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A WOMAN'S TOUCH IN F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S *TENDER IS THE NIGHT*: PULLING THE WOMEN OUT OF THE BACKGROUND

by

MERRY B. LUONG

Under the Direction of Dr. Audrey Goodman

ABSTRACT

This is a critical study of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night* focusing primarily on the lack of examination and criticism surrounding the women characters. Included are reviews of Fitzgerald's personal and professional life from the publication of his critically acclaimed *The Great Gatsby* until the publication of his last complete novel, *Tender Is the Night*, discussion of the contemporary and current criticism of the novel, and a feminist reading of the novel in order to focus more significant critical attention upon the women characters in order to create a fuller understanding of Fitzgerald's novel.

INDEX WORDS: *Tender Is the Night*, feminist reading, women characters, F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

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May 2010

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to Ramona Rollins, Gena Froehlich, and Peter Gollan for constantly and unwaveringly encouraging and supporting me through my passion for literature. No matter how much I complained and whined, they constantly reminded me that I was doing what I loved the most in my life, and for that, I owe them much more than this dedication.

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I would like to acknowledge Dr. Audrey Goodman, Dr. Pearl McHaney, and Dr. Nancy Chase's time and support for not only agreeing to read my humble paper but also for willingly working with my hectic schedule to help me finish this huge project. They are the reasons I love American Literature and will always have a deep passion for great books, great authors, and great professors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v

1 INTRODUCTION 1

2 CHAPTER ONE: THE AUTHOR, THE LIFE 10

3 CHAPTER TWO: CRITICAL UPROAR 24

4 CHAPTER THREE: THE WOMEN BEHIND IT ALL 37

5 CONCLUSIONS: WHERE IS DICK NOW? 54

BIBLIOGRAPHY 58

INTRODUCTION

Early twentieth-century America did not represent the same values or provoke the same critical reactions as it does by contemporary standards because America was a "much less political term, which was natural enough because policy was less of an issue in national intellectual life" (Berman 25). The term "America" described an idea or concept rather than a land or group of people. For Susan Hegeman in *Patterns of America: Modernism and the Concept of Culture*, America and modernism were closely affected by and tied to the advances in technology, new forms of transportation such as invention of the automobile, effects of First World War, proliferation of consumer culture, Freud's ideas of the unconscious and infantile sexuality, and sound recording and moving pictures (20). Perhaps what is just as significant as these elements in characterizing modern America was "self-consciousness, equally distinctive self-awareness of the rapidity of change, and distance from the past" (Hegeman 20). This era of American history can be summed up as an era of "cultural renaissance created from the very ambivalence, the irresolvable tensions, over ideas about the past and the possibilities of the future" (Currell 1). Influenced by jazz music, alcohol, and changes in technology, the youth of 1920s America began to rebel against and reject traditional ideas of social roles, attitudes, and ideas, which created conflicting attitudes with the past.

The tensions over progress and tradition for American women in the 1920s created a contradictory position for many female reformers of the time period. Many reformers did not believe that the "flapper" represented choice but rather "consumer conformity" (Currell 30), so reformers relied on traditional stereotypes of women to advance their goals for social change. As social change brought about new freedoms in new roles for women, women did not use these freedoms to continue to improve and reform society. The women's movement essentially collapsed, leading to a "decade of contradiction and critique" (Currell 28) for the movement. These same tensions, even if short-lived or unsuccessful,

that motivated women to pursue social equality and change also inspired writers to pursue themes of past and present and life and death in their writings, which labeled them the "lost generation." Of all of the lost generation writers, one man distinguished himself from the others with his lyrical style that explored how young women embraced this new era of short hair, short skirts, and public displays of freedom from conservative norms of their mothers' time and how young men coped with these new women. This writer was F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald's literary style captured what the youth of America were experiencing and how they dealt with modernism and the war, and his novels "offered the American reading public something new in 1920: young girls who smoked cigarettes, drank cocktails and allowed themselves to be kissed by lots of boys" (Dardis 101). Although Fitzgerald's social material in his fiction "seemed sensational in the early Twenties, Fitzgerald, himself, was an old-fashioned moralist with conventional standards of conduct" (Bruccoli, *Fitzgerald and Hemingway* 11). This contradiction between the fictional character and the author led Fitzgerald to constantly seek to maintain a balance between the new attitudes of the young men and women of his era with the conservative nature of his standards of manners and conduct.

Fitzgerald's female characters in his early stories, such as Marjorie Harvey, epitomized the Jazz Age. They were lively characters reminiscent of young and unattainable women of his life—Ginevra King, at first, then Zelda Sayre. Even early in his career, Fitzgerald used his experiences at Princeton, his time in the South, and his courtship of Ginevra and Zelda for his writing. Fitzgerald's youth and confidence were evident in his work, and his talent to understand the depths of people translated clearly into his characters of his early stories and novels. Fitzgerald's fiction transformed into "self-warning or self-judgments" (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 76) about the unattainable girl remaining unattainable because "the satisfied artist is unproductive" (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 76). Ironically this idea of the

satisfied and unproductive artist foreshadowed Fitzgerald's career after *Gatsby* and inspired his material for *Tender Is the Night*.

As success came early to Fitzgerald, his "identity became fixed as the creator of the Jazz Age" (Dardis 101), and he lived up to his Age by living grandly and without restraint. The intensity and burden of Fitzgerald's identification with his times shaped him into the roles that the prevailing moods required, and he eventually became identified—or rather he publicly identified himself in "The Crack Up"—with defeat. When his writings and identity were synonymous with the 1920's Jazz Age, he symbolized youth and confidence, but during the Great Depression of the 1930's, he became the symbol of thwarted expectations and remorse (Bruccoli, *Scott and Ernest* 156). Unlike his friend and fellow acclaimed writer Ernest Hemingway who encouraged Fitzgerald to simply write and work, Fitzgerald was more preoccupied with creating a great masterpiece that would succeed both financially and critically. Fitzgerald expected this masterpiece to surpass the fame and success of *The Great Gatsby*, but as time passed, he became exactly what he identified in Armory Blaine, for whom Fitzgerald was the prototype, in *This Side of Paradise*; "it was the becoming he dreamed of, never the being" (24).

During Fitzgerald's first six years as a professional writer and despite his personal problems, he completed *This Side of Paradise, The Beautiful and the Damned*, and *The Great Gatsby*, a play, forty short stories and twenty-seven articles or reviews as well as movie scenarios (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 225). This was the most productive period of his career. As a professional writer, Fitzgerald regarded "everything that happened to him as material" (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 104), and as he and his wife Zelda created a lifestyle that he refused to compromise or sacrifice although it required a great deal of money to sustain, it was abundant vibrant material from which he could draw for his work. Their lifestyle included traveling abroad, attending parties as celebrities, and drinking incessantly that aided in destabilizing Zelda's mental health, slowly eroding their marriage, and disrupting his progress on

Tender Is the Night, his serious fiction, the anticipated masterpiece. Fitzgerald made several attempts to focus his creative energy during his personal turmoil, but after 1925 "it became increasingly difficult for him to devote consecutive months to writing" (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 225). Fitzgerald's attempts and failures to focus his energy wholly on his novel translated almost autobiographically into *Tender Is the Night* with the story of Dick Diver. As Dick became the central focus of the story, it became evident that Dick also became the central focus for Fitzgerald, critics, and scholars, all of whom pushed the women into background. Closer examination of *Tender Is the Night* will reveal that as women faded into the background in Fitzgerald's real life, his female characters too faded into the background during the seven years of writing *Tender*. This process may have encouraged a simplistic analysis of the novel from its initial publication to its contemporary criticisms.

Fitzgerald's celebrity lifestyle monopolized his time and energy and made him incredibly dependent upon the financial viability of his easy-and-quick short stories. In 1927, Fitzgerald earned $29,757.85 after commission, which included $15,300 from short stories and only $153.23 total from book royalties (Bruccoli, *Scott and Ernest* 98). For Fitzgerald, writing these short stories would earn him enough money to grant a degree of financial freedom and time to devote to *Tender*, but as his lifestyle and alcoholism became increasingly uncontrollable, his focus on both the novel and short stories reflected the effects of the alcohol and marital issues. When *Tender* was finally published on April 12, 1934, for many critics, Fitzgerald's reputation as a "serious writer" had been damaged by the easy short stories and alcoholism. Hemingway believed that *Tender* distorted the Murphys and was "emotionally unsound," while Sara Murphy criticized Fitzgerald for only being able to understand himself and no one else[1] (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 371-374). Although some criticism focused on Fitzgerald's nonlinear

[1] Sara Murphy's complete original letter to Fitzgerald criticizing his inability to understand other people can be found in Matthew J. Bruccoli and Margaret M. Duggan, ed. *Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (New York: Random, 1980) 398.

sequence in the novel, a majority of critics found the novel primarily focused on Dick Diver in some form or fashion.

John Chamberlain in his 1934 review of the novel believed that "Rosemary was evidently intended to be meaningless in herself" (97) and was merely a catalyst for the "predictable" end of the Divers. Chamberlain focuses on the novel as a story about a husband and wife where the wife will remain in love with her husband only as long as she needs him. Nicole's love for Dick is "predicated by her sickness; when she ultimately comes to feel that she can stand by herself, her love for him collapses" (97). In Chamberlain's review, Nicole is portrayed more as a leech and Dick the victim. Chamberlain does not take into account that the Divers' demise is much more complicated than Nicole becoming "cured" and no longer requiring her husband's medical service.

On the other hand, Hartley Grattan believed that Rosemary exemplified Fitzgerald's typical female character who is "moonstruck by glamour" (104), but she has arrived to a decaying world and is too late to make the impression she wanted to make upon it. Even for Grattan, though, the novel is focused on Dick Diver as an altruistic reformer, and Nicole represents the rotten society that Dick tries to reform.

Other critics have not been as kind. Margaret Marshall's 1941 discussion in rereading Fitzgerald after his death concludes that *Tender* is a "confused exercise in self pity" (113). Marshall does not explain how or why she came to this conclusion or even what in or about the novel made her believe that it is merely an exercise in self-pity. William Troy in 1945 believes that Dick Diver's failure is neither believable nor successful in inciting any moving response from the reader since we are "never certain whether Diver's predicament is a result of his own weak judgment or of the behavior of his neurotic wife" (191). Troy's argument lacks close examination of Dick's characteristics and Troy's judgment concerning Nicole's behavior is not supported or balanced with an examination of Dick's behavior.

Thus far criticism of *Tender* has not been very thorough, and most of the critics have focused primarily on Dick.

This introduction will allow the reader to understand that Fitzgerald had the great gift of "graceful elegance" in his prose (Hook 1: 60), and his novels, specifically *The Great Gatsby*, transcend the pages as an "apparently effortless prose poem, an extended lyric or elegy with every word working, contributing to the perfectly shaped whole" (Hook 1: 60). As he became more famous and more successful, his writing changed drastically leading some of his contemporaries to believe that he had let his talent for understanding people disappear next to his dream of a masterpiece, but his ability to transform the mundane into something lyrical did not desert him. According to Matthew J. Bruccoli, Hemingway genuinely believed that after the positive review of *Gatsby* by Gilbert Seldes, Fitzgerald became obsessed with living up to that novel and its review rather than focusing on writing well and writing something in which he believed. This obsession caused Fitzgerald not to truly imagine his characters in *Tender* because he had lost touch with what people are like to begin with so that his attempt to blend the Murphys with the Fitzgeralds to create events and actions failed (Bruccoli, *Scott and Ernest* 115-117). Criticisms of the novel have been fairly biased focusing primarily on Dick Diver and his relationships with his wife and Rosemary, and the criticisms have caused both the women of the novel to fair poorly in analysis and review as well as caused the novel as a whole to lose its impact as a dynamic modern novel.

In Chapter One, I will focus on describing Fitzgerald's personal affairs post *The Great Gatsby* up until *Tender Is the Night* since his personal troubles significantly affected his ability to write a serious work that he felt would exceed the success and critical reception of *Gatsby*. His growing dependence on the financial viability of his short stories developed primarily from his desire to provide a grander life than what would be conducive to him working clearly and coherently. His increased traveling, partying,

drinking, and Zelda's medical expenses made working on his serious fiction subordinate to the lucrative paychecks that came from the short stories—short stories that he equated with prostituting his talent. His marriage to Zelda became increasingly troublesome. Some scholars and sources have alluded to her jealousy of his work, her lack of housewifely ambitions, and her own need to be creative while her mental health became increasingly unstable. As her medical problems grew, so did the financial burden and the distance between husband and wife. Zelda was to remain his primary financial and marital commitment and his love, but she was not the only woman with whom he shared his love and life. Specifically two other women, Ginevra King and Sheilah Graham, influenced his work before and after Zelda, but neither impacted him personally and professionally as Zelda did, and once Zelda stepped into the background of his life and work, so did the other women. These female characters eventually disappeared in Fitzgerald's portrayal of them and from the attention of the critics. By the time he was writing *The Last Tycoon*, "virtually all the minor characters are also one-dimensional, but it is the women who fare worst of all" (Dardis 149). However, I believe that after *Gatsby* the women characters began to suffer from neglect.

In Chapter Two, I will examine the contemporary critical reception and critical analysis of *Tender Is the Night* and reveal that although some of it was mixed, much of it was rather positive and focused on Dick Diver. One of the goals of this chapter is to reveal that the vast majority of the scholars and reviewers of this novel have been male, and based upon their gender, their focus of the novel has been one that is primarily patriarchal and male-centric perspective to examining the novel as a whole that has caused the women of the novel to be pushed further into obscurity. The lack of focus on women in *Tender* by Fitzgerald first and by critics second have rendered the female characters flat and unreflective of the vibrant women Fitzgerald had previously created with characters such as Daisy, Rosalind, Sally Carol, and Bernice. My primary goal is to reveal that because the research and criticism

has been done with a male-biased perspective, the female characters have not been studied. A critical examination using a feminist reading of the novel will help bring these women out of the background of Fitzgerald's work to reveal their contribution to the novel as more than supporting figures rotating around Dick Diver.

In the last chapter, I will discuss the novel using a feminist perspective and approach in order to fill the gap created by the patriarchal readings of *Tender* thus far. My strategy for this approach will be to examine Rosemary Hoyt, Nicole Warren, Beth "Baby" Warren, Mrs. Elsie Speers, Mary North, and Violet McKisco thoroughly as individual characters in the novel and compare them to one another in terms of their characteristics. By focusing more attention on these characters, a more dynamic analysis and comprehension of the story will provide a wider appeal critically. Some critics see the novel as a psychiatric novel involving Dr. Dick Diver and his patient/wife Nicole Diver, who on the most superficial of levels is the cause of his downward spiral and failure, but as critics have pointed out various flaws in the Nicole, Dick, and Rosemary triangle, they have failed to examine all the characters and their relationships and thus have failed to capture the novel as a whole or its effect on readers.

As I begin to pull the women out of the background, it shall become evident that the female characters add much more to the story than merely a supporting cast to Dick Diver. Although Dick plays a vital role in *Tender Is the Night*, his function is not the *only* one that affects the various events in the story and his actions do not occur in a vacuum. By dedicating scholarship to these female characters, I will be able to reveal how the dynamics of the events and actions of *both* the women and men of the novel aid and lead to Dick Diver's downfall. Since many critics have failed to examine the female characters as anything more than supporting characters or tools used to move the action along in the novel and their focus has been primarily on Dick, Dick's failure has been diminished or its effect has not been as powerful or moving, so the novel lost its impact. Fitzgerald's "masterpiece" offers more than a

story about a single man, and critics and scholars must begin examining the contribution of the female characters as well as the male characters in order to fully understand the novel's literary contribution. A novel this laden with complicated relationships must be examined and read using more than a single lens in order to truly appreciate Fitzgerald's choice to have Dick fade into obscurity in the end and everyone else to live without him.

Tender Is the Night is F. Scott Fitzgerald's last complete novel, and it was published nearly nine years after his critically successful *The Great Gatsby*. By the time *Tender* was published, Fitzgerald had accomplished more than many writers would their entire lives; he had written three successful novels, over forty short stories, published three short story collections, a play, a movie scenario, and many reviews and articles. By anyone else's standard, Fitzgerald was a well accomplished writer, but for Fitzgerald the accomplishments were never enough because he wanted to attain his own unattainable idea of success; he wanted to write a work that would surpass the critical success of *Gatsby* and also to become a financial success. He spent nine years shuffling back and forth across the Atlantic trying to work through the demons of being Fitzgerald the man and Fitzgerald the serious writer, alcoholism, marital strain, financial woes, and what he considered failure. The only thing Fitzgerald failed in was being able to see the robustness of a novel that explores the emotions of loss and the loss of feelings that could never be felt or captured no matter how much he wanted them to be.

CHAPTER ONE: THE AUTHOR, THE LIFE

Some contemporary reviewers of *Tender* argued that Dick Diver's decline in the novel is unbelievable, unconvincing, and readers are unsympathetic to it. Other reviewers argued that the evidence for Dick's decline is rooted in his youth. While neither perspective coincides with my argument, the latter argument for Dick's youth is that it is similar to Fitzgerald's youth. Prior to bursting upon the literary scene with *This Side of Paradise* on March 26, 1920, Fitzgerald's youth shaped him into a writer with specific themes that haunted him for his entire writing career. Mollie Fitzgerald pampered and doted on her son, which fostered an egocentric personality that spawned the lists and charts about people and events in his life. Fitzgerald pushed his doting mother away and gravitated towards his father, Edward Fitzgerald, who had the charm and grace he admired despite Edward's failure financially. Fitzgerald's "concentration on himself may have been poor preparation for a well-adjusted personality but it was valuable training for a writer" (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 27), and as a writer, the themes of the poor boy in love with the rich girl, the boy chasing after the unattainable girl, "gifted men ruined by selfish women" (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 76), and the boy winning the most desirable girl (Rielly 5) began to seep into his early writing. However as a boy in society, he did not make many friends, and when he found himself in a social situation where he was ignored or not handling it well, he would play the fool or the clown, or he would act out outlandishly for attention.

By the time Fitzgerald met Zelda Sayre, he had already loved and lost a great inspiration and muse for his life and work—Ginevra King. His inability to attain Ginevra haunted him for years in his writing and hovers over his most studied work, *The Great Gatsby*, and his failures in courting Zelda exacerbated his already insecure feelings. Unlike Ginevra however, Zelda was a free spirit who could care less of what people thought of her in society, but she was still the most talked about and desirable woman in Montgomery, Alabama, when she and Fitzgerald met. For Fitzgerald, Zelda was who he

wanted and when he liked women, he wanted to conquer them (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 33); sometimes he wanted to educate or improve women as he did with his sister Annabel, Scottie his daughter, and Sheilah Graham (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 62). Unfortunately for Fitzgerald, he did not fully grasp the contrast between his and Zelda's behavior; his "behavior indicated insecurity" and hers "seemed to display indifference or defiance" (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 89). Zelda could sense Fitzgerald's weakness in his confidence, and it was a quality that she did not find attractive.

After a tumultuous courtship full of jealousy, resentment, and sacrifice, the two married and settled into New York. The Fitzgeralds' marriage brought about a change in position for Zelda; in Montgomery, Zelda was a sought-after celebrity and Scott was one among many suitors, but in New York, Scott was the celebrity and she was a wifely appendage (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 133). Zelda must have found it difficult to adjust to such a subordinate role as Scott Fitzgerald's beautiful wife. This role reversal definitely projected itself in the marriage in which Zelda's life philosophy conflicted with her domestic responsibilities. Zelda believed that a woman "created herself with all the flair of a good advertising campaign" (Milford 92), and "women were to dramatize their youth to experiment and be gay; in their old age (in their forties) they would be magically content" (Milford 92). Zelda believed women who tied themselves to domesticity in order to be martyred were being dishonest, so as one can imagine, Zelda was bored with her chores as wife and later mother. Early in their marriage, both Fitzgeralds enjoyed the limelight of being a young celebrity couple taking New York by storm with their unorthodox fun.[2] Simply put, both Fitzgeralds enjoyed outlandish behavior, and if "outrageous behavior was one of the ways they could make a mark in New York, they would behave outrageously" (Wagner-Martin 46).

[2] Various sources have reported that the Fitzgeralds enthusiastically were running around in revolving doors, riding on hoods of taxi cabs, and jumping into water fountains for fun; for further details on these antics, please see Matthew Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur* (New York: Random House, 1978), Edward Rielly, *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Biography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2005), and Andrew Hook, F. *Scott Fitzgerald* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

By the time *The Great Gatsby* was published on April 10, 1925, they had become the poster children for the Jazz Age, parents to their only child Scottie Frances Fitzgerald born in 1921, and infamously known for their attractiveness and over-the-top antics. Although *Gatsby* was the most critically acclaimed of all of Fitzgerald's novels, it was not a financial success. Fitzgerald had expected a large financial return from Gatsby and when it did not achieve his high expectations, he blamed it on several things including the title and that "book contained no important women characters and women control the fiction market at present" (Hook 1: 47). While *Gatsby* was not a best seller, Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* became an instant best seller, which pushed Hemingway into the limelight as the brightest new writer and pushed Fitzgerald out (Taylor 184). This in no way to diminish the popularity of *Gatsby* as the rights were sold for Hollywood adaptation as well as for a stage version of the novel but rather emphasizes the divide Fitzgerald felt between his art and his life, serious writing and commercial writing, and money and critical acclaim. In 1926, Fitzgerald's total income was "$25,686.05, which included book royalties of $2,033.20, the play and film return of $19,464.21, and the sale of two stories of $3,375" (Hook 2: 82). Some critics have posited that these first few years of Fitzgerald's literary career were not only Fitzgerald's most productive, but also his most lucrative, but for the Fitzgeralds' lifestyle, it was not quite enough. The Fitzgeralds drank heavily, partied often, and traveled frequently from one side of the Atlantic to the other, which strained their relationship as well as friendships. From 1924 until Zelda's breakdown in 1930, the Fitzgeralds were never completely settled and failed to establish a stable environment or lifestyle.

In 1924, the Fitzgeralds sailed to France, eventually settling down temporarily on the Riviera while Scott wrote *Gatsby* and then revised it. Zelda is reported and speculated to have had an affair with a French aviator Edouard Jozan that has been believed by scholars to have been dramatized and embellished by the Fitzgeralds to increase their legend. Whether or not they exaggerated the story of the

affair, many scholars believe that the affair resulted in bitterness and resentment. Fitzgerald revised *Gatsby* during the winter of 1924 and published the novel in the spring of 1925. Not long after *Gatsby's* publication in May 1925, Fitzgerald met Ernest Hemingway, another aspiring writer for whom Fitzgerald believed great things would happen. By the occasion of the meeting, Fitzgerald had already heard of Hemingway and had mentioned him to his editor Max Perkins in his October 10, 1924 letter telling Perkins that Hemingway had a "brilliant future" (Kuehl and Bryer 78).

Hemingway learned quickly that Fitzgerald's drinking was excessive and that he could not handle his alcohol very well. Fitzgerald had begun drinking heavily during his college years at Princeton (Mayfield 106), and "at no time in his life did Fitzgerald ever attain a normal tolerance for alcohol," (Dardis 108) although that did not deter him from continuing to try to improve his tolerance. Initially Hemingway found it difficult to take Scott seriously as a writer, but their mutual admiration for each other's work helped blossom a fairly influential friendship. Critics have exalted one writer by diminishing the other in the Fitzgerald/Hemingway relationship, but "the personal relationships, cross influences between Fitzgerald and Hemingway have become mythologized" (Bruccoli, *Fitzgerald and Hemingway* 3). While it is true that they influenced one another, by the time they had met one another, their individual styles were already established.

Although the popular belief is that Fitzgerald had the greater tendency to dramatize himself, both Fitzgerald and Hemingway dramatized themselves and lived up to their mythologized public personas and both personas met with public acceptance; one was the ruined writer and the other was the successful one (Bruccoli, *Fitzgerald and Hemingway* 7). Much of Fitzgerald's success is overshadowed by his own public lamentations of failure to attain both financial and critical success according to his standards, and some of Hemingway's success could be credited to Fitzgerald's aggressive attempts to

promote Hemingway,[3] but the mythologized roles they were associated with haunted both careers despite what actually happened. Some critics believe that writers are associated with the themes of their writing and "since failure is a major theme in Fitzgerald's fiction, readers have become conditioned to regard him as the embodiment of defeat" (Bruccoli, *Fitzgerald and Heminway* 7).

When Hemingway met Zelda, there was an instant mutual hostility. Hemingway quickly noticed the jealousies that were thinly veiled in the Fitzgeralds' marriage. Hemingway believed that Zelda was jealous of Scott's work and that Scott was jealous of Zelda's antics with other people (Milford 115) and rightly so after the Edouard Jouzan incident. Later when Scott's writing significantly suffered from his dependence upon alcohol, Zelda blamed Hemingway's influence and Hemingway blamed it on Zelda's jealousy of Scott's work which motivated her to encourage Fitzgerald's drinking to keep him from writing (Mayfield 106). Hemingway instantly believed Zelda was crazy and informed Scott that he thought so, and Zelda believed Hemingway's writing to be worthless. H.L. Mencken believed Hemingway was "mining a thin vein" (Mayfield 203) and that Fitzgerald would "never amount to anything until he got rid of his wife" (Milford 139).

Also in 1925, Fitzgerald began drafting and outlining his next novel that focused upon a matricide plot that some scholars believe was inspired by the Dorothy Ellingson matricide that had been in the headlines. Ellingson's murder of her mother is blamed on the influence of jazz music and living the jazz lifestyle, called collectively as "Jazzmania," of going out, dancing, and trying to be a flapper.[4] This particular matricide made the headlines of newspapers and was much talked about because it was one of the first instances where "Jazzmania" was being blamed for a murder, which would have

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[3] Fitzgerald had the tendency to promote vehemently new writers and try to put them into contact with his publisher. He campaigned for Hemingway, but he campaigned for Ring Lardner as well. See John Kuehl and Jackson R. Bryer, ed. *Dear Scott/Dear Max: The Fitzgerald-Perkins Correspondence* (New York: Scribner's, 1971) 68-69.

[4] James L West III does an excellent job of detailing and describing the Ellingson matricide and its possible influence on Fitzgerald's original matricide plot for *Tender*. See West's "*Tender is the Night*: Jazzmania and the Ellingson Matricide," *Twenty First Century Readings of Tender is the Night* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2007) 34-39.

undoubtedly gotten Fitzgerald's attention. Fitzgerald's original matricide plot concerned Francis Melarky and his mother traveling to Europe together. Francis's mother was to be an overbearing and nagging mother who drives her son to murder her in Europe. While in Europe, the Melarkys meet the early drafts of Dick and Nicole Diver and Abe and Mary North in Seth and Diane Rorebeck and Abe and Mary Kerimer, respectively (West 35).

Later that year, in August 1925, the Fitzgeralds met and began a great friendship with Gerald and Sara Murphy, two wealthy artistic expatriate Americans living in France. The Murphys were initially put off by Scott's drinking and behavior, which decreased their ability to believe in him as a serious writer (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 200). Fitzgerald introduced Hemingway to the Murphys, and Gerald instantly became a strong supporter and admirer of Hemingway (Bruccoli, *Fitzgerald and Hemingway* 62). The Murphys were not frivolous wealthy people, but rather they both supported the arts and were interested in art, specifically painting and literature. These interests corresponded to those of Zelda who would eventually take up painting and Scott who was not only a writer but also a promoter of other writers. It is well known that the Murphys made a deep impression upon Scott, who used many of their admirable qualities as the basis for Nicole and Dick Diver for *Tender*.

In March 1927, the Fitzgeralds attempted to settle down at Ellerslie, a home outside of Wilmington, Delaware, and Zelda began dancing lessons. Zelda desired to make something of herself apart from Scott, but her desire to dance again after so many years and at an age where harvesting the talent was difficult made her new goals seem unrealistic. It is difficult to discern whether Zelda's intensity for ballet, writing, and painting stemmed from her ambitions to create an identity separate from Scott's or if her mental illness pushed her into an extreme dedication to them, but what fueled her desire to separate from Scott's fame and from her position of wifely appendage seems to have been her own desires to express herself creatively and a response to Scott's infatuation with Lois Moran. It seems that

almost overnight Zelda became "incapable of living vicariously through Scott's reputation" (Taylor 193), but as extreme as Scott's dependence or addiction to alcohol seemed to be, "Zelda's obsession with ballet was equally disturbing" (Taylor 209).

Zelda's desires to create an identity met with mixed reviews from their friends, from Scott, and from her doctors. Friends harshly criticized her desires to make something of herself beyond being Scott Fitzgerald's wife. It somewhat outraged or shocked their friends that Zelda would dare to abandon or neglect her husband and his problems to pursue her own desires, and "Scott came out of this evaluation of social roles much better than Zelda did" (Wagner-Martin 105). Scott understood his wife's intense desire and commitment to dancing but was simultaneously resentful or jealous of her commitment because he lacked commitment to his own work. Later Zelda's doctors at Prangins agreed with Scott that she had to give up ballet since they believed it was her intense dedication to her dancing that led to her breakdown, but perhaps if her creative interests in ballet, writing, and painting had been encouraged or supported at Prangins, the outcome for Zelda's mental health might have been different (Wagner-Martin 139).

A year later in April 1928, the Fitzgeralds traveled to Paris for the summer and Scott promised parts of his new book to Max Perkins and his agent Harold Ober; Zelda was to study ballet with Lubov Egorova, a well known ballet instructor who tutored such talent as Serge Lifar[5] and Anton Dolin.[6] Zelda dedicated almost all of her time either at Egorova's studio training or training at home. In September 1928, they return to Ellerslie, and Zelda began writing short stories for *College Humor*. In regards to

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[5] Serge Lifar was a French ballet dancer and choreographer and considered one of the best male ballet dancers of the twentieth century. For further information, see Florence Poudru, *Serge Lifar: la danse pour patrie* (Montreal: Hermann, 2007).

[6] Anton Dolin was an English ballet dancer and choreographer who helped found the Markova-Dolin Ballet and the London Festival Ballet. For further information, see Andrew Wheatcroft, comp. *Dolin: Friends and Memories* (London: Routledge, 1982).

Zelda's stories, some sources such as Sarah Mayfield have commented that Scott stifled her writing or discouraged her from doing it, tried to take credit for her work by adding his name to the by line or taking credit altogether, and other sources such as Sheilah Graham have stated that the addition of Scott's name on Zelda's stories have been for a larger financial return, which can be supported in Scott's edits of Zelda's works and their perspective on money. It seems the only time Scott attempted to stifle Zelda or discouraged her was when she desired to write a novel using much of the same material Scott had planned to for his big masterpiece; he felt she was poaching on his material and thus compromising his role as the serious writer and provider of the family (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 320)

Less than a year later in May 1929, they decided to move abroad as they were not living the quiet life they had originally wanted or planned at Ellerslie. At this point Scott still had not produced a large portion of his much-anticipated novel, and he still had plans for the Melarky matricide plot. He was not dedicating consecutive days to writing anymore and the financial strain of Zelda's ballet lessons, their lifestyle in Europe, and his drinking required him to dedicate time to quick-money lucrative short stories. In 1929, Fitzgerald earned approximately $27,000 for eight stories and only $31.71 from book royalties (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 278). The financial incentive for writing commercial stories was, Fitzgerald believed, a double-edged sword; if he could write enough of them for a good price, it granted him a financial freedom, but if he continued to write them, it diminished his value as a serious writer. Unlike Scott, Zelda liked the short stories because they yielded a lucrative financial return, so she could not understand why Scott disliked them (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 189); this lack of understanding concerning Scott's ambition for his work would create a bitterness on his part that led him to believe Zelda used him for financial reasons.

The strain of shuttling back and forth on the Atlantic, the drinking, partying, Zelda's ballet, and Scott's stalled novel began to show on the marriage and on each of them. In October 1929, the

Fitzgeralds were returning to Paris by car and Zelda grabbed the steering wheel to drive them off a cliff; she later claimed the car was responding to its own will.[7] For the rest of that winter and into early 1930, Zelda's behavior reflected the mental and physical stress of her writing and dancing. On April 23, 1930, Zelda had an official breakdown and checked herself into Malmaison Clinic outside of Paris (Rielly 68). Less than three months later, Zelda entered Prangins clinic near Geneva, Switzerland. Fitzgerald decided to stay near Zelda in Geneva and shuttled back and forth to visit Scottie in France. With Zelda's medical expenses added to their financial strain, Fitzgerald struggled to continue working on his novel while making sure his wife received the best care possible and his daughter was well taken care of while he was in Switzerland. Scott resorted back to writing more short stories to continue to propagate the lie that was the Fitzgeralds' lifestyle, a lie that by now had evolved over many years.

In 1930, eight stories for the *Post* totaled approximately $32,000, but he still had to borrow $3,700 from Scribners against his novel (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 290). Zelda's treatment at Prangins totaled "$70,561 Swiss francs, or more than $13,000 in 1930-1931" (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 305). Fitzgerald was able to sell seventeen short stories between 1930 and 1931, and in 1931, he peaked his pre-Hollywood era earnings with $37,599. At this point, Fitzgerald had not been able to work on his novel for months, and with his father's death in late January of 1931, he traveled back to America alone to attend the funeral with a brief stop in Montgomery to report Zelda's condition to the Sayres. Scott was very much afraid that the Sayres blamed him for Zelda's collapse and some of the members of the family such as Zelda's older sister Rosalind thought just that because Rosalind believed that his drinking and lifestyle placed undue stress on Zelda. Rosalind, who had seen first hand a fight between them that had turned violent, believed that Scott was not good for Zelda.

[7] Matthew Bruccoli is one of the foremost Fitzgerald scholars, marks the significance of the episode as material, for *Tender*. For further detail, see *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur* 282 and Rielly 68.

In September of 1931, Zelda left Prangins and they returned to America permanently. The Fitzgeralds rented a house in Montgomery, and Scott left alone for Hollywood to work for Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer (MGM) on a screenplay. Zelda's father died on November 17, 1931, and she had another breakdown in February 1932 and checked herself into Phipps Psychiatric Clinic of Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. While at Phipps, she began working on her own novel that pulled heavily from her life with Scott and touched on some psychiatry as well. She finished her first draft of *Save Me the Last Waltz* in March 1932. Zelda decided to send her typescript to Perkins without letting Scott know. Scott was angry and felt betrayed that Zelda had "poached" material from his book, especially since Scott wanted his novel to be the first American novel to use psychiatry (Dardis 117), and she had secretly sent her novel to his publisher. After reading and helping Zelda to edit her work, Scott was much calmer and more encouraging. Perkins published Zelda's novel with the hopes that she would become a writer of "popular books" and her earnings would help the Fitzgeralds with their financial situation (Donaldson, *Hemingway vs. Fitzgerald* 165). When *Save Me the Last Waltz* was finally published by Scribners on October 7, 1932, in a printing of 3010 copies, the sales were a disappointing 1400 copies, and reviewers did not treat it well by commenting on the careless copyediting and frequent errors (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 327). Scott was still concerned that Zelda would continue to "poach" what he felt was his material, especially psychiatry, and encouraged her to pursue painting again. With the failure of *Save Me the Last Waltz*, Zelda's "reserve of balance was imperiled by her arguments with Scott" (Milford 205), and she began to take some of it out on Scottie. The Fitzgerald household was not an environment conducive for the stability Zelda needed or for a writer like Scott, but Scott functioned like a professional writer and treated everything in his life as potential material.

Scott rented a home called “La Paix” on the outskirts of Baltimore and decided to do away with the Melarky matricide plot for his novel during the summer of 1932. On top of Zelda back in a clinic and his novel still unpublished, *The Post* cut Fitzgerald’s pay for short stories from $4000 to approximately $2500, the rate at which he was being paid seven years prior in 1925. Fitzgerald’s payment reduction by *The Post* had a great deal to do with the economic depression, but some of the issues were that Fitzgerald’s stories had become sloppily crafted (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 327). Scott’s desperate need for money to pay for his lifestyle, Scottie’s studies, and Zelda’s treatment caused him to churn out many stories without regard to the quality. Scott was in debt with Scribner’s and was under tremendous financial pressure to finish his already tardy novel. Any excitement that had been initially created for his next novel was slowly diminished by his commercial short stories and the empty promises of his masterpiece.

Once Scott scrapped the initial matricide plot, he turned to the potential of a story about a movie director and his wife, Lew and Nicole Kelley, who meet Rosemary Hoyt on shipboard to Europe. At this point Fitzgerald was essentially only beginning to reshape his novel but many of the characters he invented would be reused for the final version, but in the matricide plot, one could already see the seed for the characters he would include in the final version of the novel. Although Fitzgerald was moving in a new and different direction with the novel, early portraits of Nicole and Dick Diver as well Abe and Mary North established the groundwork for these characters in *Tender* as well as the salvage of several plot ideas such as action at the Gausse Hotel, the play on the beach, the duel with McKisco, and the altercations with the Italians (West 35).

Fitzgerald developed a layman’s understanding of psychology, specifically basic understandings of Freud and Jung, from speaking with Zelda’s doctors. With his knowledge, Fitzgerald began to subject his friends to intense scrutiny and analysis by turning every party into “group therapy

sessions, at which his Freudian know-it-all [attitude] offended his friends" (Mayfield 133). This prompted protests from Sara Murphy who told Scott that subjecting his friends to such analysis was both unpleasant and unfriendly. Scott was trying to analyze and capture the qualities he felt were admirable and great in the Murphys and his friends for his novel as well as practice or show a fairly strong understanding of Freudian psychology. Instead it made him even more unpopular than did his drinking antics.

At its core, *Tender* explores Fitzgerald's experiences in Europe as an expatriate, his alcoholism, his struggle to balance the writer and the man, and his marital demons although certain qualities of the Divers were based upon the Murphys. It is significant to remember that the "circumstances of the Divers ultimately derived from the Fitzgeralds" (Bruccoli and Baughman, *Reader's Companion* 58). At the most simplistic level of analysis, the Divers have been credited entirely to being mirror images of the Murphys, but under more scrutiny, Fitzgerald only cast the spell of the Murphys through the Divers on the beach in the "lyric" opening of the novel. After only being able to blend so much of the Fitzgeralds and the Murphys together, Fitzgerald began to draw completely on what he knew best—his own life with Zelda. This mixture of the Fitzgeralds and Murphys created confusion when Fitzgerald's contemporaries read the novel because they read only the Murphys and imposed what they knew of the Murphys onto the Divers.

When *Tender Is the Night* was finally published on April 12, 1934, for $2.50 per copy, it was nine years and two days since the publication of *The Great Gatsby* (Hook 2: 113). The novel had been serialized in Scribner's magazine beginning in January 1934, and some reviewers believed that it was a woman's book unlike *The Great Gatsby* because initial responses to the serialization were positive and praised the treatment of Nicole Diver (Hook 2: 113). For April and May 1934, the novel was tenth on the *Publisher's Weekly* best-seller list, and the first 7,600 copies sold out fairly quickly, which prompted

two more printings of 5,075 and 2,520 in 1934 (Hook 2: 114). Unfortunately, *Tender Is the Night* was stagnant on the shelves after 15,000 copies (Bruccoli, *Fitzgerald and Hemingway* 166). The royalties from the book sales only earned him $5,104.65 and the reviews were mixed although most were fairly positive. Many critics had issues with the treatment of Dick Diver, credibility of Dick as a doctor and his decline, Fitzgerald's choice of topic, the chronology of the novel, and some believed that the novel fell flat as it seemed to be yet another novel by Fitzgerald concerning the Jazz girls and boys from the 1920s.

On the surface, the reviewers' issues with Dick Diver's profession, decline, and wealth are simplistic and naïve readings of the novel. These readings are extrapolated without taking the novel as whole with all of the characters and the deeper reading of what Fitzgerald was trying to explore. The exploration of alcoholism in two of his male characters indicates Fitzgerald's attempts to exorcise his own alcohol demons as well as Fitzgerald's self-judgment and self-condemnation of wasted talent and genius explored through Dick Diver (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 336). Fitzgerald's ability to reflect the moods and rhythms of his times and his life creates what seems to be a sloppy story about a psychiatrist when what reviewers and scholars miss is an exploration of a man who has squandered his emotional, mental, and physical capital on choices that were not worth his talent and genius. Although the decline of Dick Diver is the unifying theme of *Tender*, Fitzgerald intended the novel to be about much more than just about Dick Diver (Hook 1: 67), and while exploring what critics had to say about the novel is significant, exploring the novel with a larger lens will allow a fuller understanding of the novel and its robustness.

It is indisputable that Fitzgerald's greatest talent as a writer was his elegance and lyrical prose, and although *The Great Gatsby* was not the financial success he thought it would be, it had strong narrative structure and control that were lacking in the previous novels. In *The Great Gatsby*, it is "the language that Fitzgerald uses that constantly enriches and transmutes the commonplace material; the

novel is an apparently effortless prose poem, and extended lyric or elegy with every word working, contributing to the perfectly shaped whole" (Hook 1: 60). *Tender Is the Night*, I argue, is not so different from *Gatsby* in terms of Fitzgerald's control over structure and language, and *Tender* presents Fitzgerald's writing abilities from a more mature and experienced writer.

By the time *Tender Is the Night* was published nearly a decade after *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald had helped ruin his reputation as a serious writer with the short stories and his personal antics. His personal life had negatively impacted his professional life, and many found it difficult to take him seriously and believed he had lost touch with truly worthwhile subjects for writing. The lack of stability and alcohol abuse had shown its effects on Fitzgerald and his writing, but for the most part *Tender Is the Night* captured his gift of language manipulation and narrative. To truly understand how the criticism of the novel affected Fitzgerald, exploration of his personal life and his struggles to reach the completion of the novel allows a fuller understanding of how he had become a ghost of the writer he once was.

CHAPTER TWO: CRITICAL UPROAR

Anticipation for *Tender Is the Night* was once high, but over the years, all hopes and enthusiasm for the "new" novel had faded. During the fall of 1933 and early 1934, Fitzgerald, his agent, and his publisher negotiated, discussed, and debated various small changes in the novel and how to advertise his new work. Fitzgerald urged that they avoid any mention of this being his first novel in several years, the Riviera and resorts, Americans in Europe, and wealth as he worried that critics would automatically form notions that Fitzgerald was throwing his talent away on the trivial subject of wealthy people during the ongoing depression.[8] Fitzgerald, in a letter to Maxwell Perkins dated January 12, 1934, was also concerned that he had written yet another novel for novelists "with little chance of its lining anybody's pockets with gold" (Bruccoli, *Life in Letters* 245), which reflects Fitzgerald's ambivalence for literary versus commercial success. Fitzgerald believed that the serialization of the novel would help its chances of succeeding commercially as he believed that it was better upon the second reading for the masses, but later lamented in a letter to Edmund "Bunny" Wilson dated March 12, 1934, that he had wished Bunny and others had read the novel version first as opposed to the serialization in the magazine (Bruccoli, *Fitzgerald: Life in Letters* 250).[9] Despite his attempts to minimize the obvious criticisms, initial response to the novel was fairly positive with reservations.

Sara and Gerald Murphy, to whom the novel is dedicated, criticized Fitzgerald for not truly imagining his characters and truly understanding people while Ernest Hemingway, in a letter dated April 10, 1934, to Max Perkins, initially criticized Fitzgerald for modeling the characters on the Murphys and having them act in ways that the Murphys never would (Bruccoli, *Fitzgerald and Hemingway* 115). Later after Hemingway had read the novel again, he wrote another letter to Perkins that *Tender's* quality

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[8] Further details of some of the edits and advertisement ideas can be found in Matthew J. Bruccoli, ed. *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Life in Letters* (New York: Scribners, 1994) 234-249.

[9] The full letter can be found in *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Life in Letters* 250.

improved each time he read it and admitted that initially he had analyzed only the weaknesses of the novel and "not given credit to its merits" (Bruccoli, *Fitzgerald and Hemingway* 116). Fitzgerald had received word that John Peale Bishop felt that *Tender* was no advance upon *Gatsby*, and after receiving a letter from Bishop with much kinder words, Fitzgerald's response on April 7, 1934, to Bishop stated that perhaps "I had been hasty in crediting that you would make such a criticism as 'this book is no advance on Gatsby'" (Bruccoli, *Life in Letters* 255). Although Fitzgerald's response to Bishop indicates that Bishop's thoughts on the novel were positive, there are hints that Bishop questioned the lack of a dramatic ending, which Fitzgerald combated with his own reasons but also cited Hemingway's advice to Fitzgerald that "the dying fall was preferable to the dramatic ending under certain conditions" (Bruccoli, *Life in Letters* 255).

According to John Chamberlain in his compendium review "The Book of Times" initially printed in *New York Times* on April 13, 1934, Chamberlain acutely pointed out that "no two reviews are alike; no two had the same tone" (Stern 76),[10] and he goes on to describe that some reviewers believed Fitzgerald was writing about the same group of jazz people he had always written about, others believed he was writing about a universal or timeless issue, and some complained that Diver's decline was poorly documented and supported (Stern, *Critical Essays* 76). Chamberlain's own assessment of the novel discussed that although *Gatsby* was superior in technical merit, the prose was still a "pleasurable performance" (Stern, *Critical Essays* 68). In terms of plot and theme, Chamberlain viewed the novel as an exploration of a disintegrating marriage between a woman whose love for her psychiatrist husband is "predicated on sickness" (Chamberlain 97) and that Nicole shall remain in love with Dick as long as she needs him. As far as Rosemary is concerned, she is insignificant in herself as a character and is meant to act as a catalyst to set in motion the actions necessary to move towards a "predictable end"

[10] To avoid confusion, original printings will be in footnotes, but I will cite using Milton Stern, *Critical Essays on F. Scott Fitzgerald's Tender Is the Night* (Boston: GK Hall, 1986) as to help readers find the material exactly where I researched it.

(Chamberlain 97). It is clear that although Fitzgerald's ability to write is praised, the two main female characters in the novel do not fare very well in Chamberlain's criticism, and these types of criticisms of the female characters do not end with his assessment.

Mary M. Colum's "The Psychopathic Novel" review[11] complains that Nicole's treatment in the novel presented itself more as a case study in a textbook than as a novelist's treatment of a character (Stern, *Critical Essays* 60) while his male characters are still "prankish sophomores" and the female characters are "bright, brittle, and young" (Stern, *Critical Essays* 62). On the other hand, Edith H. Walton in "Stale: Unprofitable"[12] blatantly states that she "does not believe in the destruction of Dick's brilliant promise as the result of Nicole's demands on him" (Stern, *Critical Essays* 71), but rather "knows" that there are deeper and more fundamental forces at work on Dick and, in turn, on Nicole as well (Stern, *Critical Essays* 71). Walton's assessment of the novel is one of the very few reviews that does not focus on the misgivings or shortcomings of Nicole or the lack of evidence for Dick's decline. It is noteworthy to take into account that Walton is a female critic and one of the two female contemporaries who reviewed the novel.

The majority of reviews were by male critics who controlled to a large degree the reception and discussion of *Tender*. Fitzgerald in his letter to Max Perkins dated March 4, 1934 stated that unlike Gatsby, which had a "purely masculine interest," *Tender is the Night* is a "woman's book"[13] (Bruccoli, *Life in Letters* 249). Fitzgerald believed that when *The Great Gatsby* failed it had a great deal to do with the lack of notable female characters[14] therefore Fitzgerald was acutely aware that his need for significant female characters would help him sell well in the fiction market, but he simultaneously had

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[11] "The Psychopathic Novel," *Forum and Century* 91 (April 1934): 219-23.

[12] "Stale: Unprofitable," *New York Sun* 14 April 1934: 30.

[13] The full letter can be found in its entirety in *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Life in Letters* 249.

[14] "Supposing women didn't like the book because it has no important woman in it" is in Fitzgerald's letter to Maxwell Perkins dated April 10, 1925; further details in *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Life in Letters* 105.

to take into account that many of the critics he had to appease were men; his novel again was caught between being serious literature and a commercial success. The fiction market's demographic was primarily women (Hook 1: 47), but the majority of reviewers and critics were men. Despite *Tender's* initial success and reprints, it died on the shelves after 15,000 copies, killed by the male critics who diluted the depth of the novel with their patriarchal perspective and superficial complaints.

Similar to John Chamberlain's assessment, Michael March's "Page After Page"[15] describes the plot or story of the novel as centered around and focused on the "painful insidious growth and decay of his marriage in which the octopus of Nicole's weakness (her pathological past) and her strength (her fabulous wealth) fastens itself upon Richard Diver and drains him of all hope and aspiration" (Stern, *Critical Essays* 64) while praising Fitzgerald's natural gifts as a lyrical writer. One can see that yet again, Nicole's illness and wealth are believed to be the guilty culprit for Dick Diver's problems and troubles, but the author F. Scott Fitzgerald is still praised for his beautiful writing. In the *St. Paul Dispatch,*[16] James Gray states that Dick Diver's tragedy stemmed from his sacrifices of his "individual integrity and his career to the protection of a rich, psychopathic wife" (Stern, *Critical Essays* 65). Gray suggests that the novel could have been improved had the protagonist's failure been made clearer and had Dick's great promise failed under more "normal circumstances" (Stern, *Critical Essays* 66).

It is evident that the major issues that reviewers criticize in the novel are that Dick's decline and failure seem contrived or unconvincing as the circumstances either do not dictate such a fade into obscurity or that his wife's contribution to his decline creates an understated fall, that the circumstances are beyond what readers would be able to relate to or sympathize with. Thomas Stavola points out that "eight of the twenty-four original reviews of *Tender Is the Night* criticized the credibility of Dick Diver, stressing the fact that his collapse seemed unconvincing or insufficiently documented" (146), but

[15] "Pager after Page," *Brooklyn Citizen* Apr. 1934: 11.

[16] "Scott Fitzgerald Re-enters Leading Bewildered Giants," *St. Paul Dispatch* Apr. 1934: 8.

Stavola fails to specify whether the original twenty-four reviews were made by men or women, so based on the sample presented, one must believe he refers to the reviews made by many male critics.

Gilbert Seldes's[17] review gushes at Fitzgerald's ability to make such a special story universally interesting (Stern, *Critical Essays* 67) while Horace Gregory[18] disagrees in his review since he believes that the characters are "miscast" and that the reader neither believes that Dick is a talented psychiatrist nor that Nicole truly was "unhinged by incest" (Stern, *Critical Essays* 73). The reader can be led to believe that Dick is a handsome, well-to-do American whose career has spiraled downward, but it is difficult to believe that the cause is Nicole when there is no strong evidence to support Dick as an educated, well-informed psychiatrist. At first glance, it would appear that Gregory is siding with Walton in believing that Dick's failure is not rooted in Nicole and her illness, but Gregory's overall complaint is that he does not believe Dick is a real psychiatrist who once had great potential in the field. The story becomes unhinged for Gregory at Dick's talent as a doctor, and without the belief in Dick as a psychiatrist, everything including Nicole's illness becomes unbelievable (Stern, *Critical Essays* 73-74).

Beyond the few complaints made by two female critics concerning the believability of Nicole as a character or her influence on Dick's failure and the majority of complaints concerning the believability of Dick as a talented psychiatrist or his fall, Fitzgerald's fascination with the wealthy creates some criticisms about his choice of subject, especially for Depression-era readers. Phil Rahv[19] criticizes the wealthy expatriates who float through the pages living their weary lives full of the essence of "last autumn" (Stern, *Critical Essays* 78), but unlike his previous characters from the roaring Twenties, Fitzgerald "is still in love with his characters, but he no longer entertains any illusions of their survival" (Stern, *Critical Essays* 78). Fitzgerald's gift and passion for writing is complimented, but the originality

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[17] "True to Type—Fitzgerald Writes Superb Tragic Novel," *New York Evening Journal* Apr. 1934: 23.

[18] "A Generation Riding to Romantic Death," *New York Herald Tribune Books* 15 Apr. 1934: 5.

[19] "You Can't Duck Hurricane under a Beach Umbrella," *Daily Worker* May 1934: 7.

of his characters still breathes the air of a past era to which readers during the Depression could no longer relate. These characters are meant to help build a tragedy for Dick Diver, but according to the critic D.W. Harding, the story lacks the true elements of tragedy and instead of leaving the reader with a sense of satisfaction at the end as a tragedy should, it leaves the reader pitying Dick Diver. The tragic plot of Dick Diver is replaced with a "fine string of carefully graduated incidents to illustrate the stages of descent" (Harding 100), and these various incidents show that despite wanting to cheer our fantastic hero on to continue giving himself to others, he becomes tired of the role he plays. When he breaks under the strain of giving continuously, there is no one with enough strength to help him (Harding 101).

As it would serve no purpose to list and recite all of the contemporary criticisms and reviews of *Tender Is the Night*, the sample discussed here makes it quite clear that the majority of critics were male and their major concerns had to do with Dick Diver in some fashion. The negative criticism of *Tender* in the 1930s can be summarized in three main concerns: study of abnormal psychology, a marriage story focused on domestic disquiet, and another of Fitzgerald's stories about the Jazz age boys and girls (Stern, *Broken Universe* 15). Few critics engaged in or discussed the female characters beyond Nicole and Rosemary's purposes to Dick's overall story. With so many critics being men and reading the novel from a male perspective that is deeply ingrained in a patriarchal society during a period of time where the image and social constructs of women were slowly changing, it is not surprising that their readings and reviews would focus primarily upon Dick as the central figure and that the women in the novel function only as dependent flat characters.

A glimpse at how many men perceived the "new modern woman" would benefit the overall understanding of how male critics were hard-pressed to let go of their male perspectives and understand the changing culture of women. Reading one of Fitzgerald's first short stories, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair," Susan Beegel explains that in the beginning of the Jazz decade, "American attitudes toward

women—and their hair—were in transition" (69), and even though the "popular dancer Irene Castle began the vogue for bobbed hair in 1918, short hair for women was not generally accepted until 1924" (69). To women of the twenty-first century, short hair does not seem to be such a drastic or image changing phenomenon. However, if perspective was kept to remember that 1920 was seeing the change from long, pinned up hair, long skirts, and private women to short bobbed hair, short skirts, and women who smoked, drank, and danced wildly in public, it is much more significant. Women today can understand how and why some men's conservative and resistant attitudes would shine through in reviews and criticisms of these new attitudes of women in the 1920s. H.L. Mencken, a famous male critic during the 1920s and 1930s as well as Fitzgerald's friend, is reported to have made a disdainful remark about Fitzgerald's story about a young girl bobbing her hair to be "trash." Mencken's remark was accepted without much debate because "it must be noted that the critics accepting Mencken's remark to Fitzgerald are exclusively male and perhaps ill-equipped to appreciate a short story about the gender socialization of young women, written for the predominantly female market of the *Saturday Evening Post*" (Beegel 59).

Men of the 1920s viewed the act of women bobbing their hair and the social fuss over it as trivial, and prevailing patriarchal ideas of the images of women dominated many of the male critics' reviews and opinions on works such as Fitzgerald's short story. Several prominent male figures including H.L. Mencken, Harold Stearns, and Harvard psychologist Hugo Munsterberg, among others, "denigrated women's cultural activity as sentimental, overly emotional, and intellectually inferior" (Sanderson 145), so it can be easily attested that stories that dealt with women's issues would be bashed and disregarded as worthless for objective discussion. To further emphasize the dominance of the patriarchal culture and subordination of women and women's contributions to the culture as a whole, it was claimed that America's social and cultural problems could not be solved by women, but by the

"application of the new expertise in education, natural science, technology, and social science (including psychology and psychoanalysis)" (Sanderson 145) that were considered the expertise of men.

In such a strongly patriarchal culture dominated and controlled by male opinions and perspectives, Fitzgerald's acknowledgement that *Gatsby's* lacked notable women is strong evidence that Fitzgerald was conscious of his female readership. As Chapter One has described Fitzgerald's personal and professional life, his personal feelings about women always teetered on the fence of conservative male notions of women, and his professional feelings were simultaneously admiration and fear of them. "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" is a story from earlier in Fitzgerald's career and indicates what kind of interest Fitzgerald had in women and understanding their allure and social stature that slowly diminished over time as he became drained by his own alcohol abuse and attempts to maintain a "healthy" relationship with Zelda. Men praised his most critically acclaimed novel, but Fitzgerald's attempt to redeem himself with more notable female characters in *Tender* is diluted by many of the prevailing patriarchal attitudes.

This, of course, raises the question of what criticism and studies of the novel were made after the initial response to its publication, and whether or not more women studied the novel after 1934. If more women reviewed the novel, were the female characters given more study and discussion to fully understand Dick's disappearance into obscurity? As time passed and women became more present in literary study and criticism, was more time and discussion dedicated to the understanding of Nicole, Baby, Rosemary, Mary, and Elsie? It is always wise to keep in mind that every literary work reflects its time period, and "*Tender Is the Night* was written between 1925 and 1934 by a man born in 1896" (Bruccoli and Baughman, *Reader's Companion* 49). Fitzgerald was a man who embraced the new images of women in his work and life, but he was a man from a conservative time with conservative peers. The goal is in no way to diminish his talent or rebuke him for his lack of campaigning for the analysis of the women in *Tender Is the Night*. The goal is to indicate that Fitzgerald's personal turmoil

with his wife and professional cognizance of *Gatsby's* shortcomings indicated that he recognized the need to create notable females, but fully developing the women characters is another matter altogether, and study and recognition was and is definitely what *Tender's* female characters needed the most.

In the 1940s, there was a small resurgence of criticism and reprinting of many of his works following the author's death on December 21, 1940. His fifth novel *The Last Tycoon* was unfinished, and as Perkins looked to find someone who could do Fitzgerald justice to complete the novel as well as pay tribute to Fitzgerald, many other writers and critics took time to review all of his work. Many wrote and lamented the loss of a great writer whose potential was diminished by the era he lived in and the lifestyle he created while others found it difficult to separate the celebrity and man from the professional writer.

John Dos Passos defended his friend by reminding critics that any writer who has "put pen to paper during the last twenty years has been daily plagued by the difficulty of depending whether he's to do 'good' writing that will satisfy his conscience or 'cheap' writing that will satisfy his pocketbook" (157). Margaret Marshall was not as kind as Dos Passos and harshly criticized Fitzgerald's last complete novel as a "confused exercise in self-pity" (113), and although Fitzgerald was celebrated in his heyday, he faded away as one of those "sad young men" in his fiction (114). Marshall does not criticize or discuss the female characters of the novel but rather focuses on paralleling Fitzgerald's work with his life. *Tender Is the Night* suffers a great deal of distortion and harsh criticisms similar to Marshall's that stem from simplistic readings that are supported by "from an overidentification of Fitzgerald's work with his life and times during the Jazz Age" (Stern, *Cambridge Companion* 96), but the novel also has been praised and exalted as one of the greatest American novels for being "a cool analysis of a nervous breakdown and the emotional exhaustion" (Schorer 170). A decade after its publication, the novel still suffered from criticisms concerning whether Dick Diver's circumstances are his own work or due to

Nicole's condition (Troy 191), but for the most part, the 1940s offered criticisms bearing central focus on the author's life and his work as opposed to specific study of *Tender Is the Night*.

The 1950s brought minimal discussion or critical studies of *Tender* or Fitzgerald. The critical neglect of the novel occurred primarily because some of the best observations were generally about Fitzgerald's *life* as opposed to his writing, which appears to have been a trend that carried over from the late 1940s after his death. The earlier part of the 50s brought about Malcolm Cowley's version of *Tender Is the Night*, Arthur Mizener's *This Side of Paradise* (a biography), and Alfred Kazin's collection of essays entitled *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work*, which aided in stimulating interest and some criticism of Fitzgerald and his work. Focus on literary technique instead of social history emerged in the early part of the 50s, and by the end, discussion moved from "brief review judgments and biography to analysis" (Stern, *Broken Universe* 23). Analysis and discussion remained the primary focus into the 1960s and early 1970s.

Up until the 1960s, there had only been one book length critical study on Fitzgerald, but in the 1960s, there were eight books on Fitzgerald and two pamphlets as well as the American publication of James E. Miller's book, *The Fictional Technique of Scott Fitzgerald* (Bryer 215). Eugene White's review[20] is one of the few critical analyses of *Tender Is the Night*. White urges readers to not "underestimate" the love between Nicole and Dick, and Rosemary is the symbol of "the dreams, the ambitions, the creative energy of his youth" (Stern, *Critical Essays* 126) that Fitzgerald has renounced for the love of Nicole and Dick. Rosemary is a "romantic dream" according to White and his analysis of the novel seems a bit more romantic and favorable for Nicole and Rosemary although it does not necessarily focus primarily on the two women.

In 1969, the first collection of essays on *Tender Is the Night* was published, but the majority of essays are general essays instead of critiques of the novel. The 1970s brought more bibliographical

[20] The 'Intricate Destiny' of Dick Diver," *Modern Fiction Studies* 7 (Spring 1961): 55-104.

studies, "new" Fitzgerald works, the first major Zelda Fitzgerald biography, and seven books on critical studies of Fitzgerald (Bryer 218). It is significant to note that it is approximately three decades after Fitzgerald's death and his last complete work before a major biography was written about his wife, who was also a published writer and painter. The readers of the 1960s and 1970s found Dick Diver to be a representative of Imperial America instead of a victim, so at best, he was a fool and at worst a villain, but either way readers did not believe he deserved the readers' sympathies (Stern, *Broken Universe* 24). Dick Diver's identity is founded on others' admiration of him and its completeness is only as complete as the egos of others that he carries with his own. John Callahan criticizes that Dick Diver reflects back to the admirers everything they wish they could be—their best selves[21] (Stern, *Critical Essays* 191).

In the 1980s, the first bibliography of foreign criticism, the first edition of Fitzgerald's poetry, the most comprehensive collection of Fitzgerald's short stories to date, most comprehensive collection of Fitzgerald's correspondence, four new biographies, and more critical studies were published (Bryer 222). Especially notable is Sarah Beebe Fryer's *Fitzgerald's New Women: Harbingers of Change*, a critical study of Fitzgerald's women characters. In the 1990s, the F. Scott Fitzgerald society was founded and has since sponsored four international Fitzgerald conferences as well as volumes of ongoing standard editions of Fitzgerald's works, twenty-four full-length studies on Fitzgerald, and twenty-four essays on Fitzgerald's least studied stories (Bryer 227). By the 1980s and 1990s, criticisms no longer debated the validity of studying *Tender*, and criticisms remained inevitably ideological with the focus on race, sexual orientation, Marxism, the representation of wealth, and feminism primarily concerned with Zelda Fitzgerald (Stern, *Broken Universe* 26).

Now in the twenty-first century, there remains continual study and critical analysis of *Tender Is the Night* with approximately four or five essays each year. Some of the essays for the early twenty-first

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[21] *The Illusions of a Nation: Myth and History in the Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Urband: Illinois UP, 1972).

century studies of the novel focus on the significance of Europe and expatriate living, the Ellingson matricide influence upon Fitzgerald's original Melarky matricide plot, race, the perspective changes in the novel, and narrative structure, but seven decades after the novel's publication, there still seems to be a lack of focus on the women of the novel and how studying them would greatly affect the analysis and critical study of the novel as whole. There were women reviewing the novel, but many of their complaints reflected how the author and his work were being studied during their time and even fewer of the female reviewers than the male reviewers mentioned or focused on the women characters. As aforementioned, some scholars have believed that the novel suffered and still suffers from simplistic or naïve readings because too many critical analyses focus on how the novel directly relates to, parallels, or reflects Fitzgerald's personal and professional woes crying out in the form of self pity, and therefore, Dick Diver's fall or decline is uninteresting and unsupported by the incidents or actions of the novel.

There has been truly little critical study concerning the significance of the women characters of the novel and how they truly affected the actions to facilitate and influence Dick Diver's overall circumstances that I do not believe stemmed simply from Nicole's mental condition. It would be naïve to believe that perhaps no one has believed that the female characters of *Tender Is the Night* really offered much to the overall story, but critiques and studies of the novel have yielded little on the women characters. Male critics have been so focused on Dick Diver that by not examining the women characters, they have lost the overall depth of what the story concerns. No person functions in a vacuum, and no narrative with this many characters offers only one story.

During the seven decades of criticism there have not been many feminist readings, analyses, and critical studies of *Tender Is the Night*, which would help draw the spotlight away from just Dick Diver the psychiatrist married to a schizophrenic wealthy woman and shine it onto the novel as a whole. Although it can be conceded that the fall of Dick Diver is the "uniting center of all the book's topics,

motifs, and themes" (Stern, *Broken Universe* 37), the depth of the novel as a whole has been diminished because critics have failed to truly study the women characters and Dick and examine its totality to understand how Fitzgerald built layers of emotional and mental decay.

CHAPTER THREE: THE WOMEN BEHIND IT ALL

There are many stigmas and associations that immediately spring to one's mind when the words "feminism," "feminist," or "feminist literary approach" are used, and in order to alleviate any misconceptions that there may be concerning the terms, a brief overview will help align all perspectives for this approach for *Tender Is the Night*. To pinpoint the exact moment when feminist criticism was born is still under debate, but most would concur that it developed strongly as a movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s alongside other theoretical movements of the era. Others have argued that it truly began when "the first woman became aware of her relationship to language and conscious of herself as a writer, speaker, reader, or auditor" (Todd 18), which needless to say does not quite quantify definitely when the movement truly had larger implications and impacted patriarchal culture, but Janet Todd argues that the beginnings probably can be quantified initially with Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* in 1928 and then more firmly with Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* in 1949 (18).

If Todd's observations signify the inklings of the beginnings of feminist criticism, it would be safe to say that some of the "modern" women of the Jazz Age were taking their new freedoms and liberation of image to begin to become aware of themselves in relation to language and writing, but in terms of mass appeal and women joining forces to truly move forward, the majority of critics have placed the beginning in the 1960s when the "politics of gender" entered a new phase that spurred a depth of debate, development and institutionalization (Belsey 2). Active feminists were helped in advancing the movement in the late 1960s with works such as Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 and in realizing from their cooperation and participation in the civil rights and anti-war movements that their roles had been and were limited to serving men (Todd 20). This awareness of the limitation of roles and credit given to women for their work and participation created a new consciousness and desire to achieve more for just women and not just in relation or subordination to men.

In 1970, three influential works, Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*, and Eva Figes's *Patriarchal Attitudes* defined an agenda for self-conscious feminist reading (Belsey 2). In the early and mid 1970s, feminism became associated with the "straightforward reformist desires to teach and hear something good about women and something bad about men" (Todd 23), which eventually caused the movement to be associated with "man bashing." This phase of feminist criticism emphasized the difference between men and women while ignoring or playing down the differences among women. Common in the 1970s was the backlash from women against Freud and psychoanalysis because the patriarchal dominance women were rebelling against was reinforced and supported by psychoanalysis. Several movements began to grow concurrent to the analysis of patriarchal culture and dominance, of which notably is the interest and concern with women's writing as a mode of resistance. While American feminists were busy creating a sense of sisterhood, rebelling against psychoanalysis as posited by Sigmund Freud, and rediscovering works by women writers, French feminists such as Julia Kristeva and Helene Cixous were "largely uninterested in describing few markers of how women wrote in distinction to men at a particular unenlightened time in history" (Todd 54) and focused on what they called "écriture feminine" or feminine writing, which would be a "utopian projection of repressed femininity, or writing from the body" (Todd 53). Many of the French feminists believed that language is closely tied to and related to sexuality and they had to reclaim their bodies from men in order to express their repressed femininity. Efforts were poured into two larger projects where the first was an attempt or struggle to reconcile the French theory and the American socio-historical criticism, and the second was an attempt to "discredit" the American project as naïve (Todd 69).

As various factions began to repurpose the feminist criticism and movement, language was no longer gender-neutral, and lesbian and gay feminists pulled away to create a voice of their own separate

from heterosexual feminist criticism that sometimes underplays the idea that gender is a social construct. Black feminists began emphasizing the difference between black and white literatures through a separate literary canon in order to make themselves visible in white culture (Belsey 17). In the 1980s, male theorists and male theories began to encroach upon the movement, which questioned whether there is room for men, and if so, would it still be feminist criticism if practiced by men (Todd 119).

Moving away from the factions, the basic principles of feminism have continuously been reshaped to help define and redefine what is and is not feminist criticism. For common ground and in order to standardize an understanding for my feminist approach to *Tender Is the Night*, I will briefly describe the principles of feminist criticism that will be utilized in this approach. Feminist criticism, according to Cheri Register, has three distinct subdivisions, each with its own agenda and purposes: the examination of the "image of women" as it appears in male works, examination of existing feminist criticism, and a still fairly infant subdivision of "prescriptive" criticism that focuses on establishing standards for determining literature that is "good" from a feminist criticism perspective (2). For Toril Moi, defining much more closely the terms feminine, female, and feminist for criticism to be appropriately practiced and performed accordingly attains a better understanding of feminist criticism. Feminine and feminist are "political labels indicating support for the aims of the new women's movement which emerged in the late 1960s" (Moi 117), which means that feminist criticism is a "critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply a concern for gender in literature" (Moi 117). Many feminists have long reserved the terms feminine and masculine as social constructs while female and male specify the biological aspects in sexual difference, which simply means feminine is "nurture" and female "nature." Simply put by Moi, female is writing by women, feminist is writing that takes an anti-patriarchal and/or anti-sexist position, and feminine is writing that refers to that which has been repressed by the dominant social or linguistic order (132).

With this basic understanding, a feminist reader or a feminist reading might ask how the text represents women, what it says about gender relations, how it defines sexual difference, and, if the text does not comment on or represent women, what this absence signifies (Belsey 1). "Female" criticism, according to Moi, can mean criticism that in some way focuses on women (129). The difficulty in using the term "feminist approach" stems from the various connotations and denotations that are associated with such a term as well as the pressure to ensure that one has a full understanding of feminist, feminine, and female in terms of feminist criticism. Although there is no specific faction or critic my feminist approach aligns itself with, my approach will be the combination of Moi's idea of female criticism and Catherine Belsey's and Jane Moore's description of feminist reader. My feminist approach, thus, will focus on the women characters of the novel, their images against the patriarchal background, and the gender relations in order to enhance the overall understanding of the male protagonist Dick Diver's fall and the novel as a whole.

As my first chapter has explored, Fitzgerald's own personal problems and life greatly affected the material he used for *Tender*, but Fitzgerald had always treated everything that happened to him as material for his work, so there is no need to read the novel as his life. Fitzgerald's marriage and alcoholism definitely had an impact on how he began to perceive his wife and many other women, and Fitzgerald's own understanding of *Gatsby's* strengths and weaknesses revealed that *Tender* needed stronger women characters. But *Tender* is more than a novel about a psychiatrist, an alcoholic, an exercise of self-pity, and wasted talent among the wealthy.

F. Scott Fitzgerald was known for his tendencies towards self-pity and his attempts to create a much more grandiose portrait of himself than really existed to impress both men and women that he respectively admired and desired. In men, he wanted to be tougher and more masculine as well as more sophisticated and self assured, while with women, he made each woman believe she was all he wanted

because he wanted to own them, dominate them, and have them admire him[22]; Fitzgerald wanted to conquer the women he desired. When Fitzgerald met a woman who was unattainable, the pain and anguish as well as joy and admiration he felt when he could not get the girl wholly inspired him to write about her. Ginevra King and Zelda Sayre were the most recast women in his work and life because, according to psychiatrist Alice Miller, "grandiose types often try to pair themselves with others who are equally inclined toward exaggerated ambitions and unrealistic self-images" (Wagner-Martin 36). Fitzgerald was drawn to women who reflected a bit of what he portrayed in himself, and because they were also the most desirable women, his interest in them stemmed from a desire to be with someone who seemed to be unconquerable. The loss of Ginevra and the temporary loss of Zelda early in their courtship haunted Fitzgerald in his writing and life as he tried to recapture his abilities as the conqueror, but as time went on and his ability to understand and conquer Zelda fully never materialized or solidified, the effects on him were irreversible.

In an attempt to paint Nicole as the source of Dick's fall and Rosemary the catalyst to the end of the Divers' marriage, critics have diminished the value of not only Nicole and Rosemary but also the other women characters. Critics blame Nicole's money and condition on why Dick's talent fails to reach its full potential, but upon closer examination, what indication other than Dick's charm and youth did the reader have that Dick's talents would have been realized and nurtured had he never met Nicole? It takes more than one person to destroy a man. The depth of the novel has been lost to a fuller critical analysis because critics have not been able to understand fully what Fitzgerald was seeking to achieve but rather have focused on surface analyses of the novel and simplistic readings of the novel that were and are influenced by the life of the author as opposed to the life of the work.

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[22] For more detail of Matthew Bruccoli's discussion of this Fitzgerald *Notebooks* entry #938, see *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur* 33.

Tender Is the Night is F. Scott Fitzgerald's exploration of the depth of decay and destruction of a man whose ideals about his life and profession are left to rot in the sunlight of neglect. Whether it is accurate to attest that Fitzgerald consciously wrote a novel about psychiatry is not necessary to discern in order to understand that Fitzgerald created a character that is a young, aspiring psychiatrist with ambition to make his mark in his field. If for a moment, one could ignore the necessity of Dr. Dick Diver using medical jargon or psychoanalytic terms in order to convince the reader that he is an educated or talented psychiatrist, one would see that the male protagonist's profession describes what the man is most interested in—a desire to understand people's innermost workings and psyche and an innermost desire to understand what his own lacks.

Closer examination reveals that many of the complaints about Diver's credibility and unconvincing fall can be explained by accepting that critics read the novel less as a novel concerning a psychiatrist disappearing in the end than as a man whose "unbridled passion" leads him to be "unfaithful to his wife and his professional calling" (Ford 100). Of all the characters in the novel, Nicole offers the most dynamic and interesting psychological and emotional history for Fitzgerald through Dick Diver to explore. Instead of focusing "more on the emotional suffering of Nicole, for she seems to be the truly grand figure in the book," (Ford 100) Fitzgerald and the critics seem to focus more on Dick. Fitzgerald subtly paints a picture of a wealthy Chicago family into which Nicole is born and bred as the princess, but her life is overshadowed by her grandfather's misdeeds to fortune and later with her father's own desires and indiscretion with her. Although Horace Gregory has tried to diminish this incestuous act between father and daughter as insufficient evidence to support Nicole becoming unhinged by it, it is notable that the emotional and psychological damage is exacerbated by the fact that Nicole has no gentle older female figure to whom she can turn, as her mother is deceased and her sister is much older and not very close with her.

Many reviewers believe that she leeched off of Dick's attention and love in order to sustain herself and eventually grow strong enough to stand without him and discard him. Her letters to Dick indicate that he is more than just someone she wants to use; for some reason, he is someone she can talk openly with to exorcise her demons. When Dick faces the decision to either push Nicole away or to encourage and return her affections for him, his instincts drive him towards her and her youth and beauty, but the other doctors discourage it. They warn him vehemently that his life with her would be strained by her illness and her constant need for care; Dick would simultaneously play doctor and husband to her every day of their life together. He listens to their professional and personal advice while "the impression of her youth and beauty grew on Dick until it welled up inside him in a compact paroxysm of emotion" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 153), and he destroys her world with his rejection. Upon their next encounter, Nicole's vibrant beauty, enthusiastic youth, and newfound happiness impress itself upon Dick until he does not resist his feelings for her. That night, Dick made a conscious decision to love Nicole for everything that she was and everything she reflected onto him—youthful hope, beautiful admiration, and passionate excitement.

Throughout the novel, there are themes of dominance and control that fluctuate between the husbands and men controlling the wives and women. Upon meeting the first group of people, to whom she did not take a liking, Rosemary acutely notices that Albert McKisco obviously "had created his wife's world and allowed her few liberties in it" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 16), but later during the duel incident, Albert reveals, almost helplessly, that his wife was a very hard woman to live with once she gained an advantage upon you and that she had called him a coward that night (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 56). Rosemary's initial assessment of the two seems naïve and simplistic once we learn that the public face that the couple reveals reflects little truth about their relationship privately. Examples of the power struggle between the McKiscos are Albert's gruff exterior and curt manners with his wife when she

speaks, their argument that resulted in Violet's head being shoved in the sand, and later their climb to a greater status as a writer could easily be read. Albert asserted and maintained the control and dominant position in the marriage, but in his darkest hour of the duel, his motivation to go through with it was because of the subtle control his wife had over him. The "few liberties" he granted her were few in number perhaps, but the weight was great.

Where McKisco's insecurities fuel his brusque exterior, Abe North's insecurities are exacerbated by his alcoholism. During the disaster that is Abe North's admiration for Nicole at the train station, his drunken debauchery, his misunderstanding with the black man, and finally his untimely death, Fitzgerald's examination of alcohol abuse between Abe and Dick attributes "the stereotypically crude or obnoxious traits of the alcoholic" (Gilmore 102) to Abe. With North, it is incredibly clear that alcohol affected a great portion of his life, and he allowed it to destroy him emotionally and mentally. His attempts to express his thoughts and feelings to Nicole seem devoid of any artistic control, which indicates that the once great composer has surrendered wholly to his vice. When he declares that he is tired of women's worlds and would rather tear worlds apart, Nicole acutely and coldly tells him "when you get drunk you don't tear anything apart except yourself" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 94). During Nicole's absence after this conversation, the description of his sweat-soaked underwear, his retching cough, his trembling fingers failing to light a cigarette, and his desire to make his way to a drink creates a simultaneously sympathetic and disgusted reaction to this man whose presence is not only heavy and solemn but weighed down his wife and his friends so much that he "lay athwart them like the wreck of a galleon, dominating with his presence, his own weakness and self-indulgence, his narrowness and bitterness" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 95). Fitzgerald's examination of North's alcoholism and self-destruction incurs a specifically negative reaction from the readers towards this character who has allowed his

addiction to consume him and is unable to untangle himself from his vice to revive his talent. Abe North foreshadows Dick Diver's destruction by Diver's vice.

Mary North, next to the dilapidated Abe North, initially presents herself as a quiet follower with little to offer, but upon closer examination, one can see that her quietness represents a quiet strength that Rosemary naively was unable to read. What little Rosemary initially knew about Mary is shrouded by Mary's loyalty and patience with her husband, to whom she symbolized some sort of lucky token. Her quietness is disrupted with her frequent laughter, and it seems as if "she was following her husband somewhere, changing herself to this kind of person or that, without being able to lead him a step out of his path, and sometimes realizing with discouragement how deep in him the guarded secret of her direction lay" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 73). After Abe's untimely death, the reader is led to believe that Mary is no longer of significance and will potentially fade into nothing without Abe, but she adapts and gains a title—Contessa di Minghetti. Her new husband's wealth stems from manganese deposits in Asia, but the prestige of the title indicates to the Divers and the reader that Mary North's world was not destroyed or irreparable because Abe's world had ceased to exist. Dick attempts to belittle Mary's abilities by attributing her education to Abe in being able to deftly adapt herself to a new husband with money and title as well as backhandedly compliment her abilities to align herself with a good match.[23] When Dick ignorantly insults Mary's new husband, she stands up to the Divers in a sudden role reversal where Mary has the power and grace that the Divers once held among their group of friends.

Before Mary North transforms into Contessa di Minghetti and casts Dick aside, Diver's image weakens when he meets Elsie Speers. Despite Dick's charms and warm disposition, Speers never wavers

[23] "'Little Mary North knows what she wants,' Dick muttered through his shaving cream. 'Abe educated her, and now she's married to a Buddha. If Europe ever goes Bolshevik she'll turn up as the bride of Stalin'" is the quote that I am referring to when Dick and Nicole have joined Mary at her new home after being greeted with such formal manners. For the full context and quote, please see F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night* (New York: Scribner's, 1961) 289.

in her and Rosemary's personal goals and agendas. Elsie Speers is a woman twice widowed raising the talented young Rosemary to be both emotionally and physically superior to many of her female counterparts but also to be shrewdly calculating with the men she encounters both professionally and personally. Speers has fostered a cocoon around Rosemary in order to aid Rosemary in achieving success in the movie industry, but by creating this cocoon, Rosemary's youthful naïveté has transformed Rosemary into a self-centered and dependent creature. Speers shrewdly decides that it is time for her daughter to begin pulling away from her in order to create an independent existence capable of functioning without Speers. With those goals in mind, Speers, without hesitation, encourages Rosemary to chase after a much older, married man to experiment with as her first love. Speers reminds Rosemary that she is economically a boy, not a girl who has been raised to work and not necessarily marry, therefore, Dick Diver is worthy as the "first nut to crack" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 49). Whether Rosemary wounds herself or Dick, Speers believes that Rosemary will be able to learn from the ordeal and give herself experience. Without much maternal fawning or emotion, Speers reveals fiercely calculating instincts in guiding her young daughter in a direction that will prepare Rosemary to remain in emotional control in her relationship with Dick, and in turn, Speers' callousness towards Dick promotes "her daughter's ability to survive hardships" (Schiff 125). Despite Dick's spell that he casts upon Rosemary, her mother's guidance allows her to control and later mature beyond the dream of Dick.

While Speers guides her daughter stealthily into independent womanhood, Beth "Baby" Warren, Nicole's older sister, lives and has always lived the life of a wealthy bachelor impervious from Dick's charms. Twice engaged but never married, Baby resides pretentiously in London because she believes a first-rate English gentleman is the only worthwhile kind (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 241). Baby's elitist manners and independent male-like control of the Warren money has caused some critics to label her as a "female man" (Stern, *Broken Universe* 40), and as a woman acting as the head of the family, she is

believed to be "unfulfilled as a woman, incomplete as a female" (Stern, *Broken Universe* 57). This male-centric criticism of Baby's independence seeps through when she is described as "alien from touch" or that she was "a compendium of all the discontented women who had loved Byron a hundred years before" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 171). Fitzgerald channels the tension of traditional patriarchal ideas of women's social roles and attitudes through Dick and Baby's struggle for dominance and power. From Dick's outrage and assumption that Baby planned to thrust Dick and Nicole together to when Baby aggressively asserts her powers as a "female man" to free Dick from Italian jail, the themes of dominance and control clash between Dick's conservative values and Baby's elitist independence.

Unfathomable to Diver, Baby had "looked Dick over with worldly eyes, she had measured him with worldly eyes, she had measured him with the warped rule of an Anglophile and found him wanting—in spite of the fact that she found him toothsome" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 177). Baby's cold assessment of Dick seems unfair or even unfounded, but Baby's responsibility to provide for her younger sister's illness with the best resources their wealth could provide meant Baby had little time to bend to sympathies or emotional attachment of charm or character. Unlike others who admired Dick, Baby did not adore Dick and did not feed his need to be "loved" because loving him did not guarantee her sister being taken care of and provided for.

Despite Dick's outrage at the idea that the Warrens believe that they could merely purchase husband and doctor for Nicole as well as assess that he were not of good enough breeding or background to be worthy of Nicole, he falls in love with Nicole. Dick's "love" for Nicole reveals that there is something lacking in the handsome doctor, and he believes someone like Nicole could fulfill it. The first impression of young Doctor Richard Diver is that he is inexperienced and unaware of his charm. Dick is summed up with "lucky Dick" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 132), a name that lingers around Dick even after his youthful days are over. "Lucky Dick" must be "faintly destroyed" by life in order to be "less intact"

(Fitzgerald, *Tender* 133), and a disease or a broken heart would not be an acceptable substitute. Dick's desire to be slightly less intact is simply because he knew that "the price of his intactness was incompleteness" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 133). Dick Diver's subconscious yearning for "misfortune" or destruction, preferably dealt to him by life, indicates a psychiatrist who may feel the necessity to be near tragedy and misfortune. Dick's love and desire for Nicole is not simply because of her youthful beauty and that her admiration for him welled up inside of her and presented itself like a gift to him, but also because her tragedy and the tragic situation would give to Dick Nicole *and* her misfortune.

Over the span of the Divers' marriage, Nicole's money begins to consume their life, and Dick slowly realizes that Nicole needs him less and less, while he depends upon her money more and more despite his resistance. Dick's dedication to his wife's illness, money, and their life together requires a greater amount of emotional and mental bandwidth and resources than what either of them had expected, which has permitted a malicious tumor to form beneath the surface of their seemingly happy marriage. During their marriage, Dick Diver "believes in the image of himself that is reflected by his friends and which he unconsciously encourages, an image of himself as something very fine" (Millard 35). When Dick is "performing" on the beach for his friends or hosting a party and exercising his charm and abilities to bring various personalities together, Dick relishes his talent for being able to keep a party going simply by using a phrase or sentence (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 241). He uses his talent to propagate the image of himself as a handsome, charming man loved and adored by his friends because he needs this adoration and love to feel accepted (Kuehl 12).

Nicole's dependence upon Dick for emotional support, protection, and power creates a strained relationship, but it is wise to keep in mind that Nicole requires a great deal of support because despite her wealth and beauty, she is a schizophrenic, whereas Dick's self-delusion and devotion to the idea of himself is a compensation for his "unsatisfied needs" (Millard 39). Nicole's needs as a mentally ill

patient must be met first before Dick's needs to be compensated in admiration to appease him, but with all of her youthful adoration, Rosemary "lived in the bright blue worlds of his eyes, eagerly and confidently" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 19), and Rosemary reflected back Dick's fine image in her eyes, reviving his "lucky Dick" self again. Nicole does drain Dick of his emotional bandwidth and she leeches off Dick for mental and emotional support, but Dick entered the marriage understanding that firstly, he would dedicate his life to her as both husband and doctor and that both roles required unconditional patience and love. Secondly, as a young man, he believed that his incompleteness would continue to haunt him unless he could "faintly destroy" himself, so Dick married tragedy and potential destruction. As a psychiatrist, Dick would have understood the intricacies of a patient, who suffered an adolescent trauma that may or may not have triggered a mental illness such as schizophrenia, therefore implicating Nicole or her money as the sole reasons for Dick's failure and fade into obscurity is both hasty and ill supported.

For someone like Dick Diver who gives a great deal of himself to others, there are deep seated issues or motives that fester beneath the surface of such a charming and charismatic man, and Fitzgerald alludes to such reasons or factors when he uses Rosemary's perspective to indicate or point out that when people offered so much of themselves to outsiders, it is an indication of a "lack of inner intensity" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 87). Although Rosemary is young and inexperienced, she can sense emptiness in the Divers' marriage. The emptiness cannot be attributed primarily to just Nicole or Dick, but rather an emptiness that grew from an incompleteness of either individual. Nicole lacks the ability and strength to stand on her own emotionally and mentally while Dick lacks true understanding of who he is without others validating him, even as contradictory as that sounds for a psychiatrist.

The profession Fitzgerald chose for Diver is to indicate Diver's desire and attempt to understand his own "inner intensity" or "intactness," but instead of addressing the "unsolved problems of

professional identity and intimacy" (Stavola 151), Diver continuously and consciously retreats into an identity with which he has become familiar and comfortable. Dick Diver finds "his identity upon others' admiration, an admiration caused and complicated by the fact that he, like Jay Gatsby, reflects back to admirers the same selves they wish to believe in—their best selves" (Stern, *Critical Essays* 191). Unfortunately, Diver uses this identity to absolve himself of his responsibilities in addressing the problems that have become too burdensome and unfulfilling for him in his marriage. His emotional bandwidth has been drained by the time Rosemary offers herself as a temporary reprieve from his situation, and Diver embarks upon a destructive journey to try and find some new identity that could help him cope with his life with Nicole. The idea of Rosemary represents to Dick the youth and youthful admiration that reminds him of how Nicole's youth and beauty once offered itself up to Dick when he was a young man with the world at his feet, and he chases after the romantic dream of Rosemary to recapture something of that past. His chase leads him down a road of destructive behavior and creates a larger rift between Nicole and him that causes Nicole's mental and emotional balance to become strained as Dick struggles to free himself from Nicole, not realizing his disentanglement from Nicole did not address the true problem of Dick Diver.

Dick's attempts to harden himself professionally to help Nicole has created a coldness in his heart that was born of indifference and matured into emptiness, and from this emptiness, he "had learned to become empty of Nicole, serving her against his will with negations and emotional neglect" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 190). This emptiness is resentment against Nicole, her money, her family, and his life, which to Dick seem to be out of his control because in actuality they control him. Realizing that in his impetuous youth he had thrown himself into something both professionally and personally that he was ill prepared and ill informed for, Dick begins to flail about to free himself from the bitterness, resentment, emptiness, and control while believing that Rosemary could revive some part of his old

"lucky Dick" self again as she did initially when they met on that beach years before. Nicole senses these new dark feelings and struggle from Dick and begins to falter under the strain of her mental illness and attempts to cope with her husband's subversive actions.

After opening the clinic with his old colleague and friend, Franz, and Nicole's attempt to flee and later kill them in the car, Dick decides to chase after his romantic dream of the past. He takes a leave and journeys to Italy where he finds Rosemary and tries to believe that he can recapture everything they had years before, but Rosemary has moved beyond her youthful adoration and virginal romantic notions of Dick. Rosemary and Dick's memories of one another are relics of the past and despite Dick's attempts to recapture those relics in the present, neither is in love with the other. Dick's passion is diminished for Rosemary, and Rome is the "end of his dream of Rosemary" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 242). Rome is not the end of *a* dream or *the* dream of Rosemary, but *his* dream—Dick's dream and memory of Rosemary's adoration. When Dick is "the center of activity, the person upon whom all eyes are admiringly focused, he feels accepted and loved" (Kuehl 12), and when that illusion is shattered, Dick is left with nothing to support his identity. Dick believed he could recapture that feeling of acceptance and love in Rosemary again, but unlike Dick, she has matured beyond that admiration and that moment they shared.

Dick still has not faced or tried to face the source of his problems—himself. He is unable to truly see that the source of his dissatisfaction has been his choices and his inability to adapt and change accordingly, and he continues to point his outrage and anger at his friends and loved ones because they are "more of a menace than a refuge for Dick" (Stavola 153). If Dick seeks refuge in other people and things in order to save himself, he cannot and will not save Nicole, who needs and finds refuge and support in *him*. Incomplete in himself, Dick Diver was never equipped or prepared to help complete Nicole, and now after five years of destruction and damage to one another, the Divers crumble beneath the strain of their emotional emptiness and resentment.

Fitzgerald created a novel that explores the uncertainty and confusion of questioning and hoping to distinguish the self from other. *Tender Is the Night* "relentlessly questions the distinction between self and the other, and even as Nicole receives treatment for her 'split' personality, Fitzgerald implies that all personalities are multiple and that people tend to 'become' the persons with whom they associate" (Kennedy 198). With Dick Diver, he not only becomes with whom he associates, he searches people for a reflection of himself that will bring him clarity and fuller understanding of who he is among these personalities—father, psychiatrist, husband, friend. Nicole has been Dick, her son, Doctor Dohmler, you, and Tommy Barban (Fitzgearld, *Tender* 183) while Dick has carried with him the egos of his friends and family to reflect both himself and their best selves back to them, but he is now unable to shed these egos to discover the real Dick underneath.

Dick's freedom from Nicole and their life appears to have been orchestrated purposely, but Dick's emotional struggle with seeing Nicole's disintegration without "participating in them" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 214), with thoughts that Nicole "should die, sink into mental darkness, love another man, made him physically sick" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 242), and with the idea that they had "become one and equal" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 214) haunts him when he realizes that he has successfully freed himself and Nicole. Nicole learns to create her own identity and free herself as "planet to Dick's sun," and move beyond the world Dick tried to create for her by adapting in order to survive without him. Dick Diver wanted to be brave and kind "but wanted, even more than that, to be loved (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 335-336), but with no ability to understand how to achieve a new identity independent of others' validation, Diver falls behind everyone and fades into obscurity.

For the most part, many of the criticisms that scholars, reviewers, and critics made of *Tender Is the Night* concerning Dick's fall, failure, or decline being caused by Nicole, the Warren wealth, the emotional drain of his friends and family, the strain of the marriage, and others is somewhat true, but

closer study and attention reveals that such easily found reasons and explanations diminish the depth of what the novel has to offer and what the other characters, specifically the women characters, have to offer. All of the various factors that scholars of Fitzgerald have pointed to concerning Diver's demise were variables that Diver threw himself into in an attempt to understand and comprehend who he is. Being unsure of who he is, Diver dedicated himself to images and identities that encompassed specific people and roles while feeding off of the adoration and admiration of others in an attempt to truly "feel" loved, wanted, and accepted. Diver's inability to adapt and mature with Nicole, Baby, Mary, and Rosemary causes him to lose his ability to hold their attention and remain the center of adoration. Since Dick is unable to create a "fixed world continuous with the past, it is only natural, Fitzgerald implies, that women like Nicole Diver, Rosemary Hoyt, and Mary North abandon them to flow in the direction of the future" (Brand 138). Whatever worlds men like Abe North, Albert McKisco, and Dick Diver have built for these women in *Tender Is the Night*, the women continue to adapt their identities to become stronger and survive even after those worlds are gone.

CONCLUSION: WHERE IS DICK NOW?

Almost a decade after his critically acclaimed novel *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald's once-highly anticipated "masterpiece" was finally published and received with a lukewarm reception. Disappointed at the lack of excited praise and attention the novel received as well as the lack of financial success, Fitzgerald believed *Tender Is the Night's* failure was from his experimental structuring of the chapters and perspectives, from the choice of title, and from the lack of cohesion and clarity of the third part of the novel. Unfortunately for Fitzgerald, there were greater grievances that reviewers took against the novel.

F. Scott Fitzgerald burst upon the literary scene almost overnight and established himself as a beautiful writer with the ability to transform the mundane into something poetic and create characters who leapt off the pages of his works, but as the 1920s embraced him as its golden, problem child, the 1930s turned its back on him. In the 1920s, Fitzgerald's works and personal stunts were considered part of the rebellious youth movement that rejected tradition, but in the 1930s, during the Great Depression and when everyone was struggling to reconcile the excesses of the previous decade, Fitzgerald's perceived unchanged disposition and lifestyle incurred a small backlash. His works concerning the wealthy or leisure class were no longer popular or desired material and his excessive lifestyle marred his reputation as a writer.

As productive and talented as a writer that he was, Fitzgerald spent most of the nine years of *Tender* struggling with financial stability, professional development, and personal frustrations. Fitzgerald was constantly plagued and torn between commercial short stories and serious fiction while his career suffered from the actions of his personal life, which bled into his reputation as an established writer. His marriage to Zelda was tumultuous, and as time went on in their marriage, both Fitzgeralds struggled to create identities separate from the other. However, the tension and strain of alcohol, childish

pranks, and traveling began to show its effects on them, and Zelda showed signs of mental illness and begins her life in institutions.

When Fitzgerald initially entered the literary market, praise was showered upon him for his ability to capture the experiences and attitudes of young people coping with the rapidity of change in the 1920s, and it is significant to note that Fitzgerald's female characters reflected the new ideas of the modern woman exercising new freedoms with a hint of tradition. As time went on and Fitzgerald struggled with establishing a firm identity as a serious writer, he faltered in being able to separate the passionate writer from the man. After *Gatsby's* critical inception with little financial gain, Fitzgerald consciously decides that stronger female characters were necessary for his next novel in order to appeal to the fiction market.

Published in 1934 during a time period in American history where Americans struggled to survive in the Great Depression, the subject of *Tender's* wealthy expatriates created tension among reviewers and readers. Despite Fitzgerald's efforts in creating a novel that explored the intricate discovery of distinguishing one's self from others and the difficulties of doing so with extenuating circumstances with powerful female characters that represented the new woman taking fate into her hands, reviewers and readers balked at Fitzgerald's unbelievable psychiatrist, emotional leech of a wife, and insufficient evidence documenting Diver's decline. Only focusing upon the surface issues created almost decades of neglect of the female characters' robustness and contribution to understanding Diver's overall inner workings and failures. As the female characters were pushed into the background of narrative, Dick Diver's story diminished in value and impact, and the novel suffered.

By using a feminist reading of the novel in order to focus more attention on how the women characters affected Dick Diver's narrative and decline creates a fuller understanding of how and why Fitzgerald explored a much more intricate personal struggle concerning the investigation of identities

and emotional independence as well as the themes of dominance and control between women and men. These women in *Tender* adapt and change to ensure their necessary survival long after their men have fallen prey to personal dilemmas. Mary North, Nicole Diver, and Rosemary Hoyt "preserved their individuality through men and not by opposition to them" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 63), but this "preservation" represents the knowledge and ability to change and move beyond the identities created through those men.

Tender Is the Night has been dubbed a psychiatry novel when it is a novel about a psychiatrist, a person who is believed to have a better understanding of the inner workings of people. Whether or not Dick Diver can be argued as a "believable" or "persuasive" psychiatrist, it is much more significant to understand that Diver's profession indicates that he, like many other people, want to discover who he truly is in an era rapidly moving away from traditions and ideas that once defined him and others. As a young psychiatrist, "lucky Dick" firmly believes that the price that he would eventually pay for his "intactness" would be "incompleteness" and only through destroying himself would he truly be improved. He throws himself into a love that is clearly destined for professional catastrophe and personal calamity, and as the years went on, Dick realizes that Nicole's needs superseded his own, which created a cold resentment that wedged emptiness into their marriage. Dick turns his back upon his marital conflicts and encourages hope that through Rosemary, a symbol of the youth and adoration that Nicole once gave him, Dick would revive his old hopes and dreams of his youth. At Nicole and Dick's age, Dick believes that to address and solve their problems would be "unnatural" and decides that it is "better to continue with the cracked echo of an old truth in the ears" (Fitzgerald, *Tender* 285).

This "old truth" resounding in their marriage is not necessarily what is best for Nicole or Dick but rather is Dick's preference to destroy what he feels no longer serves his ability to understand his identity. Dick's attempt to recapture the past through Rosemary made him realize that the past he sought

to recapture had long ago been mythologized and now is inadequate in the present. The "old truth" no longer echoed what he wanted to hear because what he wanted to hear could not no longer appease his ears. Dick Diver decides to continue chasing after false dreams of validation rather than face himself, for facing himself may have been more painful than fading into obscurity.

Unable to distinguish and discover his own identity completely separate of other people, Dick Diver's liberty from Nicole does not truly free him from his own demons. Eventually, Diver merely fades in and out of various small towns with little to offer himself or others. The distinction between his identities as "self" and "other" is never established, so he can never escape himself. The person who fades into the background is truly Fitzgerald's protagonist, and the women characters are the ones who push past Diver into the forefront and move beyond the worlds that men once created for them.

Tender Is the Night examines and explores the struggle of ideas and identities of self and other. The personal calamities and circumstances that Fitzgerald uses in the novel are beyond what can be considered normal circumstances, but the exploration of a man full of promise and potential pursuing professional and personal acceptance to validate his identity is a motif that, unlike his earlier works, truly delves into a "tortured record of the psychic and cultural confusions of modernism" (Kennedy 192). As in most of his work, Fitzgerald used his life as a foundation to build and scrutinize the Divers as modern expatriate Americans living during an era where the rapidity of change required the conscious reconciliation between tradition and progress as well as transforming identities to reflect an understanding of "self" in order to distinguish one's individuality. Without the ability to reconnect one's innermost understanding of who one is, one will continue to be tortured and create an existence in obscurity. Dick Diver destroys no one but himself.

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