BEYOND THE FEMME FATALE AND FLAPPER:
THE ROLES OF WOMEN IN SELECTED STORIES OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the degree Master of Arts in the Graduate School
of the Ohio State University

by

Paul Walker Bledsoe

The Ohio State University
1986

Master's Examination Committee:
Ernest H. Lockridge
Anthony Libby

Approved by
Adviser
Department of English
Acknowledgements

I sincerely thank Professor Ernest Lockridge for his enthusiasm, insight and patience throughout the research and writing. A great deal of appreciation is due Professor Anthony Libby, the other member of my examination committee, for his important suggestions and generous support. Thanks goes also to Professor Pat Mullin for his early interest and input. And I am deeply grateful to Joey Ferrar and her family for their kindness and guidance and warmth. Finally, I thank my father and step-mother for their sacrifice and love and belief in me.
VITA


1978 – 1980 ...................... Attended George
Washington University
Washington, D.C.

1984 .............................. B.A., Honors in English
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

1984 – 1986 ........................ Graduate Teaching Associate
Composition Instructor
The Ohio State University
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .................................................. ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................ iii

VITA ........................................................ iv

TABLE OF CONTENTS .......................................... v

ABBREVIATIONS ........................................... vi

CHAPTER                                       PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION ........................................... 1

II. YOUNG ROMANCE ......................................... 10

III. "ROUGH CROSSING" -- THE PASSAGE OF MARRIAGE .... 37

IV. LOOKING FOR "TROUBLE": THE CAREER OF THE
    ASSERTIVE WOMAN ......................................... 61

V. LYRIC PROSE AND THE ROMANTIC DOUBLE VISION .... 78

VI. CONCLUSION ............................................ 88

ENDNOTES .................................................. 91
ABBREVIATIONS

In order to simplify footnoting, references to Fitzgerald's stories and to the one book of essays about them are made internally, using the following abbreviations.


Price	The Price Was High: The Last Uncollected Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald.


CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

...it isn't particularly likely that I'll write a great many more stories about young love. I was tagged with that by my first writings up to 1925. Since then I have written stories about young love. They have been written with increasing difficulty. I would be either a miracle man or a hack if I could go on turning out an identical product for three decades.

I know what is expected of me, but in that direction the well is pretty dry and I think I am wiser in not trying to strain for it but rather open up a new well, a new vein. You see, I not only announced the birth of my young illusions in *This Side of Paradise* but pretty much the death of them in some of my last Post stories like "Babylon Revisited." Lorimer (long-time editor of The Saturday Evening Post) seemed to understand this in a way. Nevertheless an overwhelming number of editors continue to associate me with an absorbing interest in young girls—an interest that at my age would probably land me behind bars.¹

(1939 letter to Collier's fiction editor Kenneth Littaur)

It is only fitting that F. Scott Fitzgerald might end an assessment of his ability to write "young love" stories by conjecturing that "an overwhelming number of editors" would continue to associate him with "an absorbing interest in young girls," and by suspecting that such an association might hurt him. For it seems that critics, both before and since his death in 1940, have abjured the bulk of Fitzgerald's short stories because, as Howard Baker said

¹
of *Taps at Reveille* (1935) in a review of the same year, Fitzgerald often appeared to use a "formula" in which "a young man confuses a girl with an ideal." Fitzgerald's own well publicized denigrations of his short fiction have led many critics to regard the stories as mere exercises in commercial and romantic sophistry, just as frequent association of him with the flapper has promulgated the perception that the women characters in his stories are thinly drawn and become predictable types. Details involving Fitzgerald's relationships with women (particularly his use of his wife's diary and letters in some of his work) have added fuel to the fire. Critics, and especially feminist critics, who have read of Fitzgerald's early idealization of women and his occasional mistreatment of them (documented most fully in Nancy Milford's *Zelda* (1969)) have seriously questioned his ability to write realistically about women.

One of the things which makes this judgment suspect (or at least tentative) is that it represents the view of only the few critics who have written seriously about women in the stories. Until the recent publication of *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald: New Approaches in Criticism* (1982), only about 20 serious essays on Fitzgerald's stories had appeared. Indeed, the editor of *New Approaches*, Jackson R. Bryer, spends a full three pages documenting the "critical neglect" the stories have suffered. For example, of the 25 books which deal exclusively with Fitzgerald's work, only one, John A. Higgins' *F. Scott Fitzgerald as a Writer of Short Stories* (1971), is devoted exclusively to the stories and, as Bryer points
out, while Higgins' book is "very useful as an introductory survey, it tries to say something about every Fitzgerald story and, in the process, sacrifices depth for breadth of coverage" (New Approaches, xii). As one might imagine, the "critical neglect" of the roles of women in the stories is even more pervasive. Not excepting the essays in New Approches, no essay has been exclusively devoted to the roles of women in the stories. Of the 50 or so dissertations which discuss several of the stories, only seven focus solely on them, and none deals exclusively with the roles of women.

Of course Fitzgerald's life has always been granted as much attention as his work, and it is therefore not surprising that there are nearly as many biographies of him as there are critical studies of his work. But again, even the best of these, Matthew J. Bruccoli's Some Sort of Epic Grandeur (1981) and James R. Mellow's Invented Lives (1983), for example, tend to explicate the novels most thoroughly while the stories become documents merely enlisted in support of the biographer's speculations about Fitzgerald's state of mind during a particular week or month. The two biographies which explore Fitzgerald's view of women most extensively, Milford's Zelda and Scott Donaldson's Fool For Love (1983), are usually more preoccupied with identifying the real life "source" of a female character than they are with explicating the text apart from the events which may have influenced its composition.

Certainly contrasting speculation about Fitzgerald's ability to write realistically and sensitively about women existed even in his
own day, but it is clear that it in no way diminished his popularity of marketability. Fitzgerald was probably the most popular short story writer of his day, particularly from 1922 - 1933. He published a total of 66 stories in The Saturday Evening Post (circulation more than 4 million) from 1921 - 1936 and received an incredible $3,000 - $4,000 a story from '27 - '34. As Matthew Bruccoli and others have pointed out, Fitzgerald lived off the income generated by his story writing and, if there was anything as sure as his ability to write commercially viable short fiction, it was his public's nearly insatiable appetite for stories by him which featured women predominantly. In comparison to Hemingway, for example, perhaps the only other American writer of the time whose short story popularity rivaled Fitzgerald's, Fitzgerald's stories seem to be about little other than women. Moreover, the Post's readership was predominantly female. Yet, critics who argue that Fitzgerald's women characters are stereotyped and nearly always disparaged fail to account for their immense popularity.

Was Fitzgerald, for example, able to manipulate his readers into accepting and in fact enjoying a portrayal of women which was wholly inaccurate or idealized or disparaging? If so, what factors enabled him to do so? It might be contended that Fitzgerald's superb lyric prose style lulled readers into accepting pejorative portrayals of women; that a sparer style (like Hemingway's) would have made such portrayals easier to identify, and one imagines, dislike. Yet it is certain that anyone who reads more than a few of the stories
recognizes that many of the women characters in them are not passive but are instead astute power brokers of the (admittedly limited) sexual/political influence they possess and that this influence is often accentuated by the perceptions of the languishing and idealizing suitors who pursue them. One gets the sense that these young suitors--Dexter Green, George O'Kelly, Anson Hunter, to name a few more famous examples--not only reify the women they revere, but that in the process the women--Judy Jones, Jonquil Cary, and Paula Legrende, respectively--are made to take on more responsibility for events than their actual management of them deserves. It may be said that these young women become scapegoats for their suitors' absurdly romantic wishfulness and idealization of the past. If this is the case, the vast popularity of such a characterization seems to fall neatly into place: women enjoy the romantic fantasy of increased power and men can continue to project their disillusionment onto women.

The primary problem with this analysis is that it pertains to only a small percentage of the stories Fitzgerald wrote. In his many stories which explore the complexities of marriage, for example, the above formula is rarely applicable. These stories usually chronicle the difficult compromises which both husband and wife must make in order to develop and sustain conjugal contentment. As early as 1920, Fitzgerald was able to write seriously about marriage, as in "The Lees of Happiness" (1920), in which a young couple deal with disappointment and in which the heroine, Roxanne Wilbank, must
eventually face life after her husband's death. In this and later stories about marriage (like "The Adjuster" (1924)), young wives realize that marriage will be no paradise and that it will entail sacrifice. Life is hardly perfect for these women; their confident romantic savoir faire has often changed to a rather grim estimation of the reality of their circumstances. At least six of the stories in this study center around marriage: they seem to demonstrate, as much as any of the stories do, that Fitzgerald may have created realistic heroines after all, and that his interest in women did not end when they were no longer debutantes and flappers.

* The association of Fitzgerald with romantically wishful men and cold and calculating women is in many ways more justified when looking at his novels. This Side of Paradise (1920), The Beautiful and Damned (1922), The Great Gatsby (1925), and Tender is the Night (1934) all end up portraying their heroines as victimizers rather than victims. Amory Blaine's romantic idealism is only partially exorcised by a car accident that kills a friend and by the cool Rosalind's rejection of him. For while, "the waters of disillusion had left a deposit on his soul," he can still cry "Oh, Rosalind! Rosalind!" at novel's end and, in a gesture remarkably similar to Gatsby's, stretch "out his arms to the crystalline, radiant sky" (TSOP, 282). Gloria Gilbert is shown to be cold and superficial, but she is ultimately much stronger than husband Anthony Patch, whose romantic notions are shown to be as destructive as Gatsby's. Daisy Buchanan (however inadvertently) kills an unsympathetically portrayed Myrtle Wilson, and by not telling Tom she was driving seems at least partially responsible for the "holocaust" which follows. In Tender is the Night, Dick Diver falls in love with Nicole Warren despite her illness (not to mention the warning of his associate) and the reversal of their fortunes-Dick fading into a rather pathetic obscurity and Nicole seeming to recover with the decidedly insensitive Tommy Barban-mirrors the denouement of the three previous novels.
In fact, although Fitzgerald is frequently associated with the fun-loving free-wheeling flapper, it is surprising how few of that type appear in his stories. But the flapper's most conspicuous trait, her attempt to act as she wishes and find at least some measure of independence, survives to become the principle preoccupation of a great many more mature women characters in stories written throughout Fitzgerald's career. A large number of stories (like "Two Wrongs" (1928) and "Jacob's Ladder" (1927)) depict women who strive for excellence in a field of work and who become more independent of men and marriage both emotionally and financially. Often later heroes lose much of their romantic idealization of women and come to identify with their female counterparts, so that many later stories seem more sympathetic toward women's positions. While earlier Fitzgerald heroines appear strong and mature when contrasted with their idealizing suitors, many later heroines exhibit admirable strength and maturity without the necessity of chiaroscuro.

With all of this said, it remains clear that Fitzgerald was not a feminist as we would define one today. He was, in fact, capable of the most boorish remarks concerning women and their abilities. This does not, however, necessarily mean that he never portrayed the situations and emotions of women accurately or with understanding. Yet Fitzgerald's tendency to idealize women in his early life and work, his use of his wife's diary and letters in some of his work, his suppression of her writing in the early 1930's (when she was borrowing on some of the same material he was using in Tender Is The
Night), his own denigration of the stories as hack work written only to fund novel writing, and the general critical neglect the stories have suffered has made it easy for critics to arrive at a summary judgment: that Fitzgerald was incapable of writing sensitively or realistically or valuably about women.

The first and primary purpose of this study is to examine this judgment and to determine the extent of its validity. It would be absurd, for example, to deny that many of the stories involve the idealization of women and a portrayal which is mimetically inaccurate. But it is not entirely clear that, as Jan Hunt and John M. Suarez claim, "In Fitzgerald's fiction...the women are either portrayed as 'monsters of virtue' or 'monsters of bitchery." As with almost all of the criticism dealing with the roles of women in the stories, Hunt and Suarez's essay looks at a very few stories (2) from which general conclusions about the other 177 are garnered (thus the title of the article, "The Evasion of Adult Love in Fitzgerald's Fiction" seems to promise a wide coverage the article never delivers).

Fitzgerald did not simply write about flappers, nor only about housewives and debutantes, and he took significant care to render his characters as individuals. As the epigraph to this study reveals, Fitzgerald was himself aware that people typecast him as a typecaster. His self-consciousness in terms of this issue is clearly evident in the opening line of one of his most famous stories, "The Rich Boy" (1926): "Begin with an individual, and before you know it
you find that you have a type; begin with a type and you find that
you have created—nothing" (Stories, p. 177). It may prove that in
terms of female characters Fitzgerald created nothing—nothing, that
is, but unrealistic and unfair and disparaging portrayals of women.
But the hundreds of women characters in his 179 stories deserve
significant scrutiny before being declared null and void.
CHAPTER TWO

YOUNG ROMANCE

Typically, when one reads a number of Fitzgerald's stories for the first time, the reader tends to focus for the most part on the sad or optimistic young man's vision. This is partially accounted for by point-of-view: with a number of important exceptions, the majority of the stories use third person limited omniscient narration which begins and primarily stays with the central male character. Rare first person stories like "The Rich Boy" (1926) generally use male narrators who are most concerned with the actions of another man (as in The Great Gatsby). This is all simply by way of saying that Fitzgerald's stories are for the most part about men and the vision of men; it is the male heart and the male mind which we most often confront with great intimacy.

But it is clear that the principle preoccupation of many of Fitzgerald's male protagonists is women. For Andy (we never get his last name) of "The Last of The Belles" (1928) it is Ailie Calhoun; for George O'Kelly in "The Sensible Thing" (1924) it is Jonquil Cary; for Gordon Sterrett it is Edith Bradin in "May Day" (1920), and so on. There is little question that the protagonists in these stories idealize the women they seek, and that they as often as not view their courtship in terms of conquest. The hero's reification of the
heroine is hardly hidden; Fitzgerald often employs imagery involving material wealth when he describes the women his protagonists desire. Thus most often (at least in the earlier stories involving young romance) the dreams of financial success and romantic happiness are inextricably bound. Normally, of course, this involves a poor boy attempting to make a fortune so that he might marry a girl from the upper class, as in "Winter Dreams" and "May Day." (1920) Usually the poor boy (as in those two stories) is unsuccessful, but even when he does get the girl he finds trouble this side of paradise: the girl turns out to be in some way deficient, or at least incapable of living up to the idealization that is at the heart of the young man's dream. Thus, in "The Sensible Thing," George O'Kelly returns triumphantly wealthy to claim Jonquil Cary but feels a strange disappointment upon doing so:

...for an instant as he kissed her he knew that though he might search through eternity he could never recapture those lost April hours. He might press her close now till the muscles knotted on his arms—she was something desirable and rare that he had fought for and made his own—but never again in intangible whisper in the dusk, or on the breeze of night...(Stories, p. 158).

The adumbrations of words like "recapture" and "muscles knotted" clearly implies a mentality which sees romance in terms of physical conquest (though Fitzgerald is never explicit sexually), just as the use of the words "something... rare" implies the reifying association with money. Yet all of it does not seem enough to satisfy the hero.

Perhaps what is most fascinating, then, about the stories which involve the hero's idealization and reification of the heroine is
that the women character who is idealized has an amazing capacity to survive it, while the hero tends to self-destruct. Often, this occurs when the protagonist is rejected by his dream girl (an apt term, I think), a scenario which happens more often than any other. And yet even when the hero does get the girl he feels a sense of disappointment. If any generalization can be rightfully made about Fitzgerald's early young romance stories it is this: the girl, while perhaps initially weaker than her suitor, ends up stronger, or at least happier.

A number of critics have blasted Fitzgerald for alleged lack of sensitivity to the exigencies implicit in the situations of the women in his stories. Perhaps these critics have been persuaded by the young romance stories that Fitzgerald believed these women to be invulnerable, but a careful reading of many of the young romance stories reveals something quite different. For the most part the women in these stories are painfully aware that they live in a world run by men, are entirely conscious that they need to perform in order to garner a good husband (and hence economic security), and many are determined to have a good time until they find they must marry (this often happens when they feel they are losing their ability to attract men). The very fierceness with which these young women go about the business of finding a husband indicates the desperateness of their situation. Of course, because Fitzgerald often focuses on the very attractive girl or woman, this desperation is less apparent than it otherwise might be, but the insouciance with which many of the
stories' heroines comport themselves is often only a thin veneer under which signs of strain are visible.

In *The Apprentice Fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (1965), editor John Kuehl identifies the early emergence of a character he terms the "femme fatale." And while Kuehl is correct in noticing the importance of this figure in Fitzgerald's early work, the term itself is less than desirable. The problem is that it has been used (and over-used) previously in a largely derogatory context—about vampish movie characters who lack ethical and moral standards and who have vast experience with men (very few of the young heroines seem to be anything other than virgins). There is no doubt that Kuehl uses the term for convenience's sake; it is one which most readers can easily identify. However, for this study, it appears that the term "femme manque" is more appropriate. Women characters in the stories are not simply scheming to take advantage of or manipulate men, instead they are ultimately more concerned with learning lessons of life and experience and personal growth. The term "femme manque" matches well with Kuehl's term for the males in Fitzgerald's early fiction: "homme manque". These terms are preferable because they put male and female characters on a more equal footing, and while in many cases, as in "The Debutante", the girl is more knowledgable than the boy, the disparity seems related more to gender roles than actual experience.

In "The Debutante", a short play in the form of a short story which Fitzgerald wrote in 1916, but did not publish commercially
until 1920 (in *The Smart Set*), many of the themes of later stories are anticipated and, in fact, enunciated fullblown. Helen, the heroine and nascent debutante, is about to come out of her dressing room and into the world. While she prepares, she receives advice from her mother, an older woman Mrs. Halycon (obviously a play on halcyon), her younger sister Cecilia and a visit (by way of outdoor tresle) from an admirer, John. Helen's mother is portrayed as ineffectual and Mrs. Halycon takes over as primary advisor. At one point she tells Helen, "And you positively cannot give more than two dances to young (John) Cannel. I will not have you engaged before you have had a fair chance," and Helen replies that "you'd think from the way you talk that I was some horrible man-chaser, or someone so weak and wobbly that you'd think I'd run off with someone." (AF, p. 154).

It is clear from this exchange that Helen is well aware of her status as a commodity in her role as debutante, and it is equally clear that she does not envision herself as a "man-chaser" or as weak. And although Mrs. Halycon's advice does not prove necessary, her concern reflects an awareness that things have not changed all that much since her own day. In any event, once the older women leave, Helen and her sister Cecilia have a conversation about Cecilia's discovery that Helen has been smoking and drinking. Cecilia threatens to expose this behavior, but is convinced by counter threat not to do so. After Cecilia leaves, John Cannel scales the tresle on the side of the house and in a *Romeo and Juliet*
parody addresses Helen. Predictably John is worried about Helen's incipient exposure to the world; it appears that they have been sweethearts for some time and John asks Helen to marry him (it is worth noting that John's physical position, hanging outside Helen's house, mirrors his emotional situation; he is hanging on, waiting for Helen, hoping he will not fall). Exasperated by her refusal to marry him or to recognize an engagement he felt they had agreed on, John asks Helen: "Well, what do you want?" Helen replies:

I want--Oh, I'll be frank for once. I like the feeling of going after [men], I like the thrill when you meet them and notice they've got black hair that's wavy, but awfully neat, or have dark lines under their eyes, and look charmingly dissipated, or have funny smiles, that come and go and leave you wondering whether they've smiled at all. Then I like the way they begin to follow you with their eyes. They're interested. Good! Then I begin to place him. Try to get this type, find what he likes; right then the romance begins to lessen for me and increase for him. Then comes a few long talks. (AF, p. 156)

This amazing admission shows, among other things, that Helen realizes the necessity of thinking seriously about courtship—for women, for her, it is the equivalent of a business decision. Still there is an exuberance which comes through the pseudo-sophistication; a sense that given the right man, Helen could be quite romantic and mean it. While even from this unfinished description of the story, it appears that Helen may affect more sophistication than she actually possesses, at this point, we are more likely to sympathize with John. The play's ending, however, reflects an astounding awareness of the danger involved in sexual manipulation, whether men
or women are the ostensible manipulators, and an understanding that it is women who will ultimately pay the heavier price.

Cecilia: (Addressing her future self) Oh, yes! Really coming out is such a farce nowadays, y'know. We really play around so much before we are seventeen, that it's a positive anticlimax. (Shaking hands with a visionary; middle-aged man of the world) Yes, I b'lieve I've heard m'sister speak of you. Have a puff. They're very good. They're Coronas. You don't smoke. What a pity.

She crosses to the desk and picks up the flask. From downstairs the rain clapping between encores rises. She raises the flask, uncorks it, smells it, tastes a little and then drinks about the equivalent of two cocktails. She replaces the flask, makes a wry face and as the music starts again she fox-trots slowly around the room, waving the cigarette with intense seriousness, and watching herself in the long mirror. (AP, p. 161)

I quote this ending at such length in order to demonstrate not only Fitzgerald's already sophisticated style and dramatic sense, but also to give the reader a sense of the intense wishfulness of Cecilia's pose and of the desperation which pervades it. It may be that Fitzgerald intended this ending only as a sort of warning against what he saw as the increasing tendency of young women to exploit their sexual availability for all it was worth; that is, to live with daring. But the fact remains that that attempt at a measure of freedom, as understandable as it may be, leads to the same pitfalls men have long encountered: vanity, treatment of the opposite sex as a commodity and an attempt at sophistication without the sensitivity true sophistication demands. Cecilia and Helen can
hardly be blamed for their actions; they are simply trying to find a degree of freedom while responding to a variety of social pressures. The situation for the women characters in many of Fitzgerald's later stories is to be much the same, and it is easier in many of those stories (than in "The Debutante") to see women portrayed solely as victimizers. But a careful examination of the social and psychological pressure which these women go through reveals that Fitzgerald's attitude toward his heroines is rarely simplistic and often sympathetic.

In Fitzgerald's first collection of short stories, *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920), two stories, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" (1920) and "The Ice Palace" best reflect their author's sensitivity to the problems that women exploring the new-found freedom of post World War era encountered. In "Bernice Bobs Her Hair", a successful young belle, Marjorie, is exasperated by the lack of social grace which her cousin Bernice displays. Marjorie complains to her mother that Bernice is "absolutely hopeless...Men just don't like her (Stories, p. 44). The crux of Marjorie's complaint is that Bernice is unable to charm or interest young men because of her lackluster personality and vapid dance conversation. Bernice happens by the room where this conversation takes place and proceeds to overhear it. Initially Bernice is hurt and decides to leave her aunt's house, but she eventually resolves to ask Marjorie for advice. Marjorie then gives her a series of "lessons" on female grace and graciousness:

"You've got to learn to be nice to men who are sad birds...if you go to a dance and..."
really amuse, say, three old, sad birds that
dance with you; if you talk so well to them
that they forget they're stuck with you, you've
done something. They'll come back next time,
and gradually so many sad birds will dance with
you that the attractive boys will see there's no
danger of being stuck—then they'll dance with
you." (Stories, p. 49).

After this lesson, and to her great surprise, Bernice becomes
something of a social success and manages to attract a young man
named Warren who had previously been interested in Marjorie. As part
of her badinage, Bernice intimates that she is "thinking of bobbing
her hair." Marjorie, who is now jealous of the attention Warren pays
to Bernice, learns of Bernice's comment and eventually goads her into
actually going through with the hair cut. Afterward, Bernice looks
terrible, and Warren no longer is quite so attracted to her; in fact,
he shows signs he intends to return to Marjorie. Distraught over the
loss of her new-found popularity and angry with Marjorie for goading
her into its cause, Bernice sneaks into Marjorie's room while she is
sleeping and cuts off huge locks of her cousin's hair. She then
leaves her aunt's house in the middle of the night and returns home.

It is worth noting, to begin with, that Fitzgerald himself gave
his younger sister, Annabel, advice similar to that which Marjorie
gives Bernice (an account of this advice called "The General Subject
of Conversation" is printed in AF, pp. 124-131). Fitzgerald realized
in real life, as in his fiction, that women needed to be deeply
concerned with developing a manner which would make them attractive
to men. This consciousness reflects a keen awareness of the rather
precarious position in which women found themselves in the 1920s.
The great majority of women did not have the training, skills, or opportunity to find good employment, and so were almost completely reliant on marriage as a source of livelihood, and it seems clear that Fitzgerald took very seriously the idea of "lessons" which would help young women to attain qualities desirable to men. It would be easy for feminist critics of today to see this situation as simply a mechanism whereby the subservient position of women was perpetuated, but the fact remains that the acquisition of social skills was crucial for young women if they were to avoid the (at that time) rather acute trials of spinsterhood.

In any event, the sadness which Bernice initially feels at being snubbed by various boys is very real, and it would seem that Fitzgerald takes it seriously. Moreover, the fact that Marjorie goads Bernice into bobbing her hair suggests that the competition among women is quite fierce. Particularly if long hair is viewed as a sexual symbol, Bernice and Marjorie are not entirely culpable for their actions; they have been driven to them by the exigencies of their social/sexual situation. In this story, as in many of the stories about young love written throughout the '20s, the attempt of women to find a comfortable niche in a man's world is treated quite seriously, and the vast effort which the young heroines of these tales expend toward that goal is offered in sharp relief to the quixotic romance which absorbs many of the male protagonists.

In "The Ice Palace" (1919), heroine Sally Carrol Happer is presented as a young woman bored with the limitations of her small
southern town. She tells one of the town's boys, Clark, who has been courting her that "...I don't know. I'm not sure what I'll do, but—well I want to go places and see people. I want my mind to grow. I want to live where things happen on a big scale." (Stories, p. 63)
In the story, Sally ventures north with a northener, Harry Bellamy, in search of that place where things "happen on a big scale." In a sense, Sally wishes to find a new way to be, to create a new self, and while walking in a graveyard, she comes upon the grave of Margery Lee. Here Sally shows considerable imagination by inventing her a life: "... she was the sort of girl born to stand on a wide pillared porch and welcome folks in. I think perhaps a lot of men went away to the war meanin' to come back to her; but none of them ever did." (p. 63)

When Sally does venture north with Harry Bellamy, she finds herself stifled by women "who seemed the essence of spiritless conventionality" and who are only "glorified domestics." (p. 74)
Having been accidently separated from Harry, she wanders lost in the exhibit:

She reached a turn—was it here?—took the left and came to what should have been the outlet into the long low room, but it was only another glittering passage with darkness at the end. She called again, but the walls gave back a flat lifeless echo with no reverberations. (p. 79)

After she finally finds her way out of the Ice Palace, she decides to go back to the south and spend her life there.
Of course much of "The Ice Palace" reflects Fitzgerald's lifelong fascination with the south and what he considered its profound differentness. Still, the story does explore Sally's attempt to find a more interesting world to live in, a place where her mind can "grow". It is in these terms that the ice palace itself becomes such an appropriate symbol. It represents the vast, impersonal and nearly inescapable world in which men alone are permitted to function with a measure of independence. Sally grossly underestimates the powerful callousness of this world and must undergo a significant trial before she recognizes its true nature. The south is finally seen as a world in which women are accorded a higher personal value, a world where even "a young married woman expected the same amount of half affectionate badinage and flattery that would be accorded a debutante" (p. 71). While this badinage is in no way a substitute for financial or emotional independence, or for intellectual or moral growth, it is the best that Sally can do for herself. Patriarchy will not allow her an opportunity to grow, so Sally chooses the refuge of southern sexist chivalry over the northern sexism which offers her no special status at all.

It is interesting that while Fitzgerald wrote comparatively few first person stories, these are among those most frequently studied. Perhaps the interest in his first person stories is a result of the success of The Great Gatsby, where, as many critics have noted, narrator Nick Carraway's austere western hindsight informs the
novel's narrative with a more objective quality (Fitzgerald's first two novels, *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned* had been criticized for their tendency to become too indulgent in the perceptions of the young hero at the exclusion of a clear authorial judgement of him). In 1926, soon after the publication of *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald attempted to bring the objective narrative quality of his first person novel to a 13,000 word story, "The Rich Boy." In it, an unnamed first person narrator tells of the love life of rich boy Anson Hunter and beautiful girl Paula Legrende. The great majority of the criticism of "The Rich Boy" has focused on its treatment of wealth and the wealthy, but few critics have taken the time to explore the sexual/political ramifications of the story or to divine the narrator's attitude toward those implications.

Some critics have, however, identified Anson's adolescent perpetuation, as Peter Wolfe does in his essay, "Faces in a Dream: Innocence Perpetuated in 'The Rich Boy'": "Anson's princely code rules out adult actions like getting married or even acting decently and responsibly in personal relationships" (*Approaches*, 242). There is certainly no doubt that Anson acts immaturely, and that "he hasn't learned to share. He deems it safer to pine for someone he can't have than to work at a relationship with somebody available" (*Approaches*, p. 242). Anson has several chances to marry Paula, but is unwilling (or unable) to commit himself:

Humbly, obediently, her emotions yielded to him and the tears streamed down her face, but her heart kept crying: "Ask me—oh, Anson, dearest,
"ask me!"

"Paula...Paula!"

The words wrung her heart like hands, and Anson, feeling her tremble, knew that emotion was enough. He need say no more, commit their destinies to no practical enigma... (Stories, 186)

Anson desires not love, but power over Paula: when she "humbly, obediently" yields herself to him (in marriage), he balks at commitment and is satisfied that she trembles.

After being so rebuffed, Paula marries one Lowell Thayer and Anson retreats to a life of measured dissipation (and escapism) in New York. There he becomes involved with Dolly Krieger, who is described as an "emotionally shiftless woman", one who encourages Anson's drinking in the hope that it will allow her control over him. However, after Dolly realizes that Anson will never marry her, she writes a note telling Anson that she is leaving him for another man. Anson's reaction typifies his smugness and his reification of women:

He was not jealous—she meant nothing to him—but at her pathetic ruse [the note] everything stubborn and self-indulgent in him came to the surface. It was a presumption from a mental inferior and it could not be overlooked. If she wanted to know to whom she belonged, she would see. (Stories, 191).

Anson cares nothing for Dolly except insofar as she can injure his sense of superiority and possessiveness. Thus, Anson persuades Dolly to go to a country estate where he plans to consummate their affair (with the implicit assumption on Anson's part that she will become "his" as a result of sexual intercourse). But in his bedroom at the estate, Anson "perceived that the picture of Paula" was hanging upon
the wall and can not go through with it.

Anson can not consummate his affair with Dolly after seeing Paula's image because Paula represents a chink in his sexual/political armor: she realized his inability to commit himself and decided not to "belong" to him, but rather to seek love with someone else. It is not Anson's love for Paula (he is incapable of love) which prevents him, but instead the awareness (however subconsciously) that she does not need him. What remains to be gleaned, however, is the unnamed first person narrator's attitude toward Anson's action, and hence that of Fitzgerald himself.

Peter Wolfe, in the above mentioned essay, contends that while Anson has slighted the narrator in several ways—not contacting him for a number of years, discarding him at the end of the story for "the girl in the red tam"—the "tone and thesis" of the story are not bitter toward Anson: "The narrator sees Hunter as a victim" who is saddled with a "helpless addiction to female approval" (Approaches, 248). While it may be true that Anson is in some ways a victim of his own snobbery, it is not true, as Wolfe contends, that the narrator fails to "censure" Anson for his actions. After Anson has threatened to blackmail his aunt over an affair she is having, his aunt's lover, Cary Sloane, commits suicide. The narrator comments after the suicide, at the beginning of Part VII: "Anson never blamed himself for his part in the affair" (Stories, 199). As John Higgins and others have pointed out, chapter beginnings in Fitzgerald's stories are often essayistic and contain an authorial comment on and
judgement of the previous action. Here the implication seems to be that Anson's conscience is less than sensitive and that he does not own up to the consequences of his actions. While his motivation for breaking up his aunt's affair is characterized largely in terms of preserving his family's good name, it may be conjectured that Anson is merely jealous of a true love which attempts to transcend the boundaries of the conservative monied New York society he values. In any event, the fact that the narrator makes a point of mentioning that Anson never blamed himself for Sloane's suicide seems to imply that he should have.

Of course, the final sentences of any story, and particularly one by Fitzgerald, often also contain an authorial pronouncement on the story's action. It is therefore surprising that Wolfe's essay should contend that "the absence of a concluding judgment of (Anson's) immaturity" is "a function of the narrator's moral malaise" (249), for the story does finish with a narrative judgment of Anson:

I don't think he was ever happy unless some one was in love with him, responding to him like filings to a magnet, helping him to explain himself, promising him something. What it was I do not know. Perhaps they promised that there would always be women in the world who would spend their brightest, freshest, rarest hours to nurse and protect that superiority he cherished in his heart (Stories, 208).

This statement completely acknowledges Anson's solipsistic sexism. Superiority should never be cherished, and certainly not by the heart. The clear implication is that Anson's egoism has prohibited him from learning the true function of the human
heart—the ability to love. It is little wonder, then, that Anson's bALKS (WITH BOTH Paula AND DOLLY) not only at marriage, but at saying he loves them. The fact that this pronouncement comes at the very end of the story indicates that Fitzgerald thought it quite important and seems to imply a self-conscious control of the narrator's evaluation of Anson's immaturity.

While "The Rich Boy" is certainly an examination of the possible dangers and corrupting influence of money on morals, it is perhaps more especially a study in masculine reification of personal relationships and the resulting inability to love. For while Paula Legrende is also quite affluent, she seeks and finds love. She goes so far as to risk social condemnation by divorcing Lowell Thayer and marrying Pete Hagerty, a man she truly loves. Ultimately it is not wealth that prevents Anson from learning to love; instead it is his belief, reinforced by that of society, that men are superior to women. Near the story's end, Anson tells the happily married Paula:

I could settle down if only women were different... If only I didn't understand so much about them, if women didn't spoil you for other women, if only they had a little pride. (246)

What Anson mistakes in himself for pride is simply self-indulgence and self-righteousness, qualities not born of his wealth but merely perpetuated by it.

Another famous first person story, "The Last of The Belles" (1928), chronicles the love life of southern belle Ailie Calhoun as told by her confidant and eventual suitor, Andy. Ailie is
characterized as beautiful and selfish, a girl who has dozens of beaux and who "apportioned her evenings" among the many servicemen (Tarleton, the story's setting, is home of a temporary army camp) who seek her company. Ailie's "Unfailing coolness acquired in the endless struggle with the (southern) heat" is more than simply physical—she manages to view the difficulties of her suitors with uncommon detachment, with remarkable coolness (Stories, 241).

Early in the story Ailie confides to narrator Andy that one of her admirers, Horace Canby, has threatened "to climb up six thousand feet in his aeroplane, shut off his motor, and let go" if she marries anyone else (243). Soon after, we learn that Canby does die in a plane crash and Ailie seems sure that he committed suicide in despair over her callousness toward him (she had broken a date with him in favor of another man). She is, however, more concerned with her reputation than with the true cause (engine failure) and tragedy of his death:

"Andy"—she spoke in a quick low whisper—"of course you must never tell anybody what I told you about Canby yesterday. What he said, I mean". (244)

We get some indication of Andy's narrative detachment when he comments that "her brow went up in a way that can only be described as mock despair" (244). The narrator feels himself "aware that she was calling [his] attention to her involuntarily disastrous effect on men" (244). Here Andy seems to imply that any disaster Ailie causes she intends to cause, and that in the wake she is capable of only "mock despair."
In the early sections of the story, Ailie seems serious about a friend of Andy's, Bill Knowles, and about the rather comic character, Earl Schoen. But she never does marry, even when, years later, after the war and the removal of the temporary camp from Tarleton, Andy returns to see her. The narrator finds Ailie is still the center of attention at the country club dances, but perceives that "she had guessed wrong, missed out somewhere. Her wild animation, which even now called enough men around her to rival the entourage of the youngest and freshest, was an admission of defeat." (252) Realizing that he has come back to Tarleton because he loves Ailie, Andy asks her to marry him. When she rejects him, he leaves the South which now "would be empty for [him] forever." (253)

The difficult job of assessing Ailie's moral character is in no small way complicated by the narrator's mixed regard for her. It may be contended, for example, that Andy's often unflattering portrayal of her is motivated by anger over her rejection of him. Indeed, if what Andy has told us of her is true, why should he desire her at all? The answer to this lies in the fact that Andy has romanticized much of his experience in Tarleton. He wishes not to love Ailie, but to recapture the youth he spent with her. In the story's final scene, he drags Ailie and a reluctant cab driver out to the site of the old army camp:

The cab driver regarded me indulgently while I stumbled here and there in the knee-deep underbrush, looking for my youth in a clapboard or a strip of roofing or a rusty tomato can. (253)
The south is finally "empty forever" for him, not because of Ailie's rejection of him, but because he realizes the futility of his idealization of his past and of Ailie. He needs tangible proof of this futility, and of the mundane reality of much of his experience, and in this way the "rusty tomato can" is a perfect symbol: it demonstrates undeniably that time alters things whether we like it or not.

Andy's depiction of Ailie, then, is a means by which he can come to terms with the reality of his experience; she becomes a vehicle through which he can lose his illusions. If we can take Andy's portrayal of Ailie as accurate (and it is, of course, the only portrayal we have) then she is in many ways the female double of Anson Hunter in "The Rich Boy". Both seem to use people, but are incapable of making a serious commitment or of even expressing genuine love. Both seem only temporarily disconcerted by the death of one they had seemed to care for—Anson seeks the girl in the red tam only three days after the death of Paula Legrende in childbirth at the end of "The Rich Boy", Ailie doesn't even stop a date upon hearing of Horace Canby's death. Both strive, however unconsciously, to avoid maturation, Anson clinging to the security his wealth affords and Ailie continuing to play the young belle into her late twenties. Each feels an essential superiority toward others which precludes equal, and therefore, lasting relationships. At one point, Ailie informs Andy that when someone measures up to her handsome brother, who died young, she would marry that person, and Andy
realizes that "even [his] brash confidence couldn't measure up to the dead" (242). Clearly Ailie uses her brother's sacred image as a rationalization for avoiding marriage. Ailie is destined to remain a "belle" with all the limitations that term implies just as Anson Hunter is still a "boy" well into his thirties.

In a way it is true, as Scott Donaldson has observed, that "The Last of The Belles" is "Fitzgerald's ultimate rejection of the southern belle," because Fitzgerald in his maturity saw that many southern belles, like many northern rich boys, found convenient ways to avoid learning to love people humanistically as well as romantically. In this sense, Fitzgerald seems to judge the emotional and ethical maturation (or lack thereof) of each sex by the same standards. And while it is clear (as the subsequent chapter on marriage will attempt to show) that Fitzgerald in no way viewed marriage as a panacea, marriage in the stories does frequently provide a forum in which the adolescent must confront adult realities. It would be different if Anson and Ailie learn to love humanistically and responsibly outside of marriage, but neither does.

Between January 1930 and June 1931, Fitzgerald wrote a series of five stories about a young heroine, Josephine Perry, which were intended to match a series of nine stories Fitzgerald had written about young Basil Duke Lee. While all of the Josephine stories are in some way interesting, the last of the series, "Emotional Bankruptcy" (1931) best reflects Fitzgerald's more mature attitude
toward his young heroines who manipulate many men before deciding one is worth marrying. The story seems to clearly articulate the prediction Fitzgerald had only hinted at 15 years before in the ending of "The Debutante": that women who embrace the means of exercising sexual/political power on patriarchy's terms will pay a dear practical and emotional price for doing so.

Josephine is only 16 at the beginning of "Emotional Bankruptcy", but she nevertheless demonstrates considerable ability in playing man-versus-man in her dealings with Paul Dempster and Louie Randall. After using Dempster in order to attend a prom with an escort, she encourages the advances of Randall, who then is rejected (and lied to) in favor of still another man. Chapter Two opens with the authorial comment that:

> It had been like that for a year—a game played with technical mastery, but with the fire and enthusiasm gone—and Josephine was now 18. (B&W 276)

When one of Josephine's friends remarks "you've been around too much, dearie—you're blase", Josephine "bridled impatiently":

> I hate that word (blase) and its not true. I don't care about anything in the world except men, and you know it. But they're not like they used to be. (276)

Josephine has embraced the patriarchal doctrine of being concerned only about men, but mistakes caring about them for interest in manipulating them for her own gratification, and as a result becomes emotionally listless. Soon after the above conversation, Josephine falls for a romantic French Captain, Edward Dicer, but is
unable to see him alone because of her mother's plans to have her home for her school's winter holiday. When home, her business-like attitude toward socializing is evident: "Josephine saw her vacation invitations as so many overdue bills" (282). Her dread of her social obligations shows that after having become interested in Dicer, she is less happy with her social/sexual role. It is not surprising in this regard that when she initially meets Dicer, she realizes that "for the first time in her life she felt no confidence." (280) Dicer is someone she wants to truly care about, someone she is unable (or unwilling) to manipulate.

Near the end of the story, Dicer appears in Josephine's hometown of Chicago set to ask her to marry him, but he and Josephine are unable to avoid the intrusion of uninvited guests--the intrusion of patriarchal expectation in terms of Josephine's social/sexual role. When they are finally alone, she finds that although Dicer is everything she "has always wanted" after they kiss she can "feel nothing at all" (287). Josephine's emotional numbness comes not from having "ruined herself" by kissing many men, but from the necessity of distancing herself emotionally from those she attempts to manipulate. She realizes that while she has "had everything", she now has "nothing to give" and wonders dejectedly, "what have I done to myself?" (287).

Even though Josephine cares only about men, she can not feel anything with them (or with women either) because her interest in them involves not love or even pure emotion, but rather "technical
mastery" of the sexual/political power she possesses. Insecure about being accepted by the male world she has bought into, even her attempts to gain status and attention end up incapacitating her ability to feel and to love. While Fitzgerald's early heroines, who relied on manipulating men often seem impervious to the pitfalls inherent in their methods, Fitzgerald took great care later in his career to make it clear that such behavior is ultimately self-defeating.

The young hero's frequent idealization of women in the romance stories and the portrayal of women as aware and cunning has prompted Leslie Fiedler and other critics to decide that Fitzgerald's women characters are either devils or angels, but the stories themselves demonstrate that such simplistic typecasting ignores the complexity of the issue. In the classic romance "Winter Dreams", we encounter Judy Jones' toughness and callousness, while at the same time we are aware of Dexter Green's idealization of her. It seems clear that both positions are extremes, which are to be avoided; an emotional middle ground is tacitly advocated. In "Bernice Bobs Her Hair", the title heroine must undergo a significant trial before she not only succumbs to great social/sexual pressure (in cutting her own hair and then her cousin's), but also before she realizes that she can not and will not seek entry into the fierce society of sexual politics under the dictates of patriarchy and popularity. Thus, to use Fiedler's terminology, she is bitchy (cutting Marjorie's hair) and virtuous
(realizing the limitations of Marjorie's world); more accurately, we may see her as a multi-dimensioned character who faces no situations so clear-cut as to justify the use of typecasting terms.

In "The Ice Palace" Sally Carrol Happer is likewise required to make difficult compromises, relinquishing her dream of finding a place where her mind can "grow" after confronting the cold masculine world of the north. Seeking refuge in the sexist but more comfortable chivalry of the south does not mean she is a "monster of bitchery" nor "a monster of virtue", but merely someone interested in surviving as comfortably as she can. As early as "The Debutante" and as late as "Emotional Bankruptcy" Fitzgerald's women characters attempt to confront the exigencies of limited power with energy and seriousness only to be labeled "femme fatales" by critics who find it more expedient to typecast than to explore the multi-faceted and complex nature of the young romance heroines.

Fitzgerald's young romance stories were popular for many reasons. They certainly provided the traditional escapist outlet of the genre; they often depicted rich and good-looking characters who lead interesting lives; they are lush with seductive lyric prose used to heighten the tenuous beauty of romantic dreams. But they were so popular also because the men, and especially the women, in them are vital, alive, restless. And though these characters often appear to exude a sophisticated insouciance, they learn that the world rarely grants them their dreams and schemes without disappointing
alteration. During this process, however, they learn not about romance so much as about the supreme importance of illusionless living and the simple truism that humanistic and mature love is the only clear road to contentment and happiness. In this sense, the stories contain three dominant elements of the successful modern short story: glamorous imagination, stark realism, and lessons about the nature of romantic and humanistic love. And while the alternating yellow light of imagination and dark gloom of illusionless realism may convince some critics that the women characters in the stories are only black or white, one suspects that Fitzgerald's readers were drawn to them because they saw that the combination amounted finally to a color quite like flesh tone.

Nearly all the young romance stories are eventually concerned not only with romance, but with the possibility of marriage. The fact that women needed to take marriage quite seriously was, of course, a point well-recognized by women of the era. As Cecily Hamilton observes in her 1909 book Marriage as a Trade, "marriage is essentially (from women's point of view) a commercial or trade undertaking." 7 Hamilton's surprisingly modern study states further that:

If I am right in my view that marriage for women has always been not only a trade, but a trade that is practically compulsory, I have at the same time furnished an explanation of the reason why women, as a rule, are so much less romantic where sexual attraction is concerned. Where the man can be single hearted, the women necessarily are double motivated. 8
While Hamilton's analysis may not be as sophisticated as that of modern feminists, I think that she accurately portrays the feelings of most of the women of the era and most of the female characters in Fitzgerald's stories. Still, for some contemporary critics, the "double-motivated" woman in the stories is decreed a "monster of bitchery" precisely because she keeps a wary eye toward the practical and financial aspects of marriage. Even in the romance stories the practical questions of growth and security and love are carefully scrutinized. Repeatedly the women characters in the stories confront these questions and reveal beneath their seemingly shallow savior faire women serious and sensitive about their search for self expression and contentment.
CHAPTER THREE
"ROUGH CROSSING" -- THE PASSAGE OF MARRIAGE

Fitzgerald, for all his association with the flapper and drinking and young romance, wrote about marriage nearly as often as about any other subject. Scores of his stories deal with either the decision to marry, or perhaps more interestingly, the realities and disappointments of marriage itself. And while stories about the decision to get married have been the subject of several essays (most notably, Scott Donaldson's "Marriage and Money in Fitzgerald's Stories, Approaches, pp. 75-88), the large number of stories which deal with being married have been short shrifted. No single essay has yet been devoted to these stories.

As Cecily Hamilton pointed out early in the century, women were necessarily "double-motivated" concerning marriage, regarding it romantically and more especially as a "commercial undertaking." And though many of the women in the being married stories do marry largely for financial security, few seem to find marriage a panacea. In fact, the scenario we most often find involves a decline in the husband's power (financial or physical) precipitating growth in his wife. The message here is one universal to Fitzgerald's best work--for those who are serious about life, there never was, and never will be, an easy way out. The young man's romantic dream and the young
women's dream of financial security are imagined intensely, to be sure. But they are ultimately contrasted with the often unsettling realities of marriage and adult maturation and love.

Thus the title of this chapter contains several meanings. Marriage, however it is idealized by its participants at the outset, is almost always "rough crossing" which becomes a rite of "passage" toward maturity (or at least realization). Connotated also in the word "passage" is Fitzgerald's own developing sense of the significance of marriage, particularly for women. While earlier stories are more sexist in that the women in them learn to be less selfish only to take better care of their husbands, the later stories tend to involve the wife's development of an individual identity based on her own accomplishments. Finally, although Fitzgerald believed quite strongly in the importance and sanctity of marriage, several stories suggest that marriage for some individuals is no longer desirable or necessary.

As John A. Higgins points out in his dissertation of Fitzgerald's stories, Fitzgerald wrote six stories about young married couples in the first five years of his professional writing career.* Right from the beginning, then, Fitzgerald showed a deep

* These stories include "The Lees of Happiness" (1920), "The Adjuster (1924), "Gretchen's Forty Winks" (1924), "Hot and Cold Blood" (1923), "One of My Oldest Friends" (1924), and "The Baby Party" (1925).
interest in the difficulties of modern marriage. As Higgins observes, one of the dominant motifs in these stories is "resignation to adversity." While Higgins is correct in that judgement, he is less accurate in his assessment that in "almost all subsequent [to April 1924] marriage stories...wedded life is presented as a state of disenchantment, often a struggle by the male to avoid domination by the female." What Higgins takes for disenchantment is frequently instead the loss (albeit grudging) of adolescent idealization of marriage and of the opposite sex. Higgins' perception that the men attempt to "avoid domination" by the women seems equally simplistic. What develops most often is not a struggle for domination, but the realization (particularly by the women characters) that they must take responsibility for the success of their marriage, must attempt to share understanding and accept each other.

In "The Lees of Happiness" (1920) a writer, Jeffery Curtain, and his wife, Roxanne, seem to have a strong and happy "marriage of love" (6TJA, p. 121). Roxanne is, however, in some ways ill-adapted for the role of housewife. Having quit her acting career when she married Jeffery, we first see her botching an attempt to bake biscuits in Chapter One:

"Oh, I'm useless," she cried laughing. "Turn me out, Jeffery--I'm a parasite; I'm no good--"

(123).

A few lines later a friend of the couple, Harry Cromwell, comments that the biscuits are "decorative". While this scene is rendered
light-heartedly, it remains true that economically Roxanne is now a "parasite" who is left to be merely "decorative".

At the end of Chapter Two we learn that "a blood clot the size of a marble has broken in [Jeffery's] brain", reducing him to an invalid (127). During his illness Roxanne demonstrates great love and compassion for him by constantly attending him and caring for him. But the illness also means that "responsibility came to Roxanne. It was she who paid the bills, pored over his bank book, corresponded with his publishers" (127). While previously it seems that she had merely expected them to be solvent, she "was now realizing that they had been living from short story to short story" (127).

In Chapter Three Roxanne meets Harry Cromwell's wife, who is characterized as slovenly and spoiled, a woman who does not even take proper care of her young son. Kitty Cromwell's indolence and insecurity disgust Roxanne and are offered in contrast to Roxanne's increasing sense of responsibility. When Jeffery's condition worsens so that he is completely comatose, Roxanne shows significant resourcefulness by learning to skate through the frozen winter streets "so that she could make quick time to the grocer and druggist, and not leave Jeffery alone for long" (134). Her devotedness is questioned by "one celebrated nerve specialist" who remarks that "there must be some man, or a dozen, just crazy to take care of [Roxanne]," but the point is that she does not want or need another man (135).
Jeffery finally dies after 11 years of illness, but Roxanne is still frequently visited by Harry Cromwell, who is now divorced from Kitty. Although Harry is "devoted to" Roxanne, she wants him only as a friend. She has learned to tend her "own garden": both literally, as a means of getting by economically, and metaphorically, living on her own and developing a self-respect not dependent on men. At the end of the story, Roxanne decides to run a boarding house to make ends meet and seems content with her choice.

Roxanne was seemingly happy as Jeffery's wife, but it is implied that she felt herself in some sense a "parasite" who based her existence on that of her husband. Through his illness, she learns to become independent of her husband and of the need for a man to take care of her. While through the title of the story Fitzgerald obviously intended his audience to view her final situation as the "lees" of her former "happiness", it is clear that Roxanne has learned quite well to live without a man. In a sense, Harry Cromwell seems to understand this. While Harry had once prompted Jeffery to nail the ill-baked biscuits he called "decorative" to the wall as a strange decoration, he later (implausibly, and therefore more clearly symbolically) eats them. Thus Harry comes to realize that Roxanne is not merely decorative after all, and accepts her as an independent individual. They remain friends who at story's end "shake hands" and see "gathered kindness in each other's eyes" (139).

"The Adjuster" (1924) reintroduces the motif of a young life learning to become more responsible as a result of her husband's
illness. At the beginning of the story the young heroine, Luella Hemple, is characterized as rather naughty and selfish. We first see her at the Ritz with a friend and the narrator comments that her "enemies said that [she] had done quite for for [her] self" (6TJA, p. 140). The clear implication is that Luella married largely for money and security. Luella complains to her friend about her "boring" life and marriage:

    Even my baby bores me. That sounds unnatural, Eds, but it's true. He doesn't begin to fill my life. (141)

This is certainly a legitimate complaint, but Luella does nothing to relieve her boredom or to fill her life. While she claims she loves her husband, Charles, she admits, "I'd rather him be unhappy than me" (142).

    Interestingly, Fitzgerald tends to view Luella's discontentment in social, economic, and historical terms:

    If she had been a pioneer wife she would probably have fought the fight side by side with her husband. Luella...honestly wanted something to do. If she had had a little more money or a little less love, she could have gone in for horses or for vagarious amour. Or if they had had a little less money, her surplus energy would have been absorbed by hope and even by effort. (142)

But Luella's socio-economic situation seems to prevent her from making an effort.

    While Christiane Johnson, in her essay, "Freedom, Contingency, and Ethics in 'The Adjuster'" (Approaches, pp. 227-240) contends that Luella is "severely judged", it appears that Fitzgerald does not
blame Luella as an individual for her indolence. Instead, he sees it as a by-product of a new era, of "a class sprung yesterday from fathers and mothers who might just as well have lived two hundred years ago" (6TJA, p. 142). Luella has no role models to look to in her search for a more interesting and emancipated life.

Johnson's essay does correctly observe that "the story concerns [Luella's] reactions to the role of housewife and mother" (Approaches, p. 229). When Charles has a "nervous collapse" from "20 years of almost uninterrupted toil" Luella "realized that Charles Hemple of 14 Broadway was a helpless invalid—he was neither a reference nor a refuge any more" (6TJA, p. 153). Charles' illness demands that Luella face the "sudden callousness" of the world, a callousness that is compounded further by the illness of her young son, Chuck. Luella's emotional distance from Chuck is evident when she observes that he "resembled the incredible cherub of the 'Lux' advertisement" (152). Unable to care for him sufficiently as an individual, she demonstrates how much a product of her time she is by associating him with the ad. When she does manage to genuinely feel for him, her love seems more narcissistic than otherwise: "His face was the same shape as hers; she was thrilled sometimes, and formed new resolves about life when his heart beat against her own" (It is worth noting that Johnson makes this same observation)(145). Unable to even cook a meal for Chuck, she calls his nurse from his sick bed to help her. While unattended the boy's fever overtakes him and he dies.
While her son's death and husband's illness prompt Luella to acknowledge the "callousness" of the world, they are not enough to provide her a new direction. This role is filled by one Doctor Moon, a mysterious physician called in by Charles to help direct Luella even before Charles' illness. After the death of her son, Luella plans to leave Charles claiming that "Life has given me back my freedom, in place of what it took from me" (155). This is not really a new direction for Luella, she simply wishes to remain selfish and uncompromising. But the "unwelcome shadow" of Doctor Moon interferes. He literally blocks Luella's exit from the house and explains to her that:

You're trying to leave yourself behind, but you can't. The more you try to run away from yourself, the more you'll have yourself with you. (157)

Doctor Moon is a symbolic character, one who comes to represent the passage of time and the maturation it often brings. Having succeeded in convincing Luella that,

The household here is in your keeping, if there is any light and warmth in it, it will be your light and warmth, if it is happy, it will be because you have made it so...(159)

Luella demands that he tell her who he is. He replies:

"Who am I--" His worn suit paused in the doorway. His round pale face seemed to dissolve into two faces, a dozen faces, a score, each one different yet the same--sad, happy, tragic, indifferent, resigned--until three score Doctor Moons were ranged like an infinite series of reflections, like months stretching into the vista of the past. "Who am I?" he repeated; "I am five years." (159)
We might well see Doctor Moon not only as a "dies ex machina" but as an enforcer of patriarchal values as well. This possibility causes Christiane Johnson to ask:

Does that mean that Fitzgerald sees cooking and cleaning as the only roles of the mature woman? In that respect the story would appear quite conventional...In this age of feminism, we could have sympathized with Luella at the beginning of the story...But in Fitzgerald's day the growing woman did not have much choice. We noticed that Luella, having no job and no particular talent, had no other alternative. However, Fitzgerald does not want her to become a perfect housewife; he wants her to become a better person. (Approaches, pp 238-239)

As Johnson points out, while the story seems to ostensibly concern Luella's battle with housewifery, it really concerns her growth as a person. Doctor Moon gives us some idea of Fitzgerald's concept of a mature woman when he tells Luella:

It is your turn to be the center, to give others what was given to you for so long. You've got to give security to young people and peace to your husband, and a sort of charity to the old. You've got to let the people who work for you depend on you. You've got to cover up a few more troubles than you show, and be a little more patient than the average person...(6TJA, 158).

Luella's acceptance of her role as housewife (and we assume) future mother is in a way an acceptance of patriarchal values. But it is also the only way in which Luella will learn to care for others, and to love humanistically.

"Gretchen's Forty Winks" (1924), one of four "being married stories" collected in *Six Tales of The Jazz Age and Other Stories*
(1960), explores a young man's attempt to "get ahead in the world" while still maintaining his marriage. Roger Halsey, an advertising man, has left a secure job and is attempting to start his own firm, but must work night and day in order to attract new advertising accounts. His wife, Gretchen, is characterized as selfish and indolent. While Gretchen nags him about getting a new dress and a better house, "any question that had to do with getting ahead in the world always tended to give her a headache" (6TJA, p. 176). In addition, she believes that his incessant work will cause him to "end up with a nervous breakdown" (177). This view is supported by one George Tompkins, a friend of Gretchen's, who endorses "a balanced life" consisting of little work and much play. Roger is irritated both by Tompkin's suggestion that Roger's hard work will drive him to "the sanitarium" and by Tompkin's penchant for Gretchen's company (179).

As Roger embarks on a forty day schedule to complete a series of advertising drawings he hopes will capture a big account, George and Gretchen continue to see each other and to chide Roger about a nervous breakdown:

"Forty days," [Gretchen] sighed, "It seems like such a long time--when everyone else is having fun. If only I could sleep for forty days." (180)

Gretchen's whimsical statement put an idea in Roger's head, and when his need to complete the drawings reaches a crisis stage and Gretchen still wants to go out with George Tompkins, Roger resorts to drugging his wife and stealing her shoes in order to keep her at
home. At the end of the story, when she wakes up after a day and a half, she finds Roger has gotten the big account and that they are rich. Ironically, George Tompkins, who has constantly warned Roger about the dangers of overwork, ends up in a sanitarium with a nervous breakdown himself.

Undoubtedly Fitzgerald intended "Gretchen's Forty Winks" as a modern day parable about the virtues of old-fashioned hard work:

Money alone couldn't buy such work. More than [Roger] himself realized, it had been a labor of love. (182)

In context of the story, then, an individual's ability to work meaningfully is the ultimate virtue and the truest basis for self-respect, happiness, and ironically, good health. "Gretchen's Forty Winks" is, however, one of the most sexist stories Fitzgerald ever wrote. Gretchen, presented as shallow for wanting to enjoy life, is belittled by being compared to a "French Rag doll". (176) Roger frequently espouses the doctrine of male superiority and female inferiority. At one point he declares that:

The saddest thing about women is that, after all, their best trick is to sit down and fold their hands. (180)

When Gretchen worries about him working himself too hard, Roger tells her not to "worry [her] little head about it" (182). Gretchen, restless for some type of activity, complains that she is "tired of sleeping" all the time and that Roger "talks to [her] as if [she] were a child" (182). It is important to note also that it is only after he drugs her and she is passive that Roger seems to express
significant affection for her:

...A wave of pity passed over him. Gretchen seemed suddenly helpless and lonely, sleeping there. It was somehow terrible to rob her young life of a day. (188)

But Roger does rob her of a day and is rewarded for doing so. He never even tells Gretchen that he has drugged her so that after she wakes and is missing a day, she cries, "I think my nerves are giving way" (191). Roger does not show the concern for Gretchen's mental health that she did for his, but he is still presented as the story's champion and hero.

In "Two Wrongs" (1928), a long story written four years after "Gretchen's Forty Winks", Fitzgerald seems to atone for the blatant sexism of the earlier story. In "Two Wrongs", we meet brash and successful Bill McChesney, a young theatre producer "exuding aggressiveness and self-confidence until the air of his office was thick with it" (Stories, p. 287). While in 1924 Fitzgerald may have believed that financial and career success were ends which justified ethically questionable means, his attitude toward Bill's bravado implies that in 1928 he had reservations about the impact of success on character.

Bill is in a position to help young actresses find parts in his shows, but upon meeting one such actress, Emmy Pinkard, he proves (at least initially) callous: "'What do you want me to do, marry you?'", he demands (288). He keeps Emmy waiting all morning in his office with no intention of helping her, but the cancellation of a lunch
date and the "realization that [Emmy] was the most beautiful person he had ever seen" prompts him to ask her to lunch (289). The third person narrator explains that:

[Bill] did not want to lunch alone. He did not like to do anything alone now because contacts were too much fun when one had prominence and power. (288)

Though Bill does have financial power, his self-respect is still tenuous because it is reliant on adulation from others. Perhaps, also, he can not be alone because in those moments he is more likely to find himself reflecting, however unconsciously, on his insecurities and the shortcomings of his character.

In any event, when Bill takes Emmy to lunch, he constantly flaunts his power and professional contacts. And while he needs sycophants to boost his ego, he is unable to work with those in business, like his friend Brancusi (introduced in the first scene) who honestly cares about him and, therefore, will not blindly praise him: "Around the corner, was [a play] he had put on with Brancusi—the last time [Bill] would produce anything except alone" (289). After their lunch, Bill invites Emmy "up to his apartment" and attempts to seduce her. Emmy rebuffs the attempt but remains "very fresh and cool, and not upset at all" (290). Emmy realizes that sexual favors for producers are part of the game, and while she does not wish to play that game, she is not naive about it. It is implied that Bill will not give her the part because she has refused his sexual advances, "but now he looked again and saw that she still had holes in her stockings" (230). Bill gets her a bit part in a play he
is producing both because he pities her and because he still has a sexual interest in her, yet having done so, he is "conscious of being such a good fellow" (290).

While the play is in rehearsal, Bill and Emmy see each other infrequently. Emmy, however, is still quite poor and must finally succumb to "the price...of a few casual kisses in the backs of taxicabs" so that she "dined when hungry" (291). The difficulty of Emmy's situation is shown by the fact that she eventually does play the game (at least to some extent), even though she clearly abhors it. The play stars Bill's fiancé, Irene Rikker, and Bill becomes upset (hypocritically) over the love scenes she must do with the handsome male lead. His jealousy precipitates a row in which the actor, Frank Llewellyn, punches Bill. Just when it seems that the play is lost, however, Bill saves "the show from his own folly" and orders everyone to continue the rehearsal (293). When Emmy praises Bill for "holding things together", he asks, "Do you admire me, Baby?" (293) Emmy does seem to admire Bill and offers him enough reassurance and adulation, especially during the "gray days of reaction" to hangovers, that he decides to marry her (294). While Emmy does seem to care for Bill, her willingness to marry him may also indicate that she seeks a refuge from her poverty in the match.

Part III of the story takes place three years later in London where Bill is producing shows and ingratiating himself to "a lot of dukes and ladies" (295)-- again, bouyng his fragile sense of self-worth. It is implied that Bill has left New York because of a
dispute with a business friend named Aronstael, and Brancusi, who is also in London, attempts to get Bill to come back to New York and also warns him about his excessive drinking. Brancusi acts as a mentor of Bill and as an ethical norm setter in the context of the story (as older men, like Doctor Moon in "The Adjuster" frequently do in the stories). But Bill wants adulation, not friendship and sound advice, and he chafes under Brancusi's warnings. He then lies to Brancusi about his activities (he is going to see one Lady Sybil) causing Brancusi to make "a decision, then and there, that McChesney was on the downgrade" (295). This statement foreshadows Bill's decline and reinforces Brancusi's position as ethical norm-setter.

Before his night with Lady Sybil, Bill condescends to visit Emmy who is in the late stages of pregnancy with their second child. When Emmy, like Brancusi, points out Bill's error with Aronstael and mentions Bill's drinking problem, Bill storms:

    I always stop when I want to. I always do what I say. You've never seen me quit yet. (296)

"Never yet", Emmy replies, showing her cynicism about Bill's reliability and ability to quit drinking. Upset and suspicious about Bill's leaving her for the night late in her pregnancy, Emmy starts to cry and temporarily doubts herself: "I know—I'm just crazy", she says, but her suspicions remain (296).

Ironically, Bill is rejected by Lady Sybil, the aristocratic woman he has been seeing, and spends the entire night getting drunk. In the meantime, Emmy goes into labor and miscarrying after she falls
"Trying to get out of the taxicab alone" (299). When Bill finally shows up at the hospital, Emmy tells him:

I'm done with you...but it was awful when
I thought you were dead. Everybody's dead.
I wish I were dead. (299)

Emmy thought Bill was dead because in emotional terms he had become dead for her. And because her own identity up to this point is predicated largely on his love for her, she wishes herself dead as well.

Bill and Emmy return to New York where Emmy recovers and devotes herself to the dancing career which now becomes "the realest part of her life" (300). Bill "encourages" her work, but only as long as "he was going to build" a dance company around her—only as long as he can maintain control of her. However, the change in the strength of their positions has begun. Bill now "envies her absorption" in her work and comes to "lean, in a way, on Emmy's fine health and vitality" (300). He feels "a vague dissatisfaction that he had grown to need her more than she needed him" (300). As Fitzgerald clearly acknowledges, Bill's callousness and the crisis of her miscarriage have caused Emmy to realign the basis of her self-esteem. It now comes not from her relationship with Bill, but from herself:

Once she had worked just as hard and for as long on something else—her relations with Bill—only to reach a climax of misery and despair—but here [in her dancing] there was nothing to fail her except herself. (300)

Emmy finally gets her big break with Paul Mako, but Bill does not sound "very enthusiastic" because the enterprise does not revolve
around him. Soon after this, while Emmy is attempting to decide whether to go to Europe with Makova's company (she wants to), Bill develops lung trouble and is ordered by his doctor to go to Denver. Although Emmy is worried about Bill, she realizes that she "would rather die than go" with Bill to Denver and lose the opportunity of her career. Just as she had once wanted to die because Bill, the basis of her identity, became dead for her, now she would "die" if forced to give up the stronger basis of her new identity—her work:

They discussed the matter hour after hour for the next week, each of them saying everything except the truth—that he wanted her to go with him to Denver and that she wanted passionately to stay in New York. (302)

Fitzgerald's use of the word passionately underscores the implication that her feelings for Bill have been in some sense displaced by her passion for her work.

When Emmy finally decides to stay in New York and pursue her career, she is "ashamed of herself, miserable—and glad" (302). Her contradictory emotions demonstrate that she has not yet (nor probably ever will) become completely weaned of the patriarchal notion that she should stand by her husband no matter what. Indeed, at one point Emmy nearly succumbs to the pressure of the guilt which patriarchy has demanded she feel, but her new identity based on her own accomplishment proves just strong enough for her to remain in New York.

"Two Wrongs" marks a significant advance over previous marriage stories which detail the maturation of a young wife. While in
earlier stories the husband's physical illness prompts his wife's maturation, in "Two Wrongs" Bill's illness acts as the ultimate test of Emmy's confidence in a new self she has already created. Furthermore, the concept of maturation no longer implies (as it did in "The Adjuster") a resignation to housewifery and the care of a husband. Emmy demonstrates a more complete and less sexist maturation in that, while she may still care for Bill, she realizes that she loves herself with or without him, not because of him, but actually in spite of him. Emmy is elevated to the highest status a Fitzgerald character can achieve, one previously reserved only for men. She is able to love, but she is also financially and emotionally independent, able to make her own decisions and through dedication and belief in self, see that they succeed.

The title of the story is in a way contradictory, and one suspects that Fitzgerald chose it because it is catchy and had commercial appeal (like Roger Halsey in "Gretchen's Forty Winks", (Fitzgerald himself was once--for three months--and advertising man). The first wrong, of course, is Bill's drunken indifference which leads to Emmy's miscarriage. The second "wrong" would seem to be Emmy's decision to stay in New York. But this "wrong" is actually the one that makes a right; the right of Emmy to establish her new career and identity independently.

Of all of Fitzgerald's stories, perhaps "The Rough Crossing" (1928) most fully articulates his mature attitude toward the complexities and difficulties of marriage. As the title of this
chapter indicates, Fitzgerald did often view marriage as a "rough crossing", as the social institution which presented men and women opportunities for adult growth. It is not surprising, then, that in "The Rough Crossing" Fitzgerald employs imagery involving storms and hurricanes as a way of symbolizing the trials and upheavals of marriage. This technique makes the story seem less contrived and didactic in tone than many other marriage stories while still providing Fitzgerald a vehicle through which he can express his views.

At the beginning of the story, Adrian and Eva Smith are happy to be leaving America and sailing for France, but it is implied that they are attempting to escape the inescapable. Adrian remarks, "We've escaped. They can't get us now", but never specifies who "they" are (Stories, 254). Eva seems to give us a clue when she tells him, "Let's not get to know anybody, but just stay together" (255). As the rest of the story makes clear, the intrusion of anyone else somehow represents a threat to the Smiths, endangering their wish to "stay together". The fragility of their hope is added to not only by Adrian's immediate interest in "a dark little beauty" he sees on board, but also by the foreboding closing line of Part I:

This liner, leaving New York Sunday evening, would enter the zone of the storm Tuesday, and of the hurricane late Wednesday night. (256)

The intrusion of others into the Smith's marriage begins early in Part II when the "dark little beauty", Elizabeth D'Amido, and her
party essentially invite themselves to the Smith's dinner table. Elizabeth wastes no time in declaring that she "fell in love with [Adrian] the minute [she] saw" him (257). Adrian agrees to play in a tennis tournament with Elizabeth, neglecting to ask Eva if she would like to play. Eva, however, "remembers that on their honeymoon they had been in the finals [of a similar tournament] and won a prize" and is hurt by Adrian's failure to ask her or to remember their former glory. At one point, Eva goes to her stateroom with seasickness and is indifferent toward the suffering of a crew member she thinks is also seasick. Adrian is solicitous about Eva's illness when he visits her, but she realizes that "he was crazy to be out and away from the closed cabin" (259). Later this inference is vindicated; Adrian declares the cabin "stifling" (263). Here the closed cabin itself seems to operate as a metaphor for the confines of marriage.

Eva's dissatisfaction with Adrian's interest in Elizabeth prompts her to imagine the voyage over:

...That was all she could think of now—the little villa in Brittany, the children learning French—so she repeated the words over and over to herself until they became as meaningless as the wide white sky. (262)

Just as Eva first imagines the ship to be a refuge which will ease her marital difficulties, now she hopes that their destination will provide relief. But her sense that she is kidding herself is indicated by the fact that her words become "meaningless". Adrian, meanwhile, sees Betsy D'Amido. Fitzgerald's use of imagery involving the sea allows him to discreetly portray their sexual attraction.
The two go out on "deck to feel the spray" and soon return "soaked with spray" (261). Adrian feels after he has kissed Betsy that "she was all new and immaculate", offering him a pleasant and refreshing diversion from the old and cluttered complexities of his marriage (262).

Soon after this Eva confronts Adrian about his flirtation: "You're just having the time of your life with a child" (263). Even though in some ways Eva knows that it is Adrian's weakness which has caused their current trouble, when she finds him missing from a party she tends to blame herself. She becomes convinced that he,

was lost. The long seven year dream [their marriage] was broken. Probably she was [being] punished for something she had done... (265)

Like previous Fitzgerald heroines before her, Eva assumes she is to blame for any problems in her marriage; assumes that she is somehow lacking.

As their marital trouble increases, so does the force of the storm, a concurrence which is not lost on Eva:

She saw that there was no chance for them unless she could make atonement, propitiate the storm. It was Adrian's love that demanded it of her. (265)

She throws an expensive pearl necklace Adrian had given her overboard, a gesture ostensibly offered to propitiate the storm, but one which also demonstrates to Adrian the extent of her despair.

When they wake the next morning (after the party) Eva has a hangover, but given the extent to which her self-image is predicated
on Adrian's apparently fading love for her, it is not surprising that she calls attention to her pain by declaring, "I think I'm dying" (265). Soon after this remark we find out that the young crew member Eva had been indifferent toward earlier was not suffering from seasickness, but from acute and fatal appendicitis. While Adrian "explodes" over the trivial matter of getting a morning pick-me-up, Eva, feeling partially dead herself, now empathizes with the young sailor. The entire scene, in fact, is fraught with images of death and danger: "An elderly woman had been thrown down a staircase during the storm and was not expected to live" and there were "two broken arms this morning from attempts to take baths" (267).

As the storm nears its climax, so do the problems of Adrian and Eva. Fitzgerald's description of movement during the storm seems equally applicable to growth in marriage: "It was possible to make progress only step by step, holding on to rope or rail" (267). When Eva again erupts over Adrian's affair with Betsy, he charges, "You're hysterical", relying on patriarchy's old weapon (one used by the husbands in "Two Wrongs" and "Gretchen's Forty Winks") of declaring inconveniently perceptive women to be mentally unbalanced. Eva is undaunted, however, and replies, "On the contrary, I've never been so sane" (268). She then proceeds to tell Adrian she wants a divorce. At the very height of the storm, she attempts to reach the "wireless room" so that she can cable her lawyer in Paris, but is overcome by the force of the storm. Adrian goes after her, simultaneously saving her life and preventing her from divorcing him.
In the closing section of the story, Adrian prefers to look at the entire passage as a "nightmare...The truth is it never happened", he contends, "It was two other people...there are so many Smith's in the world" (270). While Eva recognizes that "the boat is still rocking for me", that is, she knows that their marriage is still unstable and unsatisfactory for her, she too prefers an illusion, her old one about peaceful isolation: "Adrian, let's never get to know anyone else, but just stay together, just we two." (270)

While the events of the passage were stormy, indeed, both Adrian and Eva wish to perpetuate the illusion that they can make their marriage work by isolating themselves. And though Adrian's attitude remains basically static throughout the story, Eva's opportunities for growth, the loss of illusion, and for dissolution of her marriage barely escape her. In a sense, she realizes that their entire marriage will be a series of rough crossings, but she is unable finally to muster the courage to confront the issue and do something about it.

Marriage in Fitzgerald's stories almost inevitably prompts the young women who are wives to drop adolescent solipsism and illusion and confront, however obliquely, the demanding realities of adult responsibility. In a way, this motif merely continues that of the romance stories--romantic love proves insufficient in promoting contentment and mature happiness. Only through learning about the qualities which compose humanistic love--sacrifice, self-respect
based on one's own work and effort, dismissal of morbid dependence on others—do these young women gain true maturity. While as late as "The Adjuster" (1924) maturation seems to involve learning to care for husband and child, stories like "Two Wrongs" allow women to develop a more independent self-respect based on work and individual growth outside the home. This movement away from home-centeredness anticipates Fitzgerald's depiction of assertive women in the stories he wrote in the 1930's, and demonstrates his increasingly (for the time) emancipated view of the problems and capabilities of women.
CHAPTER FOUR

LOOKING FOR "TROUBLE": THE CAREER OF THE ASSERTIVE WOMAN

In a sense, Fitzgerald almost always wrote about assertive women. The flapper, in her outrageous exhibitionism and defiance of social convention, sought, however superficially, to assert herself and to create a new role. Many of the women in the young romance stories are certainly quite assertive; if only in that they are determined to play the game patriarchy demands of them for their own profit, that is, to garner a husband who can provide them economic security and perhaps even love. As this study has attempted to show, part of the reason Fitzgerald’s stories were so popular is that they featured active, intelligent and vital characters—particularly women characters.

But Fitzgerald, especially during the 1930s, also wrote about women who attempt to pursue careers. Like Emmy Pinkard in "Two Wrongs", these women tend to be quite good at their jobs and learn to develop self-respect and financial self-sufficiency independently of men. Of course these career women usually have jobs traditionally associated with women—in nursing and entertainment, most conspicuously—but one can hardly expect that Fitzgerald in the 30s would portray women successfully as bank presidents and lawyers.

61
Other assertive women in the stories may not have careers, but they are different in that they do not settle for an easy and comfortable life even when it is offered them. Frequently, also, they exercise power not through manipulation of men, but through means like physical action, traditionally reserved for men. Many of these heroines direct the idle restless energy wasted by earlier women characters (like Sally Carrol Happer in "The Ice Palace" and Gretchen Halsey of "Gretchen's Forty Winks") into positive and constructive endeavors.

Especially late in his career, Fitzgerald was interested not only in the lives of the wealthy and privileged, but also in those who start from meager backgrounds and through effort and dedication make more interesting lives for themselves. Simply put, Fitzgerald was often interested in the underdog who makes good. It seems natural, then, that he was compelled to write so often about energetic women who confront a "man's world" with courage and conviction and integrity. In his era, women were by definition perennial underdogs.

The title of this chapter is essentially self explanatory, except perhaps for the word "Trouble". "Trouble" (1937) was the last of 66 Fitzgerald stories to appear in the Saturday Evening Post. It

*It is worth noting that in his last, unfinished novel, The Last Tycoon (1941), Fitzgerald featured just such a rags to riches hero, Monroe Stahr. It is also worth mentioning that the novel's first person narrator is a woman and that many career women, including writers, are portrayed in the book.
concerns the work and love life of an expert nurse, Glenola McClurg, whose nickname is "Trouble". In a way, all of the career women in the stories are looking for trouble because patriarchy is exceedingly slow in accepting them and in fact gives them all the trouble it can. The phrase, "Looking for Trouble", however, has another meaning. Fitzgerald had hoped to create a series of stories around her character demonstrating his increasing interest toward the end of his own career in career women. Ultimately only one "Trouble" story was written simply because Fitzgerald's editors at the Post conjectured the idea would not fly.

One early story which portrays an assertive heroine is "Diamond Dick and The First Law of Women" (1923). The story is relatively unique (among the early stories) in that it involves a woman who takes action, not by manipulating a man, but by exhibiting the resourcefulness necessary to combat a malevolent world on its own terms. In the story, young Diana Dickey seeks, like Sally Carrol Happer before her, a new identity. As a child she decides on the nickname "Diamond Dick" (with its clearly masculine man-of-action emphasis) and models her "facial expressions on that of a butcher boy who delivered meat at Greenwich back doors" (Price, p. 69).

The story centers around an aviator, Charley Abbot, whom Diana knew during WWI in Paris. After a five year absence, during which he made and lost a fortune in the brokerage business, Charley returns to America a physically and spiritually broken man. Diana accidently encounters him one evening in a night club and insists that he come
shows up at the dance, Diana tries to rekindle the romantic flame which had shone brightly for them after the war in Paris, but Charley feels himself so dissipated as to be no longer worthy of her. Charley returns to New York, intimating that he is going to see the rather coarse women he was with when Diana saw him at the night club. Diana is upset over his leaving, and feels she is "alone at last" (74).

After her brother tries to cheer Diana up by introducing her to several men he knows, she realizes that she wants Charley back. She decides to go to New York and try to get Charley back only after rediscovering her identity as:

Diamond Dick! The name had jumped at her all at once from a lurid cover, symbolizing her childish revolt against the softness of life. Diamond Dick was a law unto himself ...a sort of deity, infinitely resourceful, infinitely just. (80)

Diana finds a revolver in her father's room, loads it, and heads to New York to "take what was her own" (81). She eventually confronts Charley and his woman friend in an apartment and by brandishing the gun forces the girl to give Charley up and Charley to come with her. It turns out that Charley had had an aviation accident during the war which caused him to forget the events for several months before it. After Diana has Charley alone, she begins to prompt his memory of those forgotten months and it is disclosed (as Diana herself is quite aware) that she and Charley had been married during the war. They are re-married and:
after the wedding her closest friends stopped calling her Diamond Dick...yet perhaps if the occasion should arise Diamond Dick would come to life again...for under all her softness Diamond Dick was as hard as steel. (85)

Clearly Diana is a woman of action who had the courage and strength to fight for what she knew was hers. It may be argued, of course, that all Diana is getting is the subjugation of marriage, but given her vigor and belief in self, it seems unlikely that she will become a victim of marriage as other women might. Like many of Fitzgerald's heroines, Diana is dissatisfied with her lot, but unlike most of those in the early stories, she finds a way to circumvent (and ignore) the restrictions placed on her.

In "Majesty" (1929), we encounter a willful young heroine named Emily Castleton. Emily does not get much help from "her mother and father" who "did not know very much about the new world...so Emily had to learn everything herself" (TAR, p. 237). Emily is different from most of her friends in that her independent nature prohibits her from marrying young as they do. Instead "she became artistic as most wealthy unmarried girls do, at that age [24], because artistic people seem to have some secret, some inner refuge, some escape" (233). Because she seems to seek an "escape" from the traditional role of wife and mother, Emily is "a great disappointment to her father; so, at 24, with marriage in her head if not in her heart, Emily came home" (234). Emily realizes "in her head" that marriage is expected of her, but she knows "in her heart" that she wants something more.
Even though Emily is independent-minded, she is still quite vulnerable to the prescription of marriage which patriarchy offers as the standard diagnosis for the problems of all young women. Unmarried at 24, she finds that her social status is thereby diminished, and "at the first note of condescension from a former schoolmate", she decides to marry one of Newport's most eligible bachelor's, William Brevoort Blair (234). Her ploy is successful in that "immediately" she is regarded "again" as the "incomparable Emily Castleton" (234). While Emily has plenty going for her, she is shunned by society until she succumbs to the tie of a society marriage.

It is clear, however, that Emily has no illusions about her motivation for marrying. Before the wedding ceremony, she tells her more traditional and conservative cousin, Olive, "I shall learn to love [Brevoort]...love will come with marriage. Now isn't that a hell of a prospect" (235). When Olive chastises her for being "deliberately unromantic" Emily insists that she is "the most romantic person [she] has ever known" (235). Emily understands that romance and marriage often have little to do with each other, especially for women, and is not satisfied with her decision to marry. After Olive leaves Emily alone, she goes to Emily's father, who is delighted that his daughter has given in to marriage: "Now she's come down to earth, just...like a thorough-bred" (236). Mr. Castleton's metaphor underscores the sense that he views Emily as a commodity which, like a horse, must be broken and trained before it
is of use. Emily, however, has the last laugh. She decides at the last minute not to go through with the marriage after all and leaves Brevoort Blair standing at the altar.

The telegram Emily sends her father after her disappearance demonstrates that even after she has escaped from her expected marriage, she is still burdened by guilt:

I can't make the grade I would feel like a fool either way but this will be over soon so damn sorry for you. (239)

The double indemnity of her situation is here made explicit—either way Emily feels "like a fool"; that is, someone who can find no place or way to be accepted for herself. Her self-consciousness and feelings of inferiority are equally clear; she feels she "can't make the grade". Her more traditional cousin, Olive, however, seems to have no such compunction and marries Brevoort in Emily's place.

The story resumes two years later, years Emily has spent living in Europe. Her father, who has learned that she is in Paris traveling with a man who "calls himself" Prince Gabriel Petrocobesco, is once again rankled by her intimidating independence. He sends Brevoort and Olive to Paris, telling them:

Bring [Emily] back—it doesn't matter how—but bring her back. Go before a court if necessary and swear she's crazy." (244).

As we have seen in previous stories, when women challenge the roles established for them by patriarchy, they are labeled "crazy" or made to think they are. The pervasiveness of this attitude is implied by Castleton's confidence that a court will uphold his sexist
judgement of the situation.

Olive and Brevoort go to Europe but must track Emily all over the continent before they finally catch up with her at "the end of the world", the tiny fictional country of Czjeck-Hansa. They find Emily in "a large dirty room which might have belonged to a poor boarding house in any quarter of the Western World" (247). Olive can hardly believe that the magnificent Emily has come to such reduced circumstances. She pleads with her to leave, but Emily seems determined to stay. It turns out that Emily has convinced Prince Petrocobesco to return to the country and appeal to the "peasant party" to be installed as King, on which condition she will marry him. In this way Emily becomes queen of the tiny country.

In the closing scene of the story, Olive, Brevoort and their two children are in London to see a royal procession in which Emily and Petrocobesco ride in the queen's carriage, because it seems their small country is rich in mineral deposits. Brevoort asks his daughter whether she would rather "marry [him] or be a queen":

   The little girl hesitated.
   "Marry you," she said politely, but without conviction. (251)

The Blair's little girl already has the same sort of awareness Emily has developed; they both suspect patriarchy will expect them to marry, but would rather find a way to exert personal power. While it is true that Emily does eventually succumb to marriage, it is made clear in the story that she, and not Petrocobesco, will rule the roost. Emily decides that if she must finally marry, she will be
sure to gain all the power and prestige she can by it. In a sense, then, she never does get out from under the yoke of the need for social status and approval.

In "Jacob's Ladder" (1927), Fitzgerald introduces the motif he later employed in Tender Is The Night (1934) of an older man helping a young girl only to have her eventually leave him. In the story, Jacob Booth first observes young Jenny Delehanty at the murder trial of her sister. Jacob shields her from the questions of the sensationalistic press and helps her begin an acting career. From the start, however, Fitzgerald makes it clear that Jenny, though only 16, is tough-minded and strong-willed, qualities which conflict with Jacob's idealization of her. After he helps her avoid the reporters, she tells him that she can handle difficult people because she "gets sore after a while, then...can deal with anybody no matter what" (Bis, p. 160). Jacob, who imagines she has "the face of a saint" thinks "surely it was not she who had spoken" (161). His idealization of Jenny's helplessness and innocence refuses to die even in the face of her pragmatic and realistic assessment of things.

When Jenny proves to be quite successful in the acting career Jacob has helped begin, he is intimidated. It bothers him that "already another man [her director] was opening doors for her success" (165). Jacob helps Jenny choose a stage name, rejecting her admittedly absurd suggestion (Tootsie Defoe) and offering instead "Jenny Prince". Not content with having helped her, Jacob, who sees
himself as her knight-in-shining-armor, chooses a last name, Prince, which suggests his conception of himself. While she might not be much at picking names, Jenny proves to be a "quick learner" who develops "the capacity to discriminate and shut the trivial and unessential out of her life" (168). When she expresses the belief that she is to a large extent dependent on him, he denies it, but the narrator comments that "he liked her to think that" (169). It seems that given Jenny's strong willed nature, she too realizes that while she is not dependent on him, he wants her to think she is.

Soon after the above exchange, Jenny's success eclipses New York and she leaves Jacob to go to Hollywood. When he visits her there, he is distressed by her detachment, thinking that "circumstances were stiffening into a career which went on independently of her casual hours" (172). By this point Jacob resents the seriousness with which Jenny pursues her career because it lessens his influence over her. Upon attending a number of Hollywood parties, he observes that "she was soon or later talking to the guest of most importance" (175). While in New York, Jacob had declined several opportunities to seduce Jenny, but his increasing insecurity over her independence causes him to ask her to marry him—that is, to regain some control over her. He declares that he "is in love with her", but Jenny realizes, at least on some level, the nature of his motivation and responds: "Jacob, don't be silly... you're not in love with me" (175).
Fitzgerald signals his complete awareness of Jacob's idealization of Jenny when he comments that "[Jake] molded her over into an image of love" (177). But Jenny wants Jacob only as a friend. She tells him that he doesn't "thril her" but that she feels "comfortable" with him (178). Jacob's abstract idealizations of love are contrasted time and again with Jenny's pragmatic level-headedness: "I haven't got any theories on anything", she tells him, "I just told you how I felt" (179).

In the story's final section, Jenny returns to New York for a visit and Jacob tries again to limit her intimidating independence by asking her to marry him. When she refuses, confessing now that she loves another man, Jacob finally realizes that "she no longer belonged to him" (185). Symbolically, he decides to go and see one of her movies, entering the "fast-throbbing darkness" so that he can look, not at her as she is, but as an image on the screen which will not conflict with his idealization of her.

Throughout "Jacob's Ladder" Fitzgerald as third person narrator carefully reveals Jacob's idealization of Jenny and his attempts to limit her independence. And while Jacob's dream is portrayed poignantly, it is supplanted by Jenny's hard work, determination and independence. In this way, the narrative tone is less indulgent in the hero's romantic perceptions than, for example, Nick Carraway's seems to be in The Great Gatsby (written two years earlier). As a result, Jenny does not appear to be in any way a victimizer, as Daisy Fay Buchanan seems to be in The Great Gatsby. Jenny is simply an
independent minded and strong willed career woman who is determined to make decisions for herself.

In "New Types" (1934), Fitzgerald portrays another assertive young heroine, Paula Jorgensen. The story centers around Paula's attempt to raise $500 in modeling fees by being photographed at a high society party her rather disagreeable aunt is giving her. Only at the end of the story do we learn that Paula needs the money to finance a last-ditch operation for the secret husband she married at 17. The story's hero, Leslie Dixon, has been absent from America for some ten years and comes to associate the high society he enters, and especially Paula, with commercial advertising. He speculates upon first seeing Paula that "she was undoubtedly up to all the specifications in the advertisements" (Price, p. 549). For the majority of the story, Leslie thinks that Paula is superficial and cold, that she,

was interested in some form of perfection. It was perhaps a perfection that, in his unfamiliarity with the customs of his country, he could not understand, a perfection of form, a purely plastic aim, as if toward a motionless movie, a speechless talkie. (552)

Leslie notices further that:

as [Paula] accepted several introductions—not by the flicker of her face did she seem to see the people she met, or be conscious of the groups with which she stood, yet there was no touch of rudeness in her manner; it was rather an abnegation, the silence of a well-bred child. (552)
While Leslie tends to see Paula as cool and confident, her confusion over being a "new type" becomes clear after he criticizes her for treating herself "as if [she] were just something to display" (553). She responds:

I could be almost anything they wanted me to be if I knew what it was...a lot of us don't know anymore. (553)

Caught in a difficult situation (her husband's illness, which, of course, Leslie is ignorant of), Paula has no role models to help her. When the party Paula's aunt gives is over and Paula has earned the $500 modeling fee for posing with some society people, she and Leslie go to her apartment where she reveals her reasons for earning the money. While Leslie has previously accused her of "having the morality of a gold-digger", he now realizes that it is her heart which is made of the precious metal. At the end of the story, the operation on Paula's husband proves unsuccessful and he dies. Paula and Leslie fall in love and seem destined to marry.

Although the rather contrived plot destroys much of the verisimilitude of "New Types", its themes come through quite clearly. One of these themes is that women who appear selfish and shallow are often caring and giving, after all. It is just that the men who judge them don't realize the complexity and enormity of the problems they face. In fact, in "New Types", Paula's apparent coolness is a guise she must maintain so that she does not disclose the details of her improvident and taxing marriage (details which might cause her social as well as career problems were they known). As Fitzgerald
observes, Paula:

didn't know whether she wanted to talk
frankly to somebody or whether she could
ever talk frankly anymore, whether in the
future [before she and Leslie fall in love]
everything had to be locked up inside
forever, locked into the feminine characteristic
quality of patience, of standing and bearing
what life had to offer. (560)

Paula, on the whole, demonstrates remarkable self-reliance and
courage, "bearing" quite well with "what life had to offer". Ironically, of course, the very method Paula uses to face those harsh
realities makes her seem superficial. But like Emmy Pinkard in "Two
Wrongs", Paula achieves the highest regard a Fitzgerald character
can. She works hard, is independent, yet still has a great capacity
to care deeply about the suffering of others.

In some ways it is only appropriate that "Trouble" (1937) was
the last of 66 stories Fitzgerald published in the Saturday Evening
Post. For Fitzgerald had made a career out of writing about women
for the magazine, and, like most of the other heroines who peopled
the pages of the Post stories, Glenda McIver, alias "Trouble", is
active, intelligent and assertive. She is described as "an excellent
nurse" who is a "light-hearted" but "hard-working" person "with iron
nerves and a passionate love of life--one who had grown up on sordid
poverty, to whom the hospital was the opening of a wide, radiant
world" (Price, p. 718). In a world which is hostile to working
women, however, Trouble finds trouble from:

the new superintendent of nurses (Mrs. Johnston)
...a somewhat austere lady who had taken one
look at Trouble and decided that no girl that
pretty could be very serious. (723)

After Trouble hurts her ankle in a fall (into the arms of hero
Dr. Dick Wheelock), Wheelock inspects her injury, but is interrupted
by Mrs. Johnston, superintendent of nurses. The rather crotchety
older woman takes "one look" at the situation and assumes the two are
up to no good:

I have stood three or four serious breaches
of discipline lately, but I simply am not
going to permit my nurses to go up onto
operating rooms with doctors at night. (724)

As a result of this incident, Mrs. Johnston temporarily succeeds in
having Trouble, the best nurse on the staff, dismissed from her job.
Even older women in patriarchy are intimidated by the freer young
women who have begun to enter the working world.

Trouble "falls" for Wheelock romantically (as well as literally)
but after seeing him set to go on vacation with another woman decides
that he is not interested in her. On the rebound, Trouble decides to
(temporarily) acede to a marriage proposal from another doctor,
Frederic Winslow. But after several days of his company, Trouble
realizes that she can not put up with Winslow's adolescent antics and
incessant drinking. As she tells Winslow's sympathetic mother,
Trouble does not plan "to be a nurse to [her] husband" (721). This
statement is important because it shows that Trouble is interested in
a mature and equal partnership when she marries, one in which neither
husband or wife will be expected to fulfill a role as financial or
emotional caretaker. Later she tells Winslow, "I'm not going to be
your schoolteacher. Let's get that straight." and refuses to be
"disturbed by [his] appeal, childish and false" (730)(735).

The story ends happily in that upon his return from vacation,
Wheelock manages to get Trouble reinstated and turns out to
romantically attracted to her after all. Even still, Trouble
realizes that Wheelock is not so emancipated as she would like. It
is implied that she purposely reinjures her ankle so that Wheelock
will have to operate on her; that is, save her. Trouble understands
that Wheelock would be drawn to the sexual political dynamics of this
situation. But one gets the impression at the end of the story that
Trouble's independence of mind and spirit will not allow her to play
helpless for very long.

Perhaps more than in any other of his 179 stories, Fitzgerald in
"Trouble" directly confronts the issues of sexism in the workplace
and in relations between the sexes. Wheelock, while in some ways
sensitive, is shown to spend little time reflecting on the problems
which women must face:

Dr. Wheelock had an odd skepticism about trained
nurses—a skepticism shared by many men in his
profession. He thought that a true scientific
vocation would have made them take the extra
year to obtain an M.D.—forgetting that few of
them had the necessary preliminary education
and still fewer the necessary money. His feeling
was less than logical and can best be illuminated
as a facet of the struggle between the sexes—
the man insisting upon mastery and then being
faintly contemptuous of the slave he has made.
(722)

However chauvinistic Wheelock might seem in this passage, he is
no more than most men seem to be. Moreover, the story strongly
suggests that his association with Trouble will force a significant amount of consciousness-raising in terms of women's issues. In this sense, Fitzgerald realized that even men can learn to benefit (that is, love more humanistically) from a recognition of the rights and capabilities of women. Trouble is another Fitzgerald heroine who earns the very highest status because she possesses integrity and belief in self. One suspects that had Fitzgerald been able to write the series he'd planned, his increasing awareness of the difficulties and capabilities of women would have developed even further.

It is ironic that the editors of the Saturday Evening Post who had long sold magazines with the help of the great appeal of Fitzgerald's women characters, chose to inhibit what may have been the crowning development of those characters. And although there is sexism evident in many (particularly early) Fitzgerald stories, by the late 1930s his sense of the rights and abilities of women may have outgrown that of the Post's editors and readership.
CHAPTER FIVE

LYRIC PROSE AND THE ROMANTIC DOUBLE VISION

This study has attempted to demonstrate that Fitzgerald was very often concerned with the practical and emotional difficulties which the women characters in his stories confront. One must acknowledge, however, that there are a number of reasons why Fitzgerald's more sensitive and realistic depictions of women in the stories tend to be overlooked. The first of these reasons, as previously mentioned, has simply to do with the fact that the women characters are often beautiful or rich or both. These attributes tend to obscure the very real problems these women face, or tend to make them seem less difficult or important. Another reason his investigation of women's problems is often inconspicuous is that most of the story's use third person limited omniscient narration which focuses on the hero's point of view; that is, we most often stay "in the minds" of men, and are left to infer conclusions about women's perceptions through analysis of their actions rather than simply hearing what they think.

Both of these factors, however, are relatively unimportant when compared to the glossing effect of Fitzgerald's remarkably lush and often hyperbolic prose style. Many critics have remarked on Fitzgerald's "double vision", as Malcolm Cowley does in his introduction to The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald (1951):
Always Fitzgerald cultivated a double vision... he surrounded his characters with a mist of admiration, and at the same time kept driving that mist away... It was as if all his stories described a big dance to which he had been taken... the prettiest girl... and as if at the same time he stood outside the ballroom, a little Midwestern boy with his nose to the glass, wondering how much the tickets cost and who paid for the music. (Stories, p. XIV)

Although Cowley does not say so, one suspects that he realized that the "mist of admiration" which surrounds many of the characters is largely the function of the luxuriant prose style which is used (particularly in a physical sense) to describe them. And while, as Cowley notes,

the morality [Fitzgerald] wanted to preach was a simple one [whose]... four cardinal virtues were Industry, Discipline, Responsibility—in the sense of being kind to people and meeting one's obligations—and Maturity—in the sense of learning to regard failure as inevitable and yet making one's best effort always. (XV)

Fitzgerald's method of imparting these values was hardly simple and didactic. His double vision often involved prose passages which would build to a dramatic and rhapsodic rhetorical climax only to be undercut by the final phrase or even word.

Fitzgerald loved and respected the Romantic poets, especially Keats, and once remarked that "the talent that matures early is usually of the poetic type, which mine was in large part" (Stories, p. XVI). He cultivated this talent quite consciously, as his descriptions in his notebooks show. Often he would write sentences or description of a character, a setting, or an incident separately
from any story, novel or plot at all; just for the practice or pleasure of it. Sometimes he would pore over these descriptions later hoping to find one appropriate for incorporation into a novel or story. As John O'Hara once observed, "Fitzgerald was a better plain writer than all of us put together. Just words writing" (Price, p. XI).

It is the intention of this chapter to investigate the impact Fitzgerald's lush lyric prose had on his reader's perceptions of a number of women characters in his stories. As Fitzgerald himself recognized when he was studying Joseph Conrad's introduction to The Nigger of The Narcissus in preparation for the writing of The Great Gatsby, the individual words and phrases of a novel or story (particularly one which employs consciously highly stylized prose) often take on a "magic suggestiveness;" that "the purpose of a work of fiction is to appeal to the lingering after-effects in the reader's mind." These after-effects are the product not so much of elements like plot and character, but instead spring from the tone of the book as determined by its prose style.

In a way, then, it is the contention of this chapter that Fitzgerald succeeded in "appealing to the lingering after-effects" in the minds of his story readers, but that these after-effects often exude the romantic and escapist qualities salient in Fitzgerald's prose to such a degree that they obscure his portrayal of the practical exigencies of the women characters.
One need hardly go searching for examples of Fitzgerald's lyric prose; they appear on almost every page of fiction he ever wrote. Often this lyricism, enchanting to the ear and the mind, is most conspicuous when it appears at the opening or closing of a section, chapter, or story. The example below is the first paragraph of the long story, "May Day" (1920):

There had been a war fought and won and the great city of the conquering people was crossed with triumphal arches and vivid thrown flowers of white, red, and rose. All through the long spring days the returning soldiers marched up the chief highway behind the strump of drums and joyous and resonant wind of brasses, while the merchants and clerks left their bickerings and figuring and, crowding to the windows, turned their white-bunched faces gravely upon the passing battalions. (Stories, p. 83)

In a sense Fitzgerald seems to aspire to a sort of biblical/historical detachment: he specifies neither the city (New York) nor the war (WWI). Even given this uncharacteristic quality (for Fitzgerald generally) of the passage, lyric and romantic qualities abound. Words like "vivid" and "joyous" and "resonant" adumbrate an active and happy time. The rolling nature of the very long second sentence matches perfectly with the actual action; the soldiers marching. This sense of organized and harmonious movement is underscored by the phrases "strump on drums" and "resonant winds of brasses", and by the flowers which though thrown, seem to fall in an orderly pattern of "white, red, and rose". The order and joy connotated in this passage is undercut very little by the word "gravely" because the merchants and clerks are bystanders,
insignificant when compared to the "triumphal" center.

While lingering after-effects from this passage would seem to involve celebration and joy and order, "May Day" itself is about suicide, gang mobs, the struggle of a poor man to make money, and violence. In this way, the prose style, particularly of the early sections, tends to obscure, at least in the reader's memory, the actual scrodid events of the story.

A similar glossing effect takes place at the end of section one of "Majesty":

There was an attempt to clear the vestry, and then, as if to balance the dribbling, a ripple of conversation commenced at the rear of the church began to drift up toward the altar, growing louder and faster and more excited, mounting always, bringing people to their feet, rising to a sort of subdued roar. (TAR, p. 238)

Water images abound in the passage, caused by the words "clear", "dribbling", "ripple", and "drift". And while the pace of the prose quickens toward the climax in the word "roar", this climax is in some ways undercut by the word "subdued". Here, again, we see Fitzgerald's penchant for describing movement, in this passage augmented by the water images. And while words like "faster", "excited", and "mounting" give the second part of the sentence a feverish quality, they seem less metaphorical and therefore less salient than those used in the water images. The event being described is the realization by those in attendance at the wedding that the groom has been stood up, but the lyric qualities of the
passage diminish the practical impact of this most unromantic event. Fitzgerald has employed peaceful water images to a turbulent and shocking event.

The passage below appears in the second to last paragraph of "The Sensible Thing";

But for an instant as he kissed her he knew that though he search through eternity he could never recapture those lost April hours. He might press her close not till the muscles knotted on his arms—she was something desirable and rare that he had fought for and made his own—but never again an intangible whisper in the dusk, or on the breeze of the night. (Stories, p. 158)

The most conspicuous words in this passage seem to be "recapture", "eternity", and "intangible". They are conspicuous not only because they imply large concepts, but because they are used less often in speech and in writing than the other words in the passage. Each of these three words has romantic connotations and adumbrations; people often love each other for "eternity", feel delicate, "intangible" emotions, "recapture" not usually an escaped convict, but an emotional epiphany. In addition, the words "whisper", "dusk", "breeze", and "instant" are all often associated with romanticism. A breeze is cool and refreshing, a whisper quiet and soft, dusk mellow and calming, an instant transitory in its very essence. These are the words which dominate the passage and give it such a strong romantic and lyric quality. But the passage is about disappointment, disillusionment, and pain. Fitzgerald might easily have chosen to employ words like bleak, unhappy, painful, and
disappointed to describe the emotional experience George O'Kelly undergoes. These words would have drawn attention to the practical aspects of O'Kelly's experience. The ones Fitzgerald employs draw our attention away from pain and disappointment and toward beauty, movement, and life.

The passage below is the first description we get of Ailie Calhoun in "The Last of The Belles";

She had the adroitness sugar-coated with sweet, voluble simplicity, the suggested background of devoted fathers, brothers and admirers stretching back into the South's heroic age, the unfailing coolness acquired in the endless struggle with the heat. (Stories, p. 24)

The words "sugar" and "sweet" and "simplicity" suggest an innocence that Ailie hardly possesses. It may be argued that the narrator, Andy, is simply idealizing Ailie, but the fact remains that the "lingering after-effects" of this passage conflict with what we learn through plot and action of Ailie.

The following passage is the first description we get of Roxanne Milbank in "The Lees of Happiness";

Here was the gayety of the period—the soft wine of eyes, the songs that flurried hearts, the toasts and bouquets, the dances and dinners. Here was a Venus of the hansom cab, the Gibson girl in her glorious prime. Here was...

...here was, you find by looking at the name beneath, one Roxanne Milbank...(GTA, p. 120)

This passage is rife with romantic lyricism. The repetition of phrases beginning with "the" gives the passage a sumptuous, quilted, layered quality which heightens its lyricism and poetic beauty. The
words "soft", "flurried", "glorious", "gayety", and "Venus" all connote beauty and splendor. But as we have seen, the story is about Roxanne's painful and difficult adjustment to life on her own, about the grief she feels over the death of her husband and her mundane and unromantic efforts to support herself financially.

There is no denying that is was Fitzgerald's remarkable romantic prose style, as much as anything else, which contributed to his immense popular appeal. In a sense, the beauty and lyricism of his prose enabled him to tell sad stories, "to preach", and yet still be read as a popular writer. And for those who thought harder about the stories, plumbed below the layers of rich prose, he offered also a second vision; a vision of a world of difficult problems and constant struggle and disappointment.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Although F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote some 179 short stories, and the majority of them featured women prominently, modern critics have chosen to either belittle the complexity of the roles of women in the stories or simply not investigate them seriously at all. In some ways this is understandable (though hardly appropriate), for a series of factors have caused the stories in general, and particularly the roles of women in them, to be short-shifted. These factors include Fitzgerald's own well-publicized denigrations of his stories as "hack work", the association of him with the flapper, his tendency to idealize women in his early life and stories, the use of his wife's diaries in some of his work, his brief suppression of his wife's writing, his occasional mistreatment of women in his personal life, and the very fact that he wrote popular stories for money.

But it seems clear that the time has come for the stories of one of the century's major American writers to be taken seriously. Furthermore, given the fact that Fitzgerald wrote more about women than any other American male writer of his era, it is particularly imperative that the roles of the women in his stories be thoroughly investigated. Critics can no longer merely study his novels and a few of his best stories and pretend to an understanding of the
significance of his work; nor can they dismiss the women characters by labeling them "monsters of bitchery" and expect to have their work respected and meaningfully consulted.

As this study has attempted to demonstrate, Fitzgerald often took great care to portray the difficult problems women faced in the 1920s and '30s. We have seen that in the young romance stories, for example, a great number of women characters are necessarily "double-motivated" in their search for love and romantic happiness. Because they rarely possess the skills to support themselves financially, they must put all their eggs in the fragile basket of trying to find a man to live with. These women invariably face this problem with great energy, intelligence and determination. They prove to be completely aware that they live in a "man's world", are entirely conscious that they need to perform in order to garner a husband, and are usually determined to have a good time until they find they must marry, often because they feel they are losing their ability to attract men. The very fierceness with which these women go about the business of finding a husband indicates the desperation of their situation. And though these women often appear to radiate insouciance, they learn that they are rarely granted their dreams without disappointing alteration. During this process, however, they learn not so much about romantic love as about the importance of illusionless living and the simple truism that humanistic love is finally their only hope for contentment. When women characters (Ailie Calhoun and Josephine Perry, for example) fail to face up to
this truth, they remain immature and find themselves perpetually floundering in adolescent despair.

Though few critics seem to acknowledge it, Fitzgerald was not content with exploring only courtship and the decision to get married; he, in fact, wrote a significant number of stories about being married; about the difficulties and learning experiences he saw as inevitable for married couples. Marriage for Fitzgerald's women characters almost always turns out to be a rite of passage toward a maturity which, as Malcolm Cowley observed, consists of learning to regard minor failure as inevitable but still always giving one's best effort. These women, Luella Hemple and Roxanne Milbank and Emmy Pinkard, for example, learn to dismiss their morbid dependency on their husbands and develop new identities based on a self-respect earned through work and effort. Fitzgerald himself found that the writing of marriage stories matured his own vision, making the later stories less sexist in that the wives no longer just take care of their families, but instead learn to support themselves financially and emotionally.

Increasingly as his career progressed, Fitzgerald wrote about women's careers. These women, Jenny Prince and Glena McClurg, for instance, confront the harsh sexism of the working world with great poise and awareness. They realize that most of the men around them are intimidated by their independence, but this does not stop them from pursuing their careers and personal goals with vigor. As the example of Paula Jorgensen makes clear, however, these women do
not have to sacrifice their sensitivity and ability to love simply because they are determined to be as independent as possible. They can often, as the phrase now goes, have it all.

Fitzgerald, in the stories written near the end of his career, began to directly acknowledge and condemn the sexism of his era. In both "New Types" (1934) and "Trouble" (1937) he makes authorial comments which recognize and condemn the pervasiveness of sexism. Even in earlier stories, like "Jacob's Ladder" (1927) and "The Rich Boy" (1926) he goes out of his way to demonstrate that male idealization of women not only prohibits women from gaining greater freedom, but perpetuates male adolescence. As the comparison between "The Rich Boy" and "The Last of the Belles" attempted to prove, Fitzgerald after 1925 tended to judge men and women by the same rigorous standards. Thus Anson Hunter remains a boy for the same reason Ailie Calhoun remains a belle; neither is willing to truly care about anyone else except in so far as the other person perpetuates their feelings of superiority. Irresponsible men, like Bill McChesney, are punished, just as responsible women, like his wife Emmy Pinkard, are rewarded.

There is no denying that Fitzgerald wrote many stories which contained sexist elements and that he was capable of demeaning comments about women in both his personal life and in his work. But the pervasive critical judgment that he never wrote realistically or sensitively about the problems and successes of women is simply untrue. As a matter of fact, it may be that Fitzgerald, particularly
later in his career, demonstrated an awareness of the difficulties of life for women living in patriarchy as great as that of any other major American male writer of the day. The time has come to stop basing critical judgments of his women characters on the basis of a number of unfortunate personal incidents. This study has only investigated the roles of women in 21 of Fitzgerald's stories. It remains to be seen if critics will study the women in these 21 stories, or in the nearly inexhaustible and rich 158 that have yet to be investigated.
ENDNOTES


3. Some 146 short stories were published in Fitzgerald's lifetime; 18 have been published since; 14 remain unpublished; bringing the total number to 179. This number does not include several stories which were published under the by-line F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald which were mostly her work.


8. Ibid, p. 22.


11. Ibid, p. 78.

12. Johnson's article makes the point more explicitly and at greater length.

13. Higgins and Johnson both mention this.