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## F Scott Fitzgerald: Wealth and the woman

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F. SCOTT FITZGERALD:  
WEALTH AND THE WOMAN

by  
Goldie Gendler Silverman

A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English  
University of Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. THIS SIDE OF PARADISE . . . . .	15
III. THE BEAUTIFUL AND DAMNED . . . . .	30
IV. THE GREAT GATSBY . . . . .	49
V. TENDER IS THE NIGHT . . . . .	75
VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION . . . . .	114
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	119

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

"Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me."<sup>1</sup>

These famous lines by F. Scott Fitzgerald, made more famous by Ernest Hemingway,<sup>2</sup> succinctly compress Fitzgerald's involved feelings about great wealth into one brief statement and serve to identify one of Fitzgerald's major themes. For Fitzgerald was fascinated by the wealthy throughout his life; they were the chief subjects of his fiction. He grew up in awe of the man of inherited wealth, and he dissipated his vitality trying to live according to the same pattern. In his early years he was completely dazzled by wealth, and even later, when he had developed a mature judgment that could see through the glitter, he never lost the sense of an enchantment, a glamour, in great riches. To express the feelings he had about wealth required a symbol that in turn was bewitching, dazzling, and glamorous; and so, in his fiction, Fitzgerald chose to embody these sensations in a

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<sup>1</sup>F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Rich Boy," All the Sad Young Men (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ernest Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro."

woman.

The women of Fitzgerald's early fiction--his production before the "crack-up"--are all the same woman. She is an idealized product of his own mind, based on but surpassing the glamorous women of his own life. She is, of course, beautiful, but beyond that she is wealthy, vital, and assured. She possesses all those qualities which Fitzgerald admired but did not have himself, and which he somehow imaginatively attached to the fact of owning riches.

Fitzgerald's attitude toward wealth was not static; as Fitzgerald grew from the dazzled boy to the disillusioned ruin of a man, his knowledge of the wealthy increased in depth. So too the portraits of the women are marked by greater and greater depth. Rosalind, of This Side of Paradise, is merely spoiled and selfish; in his succeeding novels, Fitzgerald is able to see his woman character more and more clearly and to draw her more fully. As the novels progress, the change in her is not one of character; she remains throughout the same person. It is the author's vision which changes; his scrutiny of the woman becomes increasingly critical, gradually discerning in her the evil effects of wealth.

That Fitzgerald's involvement with wealth had its origins deep in his boyhood we know both from his biographer, Arthur Mizener, and from his own writings, especially the

series of autobiographical short stories that deal with Basil Duke Lee. Fitzgerald grew up in "genteel poverty,"<sup>3</sup> living on the edge of but never actually within St. Paul's finest residential districts. His education at Newman, a Catholic prep school, and later at Princeton was financed by a wealthy relative, a condition that must have reinforced his feelings that he was on the outside looking in. His pathetic attempts at Newman to impress those around him with his superiority are recreated in "The Freshest Boy." In the story Basil quickly antagonizes both students and faculty by boasting, ignoring rules, pointing out people's mistakes, and showing off in class. Fitzgerald's good looks helped him earn a reputation as a sissy, and he found himself forced into many fights, with the crowd always against him. The actual feelings of inferiority he must have felt are obvious; his roommate said of him many years later that he couldn't forget that "he was one of the poorest boys in a rich boys' school."<sup>4</sup>

As an undergraduate, Fitzgerald tried to reach a position in the campus society that might have compensated for his feelings about his humble background, and had he

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<sup>3</sup>Arthur Mizener, The Far Side of Paradise (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), pp. 270-271.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 22.



become president of the Triangle Club, an office of highest prestige, his whole attitude might have been different. But circumstances worked against him just when he thought he would be triumphant, and he became further embittered.

The final determinant shaping his attitude was Zelda Sayre's refusal to marry him because he was not rich. It is significant that Zelda's attitude was so much like his own that he considered her decision right and even admirable. Mizener describes her as "'inevitably drawn' toward 'the. . . stream of life,' a stream with such a high concentration of money in it that it shone."<sup>5</sup> When his first novel brought him financial success and Zelda was his, Fitzgerald's commitment to wealth was complete. So impressive was the painful experience of losing the girl he loved through his poverty, that Fitzgerald used the situation over and over again --in This Side of Paradise, "Winter Dreams," "The Sensible Thing," and The Great Gatsby.<sup>6</sup> He says of himself at this time, "In the years since then I have never been able to stop wondering where my friends' money came from, nor to stop thinking that at one time a sort of droit de seigneur

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>6</sup>James E. Miller, Jr., The Fictional Technique of Scott Fitzgerald (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1957), p. 83.

might have been exercised to give one of them my girl."<sup>7</sup>

The young Fitzgeralds quickly became celebrities in the world he had longed to conquer. In Mizener's words, they shared the belief that "if you were good enough you not only could live according to the hedonistic code of the twenties but would probably turn out all the better for doing so."<sup>8</sup> Though the income from his writings should have been more than adequate, their extravagance and inefficiency made their life cost more than it needed to, and they were in constant financial straits.

Fitzgerald's concern with wealth of another kind, a wealth of emotional energy, was almost as great as his feelings about material riches. Because his commitment to any experience was always an unguarded, total giving of himself, he began to appreciate early in his life his dependence on emotional energy. He glorified his youth, a time of total vitality, with no unredeemable spending of emotion, no indelible marks of experience.<sup>9</sup> Vitality and money, with his complex feelings about each, interlocked

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<sup>7</sup>F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Handle with Care," The Crack-Up, Edmund Wilson, editor (New York: New Directions, 1945), p. 77.

<sup>8</sup>Mizener, p. 149.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 68-69.

in his mind.<sup>10</sup> The horror of poverty and the horror of emotional exhaustion were so closely related in his imagination that he began to think of vitality in financial terms. Emotional energy became money, a fixed sum, against which you drew and drew until it was expended.<sup>11</sup> The problem was to keep his emotional capital intact; this desire was not a fear of experience but rather the fear of a bad investment on his part.<sup>12</sup> He thought of the state of having spent all his vitality as "emotional bankruptcy," a time when he could care for nothing enough any more to go on with it.<sup>13</sup> He calls it "an over-extension of the flank, a burning of the candle at both ends; a call upon physical resources that I did not command, like a man over-drawing at his bank."<sup>14</sup> The Crack-Up series of articles deals with his own period of emotional bankruptcy.<sup>15</sup> He says of himself, "I began to realize that for two years my life had been drawing on resources that I did not possess,

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 245.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 259-260.

<sup>15</sup>Fitzgerald, The Crack-Up. See "The Crack-Up," "Handle with Care," and "Pasting It Together," pp. 69-84.

that I had been mortgaging myself physically and spiritually up to the hilt."<sup>16</sup> For the rest of his life he thought of himself as living on what he had saved out of a "spiritual forced sale."<sup>17</sup> As he gained insight into the very rich, this theory of emotional bankruptcy became interwoven with his new knowledge; when he lost interest in the wealthy, emotional bankruptcy became his major theme. It appears as early as Dick Diver in Tender Is the Night.

But earlier, even as he and his wife acted out their belief in "airing the desire for unadulterated gaiety,"<sup>18</sup> Fitzgerald was able to stand back with part of his mind and watch what was happening to himself. According to Mizener's analysis, Fitzgerald's creative imagination operated at two distinct levels.<sup>19</sup> This two-sided imagination made it possible for Fitzgerald to feel simultaneously the attraction and repulsion of great wealth. On the one side, there was the romantic young man who believed that "life was something you dominated if you were any good at all;"<sup>20</sup> the other side

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>17</sup>Mizener, pp. 262-263.

<sup>18</sup>Zelda Fitzgerald, "Eulogy of the Flapper," Metropolitan (June, 1922), cited in Ibid., p. 149 and p. 180.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>20</sup>Fitzgerald, The Crack-Up, p. 69.

was the "spoiled priest,"<sup>21</sup> the moralist who recognized the impending disintegration, the emotional bankruptcy that lay ahead. The spoiled priest could be objective even while the romantic young man was most involved; this part of his mind could see in himself and in Zelda the direction in which their wealth and ease were leading them. With time the dissolution became more apparent; however, the first treatment of the theme of the core of corruption at the heart of great wealth came early, with "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," only two years after his successful first novel.<sup>22</sup>

Through this rather unique operation of Fitzgerald's imagination, he was at his best while writing about events that he himself had participated in. While the romantic young man in him lived to the fullest without counting the costs, the spoiled priest stood back, observed, and studied. It is no surprise then that the events and feelings of his stories are chronicled with almost historical precision, or that the characters in his fiction are easily traced to real persons in his own life.<sup>23</sup> From the autobiographical This Side of Paradise, where the actual letters from Father Fay

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<sup>21</sup>Mizener, p. 60.

<sup>22</sup>Miller, p. 49.

<sup>23</sup>Mizener, p. 63, Ring Lardner as Abe North, and p. 290, daughter Scottie as Honoria.

are used,<sup>24</sup> to The Last Tycoon, whose character identities the public is only now beginning to learn,<sup>25</sup> Fitzgerald was recording his careful observations of actual persons. At one time he even threatened a relative, "I will try to resist the temptation to pass you down to posterity for what you are."<sup>26</sup> The heroes of his stories are often based on Fitzgerald himself, or on a combination of some aspect of his own feelings with the physical characteristics of a close friend. Likewise the heroines are founded on a combination of the two women who most captured his imagination, his first love, Ginevra King, and his wife, Zelda Sayre, and the shimmering glamour that his imagination gave to them.

Fitzgerald was a student at Princeton when he first met Ginevra King, who was spending a vacation visit in St. Paul with a Westover classmate. She was already a celebrity, a beautiful and wealthy Chicago girl with a reputation for daring and adventurousness. Her many beaux, her deliberate conquests, were part of her charm for Fitzgerald; to him she seemed always sure and at ease, untouched by her conquests, and for all her daring, actually elusive and

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>25</sup>See Sheilah Graham, Beloved Infidel: The Education of a Woman (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1958).

<sup>26</sup>Mizener, p. 3.

romantic.<sup>27</sup> "Ginevra moved for him in a golden haze of habit, assumption, gesture, made up of a lifetime of wealth and ease, of social position always taken for granted, of country clubs and proms which she dominated as if such authority were her natural prerogative."<sup>28</sup> Fitzgerald saw in her the substance of his ideal girl, the wise, hard-boiled virgin, seeking present pleasure while vaguely aware of a distant romantic future.<sup>29</sup> Because she represented his own elusive dream of a glorious future, Fitzgerald fell in love with her. As Rosalind, Gloria, and Nicole were to captivate their fictional lovers, Ginevra became the first of the woman-symbols of the golden life.

His love for Ginevra seems to have been, for Fitzgerald, a tentative testing of his own capacity for love, a preparation for his later total commitment to Zelda Sayre. He made out of falling in love with Zelda an act of identification and dedication.<sup>30</sup> She could not only carry the image of his ideal, but she shared his ambitions and his demands on life. Her falling in love with him was not the

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 48-49.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., pp. 49-50.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

same complete yielding; she was not sure.<sup>31</sup> Though she was fascinated with his predictions of his future fame, she hesitated to pledge herself to him before he had proved his abilities. She had ambitions of her own, which made for later difficulties. Because she "wanted to live where things happen on a big scale,"<sup>32</sup> there was a time before the sale of his first novel when Fitzgerald thought he had lost her.

Though she was younger than Ginevra and lacked her wealthy background, there were many qualities that Zelda shared with Fitzgerald's first love. She too had a reputation in her community as a girl of great daring and unconventionality.<sup>33</sup> She was beautiful and witty and had conquered many beaux. Her confidence in her own beauty gave her social assurance; she believed in her rights as a beauty to do and to have whatever she wished and to let others take the responsibility.<sup>34</sup> Her imperiousness fascinated Fitzgerald even when her demands almost cost him her love.<sup>35</sup>

From these two women, with his imagination combining

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 77. Mizener is citing a portrait of Zelda, Sally Carrol Happer, "The Ice Palace."

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 89.



and shaping, Fitzgerald created his fictional ideal, a woman who resembles and yet surpasses them. She is beautiful, witty, and surrounded by the men she has conquered. She dominates her world and accepts her authority as a right of beauty. She justifies her demands through her beauty, and never considers herself unreasonable or selfish. Her life is essentially idle, dedicated to glorifying herself, and she will dare to do anything that she wishes to do. She is a product of a life of wealth and a symbol of what riches can bring. It is significant that Fitzgerald finds the opportunity in scattered references throughout the novels to label this woman, this incarnation of wealth, a "golden girl." She represents the enormous possibilities in the life of the rich, the position at the peak of the social hierarchy and the embodiment of the power of money.<sup>36</sup> In the minds of the men who love her, the golden girl is set up on a pedestal to be worshipped like an idol. As wealth incarnate, she seems to hold the means to a charmed life for them. There is a freshness and radiance about her that are tied up with her wealth; in his preoccupation with money and vitality Fitzgerald emphasizes the youthfulness that is expressed in the gaiety of the life of the very rich. She

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<sup>36</sup>Malcolm Cowley, "F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Romance of Money," The Western Review, XVII (Summer, 1953), p. 251.

personifies for Fitzgerald's heroes a glamorous, dazzling, elusive world just out of reach and unattainable.

This is the woman of Fitzgerald's novels, his symbol of wealth. She is the same careless beauty in each of the novels, with her carelessness becoming cruelty as Fitzgerald's insight improves. Each of the golden girls has, in addition to the qualities shared by them all, one characteristic that symbolizes her wealth, either her golden hair, her husky voice, or a certain hardness of beauty. This quality is not only the most attractive feature of the woman of wealth, but it is somehow tied up with the defeat suffered by the hero at her hands. Although Fitzgerald's heroes never fully recognize the harm their ideal has worked on them, the author himself gradually became aware of the destruction inherent in the woman's self interest. As his understanding of the evil effects of wealth grew, Fitzgerald drew his woman character with greater depth, to show how she was both the corrupter and the corrupted.

It is the aim of this study to trace that gradually unfolding recognition of the corruption of great wealth through Fitzgerald's women characters. The nature of the problem involved limits the material to be considered to Fitzgerald's writings before the "crack-up." As he himself said in The Crack-Up articles, "For sixteen years I lived . . . distrusting the rich, yet working for money with which

to share their mobility and the grace that some of them brought into their lives."<sup>37</sup> Fitzgerald's breakdown marked a change in his work. The wealthy subjects of his earlier works no longer interested him. The world had changed, and most of the idle rich he had glorified had been destroyed. The woman, symbol of wealth, is not to be found in the later works. But as Rosalind, in This Side of Paradise; as Gloria, in The Beautiful and Damned; as Daisy, in The Great Gatsby; and as Nicole, in Tender Is the Night, she is there, and it is in these places that we will study her.

In the discussion that follows, a chapter will be devoted to each one of the novels, showing for each that the central woman figure is indeed Fitzgerald's ideal woman; that she represents his concept of the effect of wealth at that time; and that there is in his attitude a progressively developing awareness of the corruption of great riches.

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<sup>37</sup>Fitzgerald, The Crack-Up, p. 77.

## CHAPTER II

### THIS SIDE OF PARADISE

This Side of Paradise, the autobiographical first novel that catapulted F. Scott Fitzgerald to fame at the age of twenty-four, is not a love story, nor is it about the very rich. The chapter on "The Debutante," the great love affair of the novel, which covers the relation between wealth and the beautiful woman, is only thirty-two pages long. Actually, the subject of the book is the "obscurely motivated and vaguely directed rebellion of the youth of Fitzgerald's generation."<sup>1</sup> However, the novel does introduce the first of Fitzgerald's golden girls, his wealthy women, and it reflects his initial attitude toward money, the attitude he grew up with.

Amory Blaine, the hero of This Side of Paradise, has one great love: Rosalind Connage. Her importance to the novelist is made evident by his technique in introducing her to the reader. Fitzgerald interrupts the prose narrative of the novel with a series of scenes in dramatic form through which Rosalind is first heard of and then seen. The initial description of Rosalind, in the form of a stage direction,

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<sup>1</sup>Miller, p. 22.

covers two full pages of type. Appropriately enough, Rosalind's first appearance is on the evening of her debut. The event not only establishes immediately her social and economic status, but at the same time lets the reader see that eight millionaires are marshalled to meet Rosalind; her youth and beauty and radiance are up for sale.

Rosalind has all the characteristics of the ideal woman of Fitzgerald's imagination. Her outstanding feature is her radiant, golden hair. She is beautiful, witty, and imperious. Fitzgerald makes clear that her beauty gives her great privilege.

But all criticism of Rosalind ends in her beauty. There was that shade of glorious yellow hair, the desire to imitate which supports the dye industry. There was the eternal kissable mouth, small, slightly sensual, and utterly disturbing. There were gray eyes and an unimpeachable skin with two spots of vanishing color. She was slender and athletic, without underdevelopment, and it was a delight to watch her move about a room, walk along a street, swing a golf club, or turn a "cartwheel."<sup>2</sup>

Rosalind thinks of herself as possessing a masculine mind: "I'm not really feminine, you know--in my mind."<sup>3</sup> Her recklessness and daring are notorious, even to her younger sister. She is proud of being willful and temperamental:

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<sup>2</sup>F. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), pp. 183-184.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 187.

"Because you know I'm an awful proposition. Any one who marries me will have his hands full. I'm mean--mighty mean."<sup>4</sup>

She conquers men at will for the thrill of the conquest:

Gillespie: Then why do you play with men?

Rosalind: For that first moment, when he's interested. There is a moment--Oh, just before the first kiss, a whispered word--something that makes it worth while.

Gillespie: And then?

Rosalind: Then after that you make him talk about himself. Pretty soon he thinks of nothing but being alone with you--he sulks, he won't fight, he doesn't want to play--Victory!<sup>5</sup>

The men who love her are completely under her spell, without quite knowing why. The author tells us,

7 She is one of those girls who need never make the slightest effort to have men fall in love with them. Two types of men seldom do: dull men are usually afraid of her cleverness and intellectual men are usually afraid of her beauty. All others are hers by natural prerogative.<sup>6</sup>

Even when speaking facetiously, Rosalind is well aware of her attractions and quite sure of her powers.

"Cecelia, darling, you don't know what a trial it is to be--like me. I've got to keep my face like steel in the street to keep men from winking at me. If I laugh hard from a front row in the theatre, the

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 182.

comedian plays to me for the rest of the evening. If I drop my voice, my eyes, my handkerchief at a dance, my partner calls me up on the 'phone every day for a week."<sup>7</sup>

Though the reader sees by her actions that she is spoiled, Amory, who is actually Fitzgerald, is blind to her faults. Though "she wants what she wants when she wants it," the author asserts that "in the true sense she is not spoiled. Her fresh enthusiasm, her will to grow and learn, her endless faith in the inexhaustibility of romance, her courage and fundamental honesty--these things are not spoiled."<sup>8</sup>

While she claims to have no interest in money, she admits its importance to her:

Mrs. Connage: I haven't met Mr. Blaine--but I don't think you'll care for him. He doesn't sound like a money maker.

Rosalind: Mother, I never think about money.

Mrs. Connage: You never keep it long enough to think about it.

Rosalind: (Sighs) Yes, I suppose some day I'll marry a ton of it--out of sheer boredom.<sup>9</sup>

She thinks of herself in financial terms.

He: I thought you'd be sort of--sort of--sexless, you know, swim and play golf.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 191.

She: Oh, I do--but not in business hours.

He: Business?

She: Six to two--strictly.

He: I'd like to have some stock in the corporation.

She: Oh, it's not a corporation--it's just "Rosalind Unlimited." Fifty-one shares, name, good-will, and everything goes at \$25,000 a year.<sup>10</sup>

Her philosophy is economic; she conducts her personal life on the concepts of the great robber barons: "She is quite unprincipled; her philosophy is carpe diem for herself and laissez faire for others."<sup>11</sup>

In spite of her faith in romance and her claim of being unconcerned with money, she turns down Amory, whom she loves, because he is poor. "'I can't be shut away from the trees and flowers, cooped up in a little flat, waiting for you. You'd hate me in a narrow atmosphere. I'd make you hate me.'"<sup>12</sup> Her courage and honesty are combined with a selfish retreat from responsibility and an exaggerated craving for luxury. "'I like sunshine and pretty things and cheerfulness--and I dread responsibility. I don't want to think about pots and kitchens and brooms. I want to worry whether my legs will get slick and brown when I swim in the

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 209.



summer!"<sup>13</sup>

The interrelation of money with youth and vitality can easily be seen in Rosalind. The prospect of marrying a poor boy for love ages her. Six weeks after the beginning of their love affair, "she has changed perceptibly-- she is a trifle thinner for one thing; the light in her eyes is not so bright; she looks easily a year older."<sup>14</sup>

Rosalind knows that she is not for Amory. She has been brought up to marry money. Though she disobeys her mother on the evening of her debut by disappearing from the ballroom, she knows that in the end she will follow the pattern set for her as a woman of wealth. At their first meeting she predicts the heartbreak she will bring Amory.

"I love you--now. Oh--I am very youthful, thank God--and rather beautiful, thank God--and happy, thank God, thank God--" (She pauses and then, in an odd burst of prophecy, adds) "Poor Amory!"<sup>15</sup>

The importance of wealth to Rosalind, to her family and the society they represent, as opposed to the importance of good character traits, is brought home by the newspaper announcement of her engagement to a wealthy man. Just next to the announcement is an account of the apprehension of

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 210.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 199.

Amory and "a woman not his wife" in an Atlantic City hotel room. Amory has sacrificed his honor to protect Alec Connage, Rosalind's brother and the actual occupant of the room. But nobility is not a great enough price to buy beauty.

She was gone, definitely, finally gone. Until now he had half unconsciously cherished the hope deep in his heart that some day she would need him and send for him, cry that it had been a mistake, that her heart ached only for the pain she had caused him. Never again could he find even the sombre luxury of wanting her--not this Rosalind, harder, older--nor any beaten, broken woman that his imagination brought to the door of his forties--Amory had wanted her youth, the fresh radiance of her mind and body, the stuff that she was selling now once and for all.<sup>16</sup>

It is no accident that the passage is phrased in commercial terms: "the stuff that she was selling now once and for all."

Rosalind's glamour blinds both Amory and the author. They are so entranced by her beauty and riches that they cannot comprehend her fundamental selfishness and superficiality.<sup>17</sup> Without any hesitation, they accept her motives as right and just. Amory never even pauses to question Rosalind's decision. "'Why don't you tell me that "if the girl had been worth having she'd have waited for you"? No, sir, the girl really worth having won't wait for anybody.'"<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 271-272.

<sup>17</sup>Miller, p. 23.

<sup>18</sup>Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, p. 232.

Fitzgerald is so certain that this is the way of the world, that wealth always, and rightly, wins the girl, that he makes no effort to expand on Rosalind's attitude, but confines her actions to one chapter as if nothing could be more natural than her treatment of Amory.

While Amory's attitude toward wealth is never positively stated, it is always present at the back of all of his decisions, and wealth forms a necessary background to all the events of his early life. St. Regis, his prep school, is described as "a gentleman's school" where "democracy won't hit you so early."<sup>19</sup> Princeton is "lazy and good-looking and aristocratic,"<sup>20</sup> and had "an alluring reputation as the pleasantest country club in America."<sup>21</sup> The allusions to the life of the wealthy upper classes are obvious. Like Fitzgerald himself, Amory Blaine chooses a man to idolize and emulate in every new environment he enters. At Princeton, Amory chooses Dick Humbird, who seemed to Amory "a perfect type of aristocrat."<sup>22</sup> He had the features, the bearing, and the manner of a man born to inherited wealth: "He seemed the eternal example of what

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

the upper class tries to be."<sup>23</sup> Humbird, Amory believes, "could have lunched at Sherry's with a colored man, yet people would have somehow known that it was all right."<sup>24</sup> Because he wanted to believe that Humbird was the kind of person who could be produced only by several generations of wealth and breeding, Amory felt "a curious sinking sensation" when he learned that Humbird's father had been a grocery clerk in Tacoma who had made a fortune in real estate and had come to New York only ten years before.<sup>25</sup>

Actual wealth, to Amory, is a thing to be taken for granted. He makes no effort to understand its source or to inquire into its limits. The importance of riches lies in the kind of life it provides. Until his father's death during junior year at Princeton, Amory had no actual knowledge of the family finances; he was astonished to learn "what a tidy fortune had once been under his father's management,"<sup>26</sup> and how it had dwindled away. A life without wealth, however, is difficult for him to conceive. Even while he most envies the ease of the wealthy, Amory is already aware of the corruption that lies in riches; however, he sees no

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 109

reason to avoid this corruption, but accepts it as a matter of fact. When he plans the apartment in town he will take with wealthier friends, he writes:

. . . Alec can go into the Zinc Company or whatever it is that his people own. . . he's looking over my shoulder and he says it's a brass company, but I don't think it matters much, do you? There's probably as much corruption in zinc-made money as brass-made money.<sup>27</sup>

Amory can see no romance or vigor in poverty:

"I detest poor people," thought Amory suddenly. "I hate them for being poor. Poverty may have been beautiful once, but it's rotten now. It's the ugliest thing in the world. It's essentially cleaner to be corrupt and rich than it is to be innocent and poor."<sup>28</sup>

For Amory the glamorous world of wealth is always centered by a beautiful woman. She is a fact taken for granted, so much a part of riches that he sees all the girls whom he has loved in terms of golden imagery. Isabelle, his first love, is a glowing example of a figure of wealth: "It was Isabelle, and from the top of her shining hair to her little golden slippers she had never seemed so beautiful."<sup>29</sup>

Clara, who follows Isabelle, inspires Amory to a burst of poetry, seeing her always in expressions of gold.

"Golden, golden is the air--". . . "Golden is the air, golden notes from golden mandolins, golden frets of

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

golden violins, fair, oh wearily fair. . . Skeins from braided basket, mortals may not hold; oh, what young extravagant God, who would know or ask it? . . . who could give such gold. . ."<sup>30</sup>

Even after Rosalind refuses him, Amory's basic attitude toward wealth does not change. He believes that the man of wealth is somehow fine and strong and solid, and deserves to win the girl. Dawson Ryder, who marries Rosalind, is "wealthy, faithful to his own, a bore perhaps, but steady and sure of success."<sup>31</sup> Even Rosalind feels the strength that emanates from the solid wealth behind Dawson Ryder: "'He's so reliable, I almost feel that he'd be a--a background.'"<sup>32</sup>

Although at the end of the novel, Amory claims to be a socialist because he is "sick of a system where the richest man gets the most beautiful girl if he wants her,"<sup>33</sup> he is still determined to hold onto the only inheritance he has, the family estate in Wisconsin, a symbol of the moneyed class. While he claims that "Money isn't the only stimulous [sic] that brings out the best that's in a man. . . ,"<sup>34</sup> it was for money that he had been working, the money to win

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 194.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 294.

Rosalind, the money that is Rosalind. His stated convictions seem to be based more on the agony of his lost love than on any deeply felt social principles. He tries to organize the tumult of his mind:

There was no God in his heart, he knew; his ideas were still in riot; there was ever the pain of memory; the regret for his lost youth--yet the waters of disillusion had left a deposit on his soul, responsibility and a love of life, the faint stirring of old ambitions and unrealized dreams. But--oh, Rosalind! Rosalind! . . .

"It's all a poor substitute at best," he said sadly.<sup>35</sup>

Though Rosalind has been called by one critic "a failure in characterization,"<sup>36</sup> she succeeds as a symbol of wealth. Those same qualities that fail to combine into a credible character merge into a successful portrayal of the outer glamour and inner ruthlessness of great wealth. Miller points out that the qualities Fitzgerald attributes to her are in conflict with the way she acts.<sup>37</sup> The author claims she is not spoiled while the reader sees that she is. The author emphasizes her romantic qualities, while Rosalind actually is hard and practical, going about the selling of her beauty in a direct and businesslike way. When Fitzgerald tells us that Rosalind "feels that she has lost something,

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 304.

<sup>36</sup> Miller, p. 23.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

she knows not what, she knows not why,"<sup>38</sup> he assumes for Rosalind a greater depth than she can achieve.<sup>39</sup> Just as the glamour of her wealth blinds Amory to Rosalind's basic selfishness, so Fitzgerald is blinded by the dazzling picture he has created. He tries to surround Rosalind with a poetry which she does not deserve. The glamour of wealth hides the actual hard realism of Rosalind; what seems to be her quest for romance is in fact the mobility and ease of great riches. Rosalind's mother brings to her daughter a list of eligible millionaires; the youth and beauty that seem to be the products of wealth are actually commodities to be bought and sold.

The attitude toward wealth in all of Fitzgerald's novels reflects to some extent the attitude of the American people at that time. At the writing of this first novel, the values of pre-World War I society were still in great authority. As Malcolm Cowley points out, at the beginning of the twentieth century money was solid, like rock; Freud equated money with solid excrement.<sup>40</sup> Dawson Ryder appears strong and solid to Rosalind. Cowley carries the comparison further. In the 1920's, to Americans, money became liquid;

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<sup>38</sup>Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, p. 211.

<sup>39</sup>Miller, p. 23.

<sup>40</sup>Malcolm Cowley, "F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Romance of Money," The Western Review, XVII (Summer, 1953), p. 248.



Cowley compares it to urine, blood, sperm, or milk. "It was an age when gold was melted down and became fluid; when wealth was no longer measured in possessions--land, buildings, livestock, machinery--but rather in dollars per year, as a stream is measured by its flow."<sup>41</sup>

In This Side of Paradise, wealth is still of solid quality. Dawson Ryder has the background of riches, and Amory Blaine can't compete. In the later works, the young man uses fluid wealth to attain the woman; she comes to represent the life that money can buy.

The love story of This Side of Paradise shows the beginning of the pattern that Fitzgerald was to develop through his first four novels and in many of his short stories. The man, like Fitzgerald himself, comes from a family of little or failing fortune, though he manages somehow to attain an acceptable education at an Eastern university or in Europe. The girl is younger and richer than the man, and represents for him all youth and beauty and wealth. In the later works, the girl, or her wealth, destroys the man. At the writing of This Side of Paradise, Fitzgerald had not yet penetrated through the dazzling surface glamour of great wealth, and so the hero just loses the girl. Amory is deeply hurt by his loss, but he is not incapacitated; he can go on. Mrs. Connage speaks the outcome of

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

the affair before Amory even appears on the scene: "I haven't met Mr. Blaine--but I don't think you'll care for him. He doesn't sound like a money maker."<sup>42</sup> This is the value society places on the penniless. To Fitzgerald, this decision is right. Rosalind, as a symbol of wealth, is totally desirable; he sees no faults in her; and Rosalind, as a symbol of the good life wealth can buy, belongs to the man who can win--or buy--her. The knowledge of the corrupting influence of great wealth is yet to come.

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<sup>42</sup>Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, p. 119.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BEAUTIFUL AND DAMNED

F. Scott Fitzgerald's second novel, The Beautiful and Damned, is the story of Anthony Patch, a young man of good background and promise, and Gloria Gilbert, his wife. It is a product of Fitzgerald's writer's conscience, the spoiled priest's fears of what the Fitzgeralds themselves might become.<sup>1</sup> The pattern of the novel is the familiar Fitzgerald scheme. Anthony, a graduate of Harvard, has a presently adequate income and the expectation of inheriting his grandfather's millions. Gloria, the young and beautiful, destroys him; she seduces him into a life of idleness in which he not only loses the unproved intellectual superiority he believed in, but also deteriorates physically and spiritually. Gloria is wealth, and her effect on Anthony represents Fitzgerald's growing disillusion.

In many ways this second novel is closely related to Fitzgerald's first. At the beginning of the novel, Gloria is Rosalind, four years later. In spite of Fitzgerald's efforts to individualize Gloria--she is constantly "whacking

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<sup>1</sup>Mizener, pp. 123-124.

away"<sup>2</sup> at a gum drop--she emerges as the same beautiful, spoiled young woman. Her debut is four years behind her now, and she has become bored with prom trotting and college boys. Many of Gloria's ideas are echoes of Rosalind's; she is concerned with the shade of tan on her legs: "'Well, this girl talked about legs. She talked about skin too--her own skin. Always her own. She told me the sort of tan she'd like to get in the summer and how closely she usually approximated it.'"<sup>3</sup> She thinks of her mind as masculine: "'I've got a man's mind.'"<sup>4</sup> And she eschews responsibility: "'I don't want to have responsibility and a lot of children to take care of.'"<sup>5</sup>

Even the novelist's technique in introducing Gloria is reminiscent of Rosalind's first appearance, although the second attempt is much more proficient. There is again a scene in dramatic form, but this time it concerns an allegorical beauty and serves to foreshadow the actual young woman. The presentation of Gloria is not thrust upon the reader with little warning as was the case with Rosalind, but there are several conversations about her before her

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<sup>2</sup>F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Beautiful and Damned (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c1922), p. 64.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

first appearance that heighten suspense and anticipation. Her popularity with men is not forced to attention through a stage direction, but her desirability is brought out more subtly and at great length through Mrs. Gilbert's revelation, a four page recital of the difficulties of motherhood. Gloria's importance to the novel is of course much greater than Rosalind's, in accordance with the author's increasing awareness of the corruption of great wealth. Rosalind's appearance was limited to one chapter, while Gloria's personality pervades the entire novel.

Gloria has all the characteristics of Fitzgerald's woman of wealth, his golden girl, even to the beautiful golden hair, the glowing visual symbol of wealth. "She was dazzling--alight; it was agony to comprehend her beauty in a glance. Her hair, full of a heavenly glamour, was gay against the winter color of the room."<sup>6</sup> Her egotism is enormous, and Anthony's first strong feeling toward her is frustration at being unable to stir her interest toward anything but herself. But it is

. . .in her angers with their attendant cruelties that her inordinate egotism chiefly displayed itself. Because she was brave, because she was "spoiled," because of her outrageous and commendable independence of judgment, and finally because of her arrogant consciousness that she had never seen a girl as beautiful as herself, Gloria had developed into a consistent,

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

practising Nietzschean. This, of course, with overtones of profound sentiment.<sup>7</sup>

She conquers men at will, and, since her family is kept traveling, her conquests earn her the nickname "Coast-to-Coast Gloria."<sup>8</sup>

She had been, probably, the most celebrated and sought-after young beauty in the country. Gloria Gilbert of Kansas City! She had fed on it ruthlessly--enjoying the crowds around her, the manner in which the most desirable young men singled her out;. . .<sup>9</sup>

Even in so minor an act as choosing a table at the Plaza, she demonstrates her belief in the regal privileges of her beauty:

. . .she took all the things of life for hers to choose from and apportion, as though she were continually picking out presents for herself from an unexhaustible counter.<sup>10</sup>

Young Mrs. Patch is the same Gloria, with the egotism and arrogance, if anything, more firmly entrenched. Her life is dedicated to her own pleasure; the code she develops for herself as "a violent affirmation of the negative principle 'Never give a damn.'"<sup>11</sup> This is her "fundamental sophistication," a pose of selfish egotism.<sup>12</sup> There is nothing that

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 255.

she wants of life, "except to be young and beautiful for a long time, to be gay and happy, and to have money and love."<sup>13</sup>

Her anger is great when she suspects that she may be pregnant.

"You'd think you'd been singled out of all the women in the world for this crowning indignity."

"What if I do!" she cried angrily. "It isn't an indignity for them. It's their one excuse for living. It's the one thing they're good for. It is an indignity for me."<sup>14</sup>

The earthiness and sentiment, she says, are appalling; in reality it is the menace to her beauty and the responsibility that are to be avoided.

Even after three years of marriage there is pleasure for Gloria in willful conquest; when an old beau comes through the city on his way to war, she quite deliberately makes him fall in love with her. Gloria is always the most attractive woman in any group, and Anthony is

. . . tremendously proud of Gloria, proud that she never failed to eclipse whatever other women might be in the party, proud that men were always glad to revel with her in great rowdy groups, without any attempt to do more than enjoy her beauty and the warmth of her vitality.<sup>15</sup>

Her beauty is not only the source of her privilege, but she had the confidence that it would always last. "In

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 276.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 227.

the end then, her beauty was all that had never failed her. She had never seen beauty like her own."<sup>16</sup> Idleness was one of the rights of beauty.

"...I want to just be lazy and I want some of the people around me to be doing things, because that makes me feel comfortable and safe--and I want some of them to be doing nothing at all, because they can be graceful and companionable for me. . ."<sup>17</sup>

Life was a series of "parties," gaiety buoyed by alcohol. Although their old house seemed to be warning her, "'Ah, my beautiful young lady, yours is not the first daintiness and delicacy that has faded here under the summer suns. . .,"<sup>18</sup> she would continue to exist "as a conscious flower, prolonging and preserving itself."<sup>19</sup>

This is Gloria of the early married years. But her beauty, the source of her confidence, can not last. The turning point for Gloria arrives when Adam Patch, the reformer, makes a surprise appearance at his grandson's house during a wild "party." Gloria awakens the next morning to fear; this is the beginning of her decline. For Gloria's beauty and independence are supported by wealth; her youth and vitality need a background of riches. When the promised inheritance seems to be lost to them, Gloria immediately

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 393.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 392-393.



feels a lack of nourishment. As the money gets farther and farther away, Gloria's youth fades more and more rapidly. An early sign of this loss in her is her changing attitude toward Anthony. Beneath her feeling for Anthony, behind the jealousy and possessiveness, she discovers contempt. As his income diminishes and the inheritance recedes from them, her contempt and dissatisfaction increase. Although they talk of economy, each night she becomes "nervous" and her restlessness drives them on to another "party." Outwardly the deterioration is slow to be manifested. Gloria at twenty-six has hair that is "still a childish glory, darkening slowly from corn color to a deep russet gold."<sup>20</sup> Masculine eyes still follow her in public places, and women still distrust her for her easy way of drawing the attention of their husbands. Beneath it all is the same strong self interest. Their income is shrinking and the law suit over the will is long and costly, but when faced with the fear of getting old and losing her beauty, Gloria's creed remains, "'To use every minute of these years, when I'm young, in having the best time I possibly can.'"<sup>21</sup>

At twenty-nine her fears are lulled; her beauty seems to be the only thing that has not failed her. Then illness strikes, and, even in delirium, Gloria reveals the underlying

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 297.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 304.

selfishness that she has never lost.

"Millions of people swarming like rats, chattering like apes, smelling like all hell. . . monkeys! Or lice, I suppose. For one really exquisite palace. . . on Long Island, say--or even in Greenwich. . . for one palace full of pictures from the Old World and exquisite things--with avenues of trees and green lawns and a view of the blue sea, and lovely people about in slick dresses. . . I'd sacrifice a hundred thousand of them, a million of them."<sup>22</sup>

Gloria has revealed her relation to wealth; her standards are entirely materialistic. She cares nothing at all for human values. In the aftermath of her illness, her deterioration is evident; her beauty has fled with the money that heightened it. Her beautiful hair, her pride and glory, has changed from "a rich gold dusted with red to an unresplendent light brown."<sup>23</sup> Her courage in the face of pain and her independence disappear also. She even takes to her bed for a week, humoring herself. To Anthony's eyes she has become:

. . . a quarrelsome and unreasonable woman. She was not the Gloria of old, certainly,--the Gloria who, had she been sick, would have preferred to inflict misery upon every one around her rather than confess that she needed sympathy or assistance. She was not above whining now; she was not above being sorry for herself. Each night when she prepared for bed she smeared her face with some new unguent which she hoped illogically would give back the glow and freshness to her vanishing beauty.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 394.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 425.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 416.

Even the eventual possession of the money cannot bring back Gloria's beauty.

What Gloria hoped in the tenebrous depths of her soul, what she expected that great gift of money to bring about, is difficult to imagine. . . It is doubtful if she could have made it clear to anyone what it was she wanted, or indeed what there was to want--a lonely, lovely woman, thirty now, retrenched behind some impregnable inhibition born and coexistent with her beauty.<sup>25</sup>

Her youth and vitality faded with their loss of income, and finally winning the inheritance only proves to Gloria the worthlessness of money.

To Fitzgerald, Gloria is money; her effect on Anthony is Fitzgerald's view of the influence of idle wealth. The vision of the inheritance and Gloria's attractive idleness ruin Anthony in the same way that Fitzgerald thought money could ruin a man, as perhaps he felt that early fame and wealth had ruined him: when an individual of promise is hindered by a generally weak nature, money would keep him from achieving his potentiality.

Fitzgerald's attitude toward wealth in The Beautiful and Damned is rather ambiguous, and this in turn accounts for the major defect in the book. As most critics point out, the reader is never exactly sure of just how the author wants Gloria and Anthony to be understood. As lovers they are frequently glowing and alive and sympathetic. Anthony Patch

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 424.

in his perfect apartment with his superior mind and his superior friends is more admirable than those who destroy their talents for money. The book certainly begins with the old admiration for the life of ease. The deterioration that overwhelms Anthony and Gloria later in the novel marks a change in Fitzgerald's attitude. Money, instead of bringing nobility and superiority to their lives, leads the young Patches to ruin the natural advantages of mind and beauty that they were born with.

The Beautiful and Damned is especially interesting because the change in Fitzgerald's attitudes occurs within its pages. In This Side of Paradise the author was completely dazzled by wealth, and in the opening pages of The Beautiful and Damned his attitude is the same. But somewhere in the novel a transition takes place, and at its conclusion Fitzgerald is no longer the blind worshipper of wealth and the wealthy. In Anthony's warning to the sales-minded young author, Richard Caramel, lies the key to his own downfall: "'Don't let the victor belong to the spoils.'"<sup>26</sup> Fitzgerald, the moralist, eager to drive home the lesson, repeats it on the title page of the novel. But Gloria, the symbol of wealth, has an entirely different attitude; she tells Dick "to go ahead make as much money as he could-- that was the only thing that counted anyhow. . ."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 222.

Gloria's identification with money is made clear by her attitude toward Anthony. Her responsiveness is greatly dependent on their financial state. In their early years together, when his income is adequate and the inheritance seems almost in their hands, she discourages him from any sort of work.

"But what am I going to do if he works? Maury, will you take me around if Anthony works?"

"Anyway, I'm not going to work yet," said Anthony quickly.<sup>28</sup>

There is an unspoken understanding between them based largely on their own estimates of themselves that he was destined for great position, and that "on some misty day he would enter a sort of glorified diplomatic service and be envied by princes and prime ministers for his beautiful wife."<sup>29</sup>

Later, when he is selling their bonds for living expenses and he really needs a job, Anthony goes to work at a stock broker's; but he soon resigns for he finds the work and his co-workers dull and unstimulating, and too often getting up in the morning interferes with sleeping off his headache from the party of the night before. Now that money is scarcer, Gloria is not pleased to know that he will be able to "take her around" again.

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 170-171.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

She wanted him to whine. If he had she would have reproached him bitterly, for she was not a little annoyed, but he only lay there so utterly miserable that she felt sorry for him, and kneeling down she stroked his head, saying how little it mattered, how little anything mattered so long as they loved each other. . . .<sup>30</sup>

and Gloria goes on encouraging him to waste himself.

Anthony lets Gloria's creed of "Never give a damn" keep him from proving the intellectual superiority he believes he has. Though he talks about the work he is going to do, he never actually accomplishes anything because she makes leisure "so subtly attractive."<sup>31</sup> An opportunity he can't rationalize away comes when his grandfather offers to send him to Europe as a war correspondent. For a fleeting moment he enjoys a vision of what he might have been:

He had had one of those sudden flashes of illumination vouchsafed to all men who are dominated by a strong and beloved woman, which show them a world of harder men, more fiercely trained and grappling with the abstractions of thought and war. In that world the arms of Gloria would exist only as the hot embrace of a chance mistress, coolly sought and quickly forgotten. . . .<sup>32</sup>

But Gloria, the strong and beloved woman, the attractive idleness of wealth, draws him back to reality, and he realizes that his choice was made when he fell to Gloria. This is the real turning point in the story, Anthony's last chance to be

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 231

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 206.

an independent man and not a slave to his "golden girl." Anthony gives up the adventure of war to Gloria's sacrifice of the glamour of a movie career.

Together they marshalled the armies of sentiment-- words, kisses, endearments, self-reproaches. They attained nothing. Inevitably they attained nothing. Finally, in a burst of gargantuan emotion each of them sat down and wrote a letter. Anthony's was to his grandfather; Gloria's was to Bloeckman. It was a triumph of lethargy.<sup>33</sup>

It was also a triumph of the allure of idle wealth.

Gloria's arrogance and confidence are completely opposite to Anthony's wavering judgment and irresolute intellectualism. Because her personality is so much more vital and compelling than his, she gradually becomes his sole pre-occupation. "Had he lost her he would have been a broken man, wretchedly and sentimentally absorbed in her memory for the remainder of life."<sup>34</sup> But in spite of this there are conflicts. Even during their courtship, she confuses him and hinders the flow of his ideas. Though he is attracted to her and wants to make an impression, he finds "self-expression had never seemed at once so desirable and so impossible."<sup>35</sup> In the early days of their marriage, he finds that she has lulled his mind to sleep. Gloria, who seemed to him the wisest and finest of all women, "hung like a brilliant curtain

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 277.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

across his doorways, shutting out the light of the sun. In those first years what he believed bore invariably the stamp of Gloria; he saw the sun always through the pattern of the curtain."<sup>36</sup>

When their life together becomes increasingly irregular and dissipated, Anthony and Gloria let the money become the key to future happiness, even giving it the power to renew their love. They talk "of the things they were to do when the money was theirs, and of the places they were to go to after the war, when they would 'agree on things again,' for both of them looked forward to a time when love, springing like the phoenix from its own ashes, should be born again. . . ." <sup>37</sup>

After his grandfather disinherits Anthony, "never give a damn" becomes their entire justification for doing whatever they choose to do:

Not to be sorry, not to loose one cry of regret, to live according to a clear code of honor toward each other, and to seek the moment's happiness as fervently and persistently as possible.<sup>38</sup>

They ignore the many signs of weakness that develop, though "both of them seemed vaguely weaker in fibre, not so much in what they did as in their subtle reactions to the civilization

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 308.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 226.



about them."<sup>39</sup> Gloria's courage declines and Anthony lets himself drift into an entanglement with a woman who lives in the southern town near his army camp.

After the war, when Anthony's income no longer covers their many expenses and the inheritance is tied up in litigation, Gloria's attitude toward her husband's leisure is completely reversed. She is shrewish in urging him to find something to do, and she even intimidates him into a vain attempt at selling stock in "Heart Talks," a pamphlet series of trite optimism and encouragement. The pamphlets are ridiculous, and Anthony's sales efforts a disaster. He finds it necessary to reinforce his courage with alcohol between approaches to prospects, until he is mumbling drunkenly to "customers" on the street.

Through Gloria's continual demands for a more stylish wrap, a grey squirrel coat becomes a symbol of her discontent. As her contempt increases, the united front they present to the public collapses. Gloria begins to criticize Anthony before guests, and he retaliates by raging drunkenly at her: "'You'd think everything was my fault. You'd think you hadn't encouraged me to spend money--and spent a lot more on yourself than I ever did by a long shot.'"<sup>40</sup> As a climax to his debauch, Anthony becomes drunken and abusive one evening, and

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 278.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 410.

is beaten and robbed and left to spend the night among the milk bottles on his front stoop.

Anthony Patch, who at one time showed curiosity and a sense of mental adventure, who patronized the merely financial success of his friends, has become:

. . .an individual of bias and prejudice, with a longing to be emotionally undisturbed. This gradual change had taken place through the past several years, accelerated by a succession of anxieties preying on his<sup>41</sup> mind. There was, first of all, the sense of waste. . .

He had let his wife become his sole preoccupation, and in so doing he had lost the best of himself. To Anthony, Gloria represented a search for happiness, the attainment of an idyllic life. In later years,

. . .he found himself remembering how on one morning they two had started from New York in search of happiness. They had never expected to find it, perhaps, yet in itself that quest had been happier than anything he expected forevermore.<sup>42</sup>

Anthony tells a story to his mistress, Dorothy Raycroft, of how he wanted something very much, something dazzling and golden, and when he at last possessed it, it turned to dust in his hands. Gloria, the temptress, and wealth, or gold, are here clearly equated.

In contrast to Anthony Patch, who is ruined by possessing the golden illusion, Fitzgerald has created Joseph

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 284.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 282.

Bloeckman, the disappointed suitor of the dazzling Gloria. Bloeckman is a self-made man, a man climbing rapidly in the new field of motion pictures solely by his personal abilities. When Bloeckman first appears as a rival for the hand of Gloria Gilbert, he gives Anthony the impression of being "half done." As he reappears periodically through the novel, Bloeckman emerges as more and more finished, while Anthony, the winner in their rivalry, goes steadily downhill. Bloeckman's success is not merely in acquiring polish, but he also climbs to a position of wealth and great personal power. Gloria's dominance has held its fatal sway; truly the victor belongs to the spoils.

The deterioration of the two main characters is made clear through the repeated echoing of the word "clean" through the pages of the novel. Anthony is described early in the novel as having "that especial cleanness borrowed from beauty."<sup>43</sup> During their courtship, Gloria tells Anthony that she loves him because he is clean.

"Well, because you're so clean. You're sort of blowy clean, like I am. There's two sorts, you know. One's like Dick: he's clean like polished pans. You and I are clean like streams and winds. I can tell whenever I see a person whether he is clean, and if so, which kind of clean he is."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

Gloria is here like Rosalind, defining her preference for a beautifully idle life over a domestically useful one.

Gloria doesn't see other women because they don't seem clean to her, and she defines their uncleanness as a "variety of things, a lack of pride, a slackness in fibre, and, most of all, the unmistakable aura of promiscuity."<sup>45</sup> Anthony, leaving for the army, regrets leaving his "clean and lovely girl."<sup>46</sup> The meaning of the word "clean," to describe the early charm of Anthony and Gloria, is brought home in the final scene. A girl on the Europe-bound steamer remarks that Gloria, now wearing Russian sables instead of grey squirrel, looks "sort of dyed and unclean."<sup>47</sup> Gloria, the symbol of wealth, is at last showing her true character.

The Beautiful and Damned is a step further in Fitzgerald's gradual realization of the evil effects of wealth, as shown through the instrument of the woman symbol of wealth. Rosalind was denied to Amory, but she did not hurt him. Gloria destroys Anthony; the ruined shell of a man who sails for Europe with his millions is not the young Anthony Patch in either mind or body. But the question remains, what might Anthony have become? Anthony's superiority was nowhere so

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 234-235.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 313.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 448.

well recognized as in his own mind. Wealth, in the guise of the beautiful woman, kept him from realizing a potentiality that might not have existed at all. The next step for Fitzgerald must be the effects of wealth and the woman on a man whose vision of wealth involved something finer than mere idleness.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE GREAT GATSBY

In The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald's view of the world of wealth is clear. The realization of the corruption behind great riches that crept into the latter half of The Beautiful and Darned is actually the theme of The Great Gatsby, for in this novel Fitzgerald has projected his own gradual recognition of the evil of great wealth upon his fictional narrator, Nick Carraway.) Using the familiar plot of the poor but earnest young man who is destroyed by the wealth of the woman he loves, Fitzgerald lets Carraway, an observer, gradually penetrate (the charm and splendor of the world of wealth to the grossness and corruption beneath.) At the center of this seemingly wonderful, free, and glamorous world of wealth, Fitzgerald has again set a woman, Daisy Buchanan, who is the symbol of riches, wealth incarnate, and brings about the death of Jay Gatsby, the earnest young man.

Like Rosalind Connage and Gloria Patch, the golden girls who were created earlier than she, Daisy shares the characteristics of Fitzgerald's woman of wealth. She is beautiful, assured, and popular. She was, according to Jordan Baker, in her youth "by far the most popular of all

the young girls in Louisville."<sup>1</sup> Gatsby himself feels the presence of the many men who had already loved her. "It excited him, too, that many men had already loved Daisy--it increased her value in his eyes."<sup>2</sup> In her beautiful home, with its largest of the patriotic banners floating over the largest lawn, she was terribly gay, making her debut, "keeping half a dozen dates a day with half a dozen men, and drowsing asleep at dawn with the beads and chiffon of an evening dress tangled among dying orchids on the floor beside her bed."<sup>3</sup> That description could fit with equal ease into This Side of Paradise or The Beautiful and Damned.

In many other ways Daisy is the same girl as Fitzgerald's earlier symbols of wealth. She too has wild rumors that surround her, concerning her attempt to go to New York to say good-bye to Gatsby. Like Rosalind, she too becomes restless waiting for the poor boy she loves to be able to afford her. Something within Daisy also cries for a decision. "She wanted her life shaped now, immediately--and the decision must be made by some force--of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality--that was close at hand."<sup>4</sup> Again

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<sup>1</sup>F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, c1925), p. 90.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

like Rosalind Daisy chooses the practical and most secure way. As Dawson Ryder was "solid" to Rosalind, Tom Buchanan has "a wholesome bulkiness about his person and his position, and Daisy was flattered."<sup>5</sup> The marriage of Tom and Daisy is reminiscent of the early married years of Anthony and Gloria Patch. The Buchanans "moved with a fast crowd, all of them young and rich and wild,"<sup>6</sup> and "drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together."<sup>7</sup> Even in Gatsby's mind there is an image of Daisy's white face just before he first kissed her and "forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath"<sup>8</sup> that is paralleled by a similar white-faced vision in the memory of Anthony Patch.

With Rosalind and Gloria, as a focus for their roles as the symbols of wealth, Fitzgerald chose to emphasize a visual characteristic, their beautiful glowing hair. With Daisy, however, there is a change. It is her voice that attracts men to Daisy, a low, thrilling voice that Fitzgerald repeatedly describes, tracing its effects on the hearer, until he finally reveals its unique function: to

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 181-182.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 134.



symbolize wealth.

In the first scene of the novel, Nick Carraway attempts to describe her voice. "It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down, as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again." Already he is aware that there is an attractive quality in her voice that is even more spell-binding than its music, "an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered 'Listen,' a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour."<sup>9</sup>

Thereafter, in scattered scenes throughout the novel, Daisy's voice is "glowing and singing."<sup>10</sup> The "glowing" appellation hints at its symbolic nature. Jordan Baker implies that Daisy's voice hides something else. "'Perhaps Daisy never went in for amour at all---and yet there's something in that voice of hers....'"<sup>11</sup>

At the first meeting of Gatsby and Daisy, her voice is heard filtered through the minds of both Nick and Gatsby. To Carraway, "the exhilarating ripple of her voice was a

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

wild tonic in the rain. I had to follow the sound of it for a moment, up and down, with my ear alone, before any words came through."<sup>12</sup> To Gatsby her voice is the attainment of a dream. "I think that voice held him most, with its fluctuating, feverish warmth, because it couldn't be over-dreamed--that voice was a deathless song."<sup>13</sup>

The night of Gatsby's party, the affair attended by Tom and Daisy, Daisy's voice is "playing murmurous tricks in her throat."<sup>14</sup> When she begins to sing with the music she brings out "a meaning in each word that it had never had before and would never have again. When the melody rose her voice broke up sweetly, following it, in a way contralto voices have, and each change tipped out a little of her warm human magic upon the air."<sup>15</sup>

The symbolic meaning of Daisy's voice is revealed just before the secret romance between Daisy and Gatsby is itself brought to a climax of revelation. It is Gatsby, the victim of the wealth-woman, who discovers the charm in it:

"She's got an indiscreet voice," I remarked. "It's full of--" I hesitated.

"Her voice is full of money," he said suddenly.

That was it. I'd never understood before. It was full of money--that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals'

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

song of it. . . . High in a white palace the King's daughter, the golden girl. . . . 16

The very language of the paragraph contributes to the image of riches: "inexhaustible," rising and falling, "jingle,"--"the king's daughter, the golden girl." Daisy is fully revealed as a symbol of wealth by her voice. And later, when Gatsby has been "broken up like glass against Tom's hard malice,"<sup>17</sup> and Daisy is drawing further and further away from him, it is "toward that lost voice across the room" that Gatsby's dead dream is fighting.<sup>18</sup>

Although Rosalind and Gloria are painted as dazzling beauties, as Fitzgerald himself became less dazzled by wealth, he began to see further into the character of his woman symbol, and to allow her to demonstrate traits that showed less of her glamour and more of her corruption. Daisy, therefore, does not come through in blinding, dazzling light to anyone except Jay Gatsby, who has enveloped her in a radiance of his own creation. To the narrator, Nick Carraway, who interprets the events of the story to the reader, there is an aura of decay or at least questionable value about Daisy from his first meeting with her. Daisy tells Nick:

"Well, I've had a very bad time, Nick, and I'm pretty cynical about everything."

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

Evidently she had reason to be. I waited but she didn't say any more, and after a moment I returned rather feebly to the subject of her daughter.

"I suppose she talks, and--eats, and everything."

"Oh, yes." She looked at me absently. "Listen, Nick; let me tell you what I said when she was born. Would you like to hear?"

"Very much."

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

"You see I think everything's terrible anyhow," she went on in a convinced way. "Everybody thinks so--the most advanced people. And I know. I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything." Her eyes flashed around her in a defiant way, rather like Tom's, and she laughed with thrilling scorn. "Sophisticated--God, I'm sophisticated!"

The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. It made me uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory emotion from me. I waited, and sure enough, in a moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face, as if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged.<sup>19</sup>

The corruption that lies beneath the beauty and graciousness of the life of the rich is thus hinted at in the first scene of the novel, the dinner party at the Buchanans'

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

Tom has left the table once already for a telephone call from his mistress, and Daisy implies that the situation is a familiar one: "Tom was God knows where." The "basic insincerity" that Nick feels is Daisy's lack of "the sense of the fundamental decencies"<sup>20</sup> that is so strong within himself. The secret membership that Tom and Daisy share is a society of corruption, a disregard for others and the absence of any valid standards of conduct beyond personal selfishness.

The ease and beauty of Daisy's life begins to show its corruption early. Nick's disillusionment with wealth, which is actually Fitzgerald's, begins at the same time. He leaves this first meeting feeling "confused and a little disgusted as I drove away."<sup>21</sup>

The wealth that Daisy symbolizes not only preserves and heightens her beauty, but it has also corrupted her by its protection.<sup>22</sup> Her dependence on wealth has made her bored and empty and a moral coward. Her reasons for resuming her romance with Gatsby are never clear; there is nostalgia for their early relationship, and spite toward her wandering husband, but beyond that there is a search

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>22</sup> Arthur Mizener, "Scott Fitzgerald and the Imaginative Possession of American Life," Sewanee Review, LIV (Winter, 1946), p. 79.

for relief from boredom.<sup>23</sup> Jordan said, "'There's something in that voice of hers. . .'"<sup>24</sup> hinting that there may have been other romances. "'What do people plan?'"<sup>25</sup> cries Daisy, and "'What'll we do with ourselves this afternoon? and the day after that, and the next thirty years?'"<sup>26</sup> in a restless seeking for a way out of emptiness.

Despite the appalling crudeness of West Egg Daisy is reluctant to leave Gatsby's party for she feels instinctively the presence there of "romantic possibilities totally absent from her world."<sup>27</sup> Yet the only thing she likes at the party is the famous movie star, the "gorgeous, scarcely human orchid of a woman,"<sup>28</sup> who is as empty as Daisy herself.

The remarkable courage of the earlier women of wealth is pointedly absent in Daisy; as Fitzgerald's admiration for the wealthy decreased he found this quality more and more lacking in his wealth symbol. Rosalind's decision to marry for money is essentially courageous, the author assures us.

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<sup>23</sup>John W. Bicknell, "The Waste Land of F. Scott Fitzgerald," Virginia Quarterly Review, XXX (Autumn, 1954), p. 559.

<sup>24</sup>Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby, p. 94.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

The young Gloria is fearless; her courage begins to wane only when she is faced with the prospect of losing their money. But Daisy is a moral coward, and she reveals her baseness several times in the course of the novel. Her lack of courage surprises Nick Carraway at their first meeting, when her reaction to her husband's "having a woman in New York" is so spiritless: "It seemed to me that the thing for Daisy to do was to rush out of the house, child in arms--but apparently there were no such intentions in her head."<sup>29</sup>

In her romance with Gatsby, Daisy's cowardice is further revealed. She lacks the fortitude to take a strong stand against Tom in the final showdown. "Her eyes fell on Jordan and me with a sort of appeal, as though she realized at last what she was doing--and as though she had never, all along, intended doing anything at all."<sup>30</sup> The love affair has been only a pastime for her. "Her frightened eyes told that whatever intentions, whatever courage she had had, were definitely gone."<sup>31</sup> The midnight supper with Tom, the final and complete betrayal of Gatsby, the quiet sneaking away from the city leaving Gatsby to take the blame for the murder she committed, come as no surprise to the reader. Her cowardice

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

has been carefully established. Daisy is too dependent on the protection of her wealthy background to ever break away.

For Jay Gatsby and for the reader Daisy's symbolism as wealth incarnate has two entirely different meanings. The reader, through Nick Carraway, recognizes wealth as a corrupting influence. Gatsby, however, is so dazzled by Daisy as a vision of wealth that he fails to see her true nature. To Gatsby, the life of the rich is "a universe of ineffable gaudiness."<sup>32</sup> The glamour of wealth is a blinding light that surrounds Daisy; even her porch is "bright with the bought luxury of star-shine."<sup>33</sup> Gatsby, the poor boy, is "overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves, of the freshness of many clothes, and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor."<sup>34</sup>

(The same wealthy background that has corrupted Daisy has enchanted Gatsby.) The house she lives in seems invested with glamour.

He had never been in such a beautiful house before. But what gave it an air of breathless intensity, was that Daisy lived there--it was as casual a thing to her as his tent out at camp was to him. There was a ripe mystery about it, a hint of bedrooms upstairs more beautiful and cool than other bedrooms, of gay and radiant

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 179.



activities taking place through its corridors, and of romances that were not musty and laid away already in lavender but fresh and breathing and redolent of this year's shining motorcars and of dances whose flowers were scarcely withered.<sup>35</sup>

Even the city she lives in becomes for Gatsby perceived with melancholy beauty. When he leaves it behind he is penniless and hot; he is leaving wealth and coolness, Daisy's fresh beauty, behind.

(To Gatsby, Daisy represents all the beauty and glamour in the world.) The same enchantment that captivated young James Gatz as he sat in a rowboat, looking up at the yacht, has now been focused on Daisy. In spite of Dan Cody's wealth, he had never brought the young adventurer into contact with "nice" people. Daisy, the extraordinary nice girl, becomes for Gatsby a total commitment; he is following a grail. After he had taken her, "she vanished into her rich house, into her rich, full life, leaving Gatsby--nothing. He felt carried to her, that was all."<sup>36</sup> From that time on, (the life of Daisy's youth and freshness is forever wedded to wealth in Gatsby's mind.) He sees her "gleaming like silver," like some sort of idol, a goddess or priestess of wealth.

Gatsby's first appearance in the novel shows him in an attitude of worship, stretching out his arms toward the

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 177-178.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

green light at the end of Daisy's dock, the symbolic green light of "the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us."<sup>37</sup> Fitzgerald chooses phrases of the language of money to describe him. Gatsby is "standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars;" he has "come out to determine what share was his of our local heavens."<sup>38</sup> The worship of Daisy leads Gatsby to extraordinary lengths. There is the Chicago paper he reads for years on the chance of seeing her name and the parties he gives on the chance that she might wander in. The house itself has been bought just to be close to Daisy across the bay, and when she at last visits it, "he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes."<sup>39</sup>

At this first reunion, after his reaction has run from embarrassment to joy to final inexpressible wonder, Gatsby finds release by covering his eyes and laughing--the alternative to crying. It is significant that the act that sets off Gatsby's reaction is Daisy's taking up a brush of pure dull gold from Gatsby's dresser and smoothing down her hair. Even in this transcendent moment of Gatsby's worship

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 25-26. Italics not in the original.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

of Daisy, she is defined as an image of wealth. And when the establishment in West Egg proves distasteful to Daisy, the circus ends; the "whole caravansary" falls in "like a card house at the disapproval in her eyes."<sup>40</sup>

The worship of Daisy continues long after she has abandoned Gatsby. His first thought after the accident is for Daisy's reaction. "'It's better that the shock should all come at once. She stood it pretty well.'"<sup>41</sup> He maintains for Daisy an all-night watch, letting no one mar "the sacredness of the vigil," expressing in religious terms his "watching over nothing."<sup>42</sup> In the end he carries his worship to the highest degree by dying a sacrificial death, letting himself be killed for the murder Daisy committed and leaving his body to be found floating on a mattress like a sacrifice laid out upon an altar.

To the reader, who recognizes the corruption that lies behind Daisy, she is a different kind of priestess. (Money in American life has come to be the "bitch goddess," the worship of success that destroys basic values.) (Gatsby involves himself in untold nefarious schemes in his attempt to attain his dream.) (Just as Daisy destroys Gatsby, the

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 175.

search for financial success is the evil that corrupts the  
 "fundamental decencies" of American society.) To point up  
 her role as a priestess or goddess, Fitzgerald creates a  
 usual image of the wealthy young woman dressed in flowing  
 white garments, an object of worship, her white draperies an  
 ironic symbol of her mock holiness. At Nick Carraway's first  
 visit to the Buchanans' he sees Jordan and Daisy, "both in  
 white, and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if  
 they had just been blown back in after a short flight around  
 the house."<sup>43</sup> Daisy tells Carraway that Jordan, too, is from  
 Louisville. "'Our white girlhood was passed together there.  
 Her beautiful white--'"<sup>44</sup> As a girl, Jordan says, Daisy  
 dressed always in white and drove around in a little white  
 roadster, an expensive car to suit the goddess of wealth.  
 On the day of the showdown with Tom, Jordan and Daisy are  
 again wearing white, looking "like silver idols weighing  
 down their own white dresses."<sup>45</sup> Even the child recognizes  
 their significance: "'Aunt Jordan's got on a white dress  
 too.'"<sup>46</sup>

It is the corrupting influence of great wealth, the

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 140.

worship of success, that leads to the establishment of West Egg, the settlement that Daisy found so offending, the "unprecedented 'place' that Broadway had begotten upon a Long Island fishing village--." <sup>47</sup> West Egg is the home of new money, of people who have worked hard to possess monstrous mock castles of obvious great price. Visiting Englishmen in West Egg are quick to sense its spirit. They are "agonizingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity and convinced that it was theirs for a few words in the right key." <sup>48</sup> Gatsby can brag that it took just three years to earn the money for every arched door and square tower of his house.

East Egg is different; East Egg is representative of old and solid fortunes, entitled to condescend to the raw manners and the raw fortunes of West Egg. At first the difference between the two seems obvious. Nick Carraway says West Egg is the "less fashionable of the two, though that is a most superficial tag to express the bizarre and not a little sinister contrast between them." <sup>49</sup> Jordan Baker is patronizing: "'You live in West Egg,' she remarked contemptuously. 'I know somebody there.'" <sup>50</sup> The visitors

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

from East Egg at Gatsby's parties do not ramble, but assume for themselves "the function of representing the staid nobility of the country-side--East Egg condescending to West Egg, and carefully on guard against its spectroscopic gayety."<sup>51</sup> At first glance, East Egg, with its quiet good taste and less roisterous ways, seems genuinely superior to West Egg. Yet Nick Carraway's list on a time-table of those who came to Gatsby's house shows just as many drunks or unfaithful wives or criminals from East Egg as from West Egg. The point that Fitzgerald is making here is clear: wealth is the corrupter; there is as much coarseness and vulgarity among the possessors of old wealth as among the newly rich. The early establishment of the principle is important in its application to the characters in the novel. Gatsby, in his garish bright suits and with his mysterious background, is not as corrupt as the East Egg Buchanans.

Another device Fitzgerald uses to indicate the corruption beneath great wealth is the telephone. There is an unusual amount of telephoning in this novel.<sup>52</sup> A close examination of the telephone conversations reveals that each is a link between the charming, elegant surface world and the corrupt world that lies beneath it.

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>52</sup>See B. Bernard Cohen, "Telephone Symbolism in the Great Gatsby," Folio, XX (Winter, 1954), pp. 19-23.

Gatsby's cryptic, one-sided telephone conversations are the only clue to the source of his fortune. Periodically through the novel the mysterious phone calls take Gatsby from the superficial elegance of Long Island to an unseen complex of dealings and arrangements. Gatsby's first meeting with Nick is terminated by a call from Chicago. Their luncheon with Wolfshiem is interrupted by Gatsby's abrupt departure from the table; "'He has to telephone,'" is Wolfshiem's explanation.<sup>53</sup> Daisy's first afternoon with Gatsby is marred by a more revealing telephone conversation: "'I said a small town. . . . He must know what a small town is. . . . Well, he's no use to us if Detroit is his idea of a small town. . . .'"<sup>54</sup> And Daisy's visit to Gatsby's party is spoiled by the tipsy crowd Nick chooses to join when Gatsby is called to the phone.

But the corruption underlying great wealth is not limited to the newly founded, shaky fortunes of Gatsby and the West Egg people. Fitzgerald uses much more explicit telephone calls to indicate that East Egg too is rotten at its core. In fact, when the role of the telephone is first established by Nick Carraway's alarmed reaction to "this fifth guest's shrill metallic urgency,"<sup>55</sup> he is visiting the

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<sup>53</sup>Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby, p. 86.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

Buchanans. The implication in his reaction is clear: "My own instinct was to telephone immediately for the police."<sup>56</sup> The telephone call is a clue to Tom Buchanan's double life; Jordan Baker assures Nick at the first opportunity, "'Tom's got some woman in New York.'"<sup>57</sup>

There is another revealing call at Nick's second visit, the luncheon preceding the disastrous afternoon in the Plaza Hotel.

. . . Through the hall of the Buchanans' house blew a faint wind, carrying the sound of the telephone bell out to Gatsby and me as we waited at the door.

"The master's body!" roared the butler into the mouthpiece. "I'm sorry, madame, but we can't furnish it--it's far too hot to touch this noon!"

What he really said was: "Yes. . . Yes. . . I'll see."<sup>58</sup>

Fitzgerald is establishing here the greater corruption of Tom Buchanan. Gatsby's telephone conversations are only vaguely understood, while Tom's are manifest evidence of his corruption.

It is both significant and ironic that Gatsby dies while waiting for a telephone call that never comes. The telephone is a link between the surface world and its hidden corruption, but Gatsby proves, by his dying, how incorruptible at the core he really is. Daisy, who was to have

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 137.



called, proves her corruption by not telephoning. She has made her choice. Her dependence on the protection of wealth is in the end stronger than the pull of love or adventure or whatever it was that had drawn her back to Gatsby. Without his even being aware of it, the Buchanans have dismissed Gatsby from their lives even while he is outside, maintaining his protective sacred vigil over Daisy.

Daisy and Tom were sitting opposite each other at the kitchen table, with a plate of cold fried chicken between them, and two bottles of ale. He was talking intently across the table at her, and in his earnestness his hand had fallen upon and covered her own. Once in a while she looked up at him and nodded in agreement.

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

As I tiptoed from the porch I heard my taxi feeling its way along the dark road toward the house. Gatsby was waiting where I had left him in the drive.

"Is it all quiet up there?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes, it's all quiet." I hesitated. "You'd better come home and get some sleep."

He shook his head.

"I want to wait here till Daisy goes to bed. Good night, old sport."

He put his hands in his coat pockets and turned back eagerly to his scrutiny of the house, as though my presence marred the sacredness of the vigil. So I walked away and left him standing there in the moonlight-- watching over nothing.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., pp. 174-175.

The qualities that appear beneath the brightness and glamour of the Buchanans' sophisticated world, their brutality, moral cowardice, and grossness, represent Fitzgerald's recognition of the corruption of great wealth. Fitzgerald has taken great pains to establish Tom and Daisy Buchanan as representatives of the very rich, the idle rich, the same people whose wealth had previously so dazzled him that he was blinded to their faults. Tom was a member of an enormously wealthy family; "even in college his freedom with money was a matter for reproach--but now he'd left Chicago and come East in a fashion that rather took your breath away: for instance, he'd brought down a string of polo ponies from Lake Forest."<sup>60</sup> He brings his friends from Chicago to his wedding by hiring four private cars and a whole floor of the Muhlbach Hotel. His wedding gift to Daisy reflects his great wealth; the string of pearls is valued at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Daisy's acceptance of the string of pearls marks her complete surrender to the careless self-gratification of the very rich. The letter from Gatsby arriving on the eve of her marriage creates one last chance for her to repudiate the selfish, idle life offered by Tom Buchanan in favor of the stronger, higher values of love and compassion. But the power of material splendor is too great for Daisy, whose

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

very beauty is a product of her wealthy background. The pearls remain around her neck, and she marries Tom Buchanan "without so much as a shiver."<sup>61</sup> The beautiful symbol of wealth yields herself to the highest bidder.

By approving Tom's material standards Daisy also endorses his grossness. Buchanan's cruel strength is stressed as much as his great wealth. He was "one of the most powerful ends that ever played football at New Haven;"<sup>62</sup> to Fitzgerald, a Princeton man too light for football, the connotation of a powerful Yale end is one of extreme brutality. Buchanan uses his power indiscriminately; with one blow of his open hand, he breaks Myrtle Wilson's nose. In addition to his cruel body, "his speaking voice, a gruff husky tenor, added to the impression of fractiousness he conveyed. There was a touch of paternal contempt in it, even toward people he liked--and there were men at New Haven who had hated his guts."<sup>63</sup>

There is no glamour to Tom Buchanan, for Fitzgerald has recognized at last that instead of exploring the magnificent possibilities of the life of the rich, the very rich tend to use their wealth and power to maintain their status

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

at the expense of those around them. Tom is a liar, a hypocrite, and a bully. His personal life is conducted with no standards of ethics at all. He deceives his wife over and over again. There is a hotel chambermaid on their honeymoon; a spree in Chicago that forced them to leave the city; and Myrtle Wilson. About his wife's romance, however, Tom is a complete prig. He uses George Wilson, his mistress's husband, to carry out his own revenge against Gatsby, while he takes the coward's way of sneaking off.

In Tom Buchanan, Fitzgerald's revulsion at the corruption in great wealth is complete. Tom in his vileness represents the total lack of "the fundamental decencies" fully exposed; by choosing to stay with him and be like him, Daisy becomes the beautiful mask of the inherent evil in great wealth.

It was all very careless and confused. They were careless people, Tom and Daisy--they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made. . . .<sup>64</sup>

The creatures they destroy--the Wilsons and Gatsby--are innocent victims who are deluded by their own dreams of grandeur.<sup>65</sup> They never know what hits them. Gatsby dies along with his dream while Tom and Daisy go carelessly on,

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>65</sup>Bicknell, p. 559.

unaware or not caring, but not at all touched by the damage they have done. Daisy sends not so much as a flower to Gatsby's grave. Only Nick Carraway, the observer, has any insight into the true character of "what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams."<sup>66</sup> His last words to Gatsby are: "'They're a rotten crowd. You're worth the whole damn bunch put together.'"<sup>67</sup> But Gatsby is too bedazzled to be reached.

Nick Carraway, who does have a sense of the fundamental decencies, has another function in the novel beyond mere narration. Coming from a prominent, old family, "something of a clan,"<sup>68</sup> and filled with the ideals of honorable conduct handed down to him by his father, Nick stands in direct contrast to the careless destruction of the Buchanans. Jordan Baker realizes his strength when she tells him, early in the novel, "'I hate careless people. That's why I like you.'"<sup>69</sup> Nick's feeling of obligation to do the honorable thing toward the girl back home is a foreshadowing of his sense of a similar obligation to Jordan at the end of the novel. "I wanted to leave things in order and not just

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<sup>66</sup>Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby, p. 3.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

trust that obliging and indifferent sea to sweep my refuse away."<sup>70</sup> The qualities of an older and simpler American society are set up against the glamour and complexity of a more sophisticated way of life.

As Fitzgerald recognized the corruption that wealth engendered, he realized that the struggle for financial success was creating profound changes in American society. The honesty, integrity, and courage of the Gatsbys and the Carraways was giving way to the lack of values of the Buchanans, or their negative standards of selfishness and cruelty. There is a nostalgia in The Great Gatsby reminiscent of the feeling of loss in the works of Willa Cather, Thomas Wolfe, and Sherwood Anderson.<sup>71</sup> In his "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life,"<sup>72</sup> Jay Gatsby is one with the early settlers and the Dutch sailors who once had something face to face commensurate to man's capacity for wonder. But that day is gone, and what is now offered to the imagination for an intensity of attachment is a life that is all glittering surface and evil core.

After he had chronicled his own disillusionment with

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<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>71</sup>Charles S. Holmes, "Fitzgerald: The American Theme," The Spectator's Appraisal, The Pacific Spectator, VI (Spring, 1952), p. 252.

<sup>72</sup>Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby, p. 2.

the life of the very rich in The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald went on to one more treatment of the theme: the broader effects of wealth in the disintegration of society and its eventual corrosion of the very rich themselves.

## CHAPTER V

### TENDER IS THE NIGHT

The critical reception of Fitzgerald's Tender Is The Night ranges from reviews that find it a failure<sup>1</sup> to those that call it Fitzgerald's most brilliant book.<sup>2</sup> Whatever the faults or virtues of the novel, however, (it carries the exposure of the corruption underlying the world of wealth to the farthest degree) of any of the novels; against the background of (a whole society whose great riches have degraded its members to a state of sterility and decay) it shows (the degeneration of a single soul under the influence of too much money). The theme follows Fitzgerald's familiar plot. Dick Diver, whose only legacy is the set of fundamental human values given him by his father, is a brilliant and promising physician. He is destroyed by wealth, again in the form of a woman, and to emphasize her inherent corruption Fitzgerald depicts Nicole Warren, wealth incarnate, as a psychotic.

The insanity of Nicole Warren, schizophrenia brought

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<sup>1</sup>John Berryman, "F. Scott Fitzgerald," Kenyon Review, VIII (Winter, 1946), p. 107.

<sup>2</sup>Arthur Mizener, "Scott Fitzgerald and the Imaginative Possession of American Life," Sewanee Review, LIV (Winter, 1946), pp. 82-83.



on by an incestuous seduction, is in itself a result of (the inner moral corrosion of great wealth); in portraying her thus Fitzgerald carries his golden girl of wealth one step beyond Daisy Buchanan's indifference to the evil effects of wealth to a point where the corruption of great riches is a monstrous deformity that cannot be escaped or hidden.

In spite of her mental illness, Nicole retains the characteristics of Fitzgerald's golden girls; she is beautiful, wealthy, and arrogant. Even at the end of the narrative, when Nicole is twenty-nine years old, she never loses the youth and freshness that animates all Fitzgerald's women of wealth. Her beauty is obvious even to her rival, Rosemary Hoyt, who "found her one of the most beautiful people she had ever known."<sup>3</sup> Though she admires Nicole for her beauty and wisdom, Rosemary still tries to match herself against her in a contest for Dick's love. In Nicole she found:

There were all the potentialities for romantic love in that lovely body and in the delicate mouth, sometimes tight, sometimes expectantly half open to the world. Nicole had been a beauty as a young girl and she would be a beauty later when her skin stretched tight over her high cheek-bones--the essential structure was there. She had been white-Saxon-blond but she was more beautiful now that her hair had darkened than when it had been like a cloud and more beautiful than she.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>F. Scott Fitzgerald, Tender Is the Night, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c1933), p. 33. (The Scribner Library Edition).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

Even admitting his attraction to Rosemary, Dick recognizes that "the beauty of Nicole had been to the beauty of Rosemary as the beauty of Leonardo's girl was to that of the girl of an illustrator."<sup>5</sup>

Except for her illness and the events that precipitated it, Nicole's girlhood might have been just like the popular debutante stages of Rosalind Connage, Gloria Patch, or Daisy Buchanan. In a letter from the clinic, she says, "I wish someone were in love with me like boys were ages ago before I was sick."<sup>6</sup> Her father confirms her popularity when he first brings her to the clinic:

"She could have all the young men she wanted. We were in Lake Forest--that's a summer place near Chicago where we have a place--and she was out all day playing golf or tennis with boys. And some of them pretty gone on her at that."<sup>7</sup>

For Dr. Diver there was the special pleasure of watching Nicole emerge from her shell to the enjoyment of all that a golden girl was born to.

He was enough older than Nicole to take pleasure in her youthful vanities and delights, the way she paused fractionally in front of the hall mirror on leaving the restaurant, so that the incorruptible quicksilver could give her back to herself. He delighted in her stretching out her hands to new octaves now that she found herself beautiful and rich.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

Dick's advice to his young patient is to resume the Lake Forest-debutante life of a wealthy young American girl. "Go back to America and be a debutante and fall in love-- and be happy."<sup>9</sup> Yet it is difficult to let her go, for Dick feels about Nicole as Gatsby, Anthony, and Amory felt about their golden girls, that "there was that excitement about her that seemed to reflect all the excitement of the world."<sup>10</sup>

The wealthy background that shelters the other golden girls is also part of Nicole's upbringing. When she thinks she will lose Dick, she is tempted to try to buy him too, as she buys whatever she wants. "For a moment she entertained a desperate idea of telling him how rich she was, what big houses she lived in, that really she was a valuable property--for a moment she made herself into her grandfather, Sid Warren, the horse-trader."<sup>11</sup>

Nicole is equally as careless of her money as she is conscious of the superiority it gives her. Fitzgerald's picture of Nicole shopping is a gorgeous characterization of a symbol of wealth.

Nicole bought from a great list that ran two pages, and bought the things in the windows besides. Everything she liked that she couldn't possibly use herself, she bought as a present for a friend. She bought colored

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

beads, folding beach cushions, artificial flowers, honey, a guest bed, bags, scarfs, love birds, miniatures for a doll's house and three yards of some new cloth the color of prawns. She bought a dozen bathing suits, a rubber alligator, a travelling chess set of gold and ivory, big linen handkerchiefs for Abe, two chamois leather jackets of kingfisher blue and burning bush from Hermes--bought all these things not a bit like a high class courtesan buying underwear and jewels, which were after all professional equipment and insurance--but with an entirely different point of view. Nicole was the product of much ingenuity and toil. For her sake trains began their run at Chicago and traversed the round belly of the continent to California; chicle factories fumed and link belts grew link by link in factories; men mixed toothpaste in vats and drew mouthwash out of copper hogsheads; girls canned tomatoes quickly in August or worked rudely at the Five-and-Tens on Christmas Eve; half-breed Indians toiled on Brazilian coffee plantations and dreamers were muscled out of patent rights in new tractors--these were some of the people who gave a tithe to Nicole, and as the whole system swayed and thundered onward it lent a feverish bloom to such processes of hers as wholesale buying, like the flush of a fireman's face holding his post before a spreading blaze. She illustrated very simple principles, containing in herself her own doom, but illustrated them so accurately that there was grace in the procedure, and presently Rosemary would try to imitate it.<sup>12</sup>

Even the language of money matters has a different meaning to Nicole than to other people.

"We'd just built our Lake Forest house and we were economizing," Nicole continued. "At least Baby and I and the governess economized and Mother travelled."

"We were economizing too," said Rosemary, realizing that the word meant different things to them.<sup>13</sup>

Rosemary's position as a working girl, though a glamorous one, is a useful contrast to the idle, carefree life

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 54-55.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

of the very rich that Nicole leads.

Dismissing him from her mind she [Nicole] went out, ran into Rosemary at the dressmaker's, and shopped with her for artificial flowers and all-colored strings of colored beads on the Rue de Rivoli. She helped Rosemary choose a diamond for her mother, and some scarfs and novel cigarette cases to take home to business associates in California. For her son she bought Greek and Roman soldiers, a whole army of them, costing over a thousand francs. Once again they spent their money in different ways, and again Rosemary admired Nicole's method of spending. Nicole was sure that the money she spent was hers--Rosemary still thought her money was miraculously lent to her and she must consequently be very careful of it.<sup>14</sup>

The almost unlimited wealth behind Nicole gives her a confidence in herself that borders on arrogance and resembles the imperiousness with which Rosalind and Gloria treated their abject suitors. Her presumption that her physician is fair game for a flirtation astounds Dick at first.

"You're a fetching kid, but I couldn't fall in love."

"You won't give me a chance."

"What!"

The impertinence, the right to invade implied, astounded him. Short of anarchy he could not think of any chance that Nicole Warren deserved.

"Give me a chance now."<sup>15</sup>

Nicole's affair with Tommy Barban has added meaning for her, for by this romance she is making up for the lost years of her youth. "How good to have things like this, to

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 154.

be worshipped again, to pretend to have a mystery! She had lost two of the great arrogant years in the life of a pretty girl--now she felt like making up for them;. . ."16 Nicole's conduct of the affair, expecting to be worshipped, pretending to have a mystery, is reminiscent of the technique of the other, younger golden girls, and Fitzgerald himself affirms a similarity: "Attractive women of nineteen and of twenty-nine are alike in their breezy confidence."17

The arrogance of wealth is directed at others besides her lovers; when she wishes to remind an inferior of his place, Nicole is well able to command her grandfather's slow distinct voice and his deliberate stare. Rosemary is a frequent target. When Nicole admits to a feeling of snobbery toward the other guests at Gausses's Hotel: "'Well, I have felt there were too many people on the beach this summer. . . Our beach that Dick made out of a pebble pile,'" the impression registered with Rosemary is that "she would not like to have Nicole for an enemy."18 To Kaethe Gregorovius Nicole's arrogance is especially taxing, for she senses a calculation in Nicole to use any means to maintain her sway. "'I think Nicole is less sick than any one thinks--she only cherishes

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16 Ibid., p. 291.

17 Ibid., p. 291.

18 Ibid., p. 20.

her illness as an instrument of power."<sup>19</sup>

There are other similarities between Nicole and the earlier wealth symbols. In physical appearance, for example, the first description of Nicole as a young woman with a string of pearls brings to the reader's mind the expensive strand of pearls that marked Daisy's surrender to the corruption of wealth. Nicole's hair is "thick, dark, gold like a chow's,"<sup>20</sup> and also like Rosalind's and Gloria's. But Nicole's hair is not developed in the novel as a symbol of wealth; instead, it is her lovely, hard face that "corresponds in symbolic utility to Daisy's voice,"<sup>21</sup> and represents in its hardness the qualities of wealth. It is Rosemary who recognizes in Nicole's "hard, almost stern"<sup>22</sup> face the combination of hardness, beauty, and money: "Certainly she was the most attractive woman Rosemary had ever met--with her hardness, her devotions and loyalties, and a certain elusive-ness, which Rosemary, thinking now through her mother's middle-class mind, associated with her attitude about money."<sup>23</sup> The influence of wealth can be seen in Rosemary's

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 239.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>21</sup>Edwin S. Fussell, "Fitzgerald's Brave New World," ELH A Journal of English Literary History, XIX (December, 1952), p. 300.

<sup>22</sup>Fitzgerald, Tender Is the Night, p. 25.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

reaction to Nicole's hardness: "It was good to be hard, then; all nice people were hard on themselves."<sup>24</sup> Yet Rosemary still fears Nicole and this same hard quality in her. "Nicole was a force--not necessarily well disposed or predictable like her mother--an incalculable force. Rosemary was somewhat afraid of her."<sup>25</sup> It is inevitable that the quality representing wealth in the woman symbol be somehow connected with the destruction of the hero. Just as Daisy's voice leads Gatsby to his death, so Nicole is attracted to Tommy Barban, Dick's successor, because she recognizes her own hardness in him.

Nicole's hard arrogance is out-distanced by that of Baby Warren, her sister, who has an even greater sense of their position as Warrens of Chicago. Baby's self-consciousness as a woman of position leads her to a constant attempt to make her power felt. She always buys first-class tickets as a matter of principle, and she seems to enjoy threatening the American Consul in Rome with, "'We're people of considerable standing in America--' Her mouth hardened as she continued. 'If it wasn't for the scandal we can--I shall see that your indifference to this matter is reported in the proper quarter.'"<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 232.



Fitzgerald makes their social status clear: "They were an American ducal family without a title--the very name written in a hotel register, signed to an introduction, used in a difficult situation, caused a psychological metamorphosis in people, and in return this change had crystallized her own sense of position."<sup>27</sup> Titled Europeans treat the young girls with respect, for their fortunes are tied up somehow with the Warren fortunes. Their power was such that Devereux Warren was able to arrange to run the submarine blockade and bring his daughter to Switzerland on a United States cruiser.

For Dick Diver, the son of a poor minister, to marry into the Warren family was to jeopardize all his integrity and independence. In spite of Professor Dohmler's warning that it was a "professional situation,"<sup>28</sup> Dick believed that he was marrying Nicole not out of pity or for her money, but for love. Throughout their marriage, with the strain of being both physician and husband to Nicole, and with "Sweet propinquity and the Warren money"<sup>29</sup> gradually breaking him down, he never loses the feeling that "Nicole was his girl--too often he was sick at heart about her, yet she was his

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

girl."<sup>30</sup> Even as he himself is steadily declining from the person he once was, finding himself drinking more and more, involving himself in street brawls with taxi drivers, he still recognizes his love for his wife: "Certain thoughts about Nicole, that she should die, sink into mental darkness, love another man, made him physically sick."<sup>31</sup>

On Nicole's part, her love for Dick is described as a "transference" by her physicians, a common psychological phenomenon of carrying over and attaching to the therapist "the friendly, hostile or ambivalent attitudes and feelings which the patient formerly entertained in relation to the parent or other person who at a previous time played a significant role in his life."<sup>32</sup> Through his letters, Dick has become more and more a source of security for Nicole, gradually replacing her father as the center of her trust; by then marrying this father-figure, Nicole legitimizes her feeling of complicity in desire and relieves her feelings of guilt about the incestuous relation. Nicole's dependence on her husband leads her to bind him as tightly as she can by the only means she has, her money, and forces her into a "lonely life owning Dick who did not want to be owned."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>32</sup> Arthur P. Noyes, M.D., Modern Clinical Psychiatry (fourth edition; Philadelphia & London: W. B. Saunders Company, 1953), p. 572.

<sup>33</sup> Fitzgerald, Tender Is the Night, p. 180.

Upon Dick, on the other hand, through his complex role as both physician and husband, falls all the responsibility for making their marriage succeed. Though he loves Rosemary for a time, Dick is adamant that their love affair mustn't hurt Nicole.

"Unfortunately I do. But Nicole mustn't know--she mustn't suspect even faintly. Nicole and I have got to go on together. In a way that's more important than just wanting to go on."

"Kiss me once more."

He kissed her, but momentarily he had left her.

"Nicole mustn't suffer--she loves me and I love her--you understand that."<sup>34</sup>

The complications of being in love with Rosemary mark the first crack in the relationship between Dick and Nicole. Loving Rosemary, Dick for the first time sees Nicole in a harsh, critical light. "Though he thought she was the most attractive human creature he had ever seen, though he got from her everything he needed, he scented battle from afar, and subconsciously he had been hardening and arming himself, hour by hour."<sup>35</sup> Outwardly, however, the strange relationship and precarious balance of the marriage of the Divers is not apparent. Even Rosemary, who precipitates the first open break in the precious stability, is not aware of the struggles that maintain it.

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

Her naivete responded whole-heartedly to the expensive simplicity of the Divers, unaware of its complexity and its lack of innocence, unaware that it was all a selection of quality rather than quantity from the run of the world's bazaar; and that the simplicity of behavior also, the nursery-like peace and good will, the emphasis on the simpler virtues, was part of a desperate bargain with the gods and had been attained through struggles she could not have guessed at. At that moment the Divers represented externally the exact furthestmost evolution of a class, so that most people seemed awkward beside them--in reality a qualitative change had already set in that was not at all apparent to Rosemary.<sup>36</sup>

To Rosemary the life of the Divers seems charmed and effortless.

Rosemary envied them their fun, imagining a life of leisure unlike her own. She knew little of leisure but she had the respect for it of those who have never had it. She thought of it as a resting, without realizing that the Divers were as far from relaxing as she was herself.<sup>37</sup>

She sees only the outward results of the spending of Nicole's money, and does not realize the "qualitative change," the emotional decay that is increasingly destroying Dick as Nicole's wealth advances its control over him. The first sight of the Divers does look as if their life were all fun. They are on the beach, with "four large parasols that made a canopy of shade, a portable bath house for dressing, a pneumatic rubber horse, new things that Rosemary had never seen, from the first burst of luxury manufacturing after the War, and probably in the hands of the first of

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 21-22.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

purchasers."<sup>38</sup> For lunch they retreat to their Villa Diana, their perfect house with a magnificent Mediterranean view. "The villa and its grounds were made out of a row of peasant dwellings that abutted on the cliff--five small houses had been combined to make the house and four destroyed to make the garden."<sup>39</sup>

But living the opulent life that Nicole's money provides for them, Dick finds it more and more difficult to maintain his independence and integrity. In the beginning he had laughed at Baby Warren's proposal to buy a doctor for Nicole:

"Now of course we have lots of connections there-- Father controls certain chairs and fellowships and so forth at the University, and I thought if we took Nicole home and threw her with that crowd--you see she's quite musical and speaks all these languages--what could be better in her condition than if she fell in love with some good doctor---"

A burst of hilarity surged up in Dick, the Warrens were going to buy Nicole a doctor--You got a nice doctor you can let us use? There was no use worrying about Nicole when they were in the position of being able to buy her a nice young doctor, the paint scarcely dry on him.

"But how about the doctor?" he said automatically.

"There must be many who'd jump at the chance."<sup>40</sup>

Unconsciously Dick immediately puts himself in the situation of the newly purchased man: "But how about the

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 18-19.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 152-153.

doctor?" When the marriage takes place, the original agreement does not put Dick in the position of being a parasitic husband; he makes sure of that.

How do you do, lawyer. We're going to Como tomorrow for a week and then back to Zurich. That's why I wanted you and sister to settle this, because it doesn't matter to us how much I'm allowed. We're going to live very quietly in Zurich for two years and Dick has enough to take care of us. No, Baby, I'm more practical than you think--It's only for clothes and things I'll need it. . . Why, that's more than--can the estate really afford to give me all that? I know I'll never manage to spend it. Do you have that much? Why do you have more--is it because I'm supposed to be incompetent? All right, let my share pile up then. . . No, Dick refuses to have anything whatever to do with it. I'll have to feel bloated for us both. . . . Baby, you have no more idea of what Dick is like than, than--Now where do I sign? Oh, I'm sorry.<sup>41</sup>

Nicole, however, "had been designed for change, for flight, with money as fins and wings."<sup>42</sup> It is inevitable that she would wish to travel, to live in elegance, to sample the best and most expensive things.

. . . That seems unreasonable, Dick--we have every reason for taking the bigger apartment. Why should we penalize ourselves just because there's more Warren money than Diver money. Oh, thank you, camerière, but we've changed our minds. This English clergyman tells us that your wine here in Orvieto is excellent. It doesn't travel? That must be why we have never heard of it, because we love wine.<sup>43</sup>

Nicole's mental state seems to improve with travel,

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 280.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 159-160.

a development that accelerates Dick's progressive giving in to Nicole's wealth.

. . . We travelled a lot that year--from Woolloomooloo Bay to Biskra. On the edge of the Sahara we ran into a plague of locusts and the chauffeur explained kindly that they were bumble-bees. The sky was low at night, full of the presence of a strange and watchful God. Oh, the poor little naked Ouled Nail; the night was noisy with drums from Senegal and flutes and whining camels, and the natives pattering about in shoes made of old automobile tires.

But I was gone again by that time--trains and beaches they were all one. That was why he took me travelling [sic] but after my second child, my little girl, Topsy, was born everything got dark again.<sup>44</sup>

The necessity of being physician to his wife combines with the strain of fighting the encroachment of her money to undermine Dick's professional interests as well as his integrity.

We must spend my money and have a house--I'm tired of apartments and waiting for you. You're bored with Zurich and you can't find time for writing here and you say that it's a confession of weakness for a scientist not to write. And I'll look over the whole field of knowledge and pick out something and really know about it, so I'll have it to hang on to if I go to pieces again. You'll help me, Dick, so I won't feel so guilty. We'll live near a warm beach where we can be brown and young together.

. . . This is going to be Dick's work house. Oh, the idea came to us both at the same moment. We had passed Tarmes a dozen times and we rode up here and found the houses empty, except two stables.<sup>45</sup>

But even having a work house whose costs he carefully

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 160-161.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

computed and paid for with his own money, cannot stem the inevitable effect of Nicole's advance.

. . . Dick, why did you register Mr. and Mrs. Diver instead of Doctor and Mrs. Diver? I just wondered--it just floated through my mind.<sup>46</sup>

After falling in love with Rosemary, Dick is faced with the urgency of trying to justify himself to himself and to establish once and for all a limit to the inroads of wealth. He finds that he is dissatisfied:

But he was currently uneasy about the whole thing. He resented the wasted years at New Haven, but mostly he felt a discrepancy between the growing luxury in which the Divers lived, and the need for display which apparently went along with it.<sup>47</sup>

He knows his work has suffered through his weakness, and the idea of a short, compromise publication to conceal his neglect of his work crosses his mind. "He had about decided to brief the work in its present condition and publish it in an undocumented volume of a hundred thousand words as an introduction to more scholarly volumes to follow."<sup>48</sup>

The difficulties of a situation where a bank clerk can ask a man "whether he wanted to draw upon his wife's money or his own"<sup>49</sup> are obvious.

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 89.



It was hard to know where to go. He glanced about the house that Nicole had made, that Nicole's grandfather had paid for. He owned only his work house and the ground on which it stood. Out of three thousand a year and what dribbled in from his publications he paid for his clothes and personal expenses, for cellar charges, and for Lanier's education, so far confined to a nurse's wage. Never had a move been contemplated without Dick's figuring his share. Living rather ascetically, traveling third-class when he was alone, with the cheapest wine, and good care of his clothes, and penalizing himself for any extravagances, he maintained a qualified financial independence. After a certain point, though, it was difficult--again and again it was necessary to decide together as to the uses to which Nicole's money should be put. Naturally Nicole, wanting to own him, wanting him to stand still forever, encouraged any slackness on his part, and in multiplying ways he was constantly inundated by a trickling of goods and money. The inception of the idea of the cliff villa which they had elaborated as a fantasy one day was a typical example of the forces divorcing them from the first simple arrangements in Zurich.

"Wouldn't it be fun if--" it had been; and then, "Won't it be fun when--"

It was not so much fun. His work became confused with Nicole's problems; in addition, her income had increased so fast of late that it seemed to belittle his work.<sup>50</sup>

Where Dick makes his mistake is in thinking that he can take himself out of the grip of the wealth that has swallowed him. Buying and operating a clinic in Zurich with Franz Gregorovius seems like an escape, but even in this venture the wealth of the Warrens possesses him. It is Warren money that must buy the clinic: "'Nicole and Baby are rich as Croesus but I haven't managed to get my hands on

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 170.

any of it yet."<sup>51</sup> Baby Warren with the arrogance of her great wealth presumes to approve the move.

Baby was thinking that if Nicole lived beside a clinic she would always feel quite safe about her.

"We must think it over carefully," she said.

Though amused at her insolence, Dick did not encourage it.

"The decision concerns me, Baby," he said gently. "It's nice of you to want to buy me a clinic."<sup>52</sup>

Only later does Dick realize that he has sold just a little bit more of his soul.

. . . Then it came to him under the form of what Baby had said: "We must think it over carefully--" and the unsaid lines back of that: "We own you, and you'll admit it sooner or later. It is absurd to keep up the pretense of independence."<sup>53</sup>

The "pretense of independence" is difficult to maintain. Dick's car is "a Renault so dwarfish that they all stuck out of it except the children,"<sup>54</sup> while Nicole provides a limosine and chauffeur. The situation in Zurich is not a beneficial one for Dr. Diver; the emotional drain on him is tremendous. Added to the effort of fighting for financial independence are the demands of Nicole's increasing mental instability and the strain of daily contact with his

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 175-176.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 187.

mentally disturbed patients.

Getting away from it all, Dick goes to Germany, ostensibly for a medical meeting but actually to try again to find a means of escape from his melancholy.

But Dick had come away for his soul's sake, and he began thinking about that. He had lost himself--he could not tell the hour when, or the day or the week, the month or the year. Once he had cut through things, solving the most complicated equations as the simplest problems of his simplest patients. Between the time he found Nicole flowering under a stone on the Zurichsee and the moment of his meeting with Rosemary the spear had been blunted.

Watching his father's struggles in poor parishes had wedded a desire for money to an essentially unacquisitive nature. It was not a healthy necessity for security--he had never felt more sure of himself, more thoroughly his own man, than at the time of his marriage to Nicole. Yet he had been swallowed up like a gigolo, and somehow permitted his arsenal to be locked up in the Warren safety-deposit vaults.

"There should have been a settlement in the Continental style; but it isn't over yet. I've wasted eight years teaching the rich the ABC's of human decency, but I'm not done. I've got too many unplayed trumps in my hand."<sup>55</sup>

Dick's vision is clearer now, and he sees himself better in Germany than he did on the Riviera. He admits to himself that the desire for money has sub-consciously led him to betray himself, that he has sold his arsenal of personal integrity, professional ability, and the talent of winning love. But again he makes the mistake of thinking he can escape, believing that he has not been engulfed by

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 201.

the Warren fortunes.

While Dick plans, the money is increasing, reinforcing its hold on Dr. Diver. Baby Warren, meeting Dick in Rome, tells him, "'But there's so much money now. Plenty for everything, and it ought to be used to get Nicole well.'"<sup>56</sup> So the clinic is sold and the Divers begin traveling again, becoming more and more the slaves of their wealth.

Another element that distinguished this summer and autumn for the Divers was a plenitude of money. Due to the sale of their interest in the clinic, and to developments in America, there was now so much that the mere spending of it, the care of goods, was an absorption in itself. The style in which they traveled seemed fabulous.

Regard them, for example, as the train slows up at Boyen where they are to spend a fortnight visiting. The shifting from the wagon-lit has begun at the Italian frontier. The governess's maid and Madame Diver's maid have come up from second class to help with the baggage and the dogs. Mlle. Bellois will superintend the hand-luggage, leaving the Sealyhams to one maid and the pair of Pekinese to the other. It is not necessarily poverty of spirit that makes a woman surround herself with life--it can be a superabundance of interest, and, except during her flashes of illness, Nicole was capable of being curator of it all. For example with the great quantity of heavy baggage--presently from the van would be unloaded four wardrobe trunks, a shoe trunk, three hat trunks, and two hat boxes, a chest of servants' trunks, a portable filing-cabinet, a medicine case, a spirit lamp container, a picnic set, four tennis rackets in presses and cases, a phonograph, a typewriter. Distributed among the spaces reserved for family and entourage were two dozen supplementary grips, satchels and packages, each one numbered, down to the tag on the cane case. Thus all of it could be

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 215.

checked up in two minutes on any station platform, some for storage, some for accompaniment from the "light trip list" or the "heavy trip list," constantly revised, and carried on metaledged plaques in Nicole's purse. She had devised the system as a child when traveling with her failing mother. It was equivalent to the system of a regimental supply officer who must think of the bellies and equipment of three thousand men.<sup>57</sup>

And the net result of all this wealth is that Dick is beaten. Gradually the people around Dick begin to see him, not as Nicole's physician who preserves her sanity, but as the doctor that the Warren money bought for her. Baby begins to suggest that they might trade him in for a new model:

"It's possible that I was the wrong person for Nicole," Dick said. "Still she would probably have married some one of my type, some one she thought she could rely on--indefinitely."

"You think she'd be happier with somebody else?" Baby thought aloud suddenly. "Of course it could be arranged."

Only as she saw Dick bend forward with helpless laughter did she realize the preposterousness of her remark.<sup>58</sup>

Kaethe Gregorovius, who had worshipped Dick, condemns him as a parasite: "'--Dick married Nicole for her money,' she said. 'That was his weakness--you hinted as much yourself one night.'"<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., pp. 257-258.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

Tommy Barban asserts to Nicole herself that her money has ruined Dick: "'You've got too much money,' he said impatiently. 'That's the crux of the matter. Dick can't beat that.'"<sup>60</sup>

Finally even Nicole believes that she has been Dick's destruction.

"Some of the time I think it's my fault--I've ruined you."

"So I'm ruined, am I?" he inquired pleasantly.

"I didn't mean that. But you used to want to create things--now you seem to want to smash them up."<sup>61</sup>

When Dick at last is able to free Nicole, to throw her upon her own control, he is too late to save himself. His dissolution is the sacrifice he makes to the lure of riches. His is the familiar Fitzgerald fate of the man destroyed by the wealth of the woman he loves. The rich, with their hardness and careless indifference to human values, are not concerned with the destruction they bring about. Baby Warren serves as spokesman to dismiss the ravaged Dr. Diver:

"We should have let him confine himself to his bicycle excursions," she remarked. "When people are taken out of their depths they lose their heads, no matter how charming a bluff they put up."

"Dick was a good husband to me for six years," Nicole said. "All that time I never suffered a minute's pain because of him, and he always did his best never to let anything hurt me."

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 267.

Baby's lower jaw projected slightly as she said:

"That's what he was educated for."<sup>62</sup>

The Warren money has purchased a doctor for Nicole; when his usefulness is over, he is discarded.

The gradual paralysis that wealth inflicts on Dick Diver is a loss of inner moral and emotional stamina, the lesion of vitality that Fitzgerald was later to call "emotional bankruptcy"; it is the loss implied by the "qualitative change" that is not apparent to Rosemary. As Diver himself explains, "'The change came a long way back--but at first it didn't show. The manner remains intact for some time after the morale cracks.'"<sup>63</sup>

Living the life of the very rich, Dick is forced to give emotional nourishment, "pieces of his own most personal self,"<sup>64</sup> to everyone; not just Nicole, but all the circle that surrounds the Divers love Dick for his kindness and tact, and his ability to bring happiness to people too jaded to provide their own. Coming back to Switzerland after the war, Dick realizes that being made much of is not good for a serious man. Yet "he wanted to be good, he wanted to be kind, he wanted to be brave and wise, but it was all pretty difficult. He wanted to be loved, too, if he could fit it

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 312.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

in."<sup>65</sup> So he wastes his emotional energy creating a special little world for everyone he comes in contact with, making the effort out of the habit of being loved, without regard for the worth or value of the person won.

To Rosemary, at their first meeting Dick "seemed kind and charming--his voice promised that he would take care of her, and that a little later he would open up whole new worlds for her, unroll an endless succession of magnificent possibilities."<sup>66</sup> Watching Dick moving "many varied types, each as immobile, as dependent on supplies of attention as an infantry battalion is dependent on rations," Rosemary is "ravished" by a performance that is so enthusiastic and selfless and yet appears so effortless.<sup>67</sup> But the effort is there and is taking its toll of Dick's vitality. After one of his characteristic moods of excitement that swept up everyone into it, there inevitably followed a form of melancholy that was all his own, which he never displayed but which Nicole somehow guessed.

This excitement about things reached an intensity out of proportion to their importance, generating a really extraordinary virtuosity with people. Save among a few of the tough-minded and perennially suspicious, he had the power of arousing a fascinated and uncritical love. The reaction came when he realized the waste and extravagance involved. He

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 77.



sometimes looked back with awe at the carnivals of affection he had given, as a general might gaze upon a massacre he had ordered to satisfy an impersonal blood lust.<sup>68</sup>

The effort of being loved, the cost in emotional energy, is the price Dick pays for following the lure of the glittering world of the rich. The choice, he realizes later, was made back in Dohmler's clinic on the Zurichsee; "he had made his choice, chosen Ophelia, chosen the sweet poison and drunk it."<sup>69</sup> Unconsciously he had wanted above all to be loved, and mistaking the possibilities in the life of the rich for the admiration he craves, he has sold his arsenal, his abilities and the talent for being loved, and once his talents are spent he finds himself emotionally bankrupt.

The cracks in the morale become progressively worse as money provides more and more opportunity for the drain on Dick's emotions. First Dick toys with the idea of abandoning or compromising his scientific treatise. Then his friends begin to comment on his appearance:

"Well, how're you?" repeated Tommy. "You don't look so--" he fought for a word, "--so jaunty as you used to, so spruce, you know what I mean."

The remark sounded too much like one of those irritating accusations of waning vitality. . .<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 302.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 197.

Dick notes in himself that there has been a "lesion of enthusiasm"<sup>71</sup> between his first encounter with Rosemary and his second meeting four years later, and he feels a "distinct lesion of his own vitality"<sup>72</sup> after spending half an hour with Collis Clay. The growing moral lethargy within Dick works against his own best interests. He deteriorates to the point of being jailed for a street brawl, and he finds it necessary to appeal for help to Baby Warren, giving her "a moral superiority over him for as long as he proved of any use."<sup>73</sup>

As Dick's vitality fails, he turns more and more to alcohol for extra stimulus, and his increased drinking further alienates his patients and friends.

"But what?" Kaethe demanded. "Do you think that sort of thing does the clinic any good? The liquor I smelt on him tonight, and several other times since he's been back."

She slowed her voice to fit the gravity of what she was about to say: "Dick is no longer a serious man."<sup>74</sup>

After the clinic in Zurich is sold and the Divers are traveling again, there is a growing awareness between them that as Nicole's strength increases Dick is slowly crumbling.

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 235.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 241.

Sitting in a window of a guest suite along the way, Dick hears:

Two men were chanting in an Eastern language or dialect full of k's and l's--he leaned out but he could not see them; there was obviously a religious significance in the sounds, and tired and emotionless he let them pray for him too, but what for, save that he should not lose himself in his increasing melancholy, he did not know.<sup>75</sup>

Nicole panics, watching her influence destroying Dick, "afraid of what the stricken man above would feed on while she must still continue her dry suckling at his lean chest."<sup>76</sup>

Nicole finds that:

For almost the first time in her life she was sorry for him--it is hard for those who have once been mentally afflicted to be sorry for those who are well, and though Nicole often paid lip service to the fact that he had led her back to the world she had forfeited, she had thought of him really as an inexhaustible energy, incapable of fatigue--she forgot the troubles she caused him at the moment when she forgot the troubles of her own that had prompted her.<sup>77</sup>

But Nicole, the symbol of wealth, is not meant to feel sorry. As Dick fights to escape from her contamination, Nicole struggles to free herself from his intelligence. Fighting with her money, "her health and beauty against his physical deterioration, her unscrupulousness against his moralities," she achieves the victory and cuts the cord

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<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 279.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., pp. 300-301.

forever.<sup>78</sup>

So Dick is left with nothing, even banished from the beach he discovered, and forced to take advice from Mary North.

"But we're all there is!" cried Mary. "If you don't like nice people, try the ones who aren't nice, and see how you like that! All people want is to have a good time and if you make them unhappy you cut yourself off from nourishment."

"Have I been nourished?" he asked.<sup>79</sup>

Emotionally bankrupt, drained of his vitality by the wealthy class he had courted, Dick drifts from one place to another, unable to find himself again, wandering to more and more obscure places, farther and farther from the glittering world. Gatsby was killed as he was destroyed. Dick Diver is left an empty shell by the ravages of wealth, sinking lower and lower, so that after a while "he didn't ask for the children to be sent to America and didn't answer when Nicole wrote asking him if he needed money."<sup>80</sup>

Fitzgerald's condemnation of the very rich in this book is grave indeed. America's wealthy leisure class with its arrogance, its selfishness, and its cruelty, can utterly destroy a Dick Diver, whose only weapons are his personal

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., pp. 301-302.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 313.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 315.

abilities. But beyond the damage that these princely classes do to others, Fitzgerald sees the degeneration that wealth creates among the rich themselves. The creatures who are nourished by Dick's vitality have been drained of emotional strength by wealth. Behind all the glamour of the life of the wealthy lies all sorts of perversion, weakness, and immoralities. The young and beautiful Nicole Warren, the symbol of wealth incarnate, is made psychotic by the incestuous relationship with her father; Fitzgerald chooses "this situation, this extreme (according to our tabus) example of decadence, to symbolize the rottenness of the society of which Nicole is a part."<sup>81</sup> And this is not the only rotten situation in the book; the theme of the decadence of the rich is a constant thread through the events of the novel.

As Robert Stanton points out, there are "incest-motifs" running throughout the narration of Tender Is the Night.<sup>82</sup> Besides the relations of Devereux Warren and Nicole, the love affair between Dick and Rosemary has incestuous overtones. There is a great age difference between Dick and Rosemary, and Dick's attitude is largely paternal. Rosemary's

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<sup>81</sup>C. Hartley Gratten, "Tender Is the Night," F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work, Alfred Kazin, editor (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1951), p. 105.

<sup>82</sup>Robert Stanton, "'Daddy's Girl': Symbol and Theme in Tender Is the Night," Modern Fiction Studies, IV (Summer, 1958), p. 139.

childishness, her dependence on her mother, are stressed over and over again, and she is determined to put the affair on a "nursery footing."<sup>83</sup> The film that pushed Rosemary to stardom is another clue, with its obvious title of "Daddy's Girl," and its ending a "father complex so apparent that Dick winced for all psychologists. . ."<sup>84</sup>

And there are other incest-motifs that don't center around Rosemary. The letters Nicole writes from the clinic have a definite "'Daddy-Long-Legs'" tone,<sup>85</sup> and Nicole's love for Dick is "a transference of the most fortuituous kind,"<sup>86</sup> from her father to a more acceptable candidate for a lover. At one point in her illness Nicole accuses Dick of seducing a patient's daughter, and the crowd outside the jail in Rome jeers at Dick as the suspected rapist of a child. Dick's attitude toward his own children shows an incest-motif too: "'What do I care whether Topsy 'adores me' or not? I'm not bringing her up to be my wife.'"<sup>87</sup>

There is other evidence of the great corruption of the very rich in the novel besides the theme of incest. Much of the action in the story is set in two clinics in

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<sup>83</sup>Fitzgerald, Tender Is the Night, p. 84.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 120

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 257.

Zurich, Dr. Dohmler's and the one purchased by Dick and Franz Gregorovius. Both of these are "rich persons"<sup>88</sup> clinics, and there is a constant repetition that the doctors specialize in diseases of the rich, diseases that represent not only mental aberration but moral decay as well. The scabbed woman artist whom Dick comes to love for her fortitude under the stresses of her illness is suffering from neuro-syphillis. Patient Von Cohn Morris, whose parents rage at the alcohol on Dick's breath, is a kleptomaniac; Dick sees them as a family more and more typical of the powerful and ignoble rich:

He watched until they drove away, the gross parents, the bland, degenerate offspring: it was easy to prophesy the family's swing around Europe, bullying their betters with hard ignorance and hard money.<sup>89</sup>

An emergency call to Lausanne brings Dick to meet Señor Pardo y Cuidad Real, "a handsome iron-gray Spaniard, noble of carriage, with all the appurtenances of wealth and power," who rages "up and down his suite in the Hôtel de Trois Mondes and told the story of his son with no more self-control than a drunken woman."<sup>90</sup> The son of this noble, wealthy, powerful man is an incorrigible homosexual who brags

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 254.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 243-244.

that he is known at Cambridge as the "Queen of Chili."<sup>91</sup>

Not only the clinics, but the city, the country, and all of Europe and the world are filled with increasing numbers of wealthy degenerates, corrupt victims of their own corrupting wealth.

. . . Throughout this hotel there were many chambers wherein rich ruins, fugitives from justice, claimants to the thrones of mediatized principalities, lived on the derivatives of opium or barbitol listening eternally as to an inescapable radio, to the coarse melodies of old sins. This corner of Europe does not so much draw people as accept them without inconvenient questions. Routes cross here--people bound for private sanitariums or tuberculosis resorts in the mountains, people who are no longer persona gratis in France or Italy.<sup>92</sup>

The Riviera, the Divers' particular haven, is equally crowded with degenerates. "'Do you practise on the Riviera?'" Rosemary asks Dick.

"'It'd be a good ground to find likely specimens.'"<sup>93</sup>

The "likely specimens" abound. Looking among the strangers at a party, Nicole "found as usual, the fierce neurotics, pretending calm, liking the country only in horror of the city, of the sound of their own voices which had set the tone and pitch. . ."<sup>94</sup>

In the gay and amoral world of wealth, Senor Luis

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 244.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 248. Latin incorrect in the original.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 270.



Campion speaks openly of his broken heart, broken in a clash with Mr. Royal Dumphrey, a man of "girl's comeliness."<sup>95</sup>

Dick goes to the rescue one night of Mary North and Lady Caroline Sibley-Biers, who have been jailed as degenerates. Dick is appalled at the absence of any sense of guilt or evil.

"It was merely a lark," said Lady Caroline with scorn. "We were pretending to be sailors on leave, and we picked up two silly girls. They got the wind up and made a rotten scene in a lodging house."<sup>96</sup>

In Rome there is an effeminate Embassy official who is awakened to get Dick out of jail, and appears in a white embroidered Persian robe and pink cold cream. In Paris a "tall, rich American girl, promenading insouciantly upon the national prosperity,"<sup>97</sup> gives a bizarre cocktail party where all the women guests seem most interested in attracting each other. On a railroad platform in Paris, crowded with wealthy Americans, the Divers watch in horror as Maria Wallis, a young acquaintance, pulls out a revolver and kills the man she is with. And in America, Abe North, the alcoholic musician, is beaten to death in a speakeasy.

But the degeneration that Fitzgerald found so appalling in the very rich is culminated in the Warrens of Chicago.

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 303.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

They are a family of "ducal perversion and ingrown virginity"<sup>98</sup> who embody perfectly the outward beauty and inner corruption of great wealth. Devereux Warren is "a fine American type in every way, tall, broad, well-made," and he had "that special air about him of having known the best of this world."<sup>99</sup> Yet there is an air of falsity about him apparent to Dr. Dohmler at their first meeting; and the doctor notices whiskey on his breath. When finally Warren confesses his crime against his daughter, he admits that he could have shot himself, "'--except I guess I'm such a Goddamned degenerate I didn't have the nerve to do it.'"<sup>100</sup> Warren disappears from the life of the Divers for a decade, only to be found again, moribund, in the Hôtel de Trois Mondes in Lausanne. He is dying a degenerate's death: "'He is only fifty but the liver has stopped restoring itself; the precipitating factor is alcoholism.'"<sup>101</sup>

Warren's daughters are also debased. The arrogant Baby Warren spends a lifetime recovering from the death of her fiance in the war; she is "a compendium of all the discontented women who had loved Byron a hundred years before,

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<sup>98</sup>Mizener, "Scott Fitzgerald and the Imaginative Possession of American Life," p. 80.

<sup>99</sup>Fitzgerald, Tender Is the Night, p. 125.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

yet, in spite of the tragic affair with the guards' officer there was something wooden and onanistic about her."<sup>102</sup>

Baby is a cold and sterile woman. She has "certain spinsters' characteristics--she was alien from touch, she started if she was touched suddenly, and such lingering touches as kisses and embraces slipped directly through the flesh into the forefront of her consciousness."<sup>103</sup> She is morbid; "she relished the foretaste of death, prefigured by the catastrophes of friends--persistently she clung to the idea of Nicole's tragic destiny."<sup>104</sup> She is meddling and insulting, a trivial, selfish woman. But it is in her sterility that she best typifies the rich; as she drifts from place to place and from one love to another, her affairs take on a sameness so that, "as she dried out, they were more important for their conversational value than for themselves. Her emotions had their truest existence in the telling of them."<sup>105</sup> Baby is so wrapped up in her own hard selfishness that she is unable to give anything of herself to another. She is the spokesman for the rich who delineates the functions of the less wealthy who serve them: "'That's what he was educated for."<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid., pp. 151-152.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. 312.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

But it is in Nicole Warren that Fitzgerald's judgment of the rich culminates. Symbol of the rich, wealth incarnate, Nicole is both corrupt and corrupter, debaser and debased. In destroying Dick Diver Nicole represents all the materialistic values of the glittering world of wealth replacing the old fundamental standards of an older America. Dick's values are those of his father, who believed that "nothing could be superior to 'good instincts,' honor, courtesy, and courage."<sup>107</sup> Against the hard arrogance and cruelty of the Warrens, "good instincts" are powerless. Yet Dick, loving his father and having no other recourse, no money to retreat to like the careless Buchanans, again and again "referred judgments to what his father would probably have thought or done."<sup>108</sup> Dick knows he is "the last hope of a decaying clan;"<sup>109</sup> his is the last resistance against the new standards.

The advance of the standards of the world of wealth can not be checked. In all stages of American life, the imitation of the model of wealth is rampant. For Mary North, the daughter of a journey-man paper-hanger, marriage to a titled Eastern ruler raises her to the level of the Warrens.

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 204.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 302.

untitled aristocracy. Hollywood stardom is the catapult sending Rosemary Hoyt from the middle of the middle class to a position where she can emulate Nicole's careless spending. The attractive glitter of riches is too powerful and too corrupt to be fought with mere good instincts. Dick Diver is made aware of the change that has taken place in society when he sees the gold star mothers in Paris. In their beauty and dignity he recognizes all the maturity of an older America, and for a moment he is reminded of the old values they have left behind. "Momentarily, he sat again on his father's knee, riding with Moseby while the old loyalties and devotions fought on around him. Almost with an effort he turned back to his two women at the table and faced the whole new world in which he believed."<sup>110</sup> But the "old loyalties" are still part of Dick, and the "whole new world," Nicole's world, must inevitably destroy them and destroy Dick too. Leaving America after his father's funeral, going back to Nicole, Dick senses that he is going back to a spiritual death. "'Good-by, my father--good-by, all my fathers.'"<sup>111</sup>

In Tender Is the Night, Fitzgerald's total condemnation of the corruption of the rich is clear. The dazzling glamour that blinded Amory Blaine does not confuse the mature

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., pp. 100-101.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 205.

Fitzgerald. Nicole Warren leads Dick Diver to a destruction more terrible than death. The emotionally broken man who wanders to greater and greater obscurity is a victim of a disease of the society he is part of. The corruption of wealth is a contagion that taints all those who come in contact with it and that eventually consumes the very rich themselves.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

F. Scott Fitzgerald grew up under conditions that caused him to develop an exaggerated interest in the very rich, but the mature author was able to see through and cast off many of the false impressions of the susceptible boy. The history of Fitzgerald's disillusionment can be traced on two parallel tracks. On the one hand, there is the central characteristic of the golden girl, which ranges from Rosalind's selfishness, which Fitzgerald found totally justifiable, to Nicole's schizophrenia; on the other side, there is Fitzgerald's personal attitude toward the very rich, which progresses from the blind envy of the dazzling life that pervades This Side of Paradise to the recognition of the ugly core of corruption within wealth that is exposed in Tender Is the Night. This study has shown that the development of these two themes through Fitzgerald's first four novels is progressive and related. Though the names change, the golden girls of the novels are actually the same woman with the same basic characteristics of beauty, wealth, arrogance, selfishness, and cruelty. The impressionable young Fitzgerald in his envy of the very rich sees only the wealth and beauty of the girl; the maturing Fitzgerald begins to

see that the selfishness and cruelty are more typical of the wealthy. The gradually increasing depth of the evil within the golden girl from one novel to the next reflects Fitzgerald's own growing awareness of the corruption in the wealth. She is in fact the symbol of wealth, wealth incarnate. Her influence on each of the heroes is actually the corrupting effect of wealth on them; their attitudes toward her indicate the value they place on riches.

Rosalind Connage of This Side of Paradise represents Fitzgerald's total acceptance of the values of the rich. To the hero, Amory Blaine, even her arrogance and cruelty are desirable; she justifies his belief that the most beautiful girl belongs to the richest man. Rosalind's decision to marry for money seems right and honorable to Fitzgerald; he makes no effort to explain her values because they are so obviously natural to him. Fitzgerald's early blindness to the corruption of wealth is reflected by the absence of any destructive influence worked upon Amory by his golden girl. The man who loses Rosalind is not maimed or wasted. He still has all his faculties intact to go out after other trophies, but he is left with the knowledge that the world's prizes go to the man with the most money.

Fitzgerald's attitude is much the same at the beginning of The Beautiful and Damned. Within its pages, however, a change takes place. Gloria Gilbert, who represents the



idleness of great wealth, turns out to be a force working against the best interests of the hero. Though Anthony Patch believes that wealth should provide him with the security and the leisure to realize some creative good from his intellectual superiority, he finds instead that the life of the wealthy, Gloria's life, leads only to the wasting and destruction of his potentialities. Gloria's attractive idleness prevents Anthony from realizing his promise and breaks him physically, spiritually, and intellectually. In Anthony's first view of Gloria, he sees her as the means to the attainment of the glorious, perfect life of the rich. When he finally recognizes her debilitating influence, it is too late for him to change; he is already totally dependent upon her. Seeing a world of stronger men, Anthony is forced to the realization that by choosing wealth he has destroyed his chance for achievement.

The corruption in great riches is not limited to the action of the golden girl upon the hero. In this second novel, Fitzgerald begins to hint that the girl herself is subject to the decaying effects of wealth. Gloria demonstrates how the beauty of the golden girls is dependent upon their wealthy backgrounds; as the Patches lose their money, she simultaneously loses her youth and beauty and vitality.

With Daisy Buchanan, of The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald recognizes wealth as an implement of great destructiveness.

For the first time he sees the terrible careless brutality of the very rich and the casual way they destroy things and people and go blithely on their uncaring ways. Daisy symbolizes for Gatsby a dazzling, glorious world that only wealth can open to him; the brightness of her world blinds Gatsby to the ugliness that supports it. She is the priestess or goddess of this shining world; in his awed worship of her he fails to see her cowardice and cruelty, and does not realize that she has sold out to her husband's selfish standards. The full picture of corruption is not exposed, however, for the Buchanans move on untouched by their own viciousness, and the man they destroy is totally crushed, perishing physically along with his illusions about the wealthy.

It remains for Tender Is the Night to present the complete story of the decadence of the very rich. Nicole Warren, the symbol of wealth, is a product of depravity; she has been driven insane by an incestuous relationship. Nicole is also representative of the society of which she is part; all of the very rich in this novel are charming, attractive, and idle, and all are hiding a rottenness or deficiency or degeneration. But it is for their action upon the whole and healthy that the very rich are to be most condemned. Needing the strength of others to sustain their own corrosion, they completely consume the sound and then cast them off with nothing. The empty shells of men they leave behind them are

completely drained of strength, of spirit, and of illusion. Dick Diver is the ultimate defeated victim of wealth, for he recognizes the evil that is being worked on him, tries to fight it, and finds that he is paralyzed and then destroyed by a force far greater than himself. Though Diver is a man of brilliance and great promise, the attraction of Nicole is strong enough to lure him from the honorable discipline of science to the debasing service of wealth. Nicole is his parallel, the golden girl developed to the utmost point of decadence. She is not only the alluring mask of wealth but also represents the diseased results of great riches.

The repetition of the pattern of the poor man destroyed by the rich girl is the device that carries Fitzgerald's increasing disillusion. The knowledge that Fitzgerald gained in his years of living with the very rich served only to clarify for him an idea he grew up with. If the very rich are different from you and me, it is not in their grace or beauty that the difference lies, but in the weapons they have, in their power to destroy, and in the need they have to sustain their own corruption on the healthy strength of others.

1948

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