



TREATMENT OF LOVE AND WOMAN IN THE NOVELS OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

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Abstract: *In his treatment of love and women, Fitzgerald has found that modern woman believes in giving herself generously, passing from one man to another. Fitzgerald deals with love that is doomed and the money is the preoccupation of the middle class.*

Key Words: Love, Sex, Doomed, frustration, Break- ups, Money, unnaturalness, middle Class.

Fitzgerald's works are the mirror of his life period between two world wars. He, very honestly, has presented his dreams and things in their real state. The war (First world war) brought a spirit of gloominess and depression in the American society. This war brought a chaos, Americans lost their belief in moral and spiritual values. The atmosphere created by the first world war brought unnaturalness in the field of love also. The novels written in this period are full of with the discussion of sexual morality. William Faulkner realises his duty to warn the generation from the loss of moral values so he depicts the collapse of morality and replacement of love in sexuality in his novels.

Love in Fitzgerald's novels is doomed. His women are sexual aggressors. The war between two sexes was the dominant in America. His women "move from kiss to kill with only the barest suggestion of copulation between".¹ As Leslie A. Fiedler rightly remarks. The starting of 20th century brought a great change in the position of women in America. The women became financially independent got the equal position with men. His first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, is an allegory. The American youth is caught between the forces of evil and good. For them morality and sex are interchangeable terms. Amory, hero of *This Side of Paradise*, finds himself caught between his puritan distrust of sex, Amory idealises women but finds it difficult to maintain his ennobled feelings when they are tested by flesh and blood. Amory's ambivalent attitude towards women and love play a large role in the novel. He seems to fall out of love as quickly as he falls in it: he often treats the women he has relationship with as mirrors: his attraction to them

is based on whether he likes his own reflection with them. He has a series of relationships that all end badly.

This side of *Paradise* depicts the unstable identity and sexual illusion of the central character, Amory Blaine, leading him to be a failure man in life. The heroine, Rosalind is one of those girls who need never make the slightest effort to have men fall in love with them. Rosalind is the best picture of the flappers of this generation. Fitzgerald attributes qualities to her which are mutually exclusive:

She is quite unprincipled; her philosophy is *carpediem* for herself and *Laissez-faire* for others. She loves shocking stories: She has that coarse streak that usually goes with natures that are both fine and big. She wants people to like her, but if they do not it never worries her or changes her----- . The education of all beautiful women is the knowledge of men. Rosalind had been disappointed in man after man as individuals, but she had great faith in men as a sex. Women she detested. They represented qualities that felt and despised in herself-incipient meanness, conceit, cowardice and pretty dishonesty----- . She danced exceptionally well, drew cleverly but hastily, and had a startling facility with words, which she used only in love-letters.

But all criticism of Rosalind ends in her beauty. There was that shade of glorious yellow hair, the desire to imitate which supports the dye industry. There was the eternal kissable mouth, small, slightly sensual and utterly disturbing. There were grey eyes and an unimpeachable skin with two spots of vanishing color. She was slender and athletic,



without under development, and it was a delight to watch her move about a room, walk along a street, swing a golf club, or turn a "cart-wheel".

The theme of the Beautiful and Damned is dissipation and deterioration of the inner self. Two people, husband and wife, are equally quality of an excessive indulgence in illusions and dreams. It is the story of hideous reality, punctuated by drinking and boredom, and of the marriage of the woman who wishes to be her husband's permanent mistress but neither a wife nor a mother. When Gloria thinks she is pregnant, her reaction is predictable and quite in character, for her whole shallow life is merely her appearances. Fitzgerald describes Gloria as a "girl of tremendous nervous tension and of the most high-handed selfishness".

Gloria is a new, more dangerous incarnation of the flapper. She is possessed by an illusory dream of a beauty to whom all is due, who accepts no responsibility and subordinates every other aspect of life to an aesthetic principle. Anthony and Gloria throw their illusions together, but the dream of one cannot, but suffer in contact with that of the other. The illusion of love as an absorbing way of life collides with the ideal that sees marriage as a means of satisfying one's vanity: "Marriage was created not to be a background but to need one---- says Gloria----. Mine is going to be outstanding. It can't, shan't be the setting---- it is going to be the performance, the live, lovely, glamorous performance and the world shall be the scenery".
4 The story of the novel itself admits of no other possibility than a bitter denunciation of Anthony and Gloria because their actions speak for themselves, and there is little doubt as to their purport.

The great Gatsby is an exploration of American dream as it exists in corrupt period. Tom and Daisy represent the world of sophistication. Daisy, the heroin, is the best portrait of a selfish woman. For her money is everything and she can even forget her love for the sake of money. First, she was in deep love with Gatsby. They had an affair five years ago, when he was a penniless nobody in the army, and when he returned from France, he

found her married to Tom. Daisy marries Tom because he is so wealthy that he can give her a \$ 350,000 pearls necklace for a wedding present. The women of this period have nothing to do. Their chief concern is engaged themselves in parties and to be careful about their body.

In *Tender is the Night*, Fitzgerald has transmuted into modern term the romantic image of the bewitched innocent, victimised by the fairy temptress. The novel depicts the full feverish beauty of a class in decay, "the polished charm of a decadence that is not yet self-conscious.

It introduces us to a fledgling film actress, Rosemary Hoyt, a girl with due still on her, who is taken by Richard and Nicole Diver. It also relates the decline and disintegration of its hero, Dick Diver, from a position of great promise in clinical psychology to the level of pitifully inept general practitioner, moving from town to town in upstate New York in search of his lost self. Incidents of incest, homosexuality recur so frequently through the book as to assumed the proportions of emission theme. Nicole, the beautiful mad woman, is the pivot of *Tender is the Night*. Like the American Nicole, the heritage of America has already been corrupted in its very lavishness and splendour. Nicole is a very beautiful woman. Dick labours for the sake of her health. As the son of a Mid-Western clergyman, Dick's background is remote from Nicole's. The grand-daughter of a self-made American capitalist and a German count, she springs from "an American ducal family without a title---the very name---caused a psychological metamorphosis in people."

This proportionate love is perversion of love, and in *Tender is the Night* love assumes many corruptive forms. Love becomes a dehumanizing force in the novel, because it is asked to do things it can not do. The range of the love is also unlimited in the novel. In *Tender is the Night*; Fitzgerald's presents the type of girls who is mentally and physically corrupt. Its novel about the failure of an individual---. It is also about the failure of society of which Nicole is a part. Flappers have nothing to do but only clean themselves physically.

"She [Nicole] bathed and anointed herself

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and covered her body with a layer of power, while her toes crunched another pile of a bath towel. She looked microscopically at the line of her flanks, wondering how soon the fine, slim edijico would begin to sink squat and earthward.

In *Tender in the Night*, Dick Diver is the man with the innate capacity for romantic wonder temporarily a member of the American leisure class of the twenties, an organizer of private gaiety, curator of richly incusted happiness.

This book is once again the story of the Crack-Up of a marriage. The marriage of Dick Diver and Nicole Diver is yet another of Fitzgerald's doomed matings of narcissists. Nicole "has been designed for change, for fight, with money and fins and wings.

Dick is presented as the archetypal fictional psychiatrist. *Tender is the Night* is full of perversion and abnormal love: Campion Dumphry and Fransico are homosexuals; Mr. Warren is guilty of incest: and Mary north and Lady Caroline turn out to be lesbians. It is a harder, harsher book than *The* to leave them in pieces. But the parties in the last tycoon are incidental and unimportant. Like all Fitzgerald's heroes Stahr is an aspect of himself. Stahr is remarkable his rational habits of thought and his ability to get along with the people. When Stahr first sees Kathleen, she is floating on the head of God Shiva a current of water released by a broken water, Shiva, in Hinduism is the destroyer. Stahr's destruction is contain in the very moment of promise, in the very hope for the new life. Throughout the novel, Fitzgerald plays upon this theme. The power of love in Fitzgerald goes hand in hand with a sense of personal responsibility. Fitzgerald's later heroines are remarkably in conduct and character. One agrees with Edmund Wilson when he says: "The love affair between Stahr and Kathleen is meat of the book. His

portrayal of Daisy Buchanan and Jordan Baker has much in common with Hemingway's woman. Jordan's masculine aggressiveness, her dishonesty, her selfishness and narcissism tend to support this

view. Daisy, too, is basically insincere: she indulges in an adulterous liaison with Gatsby. She is devoted to hedonistic pursuit and expensive pleasure and ignores her share of responsibility in the death of Myrtle Wilson. In *Daisy Buchanan* and *Jordan Baker*, Fitzgerald seems to be implying that modern American woman is not only deficient in character and incapable of love, but also dangerous. The presence of the fatal woman in Fitzgerald's works does not mean that he is temperamentally antagonistic to women. Undoubtedly, in his works, there is a considerable number of aggressive and dominating women like those of Hemingway and Faulkner. But it must be remembered that Fitzgerald feels it his duty to warn humanity against the danger of the castration of men and the dominance of women. For Fitzgerald, love is essentially yearning and frustration and consequently, there is little consummated love in his novels. In his treatment of love and women, he aims at the revelation of decadence in love and relationship in certain sections of American society where break-ups and divorces have become common.

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