fact that a relationship between Romero and Brett means the death of the only two ideals Jake has left and that he sees his pain in how Cohn feels in the face of her infidelity, he cannot help but believe in her, even when it means losing himself. He wants to “be as big an ass as Cohn” (94), but instead he tells Brett that “he [hates] him” because he doesn’t yet see Cohn’s suffering as his own (95). He continues his chivalry with Brett, “[spreading] out a newspaper” for her sit down and admitting he still loves her when she asks (95). She gives him her trembling hand and claims that “[she’s] like that all through,” elucidating for him that “[she’s] lost [her] self-respect” and that only he can regain that self-respect for her by feeding Romero to her as some sort of sacrifice, proving his loyalty to her (96). He takes her to Romero, a mere teenager, and leaves him with her as his own innocence to be slain, thinking only of how

it will impact Brett's love for him. He does not see his twisted constancy until Cohn reveals the truth in anger, calling Jake a "damned pimp" (100). Though Jake attempts to defend himself, he misses, and Cohn knocks him out, a situation that for the first time seems to open Jake's eyes to who he has been, all to be completely broken physically and psychologically by losing his muse. He watches the next day as Romero, also badly beaten by Cohn, kills every bull he fights. Mike, Bill, and Jake sit in the café trying to defend Brett's choice to abandon them, describing her as someone who "loves looking after people" and her abasing Cohn after the fights of the night before as "rather good" because "she's always rather good" (107). While each of them feels completely disenfranchised in the wake of Brett's masterful cut with Romero, Brett appears through the crowd, "walking, her head up, as though the fiesta were being staged in her honor," finding "it pleasant and amusing" (109). Literarily speaking, the festival is being held in her honor because she is the most masterful bullfighter in the entire book, and she inspires the creative passion in Jake that the bullfighting can only represent metaphorically. Still, she twists Jake as far as she can in her service. He has sacrificed his greatest love for her, endured a beating from his friend, and now she wants him to "go to the fight with [her]" after she goes into the cathedral "to pray a little for [Romero]" (110). When they return to the hotel, she "[goes] straight down the hall and into Romero's room" without knocking, "simply [opening] the door, [going] in, and [closing] it behind her" (111). That closing door metaphorically closes the door on Jake's hope for a future with Brett. His morality, loyalty, and romanticism are ripped away. After the next day's fights, Brett leaves without even saying goodbye. Correspondingly, Mike and Jake are forced to admit to themselves that they are blind. When Mike asks Jake, "Are you blind?" he concludes that "[he] was blind himself" (118). While their use of blind doubtless refers to their drunkenness, Mike's past-tense reference to his blindness implies that part of their blindness also

hails from Brett's blinding inspiration. They had lost from the beginning, but Brett made Jake believe that he had reason to keep fighting every time she re-entered his life.

The three broken men leave Pamplona and part ways. Jake chooses to go to San Sebastian for a few days, almost reaching for what he had with Brett. He goes swimming in the ocean and "[tries] several dives" (122). Hemingway depicts him "[swimming] with [his] eyes open" with the water "green and dark," the raft above "[making] a dark shadow" (123). For the first time in the novel, Jake seems to open his eyes to the depths of his cold relationship with Brett and let the sense of his utter isolation in a giant ocean of emptiness penetrate his being. He "[dives] once more, holding it for length" before swimming ashore (123). Similarly, he indulges in Brett one last time before returning to the shore of reality disillusioned, cleansed of his hope. She reaches out to him from Hotel Montana in Madrid, claiming that she is "RATHER IN TROUBLE," and he responds via telegram that he will arrive on the "SUD EXPRESS TOMORROW LOVE JAKE" (125). While such a comment might seem to showcase his continued loyalty to her, his cynicism finally reaches fully into his relationship even with the character he knows will never love him in return. Completely broken, he sums up the situation as "[sending] a girl off with one man" only to "introduce her to another to go off with him. Now go and bring her back. And sign the wire with love. That was it all right" (125). He realizes his role in the relationship, and though he goes to her, this time he does not tell her he loves her. It will always be true, but in their interaction, he feels the emptiness between them and his inability to conquer it with his commitment. In fact, he sees that his insistence on the "pretty" thought of what "a damned good time" they could have had together was just that—a thought—a dream that will never come true (129). In his closing relation of that understanding to the reader and himself, he acknowledges his utter failure in life and the unhappiness his desperation to believe

in happiness has caused him. Brett's inspiration as his muse draws to the definite end as she conditionally refers to the life they could have had together, acknowledging even in her verb tense that they never will have it. In the same manner as the Lost Generation expatriates that he represents, Jake finally escapes the illusion of potential and promise, falling into the arms of a meaningless reality of purposelessness.

Chapter Nine Hope Stillborn

In *A Farewell to Arms*, the only book included in this study that takes place during war, Hemingway tells the first-person story of Lieutenant Frederic Henry, an American who enlists in, fights for, and eventually defects from the Italian military, for whom he works as an ambulance driver.¹⁹ Superseding and running parallel to the war plot is the love story of Frederic and a British nurse, Catherine Barkley, who serves in the novel as his muse of disillusionment. As with each of the other muses, Catherine represents a projection of the protagonist's own flawed insistence on clinging to a false hope for a renewed world—one rife with determinism and promise. That part of him is what must be shattered for men to see the chaotic, violent, and hopeless loss that is reality in the post-war world, as Hemingway asserts through this story. By extension, Catherine symbolizes both the heroism of the early years of the war and the impossible escape from its devastation and return to the American Dream in the end. Despite the bloody stalemate of the war in the mountains of Italy and regardless of his life's other hardships, she inspires him to dream of a life of purpose, and happiness with her, only to completely thwart his hopes when she dies during childbirth barely ten months after the novel's start.

Compared to each of the other Fitzgerald and Hemingway protagonists, Frederic starts the novel equally calloused. After returning from leave and trying to explain to himself how he wasted so much of his time without going to any meaningful place where he meant to go (such as Abruzzi), he references “the smoke of cafes and the nights when the room whirled and you needed to look at the wall to make it stop,” nights “when you knew that was all there was,” and “sometimes morning and all that had been there gone and everything sharp and hard and clear”

¹⁹ While he worked for the Red Cross, not any branch of the military, Ernest Hemingway also served as an ambulance driver along the Italian-Austrian front, but he was sent home after only six weeks when he was injured in 1918 (Shuman 8).

(12). While this rationalization of drunkenness, prostitutes, and wasted time does not make Frederic feel any better in his conversation with the priest in their unit, it does typify his mindset. The narrative begins with his burgeoning understanding of life's harsh uncertainties followed by even crueler certainties that seem to have no moral basis at all, and thus, he has already turned to hedonistic pleasures to try to free himself from remembering the truth of his own insignificance.²⁰ Even in Frederic's first meeting with Catherine, he admits believing that "there isn't always a reason for everything," to which she retorts, "Oh, isn't there? I was brought up to think there was" (15). Catherine's response here first shows her mental acuity; she sees Frederic's snarky and condescending humor, and she engages with him not only as an equal but also as a superior. Furthermore, she establishes herself as the voice of traditional faith with an assertion that there is greater purpose in every choice and accordant consequences naturally follow. This ideal is the spark of faith and purpose that she will have to rekindle into flame (in other words, get Frederic to recognize in himself) in order to fully disillusion him from his own romantic desires for a life well lived. Over their next few meetings, Catherine becomes ever more tantalizing to Frederic although initially only as a conquest. As revealed by Frederic's description of her as "very beautiful" (16), in the story of her former soldier fiancé, and through Rinaldi's jealousy when "Miss Barkley prefers [Frederic] to [him]" (18), men desire Catherine. Beyond just her physical allure though, Catherine consistently shows her wit and insight in moments like the one where Frederic asks her to drop the war, and she replies, "It's very hard. There's no where to drop it," teasing him playfully for insinuating that the war is some casual

²⁰ His drifting character is perhaps best evidenced by the fact that he does not get a name until the first few pages of Book Two when he has been transferred from the front to a hospital in Milan, and his very first question after confirming his name is whether "Miss Barkly [is there]" (74). This scene begins the inseparable link between Catherine and Frederic's identities.

subject that the two of them, brought together in a foreign country by the biggest war the world had ever seen, can just let fall out of the conversation in the same way you would stop talking about the weather or an ex-lover. Then there is her omniscience and brazen refusal of Frederic's lies. The first time he tries to kiss her, she slaps him with a "sharp stinging flash" (22), when he falsely tells her that he loves her, she upbraids him for playing "a rotten game" of pretending he loves her and requesting that they not lie to each other "when [they] don't have to" (27), and the night he comes to visit her drunk and late, she is unavailable to receive him. Each of these attributes helps to draw Frederic into deeper admiration of her sanctity.

Much as in the case of Gatsby's original attempts to merely take Daisy sexually with their love affair, Frederic begins with the assertions that "[he does] not love Catherine Barkley nor [has] any idea of loving her" (26). He is only playing a game "like bridge, in which you [say] things instead of playing cards" (26). However, as their brief courtship continues, Frederic waits on Catherine more and more and even finds himself envisioning a romantic escapade with her in Milan—one in which "[they] would drink the capri and the door locked and it hot and only a sheet and the whole night and [they] would both love each other all night in the hot night" because "that [is] how it ought to be" (32). The deteriorating sentence structure here signifies Frederic's inability to think rationally when confronted with such sublime potential. In this moment, he begins to indulge himself in creating a future where the world can be right again. This dream of escape from the war and yearning for meaningful experience is just the first of the creative visions Frederic crafts to honor his muse and this before he realizes that she has infiltrated his mind.

The next afternoon, when Frederic discovers that his ambulance will be going to the river front that night to transport injured men and women after an upcoming attack, he goes to see

Catherine, who gives him a Saint Anthony pendant to wear until he comes home. When he asks her if she is Catholic, she says that while she is not, “a Saint Anthony’s very useful” (37). Saint Anthony has become known as the “patron saint of lost property” (“St. Anthony of Padua” 1), and in Frederic’s case, Catherine’s entire purpose as a muse is to first inspire America’s (idealism’s) lost property, Frederic, to believe in the possibility of his being found and establishing purpose in his life. Her gift symbolically shows her desire to save him temporarily and his changing attitude as he “[undoes] the clasp of the gold chain and [puts] it around [his] neck and [clasps] it” (37). From that moment on, he carries her inspiration with him even when it leads him to reach for heroism in spite of danger. He goes to get food for his men at perhaps the most inopportune moment during the shelling, encourages his dying compatriot to be strong (even tries to rip a tourniquet for him until he finds that Passini has died, and even insists that they treat other men before him because “there are much worse wounded than [him]” (50).²¹ After he is treated swiftly that night, Catherine is one of the first people on his mind when his friend Rinaldi comes to visit him the next day at the field hospital. Describing her as a “cool goddess,” Rinaldi suggests that Catherine returns Frederic to a “purer and sweeter” state (57). While the war has ruined him and all those dying and healing around him, Rinaldi acknowledges that “a woman like that” is only good for one thing: “worship” (57), and Frederic has become one of her worshippers, reaching for her as his idea of hope, a reason to survive the war, a way to

²¹ Actually, Frederic’s attempts at heroism start even sooner after meeting Catherine. Before he meets her, which is admittedly early in the novel, his only reputation at his post is for the various women he slept with in different towns. His first essay at rescuing a man from the war comes when a man with a purposefully exacerbated rupture begs for Frederic’s transport. Knowing that the man should be sent back to the front, Frederic tells him instead to “fall down by the road and get a bump on [his] head” so that he can pick him up on the “way back and take [him] to the hospital” rather than back to the line (30). These efforts at saving others are extensions of the inspiration Catherine has given him to save himself.

regain order, a means for regaining the best version of himself and the world in which he would like to believe. Later that evening, the priest from Frederic's base also comes to visit and advises Frederic about the value of love as opposed to the "passion and lust" he has experienced before this moment (62). The priest does not realize the growing feelings between Catherine and Frederic, but he presages the results of their relationship, warning Frederic that "when you love you wish to do things for. You wish to sacrifice for. You wish to serve" (62). Though Frederic defensively claims that he does not love, the priest assures him that "[he] will," growing even more emphatic with the proclamation, "I know you will. Then you will be happy" (62). When Frederic tries to claim current happiness, the priest clarifies that it is "another thing" that "you cannot know about . . . unless you have it" (62). Ironically, that happiness that drives men like Frederic to give everything they have to their love also dooms them to destruction when that love is taken away. Someone unhappy and lost can only be so disappointed in life's frivolous and baseless pains, but only those who feel most fulfilled can be most meaningfully struck with the resounding emptiness of their experience when life takes it from them. Hence, in stirring Frederic to grasp hope and happiness fully, Catherine orchestrates the more important life lesson he must learn when she leaves him.²²

A few days after the priest's visit, the major over the ward transfers Frederic to a hospital in Milan, and the next morning Catherine appears at the same hospital as a nurse. We can either accept this as a poor plot device or examine Catherine as a muse in this case since the muses are noted for their "[superiority] to men for the simple reason that they are always on hand, and have

²² Interestingly, the priest also calls Frederic "a patriot" (61). Like several of the other muses discussed, Catherine perhaps works metaphorically as a representative of the American Dream, a promise of potential and future despite past struggles. Through Frederic's illusory love for Catherine, Hemingway could be arguing not only the illegitimacy of hope in general but also the illegitimacy of the American way of processing pain by working harder to pursue the happiness we feel we deserve.

seen everything, and know it now,” for “the omnipresence of the muses allows them to witness firsthand what mortals cannot, and in this way their inspiration enables [those they inspire] to have greater perspective” (Snell qtd. in Bungard 445). Therefore, though the character Catherine should have no reason to appear at the hospital in Madrid, Muse Catherine can and should be wherever Frederic is either in his mind or as a physical manifestation of her motivation in him. Just as she knew that Frederic loved her and did not mean it when he said he loved her simultaneously, she sees his condition on the battlefield and in the hospital and appears anew to him. This time, when he sees her, he “[thinks he has] never seen any one so beautiful,” and he realizes immediately that “[he] was in love with her” (80). Right then, he describes everything as “[turning] over inside of [him]” (80), and suddenly, all of his pain subsides because “[he feels] wonderful” knowing that he has her (81). The next morning, Catherine “[comes] in looking fresh and lovely and [sits] on the bed[,] and the sun [rises] . . . and [they smell] the dew on the roofs” (89). The imagery presented alongside Catherine’s re-emergence in Frederic’s life reflects the new beginning he senses in being with her; he has a new awareness of the beauty life could hold, and everything seems touched by his love for her, like morning dew spread over the landscape before them. Throughout his recuperation in Milan, whenever he feels the slightest worry, Catherine is there; when he worries about what the future will hold for him after his surgery, she suggests that “maybe the war will be over” because “it can’t always go on” (90), and when he fears that he may blab personal secrets under anesthesia, she reminds him that he can “say [his] prayers” or nothing at all since “often people don’t talk” (90). Catherine aims each of her suggestions at instilling hope in Frederic, hope for his recovery and for their future. Even though Frederic sees the war as interminable, she encourages him to think of a time when it will be over and they can just go away together; similarly, while Catherine admits early on in the novel that

she is not religious herself, she does look to inspire faith and hopefulness in Frederic. Frederic's attitude toward life grows more optimistic with each passing moment as he concludes that "[he loves] her very much and she [loves him]" and more romantic as "[they write] notes during the day when [they are] awake and [send] them" through another nurse (94). When he is away from her, "[he wants] to buy something . . . to take to Catherine" (104). Regardless of his injury, Frederic portrays his summer with Catherine as the loveliest time in his life. He feels "very healthy" and for the first time in the book mentions "many victories in the papers" (102). After going out in the daytime, he would "[sit] on the balcony . . . [watching] the swallows over the roofs . . . [and waiting] for Catherine," seemingly superior to the rest of the world in his dream state, above the hardships, pain, and reality of the war (98). At night, "if [they] could only touch each other, [they] were happy" (99), and that happiness makes Frederic long for and believe in a return to his traditional values and idealistic vision for the future, one in which he and Catherine could be "really married" (99). In sweeping that concern aside for the time being, Catherine foreshadows consequences of his love. First, she reminds him not to "make up a separate [her]" because "there isn't any [her]," explaining that "[she's him]" (99). She highlights for him the truth that she is a muse who inspires creation from others but is none herself, a physical projection only of his own hope for purpose, love, and a future separate from the desolation of reality. Then, she offers a solemn warning for him regarding the dangerous quality of the love he has for her by posing a rhetorical question to him, asking, "What happened to the [someone else she loved before]?" (100). Frederic responds, "He died," without making any connection to his own situation and love's inability to rectify a merciless world (100).

As the summer progresses, Catherine continues to sculpt Frederic's expressions into products of her stimulus. She convinces him to approach military glory humbly, claiming that

she doesn't want him "to have any more rank" because "it might go to [his] head," and she feels like it is more "restful to have a husband who's not conceited" (108). Yet, at the same time, she stirs his heroism with her vulnerability at the sight of the rain until "[he comforts] her and she [stops] crying" (110). To an extent, the rain represents the natural hardships precipitated in life, and in voicing her fear of those natural hardships, she draws Frederic to promise that "[he'll] love [her] in the rain and in the snow and in the hail" (109). The beauty of this kind of promise from the perspective of disillusioning the protagonist is that it makes him feel like he has power over things he does not control. He cannot control nature or life's unfair cruelty. Thus, his only effective statement here is one of his own suffering in choosing to embrace romanticism over reality, regardless of how nature should punish his sin of hope. Catherine draws him further into isolation with her until his taste is an extension of her taste, such as at the racetrack, when she finds the company too awful and Frederic offers to stay with her and "watch the race from the fence" (114). Afterwards, she asks him if he doesn't "like it better when [they're] alone," a sentiment he immediately reciprocates though earlier in the episode, he admitted that he enjoyed being with all of the people at the race (115). This is a technique that Catherine uses frequently to guide Frederic's focus, phrasing her desires as questions so as to argue her point without outright asserting her persuasive superiority over him.

Each calculation in securing Frederic's undying devotion to an ideal he can never maintain supports Catherine's purpose in showing him that "life isn't hard to manage when you've nothing to lose" (119). To make him feel the utter loss and frustration associated with life in a chaotic and unjust world, she must first give him something as evidence of her promise that "[they] always will be together" (131). The final exemplification of that promise is the baby she tells him she's going to have, a baby that is "almost three months along" when Frederic has to

return to the front, knowing that he has everything to lose (120). Their baby is the consummation of their love, the physical evidence of it, and the legacy of it for them to leave to posterity.

As Frederic and Catherine spend their final night together before he returns to the war, he describes how “very happy” they feel, and even in a chintzy hourly hotel, they feel like it’s “[their] own home” (134). In considering the past few months, Frederic concludes that even the hospital room in which he stayed “had been [their] own home” (134). The common thread connecting the two rooms is Catherine; in this way, she represents the comfort of America and family for Frederic, and inspiration that makes him hold tight to the idea of a future together all the more tightly. As if to reassure himself of their fated love, he shares with Catherine the story of how “when [he] first met [her,] [he] spent an afternoon thinking how [they] would go to the Hotel Cavour together and how it would be,” but she replies that “[she] never thought about anything” because she is the inspiration, not the creator herself (134). However, in the same way she fuels the creation of a happy, heroic, and humble Frederic with her presence, she will also spark the fire of his destruction with her absence. When he is away from her and back at base with Rinaldi, “he [lies] and [thinks] about her” as “it [is] getting dark outside” (145). She has become a sort of light for him, a dream to guide him. Though he is isolated, he can remind himself of the romance that will become his real life once he escapes the nightmare of the war. Frederic’s change does not go unnoticed; Rinaldi makes fun of him both for “[acting] like a married man” (146) and for being “in love . . . with that English girl” (148). Far from being the calloused brothel-hopper at the novel’s opening, Frederic’s wild love for Catherine has led him to domesticate himself, to view love a sacred salvation. He even admits to the priest when they talk that he “[doesn’t] believe in defeat . . . though it may be better” (157). Rationally, he still understands the danger of optimism, but his love for Catherine has transformed him because,

while he can be rational about the war²³, he cannot fathom life in those terms. All he sees in front of him now is the promise of escape from it and return to loving arms and that feeling of home, a place he returns in his imagination as often as possible. While stuck in the column in the Bainsizza, trying to make it past the block, he envisions how “Catherine was in bed now between two sheets, over her and under her,” hoping that “maybe she was lying thinking about [him]” too (171). He even loses the designation between his dreams of her and his reality in the war when he starts to hear her talking to him, but he doesn’t fight it; instead he relishes her promise: “Of course I wouldn’t go away. I’m always here. I come whenever you want me” (172). Like a poet, he makes himself believe he can invoke his muse at his pleasure, and she will inspire him to continue producing greatness.

Greatness becomes mere survival for Frederic after his ambulance gets stuck in the mud on his way to Pordenone in an attempt to get him and his men out of the danger of the Germans blocking the bridges. In desperation to prove his power over his circumstances, he even shoots one of two Italian soldiers who will not stop to get the car going again, tries to cross a field, and eventually has to abandon his mechanical burden altogether. Just when he and his remaining men find a place to walk with the rest of the retreating Italian army, his rank becomes his next weakness, and he is forced to defect or be shot in the head by incredulous carabinieri. He “[runs] for the river” to escape, disregarding everything but his sheer determination to live a life worth living with Catherine (194). Rather than thinking of the permanence of his career consequences, he thinks of the permanence of the new life he can build with his muse. He rationalizes his return

²³ After all, Frederic does comment that “abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow [are] obscene beside the concrete names” of places they fight (161), but he does not include love in this list because to him it is not only not abstract (since he has the concrete proof of Catherine—not realizing yet how temporal that proof is) but also untouched by the war and therefore still worthy of worship.

to Milan by saying, “I was not made to think. I was made to eat. My God, yes. Eat and drink and sleep with Catherine” (200). He makes an agreement with himself that “[he] is going to forget the war” because “[he has] made a separate peace” (211). As the representative for Lost Generation men, Frederic’s desire to abandon the war that the rest of the world continues in favor of a more solid and hopeful piece of the future with Catherine is completely understandable though ultimately unattainable. Heedless of the rain falling “outside the windows” when he reunites with Catherine in Stressa, inside with her it is “light and pleasant and cheerful” (216). Because he feels that “[he has] come home, [feels] no longer alone,” Frederic chooses to see “all other things [as] unreal” (216). He ignores the obvious signs that his world with Catherine is impossible to maintain in favor of embracing any creative solution to making their love story feasible, including rowing to Switzerland in the middle of the next night (an Italian military defector and a pregnant woman). Almost in response to young Frederic’s willful ignorance, the reflective first person narrator laments the since-gained knowledge that “the world breaks every one and . . . those that will not break it kills” (216). Unfortunately, Frederic has not yet learned that lesson from his muse; she first has to enable his complete happiness, make him work for his freedom, “[rowing] all night” until “[his] hands [are] so sore [he] could hardly close them over the oars” (234). When he is ready to capitulate, she encourages him to keep pushing, reminding him that “[they’re] going beautifully” (235). Upon arrival in Switzerland, Frederic tells Catherine that “[he] couldn’t be happier” (240). In that moment, Frederic relays his complete belief in the illusion and delusional escape from real life, which makes him the most meaningful pupil for Catherine as a muse of disillusionment. As the two settle down in a cabin in the mountains, he feels like he has achieved his happily ever after, depicting it as “lovely in bed with the air so cold and clear and the night outside the window” (251). For the first time in his

life, everything seems clear because he knows what he wants, and he has it in every capacity except legally. Even that, he knows he will have once she has the baby and they can get married; Catherine expresses her excitement at “[being] an American . . . [going] to America . . . [and seeing] Niagara Falls” (253). Frederic proceeds to list all of the symbols of American dedication and man-made subjection of nature that she may also want to see, images that romanticize and cement the American Dream of self-determination and optimism, a Dream they seem to have conquered themselves by escaping the war that the rest of Europe mires itself in. They start planning for the future, “smelling the spring in the air” (266). They move down closer to the city and plan how they could return to the mountains with “the little one and the nurse” and “have [their] same room looking over the lake” (263).

Then comes the *pièce de résistance*, Catherine’s true inspiration in showing Frederic the scope of reality and the significance of a moment in representing all of the pain life has to offer him. Frederic takes her to the hospital to have the baby, but despite every attempt to save Catherine during childbirth, “the door [is] closed to him,” and there is nothing he can do (272). He begins to disintegrate mentally, asking himself over and over again, “What if she should die?” (274). Unable to accept that it could happen, he turns to desperation, asking the doctor to “operate as soon as [he] can” to try to save Catherine and the baby’s lives (275). When he returns to the room, Catherine tells him that “sometimes [she knows she’s] going to die,” and Frederic’s clear delusion shows itself in his assertion that “[he] won’t let [her]” as if he has any control (276). Over the months he has had and survived with Catherine, he has come to trust in the justice of a greater good and a purpose for suffering, regeneration. Hence, he believes that he can change the random course of pain in the world with his volition. It is not until he learns that the baby has died that he starts to see the tragic comedy of it all, understanding that “now Catherine

would die” since “that was what you did” without “[knowing] what it was about” (279, 280). Suddenly, he can connect all of the loss in the war with his potential loss of Catherine and comprehend that the only moral of life is that there are no morals, only certain death; “you could count on that” (280). Even still, he holds on desperately until the end, begging God not to let her die, but she still does. In her death, he faces the final disillusionment, lights on or lights off, in the hospital room or hotel room, winter or spring, the only inspiration he has left is the vision of the world as it really is—empty and lost like him as he “[walks] back to the hotel in the rain” (284).

Chapter Ten The Old Man and the Muse

Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* differs from each of the other novels discussed in this study in that it does not directly reference any war or literally depict a romantic struggle between a man and a woman.²⁴ In fact, most of *The Old Man and the Sea* depicts the life of only one character, the protagonist, Santiago. However, in this book alone, Hemingway sets up his readers for the primary relationship with the title. The sea acts as Santiago's muse, and therefore her role in the novel is similar to that of the other leading female characters discussed. The sea gives an aged Santiago hope for his renewal, belief in his potential, and eventually, destruction of his dreams. Through her inspiration, he learns the complete depths of man's loss and resulting brokenness.

As with the other protagonists, the book begins with an already somewhat jaded man, aware that he is unlikely to achieve greatness but still hopeful that he will. Hemingway compares the sail on Santiago's boat to "the flag of permanent defeat," which supports Santiago's characterization as a man already alone and downtrodden (9). In fact, the sight saddens the boy who used to fish with Santiago and who still takes care of him to a large extent, because that limp flag represents the decline of the man he once respected so much, now still waving in the breeze, but only as a reminder of all of the glory that he has lost. When Santiago lies down at

²⁴ Hemingway never mentions WW I or WW II in this novel even though it takes place after both of them, but the metaphorical war that Santiago wages with the fish he attempts to catch at sea leaves him lost in the same way as the writers of the Lost Generation. This war and its aftermath dash his search to regain hope in his heroic ideals and faith in his individual and societal promise as the historical wars did to Hemingway's generation. Similarly to each of the other novels explored here, Santiago's loss at the hands of the woman he loves and muse that inspires him echoes Americans' loss of surviving war and embracing the accompanying moral defeat in the first half of the twentieth century. Santiago also is the only protagonist that is not American, but Hemingway makes clear the optimistic American ideals and traditions he represents through his adoration of American baseball legends.

night, the boy can see that “his shirt [has] been patched so many times that is [is] like the sail and the patches were faded to many different shades by the sun” (18). This tattered old clothing resting upon this worn old man implies the shell of a life that the man has left. Burned by years in the sun and in the light of the world’s harsh realities, he is yet open to, and dependent on, a breeze from the sea to push him along her waters in search of some elusive grandeur. The speaker clarifies that “everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated” (10). Significantly beyond his physical prime, Santiago retains only one hope, and it is in the form of a woman, *la mar*.²⁵ He looks to the sea for inspiration, and in that one facet of life, she has inspired him to continue pushing for that big catch (even after 85 days with no catch). When the boy speaks to him about getting bait for the next day’s sojourn at sea, Santiago’s hope and confidence “[freshen] as when the breeze rises” over the sea (13). Though he is largely lost to age and poverty, the sea revitalizes him, motivates him to continue fishing, for with her current, he sees that “tomorrow is going to be a good day” (14). He understands that today has been bad, and while he should have learned the truth of life’s emptiness and man’s failures from his experiences yesterday, he looks onward to a tomorrow during which he believes his muse, the sea, will deliver inspiration to him through which he can finish his work and fulfill his purpose on earth. Furthermore, “in his dreams he [hears] the surf roar” along the coast of Africa as he sleeps away the hardships of the day (24). In the same spirit as other Fitzgerald and Hemingway protagonists try to escape the realization of the impossibility of idealism by traveling abroad through Europe, Santiago attempts to sever himself from the

²⁵ Later, as Santiago drives out to sea, he expresses how “he always thought of the sea as *la mar* which is what people call her in Spanish when they love her” (29) as opposed to the young, less traditional men who view her as “*el mar*” because they thought of her more as a masculine “contestant or a place or even an enemy” than as a feminine inspiration to men’s achievements and education (30).

hard, chaotic facts of reality by returning to a youth at sea along the coast of a far-away land where he sees “lions on the beach” (25). These lions symbolize the strength, vigor, and potential of his youth, and they also serve to underscore Hemingway’s overarching irony in using female muses as an extension of the romantic life-façade men have built and must recognize and destroy to face an awful but legitimate reality. Santiago views lions as a golden image of strength, and we often associate them with male prowess and strength, but scientifically speaking, the female lions do the preying in the wild. By extension, it is the ocean that appears to hold so much promise for Santiago’s exercise of his masculine domination that in fact preys on him and defeats him in the end by first extending that impetus of belief, which stirs his creative action and effort toward the inevitable fall.

Just like all of the other Cuban fishermen, Santiago is drawn to the beauty of the ocean that next morning, as he has been every morning before that. Unlike the other men though, the ocean spurs him on to deeper waters with her “phosphorescence of the Gulf weed” and promises of “all sorts of fish congregated because of the swirl the current [makes] against the steep walls of the floor of the ocean” (28). Her curving waters and depth of spirit make him imagine all of the fish for him to reel up from beneath her surface. Once he casts his baits out, he allows himself to be directed by her, “drifting with the current” (30). In the manner of all muses, she even directs and manipulates Santiago’s vision in expressing her own artistic aptitude. Hemingway personifies “the flat sea” as “[sending]” the sunlight “back at [Santiago’s] eyes so that it hurt sharply and he rowed without looking into it” (32). His eyes averted, Santiago embodies a worshipper confronted by his divinity. Moses could not look at God’s glory on Mount Sinai, and Santiago cannot look directly at the ocean’s glare. He knows the danger of sailing so far out to sea, but Santiago sees only positive omens from his lover, promising his

prosperity. When he watches his lines, he thinks about how happy he is to look into the water and see “so much plankton because it meant fish” (35); he even interprets the changing sunlight manipulated by the water’s surface as “[meaning] good weather” (35). His desire to believe overpowers his reason, and he puts his trust solely in the sea. Hemingway links Santiago’s desire with American idealism through the old man’s obsession with baseball, specifically the Yankees, a team that plays in the American League whose name literally references the New England Americans who rose up to fight for their principles against England (and later against the South). The constant nostalgia he uses to link himself with DiMaggio (since “[DiMaggio’s] father was a fisherman” [68]) reflects the Lost Generation’s longing for comfort in the patriotic promises of America before WW I robbed them of those seemingly naïve and inaccurate idealistic visions of destiny and drive. As a representative of those men, even though in Cuba, Santiago looks to baseball whenever he begins to remember the emptiness and hopelessness that he sees in life, but the sea refuses to cede her grasp on him for any period of time with the consistent reminder that “now is no time to think of baseball” when he has “only one thing . . . [he] was born for” (40), and that is to fulfill his ambition of catching the greatest fish anyone has ever seen from his creative and encouraging muse, the ocean.

In the moment he considers “just [drifting]” instead of investing his efforts in the exercise of catching his fish, the ocean gives him hope by delivering it as “one of the projecting green sticks [dips] sharply” (41). No easy catch, the fish makes him work for what he thinks will be his most meaningful gift ever from the sea, and he is willing to expend that concentration and remaining physical strength on hooking the fish, speaking to the fish, and following the fish as it “[moves] steadily and they [travel] slowly on the calm water” (45). The sea’s surface is deceptively peaceful and friendly as it hooks Santiago in the same moment he hooks the fish,

both victims of false hope with a hook of reality waiting inside the bait. Before he can tire the fish, he “[looks] behind him and [sees] that no land [is] visible” (46), but rather than being concerned, he “[feels] strong” reeling in a big fish, given to him by the sea that seems to glow with his success as his “line [shows] like a phosphorescent streak in the water straight from his shoulders” and the current “[carries] them to the eastward” (47). With the image of the line glowing as it streaks from Santiago’s shoulders, we can understand the ownership he feels over the product of the fish, and because the sea is the woman who brought him such success, he trusts his ability to get back home atop her pleasant surface regardless of how lost he may seem. He begins to consider “what a great fish” he has hooked “and what he will bring in the market if his flesh is good” (49). Still, that moment of considered greatness is the first time the muse brings Santiago to see himself in the fish—wondering if “he is just as desperate as [Santiago is]” (49). He acknowledges that the fish is masculine in all of his endeavors, implying that he will be larger and therefore more valuable because of the way he fights from below the surface. Interestingly, this consideration of the desperation of life in and on the sea makes Santiago remember “the saddest thing [he] ever saw” (50): a male marlin that once followed his caught lover until she was aboard the boat and then flew into the air for one last glimpse of her after being clubbed and as Santiago prepared to harpoon her. For the first of several times, Santiago relates the skin of the fish to mirrors (this time their backing specifically). In the habit of muses and their artists, the sea brings him this memory as an inspiration and a lesson. Yes, it reminds him of his gift for fishing in youth, but it also foreshadows his own destructive and melancholic future. However, rather than heed both admonishing lessons of the mindful memory the sea brings him, Santiago chooses to embrace his fishing as “the thing he was born for” (50). He finds and defines his purpose in his life with the sea. Even though he wishes that the stout fish “would

turn with the current” (53), a sign from his muse that his accomplishment is attainable, he never stops working his body as his instrument of expression for the muse. He carries the strain of the line while it cripples him and robs him of sleep, and as the fish pulls, he looks to the ocean as his healer, submerging his bleeding hands, he “[watches] the blood trail away” and convinces himself that the fish has slowed significantly (57). Deciding to “stay down with [the fish] forever” if that is the only means to success, his loneliness and isolation is of no consequence to Santiago now because when he looks into his muse’s encouraging eyes, “he [can] see the prisms in the deep dark water and the line stretching ahead and the strange undulation of the calm” (60). He decides that “no man [is] ever alone on the sea” (61), for she is his chief comforter and the muse for whom he produces his artistic masterpiece (exhibited in the skillful catching of such a worthy predator). Looking into her, he sees only the path to redemption—of his reputation and his faith in himself—and fulfillment—the line he sees stretching before him through her to the fish.

When Santiago finally sees the fish as “he rose his full length from the water and then re-entered it, smoothly, like a diver” (62), the sea performs perhaps her most memorable act of motivation to uplift Santiago and convince him of the beautiful prize he will attain in the wake of her inspiration. If he catches the fish, he promises (to the sea?) “to make a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Cobre” (65), the Virgin that the sea brought to Cuba. Santiago feels like this fish is an extension of that giving nature. The Hail Mary he begins to recite shortly thereafter seems to highlight this same blessing of heavenly gifts. Santiago refers to Mary as “blessed” among women and proclaims, “Blessed is the fruit of thy womb” (65). While “the fruit” described here is Jesus, as in all Catholic Hail Mary’s, Hemingway seems to be making a dual allusion both to the divinity of the Saint’s statue (yielded by the holy muse, the sea) and to the divinity of the sea

itself and the fruit of its womb (the fish). Thus, when he promises to react with religious fervor to the fruit of the sea, he acknowledges the spiritual guidance of the sea in bringing him the fish. He believes that if he exercises his faith, his endurance, and his talent, he will kill the fish “in all his greatness and his glory” (66), so he continues to “[ride] gently with the small sea,” trusting the muse who first inspired his dedication to deliver the resulting bounty (67). She has returned him to a belief in justice and determination with the promise of achievement at the end of a line reaching from his capable hands into her nurturing depths (despite the fact that he has not caught anything for over two months). Even beginning to encourage his own conviction, he reminds himself that “[he] must have confidence and [he] must be worthy of the great DiMaggio who does all things perfectly” (68). This return to the glory of baseball and the DiMaggio fisherman-to-riches story implies Santiago’s expectation of greatness if he can stay committed to reeling in this fish. In the midst of wondering about how DiMaggio would handle the fish, Santiago once again draws a parallel between himself and the beast he fights, thinking that “[he] would rather be that beast down there in the darkness of the sea” (68). With that thought, he clarifies his love for the sea; it is not that he would rather be on the opposite end of his line, but rather that he feels most at home in the heart of the sea “unless sharks come,” he admits (68). (Ironically, those sharks are exactly what the sea brings to destroy any remnants of the battle that would bring glory to him and his mirror, the fish.) Part of what makes the sea beautiful to Santiago, as is true for all of the muses discussed here, is that she is desirable to others—other men, such as the fishermen he sees each going to his secret place with her when he takes off his first morning, and other creatures. He even describes the Sargasso weed on the night before he finally catches the fish as “[heaving] and [swinging] in the light sea as though the ocean were making love with something under a yellow blanket” (72). To him, just as to all the rest, this is less a reason for

jealousy than it is an assurance of her bounty, the physical evidence of the plenty she offers her lovers. He offers sacrifices of skill to honor his muse, returning the carcass of the fish he eats while onboard to the sea, and he reaches his hands into the water for inspiration, healing, and purpose in the same way as ancient Greek poets sought the infusion of the muses in their works. As “he [watches] the flow of the water against [his hand],” he notices the “phosphorescent [glow] from skinning the fish” (79). His conquests, motivated by his love for the sea, and his rising confidence in his own ability to meet her expectations result in the glow of achievement—the evidence of creative skill—on his hands. As the fish grows more and more tired, Santiago begins to see the ocean fighting alongside him because it has “to pull the friction of all that new line through the water” (83). Santiago manipulates the line and directs the boat to hook the fish, and the sea provides the tension that he needs to actually land it. He constantly reminds himself that he needs to remain strong, to “be fearless and confident” (84), and when he feels weak, nauseated, or pained, he cleanses himself in the water, which restores him. He cleans his face, “[washes] his right hand . . . and then [lets] it stay in the salt water” while he watches the morning dawn (84); with that morning comes new hope, delivered in the narrative by the water. When he finally begins reeling in the circling fish, he again starts to suffer from his own weakness, “[feeling] faint,” and again he uses the sea water to rejuvenate his strength (88). He refocuses his intellectual and physical energy by “[lifting] some sea water with his left hand and [putting] it on his head” (88). As he pulls the fish up alongside the boat, Hemingway describes his vision of it as “interminable in the water” (93). This appearance of never-ending happiness and completion after two days of seemingly unending work reassures Santiago of his strength and “more strength he had just summoned” to kill the fish (93-94). The fish crashes into the water with one last thrust of vitality before succumbing to its unavoidable loss, “showing all his

great length and width and all his power and beauty” before sending “spray over the old man and over all of the skiff” (94). Inspired by the “glimpse of vision” that the ocean had just given him in seeing such a tremendous fish conquered by his own two hands, he begins formulating a plan to bring that vision to fruition—a plan to get the fish home with his little skiff (94).

Unbeknownst to Santiago, this moment of triumph is the end of the delusion the ocean has cemented in him and the necessary first step in his own disillusionment. In other words, his momentary vision of the greatness of the fish is also the momentary vision (and final death throes) of his own greatness before accepting loss, a true experience that the same muse will teach him to accept as reality over the night’s journey home. Hemingway further supports the parallel between Santiago and the fish when Santiago examines the fish and sees that “the fish’s eye [looks] as detached as the mirrors in a periscope or as a saint in procession” (96). Comparing the fish’s eye to “the mirrors in a periscope” could signify Santiago glimpsing himself in the fish from the other side of the water (just as submarines use mirrors in periscopes to see what happens on the other side of the surface), and with the comparison to a saint, Hemingway almost certainly references Santiago (whose name refers first to the Apostle John’s brother), proceeding like all of the men before him in his quest for fervor and purpose and also in his inevitable failure and detachment from the perfect world he seeks.

Even as the ocean guides both victims, man and fish, back to shore, “sailing together lashed side by side,” Santiago still views “the dark water of the true gulf” as “the greatest healer that there is,” completely unaware of the shock and grief that same dark water has planned for his destructive realization in the next twelve hours (99). It is not until one hour later that the first shark hits his prized catch, and he begins to understand that “the shark was not an accident” (100). Santiago apprehends that “he had come up from deep down in the water as the dark cloud

of blood had settled and dispersed in the mile deep sea” (100). Hence, Santiago admits that the same muse who brought him the most important fish of his career also now functions as a highway for its annihilation. Originally, fishing so far out and in such deep waters was alluring to him, but now that same “mile deep sea” serves as a diffusing agent, spreading the smell of blood to other, possibly more worthy competitors for the fish’s meat. Under the beautiful surface that Santiago skims in his boat, the water allows the first shark to “[swim] fast, just under the surface with his high dorsal fin knifing through the water without wavering” (100). Comparing the dorsal fin to a knife has no significance to the fish since the shark tears at that with his teeth, but transporting the shark through its waters, the sea figuratively stabs Santiago in the back by transporting sharks to mangle his prize. Eventually, Santiago laments his exercise in catching the fish as something that “might as well have been a dream” because the achievement was “too good to last,” yet he remains “full of resolution” in spite of the “little hope” he had left (101). He cannot quite accept the idea that man could be “made for defeat” and therefore exercises the one creative agency he has left that makes him superior to the sharks: his intelligence (103). Accordingly, he applies all of his ability to thinking of ways to defeat the coming scavengers as well as “something cheerful” such as getting home faster thanks to “the loss of 40 pounds” (104). With “some of his hope [returning],” he refuses to acknowledge the pattern of destruction he knows “could happen when he [reaches] the inner part of the current” (104). It is not until he reaches into the water to feel the mutilated fish’s flesh that he starts to think about how his own dreams are going to be similarly mutilated because he cannot “keep its scent out of the water” (106). That water that inspired, healed, and comforted him now assures his defeat. When the next two sharks approach, his dream of morality and salvation dies as he utters, “Ay” (107). Comparing this noise to one “a man might make, involuntarily, feeling the nail go through his

hands and into the wood” does not so much make Santiago a Christ figure as it does compare his loss at this moment to the loss Christ felt when he cried to God for forsaking him. In that sense, Santiago and Christ are both crushed by their powerful faith that mortally devastates them. After the sharks take most of the meat, Santiago cannot even stand to look at his ambition as reflected in the fish’s skin, described as “the silver backing of a mirror” with “stripes [still] showing” (110). The physical stripes of the fish echo back for Santiago the same stripes he feels as punishment from the sea for his trust and hope, but he continues to try, and with each try, the sea convinces him even more thoroughly of his inability to control the chaos of this life. He sees “the brown fins coming along the wide trail the fish must make in the water” (112). The water that brought the fish to him has now become his worst enemy, and he can only “[hope] that he [will] see land” (110). In attacking the sharks, he loses every weapon he has, and soon enough, he has no choice but to lie in the “cold of the night,” feeling “stiff and sore now” with “his wounds and all of the strained parts of his body [hurting]” (117) until the next pack of sharks comes. Though he knows “this time” that “the fight [is] useless,” he chops at the water with his tiller, completely sacrificing his last bit of man-made power in the boat to try to protect the measly mass of fish left tied to his vessel (118). Having taken everything from Santiago, leaving him with a disgusting carcass and skeleton, the sea finally teaches her pupil that “he is beaten . . . without remedy” (119). As he pulls up to shore with the monstrously disgusting remains, Santiago does not even have anyone to help him, and he falls irreparably in trying to carry his equipment. He is forced to leave everything behind to even make it home.

Scholars like Gregory Stephens have asserted a difference between Hemingway’s *Old Man and the Sea* and his other works because of the alleged humility and grace that Santiago shows in his defeat. Stephens suggests that by the end of the novel, Santiago “has achieved . . . a

mature man's submission to a natural order in which humans cannot presume dominance," and further encourages us to see that "the humbling of a man already possessed of admirable humility implies that we should be humbled before nature" (92). The argument that Santiago is humbled by nature is irrefutable as the novel draws to a close in the same manner as Santiago's life, mournfully, but the idea that Santiago somehow grasps humility as a final straw of heroism seems less defensible. After all, he does not choose to humble himself. He keeps the fish strapped to the side of his boat in hopes that some part of his masterful achievement will remain. Then he leaves the fish on the shore where all the other men measure its length, a length whose measure reveals just how significantly he has failed. The boy mourns in the end for the loss of heroism, Santiago's realization that there is no heroism in this broken world, only sacrifice for heroic ambitions that can never be achieved and that result in resounding loss.

While Hemingway's parable-style story in *The Old Man and the Sea* differs from his approach in his first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*—as F. Scott Fitzgerald's style changes significantly between writing *This Side of Paradise* and *Tender is the Night*—the ending bears a similar tenor of disillusionment at the hands of the muse. Just as *The Sun Also Rises* ends with Jake's final loss of even his dream with Brett, Santiago ignores and even refutes the boy's hopefulness in the end of *The Old Man and the Sea*, sending what remains of his great promise to be chopped up for bait by another fisherman and confessing that he "felt something in [his] chest was broken" by the loss (125). Just as with each of the other protagonists examined, with the help of a muse of disillusionment, Santiago has finally come to understand the sin of his romantic, heroic ideals. The sea, like Hemingway's other women, transforms Santiago from a defeated flag into a man again, full of faith in his ability to catch the greatest fish of his life and to impress and provide for all those he loves. Only in convincing him to embrace hope so fully

can she truly reveal to him the inexistence of purpose and the illegitimacy of hard work or principle in such a broken world. (This revelation comes when she steals back the very achievement to which she has made him submit.) In the end, even the carcass of Santiago's achievements is unintentionally immortalized as failure when two tourists misunderstand the waiter's explanation of what happened to the fish's body on the shore; the waiter explains, "Eshark," and the couple assumes the fish is a shark (127). Hence, Santiago's defeat by the sea destroys even the legacy of his catch and his survival. Incapable of surviving in the real world after the sea completely disillusioned him and rids him of his heroic aspirations, Santiago is forced to escape to heaven, or a dream world where he can still see lions instead of reality.

Chapter Eleven Conclusion

Fitzgerald's and Hemingway's works have come to speak for and represent the struggles of a generation morally adrift after enduring the horrors of WW I. This "lost generation," as Hemingway quotes Stein dubbing him and his cohort of writers in the opening pages of *The Sun Also Rises*, is unique in that its members were raised on an American Dream whose faulty underpinnings they initially overlook but must eventually accept. As a result, they still long for the fulfillment of the American Dream they grew up revering; they still hope that the tenets American society taught them will someday ring true in their own lives, but they simultaneously see the impossibility of that hope. The American ethics we see Fitzgerald and Hemingway's characters reach for include an illusory pursuit of happiness, trust in hard work and self-determination, and traditional value for loyalty and sacrifice. Though they have seen each of these ideals shattered by their individual and universal experiences during WW I, when so many promising young people went like fodder through a war zone that involved most of the Western world, they still ache to believe. It is this belief that Fitzgerald and Hemingway deem delusional. Its mere existence accordingly guarantees man's spiritual destruction and brokenness when the world clarifies its cruel reality. Because of their last romantic stronghold of hope, the men both authors portray as protagonists in their novels must be utterly devastated by the chaotic and cruel eventualities of the empty world they inhabit, and for both authors, that devastation epitomizes the struggle of the modern man.

Both have written other novels and several impressive short stories in addition to the six works considered in this study. However, these six defining novels showcase a form in their narratives never before fully explored. In looking at the female characters each author portrays as befitting the mythological form rather than trying to understand them as a mixture of charming

vixens, forceful flappers of the Roaring 20s, and emasculating viragos, we can perhaps best examine them as one common muse of disillusionment, which both Fitzgerald and Hemingway define in their novels and to which both allude with characteristic markers used to identify the female characters and their relationships. As with the original three (later nine) Greek muses, each of the muses in Fitzgerald and Hemingway's novels first and foremost inspires men's creative exertions with her deity. Physically captivating, emotionally and intellectually refreshing, like the springs of water with which they are so often associated, these literary muses, like their predecessors, rely on the power of memory for their greatest achievements in revealing reality to men. In this way, Fitzgerald and Hemingway use the women as actual reflections of what the men already know about life but have not accepted because of their idealistic delusion about what life could be. Many years of criticism have gone into evaluating Eleanor and Daisy, Brett and Catherine, when both male authors were perhaps all along writing only about the male experience, capitalizing on the very romanticized view of women that men have constructed to reveal those same men's undoing. The male protagonists in these novels, or the narrators describing them, often refer to their female counterparts as mirrors or reflections because that is precisely what they are. These women are embodying the memory of hope that inspires men to keep striving for a dream they must eventually understand can never come true.

With this goal of disillusionment in mind, each of the female muses in Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Tender is the Night* and Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, and *The Old Man and the Sea* must first begin by inspiring her respective protagonist to embrace his frail hope. Once she motivates him to trust a hope he had buried beneath a seemingly impenetrable, jaded exterior, she stirs him to practice and perform according to his most outstanding creative talents. Most of the men already seem cynical after

their wartime service. (Santiago is the only exception, and his reason for cynicism is his fading fishing career.) Moving their subjects to abandon the calluses that protected them during their painful past, Fitzgerald's and Hemingway's muses bring out a softer, less reticent lover in each of the men only to subsequently scorch that softened skin with their heartless actions. These actions range from infidelity to abandonment, but in each case, they relentlessly ravage the illusory hope the protagonist has constructed in honor of his inspiring muse, leaving him to internalize the inescapable hopelessness of life. As the love story concludes in disappointment, each man understands his absolute powerlessness to affect change in his future; hence, his search for meaning and happiness ends fruitlessly. Just as both authors want readers to see through each story, the protagonist finally sees that life is painfully futile, hopeless, heartbreakingly fragile and thus doomed to annihilation. Only the muses, superior from the outset, make this complete transformation possible, and while it often breaks the protagonist entirely, the muse moves on psychologically unscathed (even unto death) after the creative failure she has wrought in him.

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