

The Role and Symbolic Representation of the Flapper in the writings of F. Scott Fitzgerald.

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The purpose of this research is to evaluate the image of the Flapper and establish what she symbolised for America in the 1920s. Focusing on F. Scott Fitzgerald's novels *Tender is the Night* and *The Great Gatsby*, I will determine the symbolic significance of the Flapper and reinforce my argument by focusing on several female characters in both novels. I will also be examining Fitzgerald's use of his wife Zelda Fitzgerald as a template for his own fictional Flapper girls. I aim to analyse the Flapper as a symbolic representation of an exceedingly materialistic superficial culture, that fundamentally values appearance and economic prosperity above all else. I aim to illustrate this ideology with the use of Thorstein Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption and apply it to Fitzgerald's writings. As depicted in his female characters, I will reveal that underneath the glamorous Flapper persona, they were egotistical, drank, spent and partied excessively, were inconceivably materialistic and incredibly damaged.

I will firstly discuss the 1920s in America and investigate the historical origins of the Flapper. The 1920s was an era of significant change, an era of profound tension and clash in values between the traditional and the new modernized culture of America. As Norton states the: "tension between the urge for release, fun and consumerism and the tug of old-fashioned values and order" is what essentially characterised this decade (Norton, 1980, 732). Economic growth swept America: "people had further purchasing power and they spent like Americans had never spent" fundamentally becoming "material unbound" (Norton, 1980, 726). In the 1920s there was a clear differentiation between the classes, and to be in the "leisure class" wealth was a necessity (Veblen, 1899, 42). This unprecedented consumerist society according to Norton was powered by enhanced systems of credit particularly "time-payment plan or the instalment" (Norton, 1980, 721). People's lifestyles improved as credit enabled individuals to avail of expensive items that they may not necessarily have the means or income for. As Calder states: "credit played a huge role in this culture of consumption" (Calder, 2009, 6). Credit and similar alternative payment schemes allowed lower class individuals to purchase and display material goods and use these possessions as evidence of wealth. Although, in reality they were unable afford such possessions, it depicts the struggle and competition between the classes.

Veblen, an American sociologist, assessed the social economics of society and the latent functionalities of "conspicuous consumption and waste" as indicative of social status (Veblen, 1899, 40). In his novel *The Theory of the Leisure Class* he analyses society in an era of "conspicuous consumption", stating that American society had left behind the industrialised era and became driven by leisure and consumption (Reynolds, 2001, XII). The overuse of credit and payment plans can be applied to Veblen's theory of "pecuniary emulation", which can be defined: "as the tendency of lower class individuals to conspicuously consume in order to appear to be a member of the upper class" (Veblen, 1899, 41). As Veblen asserts: "it is extremely gratifying to possess something more than others" (Veblen, 1899, 55). This aspect of the 1920s is widely seen in both *Tender is the Night* and *The Great Gatsby*, as the characters consistently want to portray status through their excessive expenditure, large homes and wasteful purchases. Conspicuous consumption is the "lavish or wasteful spending thought to enhance social prestige" (Reynolds, 2001, XII). *Veblen is suggesting that wasteful spending and conspicuous consumption were used*

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as a means of performing socio-economic status and wealth. It is clear that “during the 1920s the flower of consumerism reached full bloom” (Norton, 1980, 720). However underneath this materialistic prosperity, there was great melancholy, and it is this contradiction between optimism and unhappiness that is the defining theme of the decade.

Alongside prosperity and optimism, the Constitutional Amendments of the 1920s demonstrate that it was also an era of significant liberalisation. Society became insubordinate as many became rebellious towards the law and legislative restraints. A primary example of this tension is the Eighteenth Amendment which was ratified in 1920, banning the sale of alcohol and intoxicating goods. This was an attempt by the government to reduce crime and other social problems. This clearly created tension for some in society between the Puritan tradition of the hard-working individual, sobriety and restraint as opposed to the liberating opportunities that the 1920s produced (Norton, 1980, 744). However, the Eighteenth Amendment actually encouraged boot-legging, as many citizens purchased alcohol from illegitimate manufacturers, which was a major crime during this period (Norton, 1980, 743). According to Norton: “Americans had become law breakers and supporters of crime” (Norton, 1980, 743). Activities such as excessive drinking, prostitution and gambling became big businesses and were exploited by criminals. In Chicago, a city known for crime and gangs, Al Capone a famous gangster of the time who was in this business retained a large amount of power over local politics up until his imprisonment in 1931 (Norton, 1980, 743). This aspect of the 1920s is seen in *The Great Gatsby*, as it is implied by Tom that Gatsby is a bootlegger stating: “he sold grain alcohol over the counter” (Fitzgerald, 1925, 128). Society’s new modernized lifestyle reinforces the fact that modern values were becoming corrupt and individuals were becoming rather self-absorbed, and this was causing a clash between traditional morals and America’s new value system. Another Constitutional Amendment relevant to this dissertation was the Fifteenth Amendment, which was adopted in 1870 and gave African Americans the right to vote. However, it was not until 1940 that all US states adhered by the amendment (Naidu, 2012, 6). During this era, Jazz music, which grew from African-American oral tradition became increasingly popular. The Jazz Age for many symbolized freedom and liberation from various types of repression. Jazz music allowed a freedom of lyrical expression, in a way it was a merging of cultures that suggests a sense of optimism and a moving on from the divisions of the past.

Perhaps most significant in the context of this dissertation was the Nineteenth Amendment which was ratified in 1920. The 1920s offered women a great deal of confidence and central to this confidence was the Nineteenth Amendment in which women gained the right to vote (Oliver, 2013, n.p.). The aftermath of World-War One also gave women the opportunity to work. As male soldiers departed to fight abroad women were hired to take their place in numerous occupations, and continued to work after the war (Oliver, 2013, n.p.). Women thus gained unprecedented freedom as they obtained professional jobs, began to drive, and became more “sexually free” than prior generations (Oliver, 2013, n.p.). The Flapper emerged as the most visible symbol of women’s liberation in the 1920s. This is seen in Fitzgerald’s novels through the character of Jordan Baker who is professional athlete and also Rosemary Hoyt, a famous movie star. Both of these characters do not depend on their male counterparts to provide for them and are clearly symbolic of the modern, liberated women of the period.

The 1920s was clearly an era of great liberalization, and the Amendments discussed above clearly depict this ideology. The tension between the archaic values and modern ethics demonstrates the increasing resistance to traditional ideals, and led to an unsettling mix of old and new. Literature, art and music also used this conflict in their work (Norton, 1980, 744). Stein coined the phrase “The Lost Generation” to describe the post-war generation, a generation which was seemingly optimistic on the surface, however significantly lacking in

substance (Bradley & Temperley 1989, 235). Hemingway quite succinctly describes this generation stating: “lost means not vanished, but disoriented, wandering, directionless, a recognition that there was great confusion and aimlessness among the war's survivors in the early post-war years” (Hynes, 2011, 344). This statement suggests that they were a generation lacking in substance and purpose as opposed to previous generations and became confused and disordered in relation to the clash between modern and traditional values. It was a civilization fundamentally searching aimlessly for something to satisfy their emptiness and lack of purpose. Looked at this way, perhaps society was not as optimistic and liberalized as it was portrayed. Shenton asserts that behind the façade: “of frolic and fun was the tragedy of a people running away from the truth. It was actually a period of great unhappiness and uneasiness” (Shenton, 1956, n.p.). The glamour and conspicuous consumerism displayed on the surface and the optimism of this decade clearly functions as a front for the corruption and uneasiness underneath this society.

The Flapper operates as a social symbol of the 1920s and is the epitome of both the liberalization and underlying despair that characterised the period. I will firstly discuss the positive aspects of the Flapper and then evaluate her negative attributes. She emerged when the war ended in 1918, a period when, as I have discussed above, women gained unprecedented freedom and became rebellious against traditional roles and conventions. Greenberg states that no one knows who coined the term “Flapper” (Greenberg, 2008, 91), but it seems that the term dates back to 1856, and suggests that it is: “a young wild duck which is unable to fly, hence a little duck of any description, human or otherwise” (Knowles, 2009, 235). The Flapper emerged in a decade undergoing a transition and clash between old and new value systems. Perhaps as Knowles suggests the term emerged “from the idea of an unfledged bird flapping its wings as one did while dancing the Charleston” (Knowles, 2009, 235).

The Flapper image consisted of bobbed hair, shorter dresses and excessive makeup. Her image and fashion sense clearly rejected previous fashion trends which consisted of longer dresses, longer hair and less makeup (Fischer, 2009, 74). Similar to their revealing attire and overall look, her bobbed hair also “exposed flesh on the back of their neck and ears” (Gourley, 2008, 62). Some critics referred to the Flapper’s fashion sense as “the new nakedness” as she wore low cut dresses, skirts just below her knees and face makeup (Gourley, 2008, 60-62). The Flapper’s appearance supports Veblen’s theory of “dress as an expression of the pecuniary culture” (Veblen, 1899, 177). He discusses the infatuation with dress, fashion and style and its importance in this society as he asserts that: “fashion is a popular and universal outlet for conspicuous display” (Veblen, 1899, 177). This ideology was profoundly established in the Flapper’s appearance discussed above and was clearly symbolic of the clash between the archaic and modern value systems. Flapper characteristics are symbolic of liberation for women, her attire was indicative of an era where women were sexually, financially and socially more independent. Her clothes were looser, her attitude was rebellious and she was the proprietor of her own future. As discussed above, her appearance was the epitome of beauty, fun, glamor and freedom. Wharton suggests that the Flapper wore revealing clothing as women had “greater freedom to display their sexuality” (Wharton, 2015, 244). It was a liberating era for women and the Flapper was an emblem of this new woman. She signified freedom of choice and equality for women, and expanded the previous limitations for future generations.

Flapper characteristics are also, however, symbolic of the dark underbelly of a seemingly optimistic society as they were prone to exploitation in the name of empowerment. Mackerel quite effectively depicts the darker side to the Flapper, linking it to the dark reality of the seemingly optimistic 1920s. She states that the Flapper was part of a social scene that facilitated abuse and exploitation in attending: “sleazy parties in squalid flats, overflowing

ashtrays and a haze of smoke, hash pellets served with cocktails, cocaine passed around openly, canapés served on the bodies of naked girls, alcoholism, promiscuous sex and illegal abortions, all that, was the dark side of the glamour, gaiety and glitter of the jazz age” (Mackerel, 2013, 134). The Flapper became involved in activities such as excessive drinking, drugs and casual sex. The aspect of food served on “naked girls” depicts the Flapper’s lack of modesty, illustrating an image of objectification. Veblen also associated the feminine body with conspicuous consumption “since it is given over to leisure to display” (Armstrong, 1998, 60). This suggests that the female body has also become an object of evidence of wealth to display social status. Wharton suggests that the Flapper is essentially a “child in a woman’s body” and refers to her as: “irresponsible, uncaring, and unabashedly selfish” (Wharton, 2015, 235). This suggests that Flapper characteristics include being incredibly child-like and irresponsible, however these qualities are disguised within a woman’s body. This reinforces my argument that externally the Flapper depicted the seemingly optimistic society of the 1920s, however in reality she was child-like, self-absorbed and consistently searching for something to increase her store of experience. She was part of a social scene that was accustomed to alcohol, drug abuse, exploitation and reckless behaviour. It was these leisure interests that she used to satiate her emptiness, lack of purpose and direction.

My thesis will now analyse two selected novels by F. Scott Fitzgerald, focusing particularly on his portrayal of the female Flapper characters and the contradictory values that they embody. As his wife Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald is widely considered to have been the inspiration for many of these characters, I will offer a brief overview of her biography as according to Tanner: “their traumatic marriage and her subsequent breakdowns became the leading influence in his writing” (Tanner, 1990, 2). In her early life she is described as a rebellious teenager and the despair of her father (Mackerel, 2013, 22). According to Mackerel: “Zelda didn’t invent her bad behaviour, she was the rising curve of a new teenage culture” (Mackerel, 2013, 22). In other words, she grew up in a culture where rules and traditional values were beginning to be rejected and disregarded. She became a socialite in the 1920s, or as Fitzgerald labelled her “the first ever Flapper girl” (Mackerel, 2013, 146). She married Fitzgerald in 1920, and they became “the first ever celebrity couple” (Mackerel, 2013, 144). Her marriage however spiralled downwards when he began to take extracts from her diary for his own writings. Their marriage consisted of affairs, alcoholism, unstable finances and Zelda’s deteriorating mental health (Mackerel, 2013, 144). Her private struggles evidently betrayed her public persona, as she had attempted to commit suicide in 1924. The pair’s glamorous celebrity lifestyle was clearly a façade hiding their unhappiness. It is this disparity between appearance and reality that was central to the decade’s disillusionment.

The contradiction in the 1920s between the opulence on the surface and the corruption that lay beneath is apparent in his novel *Tender is the Night*, which was published in 1934 and set between 1913-1921 in the French Riviera. The central characters, Nicole and Dick Diver, turn the Riviera into a fairground for the wealthy and materialistic individuals of the 1920s. The area is described as: “a resort of fashionable people” (Fitzgerald, 1934, 11). Rosemary, however, asserts that: “behind this paradise, lay a strand from the outer darker sea” (Fitzgerald, 1934, 19). This reveals that amid the sun, sand and glittering seas, the darker sea will ultimately prevail. Fitzgerald began writing *Tender is The Night* in the Riviera in 1925, where he irregularly worked on it and put it aside for many years. By 1932 he had started consistently writing and finished the novel in 1934 (Cowley, 2014, n.p.). According to Milford: “Fitzgerald viewed Nicole Diver as a composite portrait of Zelda” (Milford, 1970, 285). As Zelda became ill during this period, her health was deteriorating and while the public still believed the Fitzgeralds lived a life of glamour, friends noted that the: “partying of the Fitzgerald’s had somewhere gone from fashionable to self-destructive” (Milford, 1970, 124). This can be compared to the Divers in *Tender is the Night* as their leisure class lifestyle

and marriage went from seemingly harmonious to destructive. As Zelda states: “there wasn’t much interest in private lives, but in public lives that could be watched” (Brucoli, 2013, 28). It is this contradiction between private and public perceptions that Fitzgerald lampoons in both *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is the Night*.

One of the central characters in *Tender is the Night* is Nicole Diver, a beautiful young woman born into a rather wealthy family. Our introduction to Nicole is on the beach in the Riviera, where she is described as: “young, with a bathing suit pulled off her shoulders, orange brown skin, set off by a string of pearls” (Fitzgerald, 1934, 14). She is fundamentally portrayed as flawless or infallible, her beauty is seemingly inconceivable and she seems to be a rather peaceful character. Our introduction to Nicole is very positive. In the beginning, we see her glamorous lifestyle in the Riviera, her privileged standard of living and overall beauty described on the beach. However we learn that she is bored, drifting around Europe in the off season, conspicuously spending to fill some sort of void, in an aimless pursuit for pleasure as she states: “we’ll be back next season” (Fitzgerald, 1925, 24). The fact that the Divers are drifting around Europe in the off season depicts their disorientation and lack of purpose. It seems they are searching for somewhere or something to give them this purpose. Veblen suggests that “leisure time” is also associated with conspicuous consumption (Veblen, 1899, 127). As Nicole was drifting around Europe in the off-season her actions depicts the wastefulness of time and resources that the leisure class accustomed to.

Her consistent shopping sprees and excessive expenditure and waste are also revealed when Rosemary states: “Everything she liked that she couldn’t possibly use herself, she bought as a present for a friend” (Fitzgerald, 1934, 65). Veblen asserts that: “conspicuous consumption of valuable goods is a means of reputability” (Veblen, 1899, 130). This suggests that Nicole purchases large amounts of valuable goods to depict her socio-economic status and to maintain a reputation that exhibits wealth and luxury. However her “reputation” certainly contradicts her reality in the second section of the novel. As Nicole’s mental health issues progress, our impression of her from our introduction is deconstructed. Her father says she is “not right in the head” (Fitzgerald, 1925, 141) and we witness her time in the psychiatric clinic, her abusive father and the gradual deterioration of her marriage with Dick. The disintegration of her marriage and mental breakdowns perhaps represent the period of excess and “conspicuous consumerism” and the consequences that entail.

Monbiot refers to materialism as: “a value system that is preoccupied with the social image they project. It smashes the happiness and peace of mind of those who succumb to it. Its associated with anxiety, depression and broken relationships” (Monbiot, 2013, n.p). This theory is seen in Nicole’s internal struggles. Her beauty and peaceful persona are only a façade that hide her tragic reality. Nicole’s true personality is only portrayed through her personal letters to Dick. We get a sense that she is intelligent and educated as she states: “I can speak three languages four with English” (Fitzgerald, 1934, 136). This is possibly a reference to Zelda’s life as we know that Fitzgerald restricted her own publications and she was required to publish her writings under her husband’s name, her intellect seemingly stifled. Nicole is ultimately powerless, a possession of all the men she encounters, father, husband and lover. She is silenced by patriarchal society, a society that disregards her intellect, her self-expression and her overall voice, which perhaps is the underlying trigger for her mental health issues. It can be argued that Zelda Fitzgerald also epitomizes the contradiction in a society that fooled women into thinking they were liberated when in fact society continued to be very patriarchal. She suffered as a consequence as she was an incredible writer and was very creative, however she was required to publish her writings under her husband’s name which, for Zelda, was “artistic imprisonment” (Penier, 2015, 55). As Mackerel asserts: “beneath the apparently, woman-friendly surface of the times, the old tectonic plates of class and gender lay stony as ever” (Mackerel, 2013, 156). As well as

acting as her husband's muse, Zelda like her fictional counterpart Nicole epitomizes the contradictions embodied by the confidence and optimism of the Flapper.

The second key Flapper character in the novel is Rosemary Hoyt. Rosemary epitomizes beauty and elegance, she is a young actress, and has only recently become a celebrity in the last six months. We meet Rosemary as she is only being introduced to this lifestyle. On our introduction to Rosemary she is on the beach observing the drama of the people surrounding her. Her appearance is portrayed as beautiful as Dick states: "the colour of her cheeks were real, ash blonde hair, and a fine high forehead" (Fitzgerald, 1934, 12). In our introduction to Rosemary we see she is new to this lifestyle, she is described as beautiful and young and seemingly overwhelmed with the drama and atmosphere of the Riviera. She develops friendships with the Divers' "little cliques" quite easily, and also with Dick's wife Nicole (Fitzgerald, 1925, 18).

However, she also becomes Dick's mistress. In fact she pursues Dick, stating: "Nicole won't know, you can love more than one person can't you" (Fitzgerald, 1934, 76). She has seemingly no guilt regarding her actions and her character is quite self-absorbed. Her actions and the events that unfold around her character reveal her true self which is disguised by her Flapper persona. Her materialistic values reinforce Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption as Nicole states: "Rosemary bought two dresses and two hats and four pairs of shoes" (Fitzgerald, 1934, 27). Rosemary also says to Dick: "oh we are such actors" (Fitzgerald, 1934, 118), possibly suggesting that their characters are playing a role in a movie acting out their leisure class lifestyle to cover their true personalities and immoral actions. In reality this "role" is a façade hiding the excessive amounts of pointless material goods purchased, their contribution to murders, affairs, deceit and overall corruption. The corruption underneath this prosperity is revealed when Rosemary finds a "dead negro" on her bed, and allows Dick to dispose of the body stating: "it's only some nigger scrap" (Fitzgerald, 1934, 122). This self-absorbed action effectively reveals that underneath Rosemary's celebrity, glamorous Flapper persona, she fundamentally lacks in substance and emotion.

Brucoli quite effectively summarizes these characters as he states: "the world of the novel has not been able to recover from the war, that the characters are war casualties, and that the war is being continued by senseless acts of violence and self-destruction" (Brucoli, 2009, 96). Brucoli suggests in this quote that although the war is over, these characters are "war casualties" fighting against the clash in values between the old and the new, contributing to the unpleasantness of post-war America which consisted of abuse, exploitation, corruption, crime and excessive expenditure. It is these senseless acts that results in the self-destruction of many of Fitzgerald's characters. My findings suggest that both Nicole's and Rosemary's characters convey the disparity between the glitzy image of success and decadence, and the self-destructive, more tragic reality that lay underneath. These qualities are found in many of Fitzgerald's female characters and also in my research into 1920s society.

This tragic reality that often lay beneath a glamorous exterior is also seen in *The Great Gatsby*, which was published in 1925 and set in 1922 in Long Island New York. The protagonist of the novel Jay Gatsby hosts large parties in his mansion on Long Island. The description of Long Island suggests that it is beautiful, exceptionally glamorous and clearly an area in which the wealthy reside. Nick describes it as: "glittering along the water" (Fitzgerald, 1925, 11). Fitzgerald began writing the novel in 1922 and took two years to complete it, during which time his life, as discussed above consisted of great anxiety. During 1924, Zelda's mental health was deteriorating to the extent that she had taken an overdose of sleeping tablets (Martin, 2004, 84). It is clear that the novel was written during a time of pain. As Fitzgerald himself asserted: "I dragged the book out of the pit of my stomach in a time of misery" (Sanderson, 2006, 154). The desolation of the novel's end, which sees the death of

its glamorous hero, and Nick's description of the other main characters as "careless people, who smashed up things and creatures and then retreat back into their money" (Fitzgerald, 1925, 170) clearly indicates Fitzgerald's sense of disillusionment with the materialism of the period.

As discussed above, Fitzgerald uses the Flapper as a symbol of the emerging modern values, associated with both confidence and contradictory qualities such as immorality, corruption and unpleasantness. The many nameless Flappers who attended Gatsby's parties effectively embody these contradictions between appearance and reality. Nick asserts that one: "was not only singing, she was weeping too through her heavily beaded eyelashes" (Fitzgerald, 1925, 52). On the surface she is described as "tall, red-haired, young and famous" (Fitzgerald, 1925, 52). However, her sadness suggests that this is merely a façade to mask her isolation and inner turmoil. It is apparent that these women are incredibly materialistic, as one asserts in relation to her dress: "it was gas blue with lavender beads. Two hundred and sixty-five dollars" (Fitzgerald, 1925, 45). Veblen suggests that: "the standard of reputability requires that dress should show wasteful expenditure" (Veblen, 1899, 304). Therefore, she clearly felt that it was necessary to inform total strangers of the expensive price of her dress as evidence of her wealth and status. Nick also describes the girls as "confident" illustrating their self-assurance through their possessions (Fitzgerald, 1925, 42). However, during the party they are found gossiping, crying, bored and fighting with their partners. It is through these characters, as Tanner asserts, that Fitzgerald *re-creates the universal conflict between illusion and reality* (Tanner, 1990, xxxix). *Fitzgerald clearly uses these Flappers to depict the contradiction between appearance and reality. The portrayal of these women as beautiful, confident and wealthy is deconstructed to expose their true personalities through their excessive drinking, fighting, crying and meaningless exchanges with strangers.*

As the purpose of my dissertation is to analyse specific Flapper characters from both *Tender is The Night* and *The Great Gatsby*, I will focus on Daisy Buchanan and Jordan Baker, two female characters that represent both the seemingly optimistic 1920s society and the dark underbelly of this civilisation. Daisy is a popular socialite born into a wealthy family from Kentucky. Our introduction to both Daisy and Jordan is in Daisy's home, where Nick describes them as: "both in white, and their dresses rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house" (Fitzgerald, 1925, 13). Daisy is illustrated as pure and innocent, the colour white fundamentally indicates her angelic persona. Nick describes her appearance by stating: "she had bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth" (Fitzgerald, 1925, 17). Her appearance creates an infallible perception of her, her beauty, kind personality and privileged lifestyle are displayed in our introduction to her character.

However, the corruption of the wealthy elites, her uncompassionate attitude regarding Myrtle and Gatsby's deaths, and her ultimate disregard for her own daughter, portrays her character as emotionally dead. We soon learn that she is lazy as she: "made an attempt to rise, and asserts I'm p-paralysed with happiness" (Fitzgerald, 1925, 14). Her lethargic movements and expression depict her character as careless and unimpressed by anyone or anything. Her character greatly lacks in substance as she even becomes emotional when Gatsby presents to her his shirt collection, taking "out a pile of shirts and throwing them at her" (Fitzgerald, 1925, 89). Daisy states: "it makes me sad because I've never seen such beautiful shirts before" (Fitzgerald, 1925, 89). The juxtaposition of such ordinary objects as shirts and the excessive emotion it produces in the otherwise unimpressed, lethargic Daisy is absurd. This reinforces Veblen's theory that individuals purchase inconceivable amounts of pointless possessions simply to show evidence of her wealth and social status. Sanderson states: "in a deceptive, fraudulent world, Daisy still retains her value as a symbol. She represents illusion

itself, the illusion of everything admirable, authentic, desirable, and unattainable” (Sanderson, 2006, 156). This suggests that Daisy, similar to the Flapper, was a social symbol representing the appearance of everything authentic, however is only an illusion that hides her unhappiness.

Jordan Baker is the second female character I will analyse within *The Great Gatsby*. She is a young celebrity and golfing sport star, she was born into a wealthy family and resides in the upper-class scene of West Egg. We first meet Jordan in the same setting as Daisy. However Nick describes her as: “extended full length, completely motionless” (Fitzgerald, 1925, 14-16). From our introduction, we get the impression that she is too lazy to greet Nick, she seems to be indifferent to his presence. Her lazy attitude is also seen when she states: “I’ve been lying here for as long as I can remember” (Fitzgerald, 1925, 16). She is described as a: “slender, small-breasted girl, like a young cadet with a charming discontented face” (Fitzgerald, 1925, 14). Unlike Daisy, Jordan plays sport and generates her own income. Jordan is not dependent on a male to provide for her, she resists previous traditional value systems and is certainly a typical Flapper in relation to her fashion sense and celebrity image. She is rather cynical and direct as she states with regards to Tom’s mistress: “you mean to say you don’t know” (Fitzgerald, 1925, 20). This suggests that she is inconsiderate and willing to discuss other’s personal affairs directly with a stranger. Nick maintains that Jordan is a dishonest individual due to a previous golfing scandal, she cheated as she could not endure being at a disadvantage. Her desire to be portrayed on the surface to others as successful reveals the superficiality of her personality: her lazy speech, glamorous clothing, and consistent attitude of superiority depicts her craving for others to perceive her as infallible. This suggests that her external image as a Flapper masks her empty, dishonest cynical personality.

The characters of Daisy in *The Great Gatsby* and Nicole in *Tender is The Night* are similar in many ways. They are the central female characters in each text. They both possess wealth along with beauty, but are unhappy in their lives and marriages. Daisy consistently plans outings and activities, even on the longest day of year, while Nicole drifts around Europe aimlessly excessively spending to fill the emptiness and boredom within her life. Daisy and Nicole are part of the leisure class who do not have to work, they use their time going to the movies, golfing, parties and shopping which are all major attributes of this class. Both also have young children whom they ignore. Daisy uses her daughter as a trophy to show off to other people, and Nicole causes Dick’s car to crash without considering her children in the back. Both women are also intelligent, however restricted in many ways by men. Tom perceives Daisy as an object to own when arguing with Gatsby as he states: “Daisy’s not leaving me, certainly not for a common swindler like you” (Fitzgerald, 1925, 127). Dick patronizes Nicole as he is both her husband and doctor stating: “she is not strong enough to decide the matter for herself” (Fitzgerald, 1934, 249). Both of their husbands have mistresses who they also use and disregard. Nicole and Daisy have no identities of their own, they both identify with their husbands and are largely dependent on them. Both of their husbands are very controlling, and perhaps this is the reason that these women acted in such a desperate and dangerous manner.

Similarities can also be drawn between Jordan and Rosemary, as both characters are forward and direct. They are celebrities but are seemingly unsure regarding their futures. They are already bored with life, directionless and searching for somewhere or something better. As Bloom suggests boom-time America was a period where citizens wanted to: “become someone else, someone better, more beautiful, more wealthy or more free” (Bloom, 2009, 62). Rosemary and Jordan do not depend on their male counterparts to provide for them as opposed to Daisy and Nicole. Both women, similar to the Flapper, rebel against the silencing of patriarchal society and reject traditional gender roles. As Bloom asserts,

Rosemary and Jordan both escape unharmed from the corruption of this wealth consumed society, although he states that Jordan escapes “but only by remaining incurably dishonest and detached” (Bloom, 2009, 63). As her character is dishonest and selfish she does not attach herself to friendships, relationships or employment, she is self-employed and does not rely on males or anyone within the text. Rosemary similarly is dishonest and selfish, Bloom suggests that it is “a combination of determination and savvy that keeps her alive” (Bloom, 2009, 63). Although these characters escape unharmed, they do not escape through moral means, they escape because they are detached and do not care for anyone other than themselves. It is these characteristics that the Flapper and 1920s society also seems to internalize.

Fitzgerald’s writings are a social observation of the disillusioned decadence of post-war America. The 1920s became associated with economic wealth, new advanced technologies, on demand credit and liberalisation for many. However, these material possessions and attributes were a façade for the corruption and moral decay that lay beneath this society. The female Flapper characters in both *Tender is The Night* and *The Great Gatsby* demonstrate and portray this optimistic persona. However, we learn that beneath the Flapper façade these characters are pre-occupied with wealth, social status and reputation. They have no morals or consciences. Daisy and Nicole both disregard their children, they both seek to increase their store of experience through affairs, alcohol and parties. They both lack in purpose and are bored with their lives. Nicole drifts aimlessly around Europe in the off-season, likewise Daisy is consistently looking for something to do or plan. Rosemary and Jordan are quite alike as they are both famous celebrities, directionless with regards to their future, direct and largely inconsiderate of others. The “shattered idealism” of the decade is replicated in the illustration of the Flapper as a representative of the corruption underneath a seemingly optimistic society (Goldman, 1998, n.p.). The Flapper’s inner struggle symbolically represents that the external extravagance of the 1920s masks the internal conflict between the archaic and the modern value systems of the decade. She represents the demise of the American Dream and the moral decay of civilisation which is predominantly seen in the glamorous leisure class of the French Riviera and Long Island New York. She embodies contradictory values and immense disparity between glamour and success and the corruption that often lay beneath. The Flapper ultimately epitomizes the darkness underneath a society “backlit by beauty” (Goldman, 1998, n.p.).

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