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MASTER'S THESIS

**A PORTRAYAL OF THE SOUTH IN F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S SHORT
STORIES: FROM NOSTALGIC IDEALISM TO CRITICAL SKEPTICISM**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this master's thesis titled as "A Portrayal of the South in F. Scott Fitzgerald's Short Stories: From Nostalgic Idealism to Critical Skepticism" has been written by myself in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resources in the reference list. I verify all these with my honour.

13/08/2015

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ABSTRACT

Master's Thesis

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Each decade has a major author who captures the culture and spirit of the era and sets the literary context from which other prominent works emerge. For the 1920's it was Francis Scott Fitzgerald, the "social historian" of the "Jazz Age," a term Fitzgerald himself coined to describe the glitz and glamour of the Roaring 20s. Fitzgerald epitomized his generation with personal experiences; his characters became symbols of his generation and facet of American culture. Nevertheless, to remember Fitzgerald only as a spokesman of the Jazz Age would be to do injustice to many of his insightful other stories that reflect his keen interest in the Old South and its dying traditions.

Despite being a Northern and a new generation writer, for Fitzgerald the south had a special meaning and place in his memory. His fascination with the South is due to nostalgia; gracious assets that are gone with the wind as he regarded the South as romantic and aristocratic. And thus, the loss of the romantic South in the face of new world ideals furthered the decay of American societal values and since he believed there was no hope for its betterment, the South could no longer become the redeeming force Fitzgerald once envisioned. So, his treatment of the Southern region in his short stories also changed and the once romantic and optimistic writer of the turn of the century turned into the very bitter and cynical social historian of the Jazz Age. From the very first to the last, his short stories that are based on his real life experiences, feelings, and the prominent people in his life manifest his assessments and sentiments,

and in this dissertation, I aim to scrutinize his reflection of the South and what South represents, from its landscape to its belles and cavaliers, from its eloquent beauty to its gradual deterioration and devastation.

Keywords: F. Scott Fitzgerald, Zelda Sayre, Autobiografiction, South, North, Short Story, Jazz Age

ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

F.Scott Fitzgerald'ın Kısa Hikâyelerinde Güneyin Temsili: Nostaljik

İdealizmden Eleştirel Şüphencilğe

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Her dönemin kültürü ve ruhunu yakalayan ve diğer önde gelen eserlerin çıkmasına kaynak olan edebi içeriği belirleyen başlıca bir yazarı vardır. 1920ler için ise bu, parlıtısını ve büyüsunü tanımladığı “Caz Çağı” terimini türeten bir “sosyal tarihçi” olan Francis Scott Fitzgerald’dır. Fitzgerald kişisel deneyimleriyle kendi neslini temsil etmiştir; karakterleri neslinin sembolleri ve Amerikan kültürünün yansıması haline gelmiştir. Yine de, Fitzgerald’ı sadece Caz Çağının bir temsilcisi olarak hatırlamak onun içeriği yoğun, Eski Güney ve oranın ölmekte olan geleneklerine karşı ilgisini yansıtan diğer hikâyelerine haksızlık yapmak olacaktır.

Kuzeyli ve yeni nesil bir yazar olmasına rağmen, Fitzgerald’a göre güney, anlarında özel bir anlama ve yere sahiptir. Oraya duyduğu büyük ilgisi, güneyi şairane ve aristokratik olarak görmesi kaybolup giden nazik niteliklerin yaşattığı nostaljiden kaynaklanır. Böylelikle, romantik güneyin yeni dünya dinamikleri karşısında yok oluşu Amerikan toplumsal değerlerinin çöküşünü ileri taşımıştır ve iyileşmesi için hiçbir umut olmadığına inandığından dolayı, güney bir zamanlar Fitzgerald’ın öngördüğü gibi iyileştirici bir güç olamayacaktır. Bu yüzden, kısa hikâyelerinde güney bölgesini ele alışı da değişmiş ve bir zamanların şairane ve iyimser yazarı; Caz Çağının tatsız ve kuşkucu sosyal tarihçisine dönüşmüştür. İlk hikâyesinden sonuncusuna kadar, Fitzgerald’ın değerlendirme ve duygularını, gerçek hayat deneyimlerine, hislerine ve hayatındaki başlıca insanlara dayanan kısa hikâyeleri ortaya

ıkarır. Bu tez Fitzgerald'ın; tabiatından g zellerine ve s varilerine, etkili g zelliğinden kademeli bozulma ve ok ş ne; g neyi ve g neyin temsil ettiklerini yansıtmasını ayrıntılı bir biimde incelemeyi hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: F. Scott Fitzgerald, Zelda Sayre, G ney, Kuzey, Kısa Hikaye, Otobiyografik Kurgu, Caz ağı

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INTRODUCTION

Each decade has a major author who captures the culture and spirit of the era and sets the literary context from which other prominent works emerge. For the 1920's it was Francis Scott Fitzgerald, the "social historian" of the "Jazz Age" a term Fitzgerald himself coined to describe the glitz and glamour of the Roaring 20s. As Matthew J. Bruccoli states, what Fitzgerald supplied was "not extensive documentation but evocative details to convey the moods of time and place" (Bruccoli, 1991: 114). As an author, Fitzgerald is largely known for his writings that deal mainly with the wealth and life-style of the upper-bourgeoisie, and for his enticing style that invites readers to experience the many aspects of the Jazz Age; its magic and enchantment as well as its hedonism and corruption. Fitzgerald epitomized his generation with personal experiences; his characters became symbols of his generation and facet of American culture. With his title character Jay Gatsby, he played a seminal role in depicting the failure of the American Dream, the myth of material success and hope of unlimited opportunity. As Fitzgerald himself summarizes at the end of his debut novel *This Side of Paradise*, "Here was a new generation dedicated more than the last to the fear of poverty and the worship of success, grown up to find all Gods dead, all was fought, all faiths in man shaken" (Fitzgerald, 1996: 260).

The short stories of Francis Scott Fitzgerald, mostly overlooked in academic circles, if read closely can provide an insight to the major events, sorrows and pleasures of his own life. In his stories, he treats themes of youth, success, livelihood, economic prosperity of the '20s, extravagance, technological advancements, flappers, big parties, jazz music, recklessness; along with growing restlessness, loose morals, excessive consuming of liquor, the speakeasies and bootleggers, infidelity, disorder, despair, chaos, failure, decadence, the depression and crash of the '30s, and disillusionment. Nevertheless, to remember Fitzgerald only as a spokesman of the Jazz Age would be to do injustice to many of his insightful other stories that reflect his keen interest in the Old South and its dying traditions. Despite being a Northern and a new generation writer, for Fitzgerald the South had a special meaning and place in his memory. His fascination with the South is due to nostalgia; gracious

assets that are gone with the wind as he regarded the South as romantic and aristocratic.

As Fitzgerald grew older and more mature but less idealistic his stories would also undergo a drastic change. After witnessing the corruption of his era and experiencing the traumatic effects of a marriage he did with a Southern woman, he began to realize the stressing importance of capital which would eventually lead him to a critical skepticism towards America, and most significantly, towards his distinguished South. This change apparent both in personal decree, and in a social and cultural context, altered his perspective towards the South which he portrayed through the short story pattern he frequently employed; the doomed romance tale. According to Fitzgerald, the loss of the romantic South in the face of new world ideals furthered the decay of American societal values and since he believed there was no hope for its betterment, the South could no longer become the redeeming force Fitzgerald once envisioned. Thus, his treatment of the Southern region in his short stories also changed and the once romantic and optimistic writer of the turn of the century turned into the very bitter and cynical social historian of the Jazz Age.

This trajectory, together with the myth of the Antebellum South which had a profound impact on F. Scott Fitzgerald's short stories, will provide the core of the narrative which I will trace in this dissertation. From the very first to the last, his short stories that are based on his real life experiences, feelings, and the prominent people in his life manifest his assessments and sentiments, and in this dissertation, I aim to scrutinize his reflection of the South and what South represents, from its landscape to its belles and cavaliers, from its eloquent beauty to its gradual deterioration and devastation.

Be it Aristotelian mimesis "Art imitates Life" or Oscar Wilde's anti-mimesis "Life imitates art", there is no difference between the two in Fitzgerald's case because his life and art is inextricably mixed. Thus, the first chapter will deal with the theory of autobiographical fiction or *autobiografiction* as termed by Stephen Reynolds Fisherman. Combining autobiography and fiction, Fitzgerald modeled the protagonists of his short stories after himself and mirrored situations in his life on paper. As Fitzgerald himself admits, he molded his life events into stories, directly drawing his characters and settings from his own life and locale: "Most of what has

happened to me is in my novels and short stories...” (qtd. Gibbens, 1994: 29). His fiction and life has one soul, they unite in one identity; it is impossible to break them apart. His stories bear such a striking resemblance to his life to the extent that once he said, “Sometimes I don't know whether Zelda isn't a character that I created myself” (Cowley, 1964:20). Kirk Curnutt states that “the vast majority of Fitzgerald’s fiction belongs to the tradition of roman a clef, the thinly veiled memoir,” and he cites the complaint of a critic asserting, “[Fitzgerald] cannot create beyond himself nor imagine experience[s] very different from his own. He is continuously autobiographic. His heroine is his wife, and his hero is himself” (Curnutt, 2004: 4). Innumerable parallels exist between Fitzgerald’s own life and his fictive works, making it hard for the reader to separate fact from fiction. In this blurry line of his art and reality, it is, thus, hard to determine where fiction ends and where Fitzgerald’s real life begins.

The second chapter will deal with the young romantic Fitzgerald, whose nostalgia for the by-gone days and Southern traditions had a solid influence on his writing. Influenced by his father’s Southern manners and graciousness, Fitzgerald in his early short stories projected the South as uncorrupted, untainted and noble and its values as a remedy to the materialistic, vulgar, and blunt world of the 20s. For him, the South remained as the representation of the innocent and ideal old days. He believed that Southerners, unlike the people of his own region, were deeply attached to their land and customs. Moreover, Fitzgerald’s perpetuation of southern issues is remarkable because, at the time, the South, and the themes and myths regarding the South, such as the Southern belles, were dominions mostly belonging to the southern writers. Thus, his affiliation with the South, often neglected, can actually provide a better understanding of the complexities of the Old South and the clash between northern and southern regional identities. His stories usually consist of themes regarding the North and South dichotomy. Thus, Chapter 2, after giving brief biographical information about Fitzgerald’s parents will explore how his upbringing and personal experiences shaped his outlook on life, especially his sentiments towards the South.

Yet, Fitzgerald’s idealization and admiration of the South whose values and virtues he believed was worth preserving, gradually changed in accordance to his

demoralizing relationship with his Southern wife Zelda. Accordingly, the third chapter of my dissertation will deal with this transition, the waning effects of a culture and its damaging consequences. Undoubtedly, Fitzgerald did not view the Northern transformation as positive as well. He told his companion Laura Guthrie Hearne, "There is Weltschmerz--the uncertainty of the world today. All sensitive minds know it now. There is a passing away of the old order we know and we wonder what there will be for us in the new--if anything. The future is dark" (Turnbull, 1962: 265). The abrupt changes in American lifestyle, however, were not only to be seen in the North; they would soon overtake the South as well, and the declining moral and manners of the younger generation would be a common issue for the whole country. What's more, Fitzgerald's utterly consuming matrimony with Zelda would soon take its toll, and Fitzgerald's positive view of the South would eventually shift towards a more unfavorable one. In parallel to the alteration and degeneration of the New South, his fiction also began to reflect this decay in values, ethics, and morals. To witness the Southern forebears' values smearing and vanishing, to mark them no longer existing, especially the change in Southern women, whom Southerners put on a pedestal, would be a very hard blow for Fitzgerald. He was soon to realize that this icon of etiquette and beauty, this Southern belle was also a woman lusty for power, rank and wealth. This realization wounded Fitzgerald's faith deeply. He was well aware of the power of habit as a precise aspect in determining one's character, and, seeing the transformation in the South, particularly on his Southern belle wife Zelda, became to be a huge disappointment. Although his own personal experiences with Zelda at first fascinated him, the fluctuating nature of his chaotic marriage, and the realization that Southern belles/ladies, which Zelda represented, were no longer what they used to be, caused Fitzgerald to view the South and Southern women very critically.

Fitzgerald reflects his enchantment and then disenchantment with the South in many of his works but most conspicuously in some of his short stories. Thus, the last chapter will deal with his short stories from which he glanced critically from a distance. The hopeful and positive Fitzgerald of the early '20s is to be replaced in these stories by a negative and skeptical writer filled with disappointment and bitterness. This dissertation will chronologically track these stages of transformation

by analyzing fifteen of his short stories; “A Debt of Honor”, “The Room with the Green Blinds”, “The Ice Palace” “The Jelly Bean”; “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button”, “Two for a Cent”, “Diamond as Big as the Ritz”, “Dice, Brass, Knuckles and Guitar”, “Gretchen’s Forty winks”, “The Sensible Thing”; and “The Last of the Belles”, “More Than Just a House”, “The Night at Chancellorsville”, “The End of Hate”, and “Flight and Pursuit” so as to demonstrate Fitzgerald’s deteriorating sentiment towards the South. For alas, neither the Old South with its provincial and genteel life nor Southerners with their strong code of etiquette would serve as a cure for the emotional impoverishment that Fitzgerald saw as the biggest problem of his century.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HISTORICAL SCOPE

1.1. AUTOBIOGRAFICION

In his “Autobiographical Pact”, Philippe Lejeune explains the literary genre of *autobiography* as, “retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality,” (Lejeune, 1975: 4) and according to his “autobiographical pact”, there should be an “affirmation in the text ... referring back in the final analysis to the name of the author on the cover” (Lejeune, 1975: 14). Georges Gusdorf, meanwhile, writes that “Autobiography ... requires a man to take a distance with regard to himself in order to reconstitute himself in the focus of his special unity and identity across time” (qtd. in Smith, 1998: 148). Autobiography is literal life writing, an extensive account of one’s life. It connects the episodes and forms a unified constructed self whilst representing, as self is not a stable, constant entity. It would not be wrong to claim all autobiographical writing is inherently fictional. Thus, from autobiography, the reader expects pure reality and author’s self-realization. On the other hand, *fiction* consists of pure imagination, with a touch of reality, as Albert Camus defines it: “Fiction is the lie through which we tell the truth.” The Cambridge dictionary defines fiction as, “the type of book or story that is written about imaginary characters and events and not based on real people and facts.” M.H. Abrams, in his *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, describes fiction as:

... any literary narrative, whether in prose or verse, which is invented instead of being an account of events that in fact happened. In a narrower sense, however, fiction denotes only narratives that are written in prose (the novel and short story) ... Literary prose narratives in which the fiction is to a prominent degree based on biographical, historical, or contemporary facts are often referred to by compound names such as "fictional biography," the historical novel, and the nonfiction novel (Abrams, 1999: 94).

In Chapter 9 of his *Poetics*, Aristotle draws a distinction between fiction and non-fiction stating that non-fiction tells us about what has happened or things as they are, but fiction consists of “what may happen, i.e. what is possible according as being probable or necessary,” and that fiction is thus of greater philosophical importance than non-fiction. Fitzgerald picks up on the Aristotelian potentiality of fiction, remarking that it “is awfully hard to analyze, it is awfully intangible. It just means

the keen equipment; it means a scent, a smell of the future in one line” (qtd. in Turnbull, 1962: 234). And as Eleanor Roosevelt states, “The reason that fiction is more interesting than any other form of literature, to those who really like to study people, is that in fiction the author can really tell the truth without humiliating himself” (Roosevelt, 1992: xvi).

When a work is a combination of both of these aspects, then, it falls into the category of *autobiographical fiction*, in which, the reader is expected to realize “the resemblance”, as Lejeune claims, that can be “anything from a fuzzy ‘family likeness’ between the protagonist and the author, to the quasi-transparency that makes us say that he is ‘the spitting image’” (Lejeune, 1975: 13) because, unlike autobiography which is “all or nothing” without any degrees, autobiographical fiction involves degrees of identity. It is a form where author’s life and the elements he creates converge. Stephen Reynolds Fisherman in his journal article, “Autobiografiction”, depicts this as “fiction with a good deal of the writer’s own life in it,” and coins the term *autobiografiction*: an amalgamation of fiction and autobiography, which connotes “a minor literary form which stands between those two extremes” (Fisherman, 1906: 28). He describes autobiografiction as “a record of real spiritual experiences strung on a credible but more or less fictitious autobiographical narrative,” and the author accomplishes this as:

he invents a certain amount of autobiographical detail, or (which comes much the same) he selects from his life the requisite amount of autobiographical material, adding perhaps a quantity of pure fiction and on that he builds the spiritual experience, with that he dilutes it, makes it coherent and readable. The result is autobiografiction (Fisherman, 1906: 28-29).

Autobiografiction is, then, the interweaving of author’s life with the created characters and their narrative. The protagonists are not exactly the author himself but rather a changed version which sometimes includes some characteristics or experiences of the author, yet consists of “a literary form more direct and intimate probably than any to be found outside poetry” (Fisherman, 1906: 28). Thus, through this form of writing, the author, by blending fiction and autobiography, becomes able to hide his prominent experiences and personal facts under a disguise which supplies a protective area to divulge, and also portrays the events that touched him deeply, be it humiliating or honorable which normally could not be easily achieved merely through autobiography.

1.1.1. The South in Fitzgerald's Autobiografiction

Fitzgerald never wrote an autobiography but left his trace through letters he sent to his friends and relatives during his lifetime, through autobiographical essays (some of which are compiled in the *Crack-Up*) but most significantly, through his autobiographical fiction. When Fitzgerald's chronological autobiographical works are observed consecutively, information about the prominent deeds and the persons that affected him deeply can be obtained. As Kirk Curnutt observes, "From the moment that he burst upon the literary scene in 1920 with his debut novel, *This Side of Paradise*, the precocious twenty-three-year-old encouraged audiences to acknowledge the "umbilical connection between life and art" (Curnutt, 2004: 4).

Most of Fitzgerald's works could be analyzed from the perspective of autobiografiction as all of the details of his fiction are precisely reflective of his personal life. In his 1933 essay "One Hundred False Starts", Fitzgerald remarks:

Mostly, we authors ... have two or three great and moving experiences in our lives—experiences so great and moving that it doesn't seem at the time that anyone else has been so caught up and pounded and dazzled and astonished and beaten and broken and rescued and illuminated and rewarded and humbled in just that way ever before. Then we learn our trade, well or less well, and we tell our two or three stories—each time in a new disguise—maybe ten times, maybe a hundred, as long as people will listen.... Whether it's something that happened twenty years ago or only yesterday, I must start out with an emotion—one that's close to me and that I can understand (Fitzgerald, 1933a).

Fitzgerald recruits his life, family, acquaintances, and settings for his fiction, aiming not to disclose real people or facts but to convey his version of truths through their recreated fictional forms.

Michael J. Schulze, discussing Fitzgerald's autobiografiction, writes that "Fitzgerald's using Zelda's words verbatim contends that fiction mirrors reality instead of merely being inspired by it," and that, "creating the perfect guise to discreetly reveal his true self. ... Fitzgerald's fiction is a window to the Real Fitzgerald. Fiction writers are said to be professional liars. What better lie than to disguise the truth as fiction?" (Schulze, 2011) Although none of his protagonists are exact identifications of himself, he allocates his feelings and experiences to them, assigns hints of his true self, and when thoroughly scrutinized it is clear that they embody his personality. Judith Baughman, in her "Art Imitating Life in Fitzgerald's Novels" writes, "In his best work, fictional elements provide artistic form and moral

order that life rarely yields; autobiographical elements invest the work with an intensely ‘felt’ quality, perhaps the most notable mark of Fitzgerald’s greatest writing”(Baughman, 2000). Alice Hall Petry affirms that Fitzgerald is, “an author whose private life is reflected consciously or otherwise, in virtually everything he wrote” (Petry, 1989: 4). Concerning this, Fitzgerald writes in a letter in 1938:

You’ve got to sell your heart, your strongest reactions, not the little minor things that only touch you lightly, the little experiences that you might tell at dinner. ... You have only your emotions to sell. ... In *This Side of Paradise* I wrote about a love affair that was still bleeding as fresh as the skin wound on a haemophile. ... You wouldn’t be interested in a soldier who was only a little brave (Fitzgerald, 1994: 368).

Even as a child when he was developing the habit of writing, Fitzgerald kept chronicles, like his 1910-11 *Thoughtbook of Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald*, where he wrote like a diary. And “much of his fiction would take the form of self-warnings or self-judgments” (Brucoli, 1991: 88). For instance, in his masterpiece *The Great Gatsby*, one can clearly observe immediately the duplication of his life, with Daisy being the belle of Louisville, Kentucky as Zelda was of Montgomery, Alabama, and Gatsby a Midwesterner as Fitzgerald was a Minnesotan. Just like Fitzgerald, Gatsby’s officer’s uniform hides his background and his multitude of personalities, that is to say, he was a poor, Northerner with a failed father and a family of no nobility and money, and he was not a university graduate because he dropped school, which he would have failed completely, to join the war. The main theme of the book is “self invention” through “the American Dream” and infeasibility of repeating the past, both of which can be observed in Fitzgerald’s own life. “F. Scott Fitzgerald's life is a tragic example of both sides of the American Dream - the joys of young love, wealth and success, and the tragedies associated with excess and failure” (Willet), a statement which is also a good summary of *Gatsby*.

In a letter written in 1917, he details his autobiographical prose writing: “I’m sandwiching the poems between rheams[sic] of autobiography and fiction” (qtd. in Brucoli, 1991: 95). For example, about Fitzgerald’s repetitive plot of doomed love affairs between Southerners and Americans from other regions, especially Northerners, Charles Mitchell Frye writes:

If ... inter-regional relationships misfired in only a couple stories, one could reasonably dismiss them as incidental plot devices. But Fitzgerald recycled relationships doomed by region in tens of stories and several novels, suggesting ... a repetition automatism rooted in biographical trauma... (Frye, 2012: 32).

It would be accurate to claim, then, that he draws his characters from his life closely, and that his fiction is intensely personal. This correlation allows him to project his combination of feelings with the qualities of an actual acquaintance, his biographical matches, as well as in some cases his stories being a foreshadow to his own future. “It is true of Fitzgerald not only that his characters are modeled on himself but that he sometimes becomes his characters after the fact” (Donaldson, 2006: 95). In his *Ledger*, after Zelda’s delivery, Fitzgerald notes Zelda’s remarks, which he later would use in his famous novel *The Great Gatsby*, “Isn’t she smart – she has the hiccups. I hope it’s beautiful and a fool – a beautiful little fool” (qtd. in Bruccoli, 1991: 185). Fitzgerald in a letter confesses to his daughter Scottie, “I told you once it was an old Saturday Evening Post story called ‘Babylon Revisited’ that I wrote in 1931. You were one of the principal characters.” And in another letter to his literary agent, Fitzgerald writes, “Please immediately send me back carbon copy of [‘Babylon Revisited’]. It is terribly important because this is founded on a real quarrel with my sister-in-law + I have to square her” (qtd. in Bryer, 2000: 198). Fitzgerald had contradictory concepts of “literature as a lifestyle and profession” because “[his] fiction was autobiographical, he [...] needed constant if not melodramatic stimulation, for without that inspiration, he had nothing to write about” (Curnutt, 2007: 19).

1.1.2. Fitzgerald’s Epoch

“With his ability to catch the flavor of a period, the fragrance of a night, a snatch of old song, in a phrase,” (qtd. in Bruccoli, 1991: 5) he is renowned for his five novels - *This Side of Paradise* (1920), *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922), *The Great Gatsby* (1925), *Tender Is the Night* (1934), and the unfinished *The Love of the Last Tycoon* (1941)-, but not less of importance, he wrote 178 short stories most of which, being prequels or extensions of his longer fiction, are gathered in short story collections such as; *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920), *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922), *All the Sad Young Men* (1926), *The Lost Decade* (1928), *Taps at Reveille* (1935) and other posthumous ones. He assigned his desires, disappointments, and actions to his short stories putting in words in “Echoes of the Jazz Age” in 1931 as they, “bore him

up, flattered him and gave him more money than he had dreamed of, simply for telling people that he felt as they did.” Short stories were what he “put the major part of his writing time into... [and] which he resented and disparaged. Most of them were written just for money” (Fitzgerald, 1931a). Short story was not Fitzgerald’s favorite literary form, however, as it was a major cause of income and due to his monetary interests and seeking quick money, most of the time he left aside his, what is then considered, his serious, longer fiction, and wrote magazine fiction. Just like many critics, Fitzgerald’s contemporary and friend Ernest Hemmingway warned him that the short stories he wrote for the *The Saturday Evening Post* would “ruin his ability to write seriously” (Brucoli, 1991: 165) but Fitzgerald in defense said he was cheapening them for the magazine after writing the original artistic ones. Yet, his short stories never failed to lose his status as a gifted and a unique writer; at no time did he ever produce any work that could be considered poorly written, redundant or unskilled.

In conjunction with his autobiografiction, the part historical scope plays in Fitzgerald’s works cannot be disregarded as he interweaves personal and historical perspectives. “The Jazz Age”, and “Age of Excess”, typified the fundamental cultural, economical, and social changes. During the Jazz Age, the country prospered as the middle class reached its highest standard of living, and as wealth bred innovation, technology advanced, and sky scrapers ascended. In the American household, an average family was now able to replace manual and primitive housekeeping materials with vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, and automatic washing machine, as well as acquiring radio sets, and telephones as they were now easily accessible. The burgeoning consumer market was full of the new factory products, and the affluence of the day led people to spend irresponsibly which resulted in conspicuous consumption. Automobiles – the symbol of desire for motion –, which were later called the “devils wagon”, were popular and affected many areas as the assembly line in industrial production, building of highways and roads, as well as making their owners free as it meant independent mobility. Thus, the innovations, and advancements in technology resulted in profound changing of the social codes. Popular media’s role in that was also undeniable. Along with the radio stations, magazines, and advertisements, movies helped the reestablishment of the new values,

too. To exemplify these major styles and behavior: “calling” became “dating”, women’s dresses were trimmed from ankle to knee length, daring dancing parties took place and the jazz music played at those was called “the devils music” because of the immortality those parties brought. In this new era, older moral codes and religious mores were revolted against as well as the gender codes. The release from the restraints of gentility, made people feel freer, particularly women, who became to be called as Flappers with bobbed hair, corsetless short dresses.

With all of this came consequences, mostly immoral and undesirable, such as, premarital sex, alcoholism, bootlegging, and organized criminal activities. The decade noted other negative aspects, especially on politics, law, and racism; the Red Scare, government promoted movement to capture people with radical political affiliations; Prohibition, a law banning the “the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquor”, (Horn); and the Ku Klux Klan, a hostile anti-black, anti-immigrant society.

Although not every part of America had the chance to act along with the dynamism of the age at first, the mood of the era pervaded the whole country towards the end of the decade. Then, with the collapse of the stock market on Wall Street in October 1929, the decade abruptly came to an end. Black Tuesday ended the Jazz Age, and made the US suffer till the end of the 1930s. “As the banks failed, businesses went bankrupt, unemployment rose, and poverty spread, attention was turned toward America’s social, economic, and political failings. The mood of the nation changed from gay cynicism to concerned pessimism” (Bevilacqua, 1994: xxi).

Being one of the foremost writers of his epoch, Fitzgerald is, of course, a great representative and a chronicler of this period. Seeing himself as a “spokesman for his generation” in a letter he writes; “I’m trying to set down the story part of my generation in America and put myself in the middle as a sort of observer and conscious factor” (qtd. in Brucoli, 1991: 95). The Jazz Age, in literature, was significant as “many of its prominent writers came from provincial towns in the Midwest or the South that they were eager to leave but which would remain in their consciousness as their nostalgic image of a lost innocence” (Bevilacqua, 1994: xxi).

About the time, in his “Echoes of the Jazz Age”, Fitzgerald notes, “It was an age of miracles, it was an age of art, it was an age of excess and it was an age of

satire”, but then he adds, “This was the generation whose girls dramatized themselves as flappers, the generation that corrupted its elders and eventually overreached itself less through lack of morals than through lack of waste....A whole race going hedonistic, deciding on pleasure” (Fitzgerald, 1937). Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald were the epitomes of this period; Zelda being the flapper, and Scott being a man striving for success throughout his whole life. Although Zelda was more of a belle – at first – than a flapper, “she obligingly bobbed her hair, adopted prevailing New York fashions, and played the role of muse in celebrity interviews and profiles” (Curnutt, 2007: 18). Fitzgerald cultivated his own popular image in the media, as well. Fitzgeralds triumphantly became ubiquitous figures with their outrageous behavior, they even became public performers as Zelda recognized themselves as “awfully good showmen” when Fitzgerald called the couple as being “the most envied [one] in about 1921 in America” (Brucoli, 1991: 414). He ardently took part in the age but on the other hand, also stringently criticized it. About the Jazz Age, he asserts:

“a fresh picture of life in America began to form before my eyes. The uncertainties of 1919 were over—there seemed little doubt about what was going to happen—America was going on the greatest, gaudiest spree in history and there was going to be plenty to tell about it. The whole golden boom was in the air—its splendid generosities, its outrageous corruptions and the tortuous death struggle of the old America in prohibition. All the stories that came into my head had a touch of disaster in them—the lovely young creatures in my novels went to ruin, the diamond mountains of my short stories blew up, my millionaires were as beautiful and damned as Thomas Hardy's peasants” (Fitzgerald, 1937).

Many of Fitzgerald’s protagonists show how difficult it was to live with the changing norms for himself and his wife, Zelda. The progress of his life is demonstrated in the progress of his stories as much of his life is a reflection of the Jazz Age, and his stories show, first, the frustration, and then, the breakdown. He complained of the hollowness of modern life, decaying moral values, and the greed of the ‘20s as he writes, “the word jazz in its progress toward respectability has meant first sex, then dancing, then music” (Fitzgerald, 1937). Fitzgerald, in “My Lost City” notes, “Back in 1920 I shocked a rising young business man by suggesting a cocktail before lunch. In 1929 there was liquor in half the downtown offices, and a speakeasy in half the large buildings” (Fitzgerald, 1932a). Moral dichotomy, lust for immediate sexual, financial, or social domination, and longing for self-transcendence run through all of

his entire stories. The main characters are usually utterly wrecked by their self-deluding, lavish nature of possessing and materialism, which controls their lives.

“Fitzgerald embodied in his tissues and nervous system the fluid polarities of the American experience: success and failure, illusion and disillusion, dream and nightmare” (Callahan, 2006: 141). Then, in his life, Fitzgerald, in his own words went from the “willingness of the heart” to the “qualified unhappiness” within the process of time (Wilson, 1965: 64-84). “With his capacity for becoming identified with the moods of his times, Fitzgerald would come to symbolize the excesses of the Boom Decade. The Twenties had spoiled and rewarded him. The Thirties would disparage him” (Bruccoli, 1991: 339). He symbolically explained the resonation of the wastage of the boom years and their irresponsible youth, and Zelda’s mental breakdown in his *Ledger* as “The Crash! Zelda + America”, (qtd. in Tate, 2007: 8) identifying the events of his life with the course of his time. The archetypical ’20s figure of the lost illusions and betrayals of both the promises of America and the American society come in *The Great Gatsby* (1925). In short, his works provide a study of the times and the society of the ‘20s as well as his life with his fiction consisting of autobiographical aspects.

CHAPTER TWO

FITZGERALD'S TIES TO THE NORTH AND SOUTH

2.1. NORTHERN ROOTS – MOLLIE MCQUILLAN

Born in Minnesota in 1896 to a Northerner mother, Mollie McQuillan, who, as Fitzgerald recalled, was the daughter of a “potato famine Irish” family quickly became rich after arrival in the US. Fitzgerald’s grandfather of his mother’s side, “Philip F. McQuillan was an exemplar of the American Dream that his grandson F. Scott Fitzgerald would respond to so complexly in his fiction” (Brucoli, 1991: 11). After emmigrating to the US from Ireland in 1843, Philip first worked as a bookkeeper. Then he got married to Louisa Allen, and prospered after the Civil War with the small wholesale grocery business he founded in 1857 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Eldest of the five daughters of the newly affluent McQuillan family, Mollie was born in 1860, was provided with education, and trips to Europe whilst living a substantial life (Brucoli, 1991: 11-12). As a mother who lost her two elder children, Scott was the apple of Mollie’s eye, and due to bringing him up indulgently, she caused him to be a bit spoilt, and he later blamed her for “his vanity and narcissism (‘I didn’t know till 15 there was anyone in the world except me, ’...’)” (Curnutt, 2007: 14). About her anxiety, Fitzgerald wrote that she was “half insane with pathological nervous worry” (Brucoli, 1991: 16). She wanted him to become a businessman, and didn’t encourage his literary enthusiasm. And when he became a “young literary star”, he was ashamed of his mother because she “didn’t fit the glamorous image evolving about him,” and was embarrassed by her “not only for her lack of family distinction but also because of her extravagant dress and behavior made that lack constantly apparent” (Brucoli, 1991: 177, Donaldson, 1973: 11). As R. Clifton Spargo remarks in his “The Reluctant Irishman: F. Scott Fitzgerald and Me”, Fitzgerald’s first generation “Irish mother doted nervously on the young Scott, but he lamented her attentions and for the rest of his life thought of her as somewhat gauche, referring to her here and there as an ‘old peasant’” (Spargo, 2013).

2.2. CAVALIER SOUTH – FATHER EDWARD FITZGERALD

Proud of his paternal ancestry, Fitzgerald greatly admired his southern father, Edward Fitzgerald of Maryland, who was perhaps the source of his fascination with the South in spite of his northern upbringing. Francis Scott Fitzgerald's southern origins were apparent even in his name descending from his father's side of the family. He was named after Francis Scott Key who was the writer of "The Star-Spangled banner", the national anthem of the US, and a relative of his father's mother, Cecilia Ashton Scott who descended from the Scotts of the seventeenth century in Maryland, a Southern sympathizing family during the Civil War. Another ancestor, Mary Suratt, was executed for her role in the assassination of Lincoln. Edward's forebears were directly related to the Civil war and thus, this issue was a part of Fitzgerald's paternal pedigree. Bruccoli states, Edward, as a boy, "guided Confederate spies during the Civil War" (Bruccoli, 1991: 12). After attending but not graduating from Georgetown College, Edward left the south and went to the west for business purposes. There the dapper Edward married the not so beautiful and rather eccentric Mollie (Bruccoli, 1991: 13). Edward Fitzgerald, with his courteous conduct, a refined taste for the genteel, and notions of virtue and chivalry, as John T. Irwin indicates, "was every inch a gentleman – gracious manners, impeccably groomed, a natural storyteller with a taste of romantic poetry, and possessed of a highly developed sense of honor that he tried to instill in his son" (Irwin, 1997: 4). Fitzgerald is claimed to have obtained his love for poetry from his father, as well, who read the great poets, including Poe and Byron to him. In his 1915 play "Shadow Laurels", Scott pens his feelings about his father, saying "he knew everything, he could tell anything – he used to tell me poetry. Oh what poetry! And I would listen and dream" (Fitzgerald, 1915).

Edward brought Scott up by teaching him Southern manners, and with the stories of the Civil War and the Old South. Fitzgerald took pride in his father and always felt compassionate towards the South. As Matthew Bruccoli writes, "Scott's interest in history was initiated by his father's Civil War stories, which made him a strong Confederate sympathizer" (Bruccoli, 1991: 21). Also, as Scott Donaldson remarks, "[His] tendency to glamorize the South, inherited from his father, Scott

Fitzgerald never lost” (Donaldson, 1973: 3). In his foreword to Don Swann's *Colonial and Historic Homes of Maryland*, Fitzgerald writes that much of his early childhood in Minnesota was spent in asking his father questions about such things as “Early's column” and “Jeb Stewart's [sic] cavalry ” or “... how [he] used to ride through the woods with a spy up behind [him] on the horse,” because as he states, “the impression of the fames and the domains, the vistas and the glories of Maryland followed many a young man West after the Civil War and my father was of that number” (Fitzgerald, 1939).

Fitzgerald was a Civil War buff, then. Thanks to his patrimony and his father's reminisces, many of his writings are suggestive of the Civil War. This is apparent from his first juvenile stories right up to the ones he wrote at the end of his career. Two of his very first four short stories, “A Debt of Honor” (1910) and “The room with Green Blinds” (1911), both of whose plots sympathize with the Confederacy during the Civil War. In “A Debt of Honor”, Fitzgerald tells the story of a Confederate private Jack Sanderson falling asleep while on sentry duty. General Robert E. Lee – who is the real life General-in-chief of the Confederate armies – sentences Jack to death by being shot but then, decides to let him off with a reprimand. Six weeks later, Jack “pays his debt” by heroically compromising his life against the Union troops. “The room with Green Blinds” is about the narrator Robert Calvin Raymond's inherited Georgia house where there is a particular room, on whose door writes the initials of “J.W.B”, not to be opened “until Carmatle falls”. Asking the help of Governor Carmatle to solve the mystery of the initials ends in discovering John Wilkes Booth (the real life assassin of Abraham Lincoln) hiding in that room. Carmatle shoots him, and explains that he does so to avenge his son's death because of Booth who had stolen his son's horse and uniform, and caused him to be shot by mistake by Union soldiers. The two stories are apprentice fiction, and show Fitzgerald's deep interest in the Southern side of the Civil War during his formative years. His interest would continue, however. In 1913, Fitzgerald wrote and acted in a play for St. Paul's Elizabethan Dramatic Club, called “Coward” which tells a Civil War story, favoring the South once again. Frederick Wegener notes that “more than a conventionally defining benchmark, the Civil War thus became on many other levels an essential reference point for Fitzgerald, animating his

imagination as vigorously (if perhaps not as grandiloquently or program-matically) as that of, say, Faulkner or Glasgow among his literary contemporaries” (Wegener, 2012: 253).

The centrality of the South in Fitzgerald’s imagination should not be underestimated. His paternal associations affected him so deeply that, in his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, the protagonist Amory Blane, Fitzgerald’s alleged “alter ego”, is “for the Southern Confederacy” just like himself. (Fitzgerald, 1996: 23) Bruccoli writes that the author even “much preferred his Maryland relatives to those in Minnesota” (Bruccoli, 1991: 18). Others tried “to win him to Irish independence as a romantic cause, but it didn’t seize his imagination as the lost South had – probably because Scott had no sense of his Irish past. His Irish roots were mercantile and unglamorous” (Bruccoli, 1991: 42-43). Even when he chose his university, he felt for the South. With the money received from the death of Mollie’s mother, his college fee for Princeton University, about which he thought as “being lazy and good-looking and aristocratic ... like a spring day” (Fitzgerald, 1996: 23) would be paid. Bruccoli notes, “Princeton was the Southerner’s Ivy League college, and Fitzgerald thought of himself as a courtesy Southerner by virtue of his father’s pedigree” (Bruccoli, 1991: 44). R. Clifton Spargo remarks, “the Yale men seeming brawny and brutal, the Princetonians by contrast ‘slender and keen and romantic’” (Spargo, 2013). When Fitzgerald was at Princeton, “the McQuillan connection became increasingly remote. The family roots that mattered to him were in Maryland” (Bruccoli, 1991: 52).

2.3. NORTH/SOUTH DICHOTOMY

There is clear evidence of the clash between the North and the South in Fitzgerald’s short stories. With the coming of change in the 1910’s and the early ‘20s, the regional difference was widely realized by the whole nation as, “most of the views of the South, expressed by both Southerners and outsiders, have accepted the hypothesis that the area was a separate and distinct part of the United States, differing markedly from the rest of the country in background, economy, culture, and social attitudes,” and because of the fact that they wanted to remain “the romantic conservatism of Southern attitudes and behavior” as well as their “traditionally easy-

going way of life” (Horton, 1967: 367-412). The entire components the South held were evident on his father whereas his mother represented “the gaucheries of the upper-middle-class parvenu” (Curnutt, 2007: 13).

His father’s positive influence on Scott was apparent, but on the other hand, there were some characteristics of Edward which Scott did not admire. In addition to that, the McQuillan family’s attitude of looking down on the Southern Fitzgerald family heightened Fitzgerald’s awareness of the differences between the national sections. In spite of Edward’s courteous conduct and genteel manners, he was a failure in business, losing his money and having, thereafter, to rely on McQuillan money, his life was a disappointment. When he first arrived in the west, he became a furniture manufacturer. Later, he worked at Procter & Gamble, but he couldn’t find the fortune he was seeking. Edward was not a business success, and the family’s funds were decreasing, thus money was constantly on the agenda of the family. Fitzgeralds lived out on Mollie’s inheritance income, and only with that they had a chance to live in Summit Avenue, which was the richest residential area in St. Paul. Though Scott was friends with the wealthy families’ sons, he always felt an outsider and was always class conscious, and “his sense of differentness in St. Paul sharpened his skills as a social observer and shaped his lifelong self-consciousness” (Brucoli, 1991: 26).

“This theme of failure and success, and the thin line between them, was to become an obsession in the mature Fitzgerald’s treatment of ... protagonists” (Donaldson, 1973: 16). Edward’s failure and his reluctance and inability to succeed in work and life, fortified by the scorning of Mollie’s family, became the reason of Fitzgerald’s obsession with money success, and reinforced Fitzgerald’s North-South dichotomy. Fitzgerald thereby experienced a kind of replay of the Civil War in his own life. Reflecting upon this tension he writes in a 1933 letter to John O’Hara: “The black Irish half of the family had the money and looked down upon the Maryland side of the family who had that certain series of reticence and obligations that go under the poor shattered word ‘breeding’. So being born in that atmosphere of crack, wisecrack and counterack I developed a two cylinder inferiority complex” (Fitzgerald, 1994: 503). As John Kuehl states, Fitzgerald’s tendency to “identify autobiographical and historical events” comes from the polar opposites as “his

financially inept but ‘Old American stock’ father came to symbolize pre-Civil War southern aristocracy while his mother’s financially successful but ‘black Irish’ relatives came to represent post-Civil War northern *nouveaux riches*” (Kuehl, 1965: 35).

As C. Hugh Holman suggests, Fitzgerald “saw himself as torn between the vigorous, successful, and aggrandizing North and an ancestral dignity, grace, and good manners associated with the South” (qtd. Wegener, 2012: 253). All of this urged Fitzgerald to be very ambitious, class conscious in addition to his desire for leadership, and be admired and attractive, due to the fact that the opposition between the two represented the opposition between money and class. “Having suffered because his happiness [with Zelda] was nearly destroyed by the lack of money and having grown with the spectacle of his father’s failure, Fitzgerald responded money by showing contempt for it,” and hence, Zelda became “an integral in his dream of success” (Bruccoli, 1991: 132-134). In 1938, he observed, “That was always my experience – a poor boy in a rich town; a poor boy in a rich boy’s school; a poor boy in a rich man’s club at Princeton ... I have never been able to forgive the rich for being rich, and it colored my entire life and works” (Bruccoli, 1991: 270).

Thus, the south represented nostalgia and regression whereas the north represented progression. Although he was aware that the indolence of the South and the Southerners was often imagined, he still appreciated the value of breed and nobility and the way the South “was not likely to find a great deal of novelty in the ‘new freedom’ of the Jazz Age” (Horton, 1967: 365). Yet his ideas changed afterwards in accordance with the time and the other aspects that shaped his ideas. He reflected it in his ideas by first favoring and then disfavoring the Southern mind. He depicted the cultural binaries between the North and South as canine/ feline, as in masculine/ feminine, the residents of the North as mature whereas the South as childish and impulsive. About Fitzgerald’s dualities, Robert Roulston argues “that for him the South is either a lovely, romantic land filled with tradition and time-tested values or a place of inertia, failure, decline, and decadence” (ed. Sachsman, 2007: 165).

He manifests his enchantment and disenchantment with the nostalgic allure of the South in many of his works but most conspicuously in the Tarleton trilogy. In

these early '20s stories, before his ideas changed, he mentions the ideal southern man not positively. Though he mentions their lazy and sleepy state, compared to the hard working Northerners, they are well intentioned and somehow hopeful to make something of themselves. In the second story of the trilogy, "The Jelly Bean" (1920) as the title of the story suggests, the protagonist, Jim Powell is an idle southern man, living in a small city "that has dosed sleepily for forty thousand years in southern Georgia". "Jelly bean" or "Jellies" were the boys who loafed, and as Fitzgerald puts in the story, "'Jelly-bean' is the name throughout the undissolved Confederacy for one who spends his life conjugating the verb idle in the first person singular- I am idling, I have idled, I will idle" (Fitzgerald, 2010: 48). Financially and socially not in an improved position as his family used to be, Jim- called "by means jelly- weak and wobbly like" because he says he "ain't worth shucks" (63) - gets invited to a party by his friend Clark. At the party he sees the beautiful Southern belle Nancy Lamar whom he helps to get back the money she loses in a dice game. After receiving a kiss from Nancy, enchanted and "chemically changed", Jim decides to leave his city and come back as a gentleman as feels socially inadequate by "people who weren't nothin' when my folks was a lol" (63). However, after finding out Nancy got drunk and married a man of higher social standing and wealth than himself the day after the party, he goes back to loafing "into a pool-hall ... where he was sure to find congenial crowd who would make all the jokes- the ones he knew" (64).

2.4. THE NOSTALGIC ALLURE OF THE SOUTH- SOUTHERN BELLE ZELDA SAYRE

To speak of the gifted author of "the Jazz Age" and his relationship with his quintessential flapper and Southern belle wife Zelda is to invoke the "wild wind of success," one that would come to a tragic end within two decades bringing the couple catastrophically, and notoriously "from boom to bust" (Fitzgerald, 2010: ix).

Fitzgerald's sympathy towards the South was also associated with his beloved wife, Zelda Sayre of Montgomery, Alabama, for the most important iteration of the south in Fitzgerald's life came in the person of Zelda. Throughout the engagement and marriage between "the brilliant success of the North" and "the golden beauty of the South", Zelda had a huge impact on his writing, and provided the material for

much of his fiction. We can, then, read autobiography in Fitzgerald's repeated trope of the romantic appeal of the South through the relation between a young Northern man and a Southern girl. Zelda was the writer's *golden girl*, Montgomery Alabama's *belle*, and, America's *flapper* with a talent for dance, writing, and painting. In an early interview Fitzgerald remarked: "I married the heroine of my stories. I would not be interested in any sort of woman," and in another one he added to his view of Southern girls: "First of all, remember I married a Southern girl. A characteristic is that she retains and develops her ability to entertain men. The mid-western girls lack this utterly. With the sophisticated eastern girl, it's give and take proposition" (Fitzgerald, 2004: 31). As can be seen in the illustration below, for Fitzgerald, the Southern woman was the most fit for the concept of the American flapper.

Figure 1: American Flappers As Seen By Fitzgerald (NY, April 14, circa 1922-23)



Source: Bruccoli, et al. 2003: 97.

The personification of the Old South as the Southern belle stereotype plays a significant role in many of Fitzgerald's works. Revivifying the Old South, the belle was an incarnation; offering both a fascinating present and a memory of the past. As

stated in *Reconstructing Dixie*, the Southern belle “served as a linchpin of the nineteenth century revisionist versions of the Old South, in which the Lost Cause ideology of southern nationalism conveniently fused the figure of the southern lady onto a celebration of the rebirth of a ‘nation’ defeated”, owing to the feminized position of the South due to “the loss of a large portion of the male population, and figurative, given the South’s status as defeated – turned to hyperfeminized figure of the southern woman as discursive symbol for the region” (McPherson, 2003: 19). A belle consisted of: beauty (being the most important attribute), charm and, wealth, along with child-like behavior, eagerness to compete to capture the best gentleman, tendencies towards manipulation, self-centeredness, “narcissistic and vice ridden” attitudes, and love of consumption and luxury. “She is the heroine of the white South’s most cherished story about itself: it is designated work of art, bearer of its ideals. The body of the Belle was inscribed with the integrity and glamour of the South itself” (Roberts, 1994: 102). A belle was expected to be, as Kathryn Lee Siedel states, a “charming and flirtatious coquette who never yields her purity” (Siedel, 1985: xvi) so as to capture a wealthy gentleman and get married before turning twenty. When a woman enacted the Southern ideals of femininity, she embodied the vices and the virtues of the southern society, reaffirmed patriarchy, and validated the masculinity and the bloodline purity as for the southern chivalry these issues were of great significance. And, Zelda was a Southern belle in the fullest sense of the word; the impeccable embodiment of the Southern Belle whose myth reflected the long lost glorified past. As Durr observes, “These great Southern belles became an institution. A man was proud to be seen with them. It gave him status. Their cities were proud of them,” (Durr, 1990: 30) and Fitzgerald received his first status with her.

Fitzgerald’s muse, Zelda, was born in July 1900 to Minnie Machen Sayre, the daughter of a Kentucky Senator Willis B. Machen, and Judge Anthony D. Sayre of Alabama Supreme Court. Though she was barely born in the twentieth century, she was raised as a nineteenth-century child with the products of southern culture. She was indulged, and had a spoilt rearing, and her family nurtured her narcissism. Coming from a socially privileged family, she was popular for her beauty and free-spiritedness, and was voted “Prettiest” and “Most Attractive” in high school (Tate, 2007: 302).

Although she was an unconventional girl, she remained within the boundaries of Southern feminine conduct. She liked the security of Southern establishment, as in her novel, *Save me the Waltz*, she indicates that a southern girl is the “one who wants to have a law to itself and the other who wants to keep all the nice old things and be loved safe and protected” (Fitzgerald, Z. 1967: 56). Shirley Abbott explains that like all belles, Zelda was:

not after love but power- using the prettiest weapons possible, hiding her true self/intelligence. ... If there had been no such thing as a belle she would have invented it, and she captured a talented handsome Northerner who could be counted on to provide one thing all belles crave- glamour (Abbott, 1983: 106-108).

Southern Belles’ chief purpose in life was to win the attention of others, and Zelda thrived on attention, receiving displays of affection from numerous young *beaus* before marrying. In that sense, Zelda was especially significant for Fitzgerald because “his ideal girl was one pursued by many men; there had to be an element of competition” (Bruccoli, 1991: 63). About the appeal of the belles, Fitzgerald remarks in *This Side of Paradise* (1920); “The ‘belle’ had five or six callers every afternoon...The ‘belle’ was surrounded by a dozen men in the intermission between dances” (Fitzgerald, 1996: 55).

Zelda possessed the qualities that Fitzgerald required in a girl. She was beautiful, independent, socially secure (but not wealthy), and responsive to his ambitions. More than any girl he had ever known, Zelda shared his romantic egotism. She and Fitzgerald wanted the same things – metropolitan glamour, success, fame (Bruccoli, 1991: 102).

With the entry of the US into the WWI, the “men from Princeton and Yale who smelled of Russian Leather and seemed very used to being alive” and whom she saw as a “release” from the small arena that suffocated, as she wrote in a letter, made her made her dreams reachable (Milford, 1983: 19). Back then, Fitzgerald was an aspiring writer who had left Princeton University without a degree, and joined the Army in 1917. In the final months of the WWI in 1918, while training at camp Sheridan in Alabama during the final months of the WWI, the young Lieutenant Fitzgerald met the charming Zelda, one of the top Montgomery girls who were welcoming the Yankee officers, at a country club dance; they fell in love immediately. He described Zelda to his friends as “the most beautiful girl in Alabama and Georgia”. Besides her good looks, “Fitzgerald was not only attracted to her considerable charms, but also to her status as the most popular girl” (Curnutt,

2007: 17). After the war was over, he was discharged from the army, and was employed at an advertising agency in New York. At first she broke off the informal engagement as the struggling writer could not provide her with the life she already had as he lacked financial stability, and the Sayre family did not encourage the marriage due to their concerns about their daughter's care, he convinced her to marry him when he signed the contract for his first novel, *This Side of Paradise* with Scribner's. As it was accepted to be published, so was his marriage proposal, remarkably synchronously. Instantly proving his success, wealth and fame, the couple got married in NY, just a week after the book's publication. Overnight celebrities and "Jazz Age" representatives of their generation, they led a glamorous, extravagant and hedonistic life both in the US and Europe (the nomadic couple never owned a permanent home), and had only one child, Frances Scott – "Scottie".

The life they embarked upon together upon was emblematic of the "Roaring Twenties" with all its glitter, youth and energy, as well as dissipation, decadence and eventual collapse. After a time, their self-indulgent life style would consequently wear them out. All would come down beginning with outrageous behaviors, debts, disorder, excessive spending and drinking, damaging the breach of trust both by cheating and by blaming each other for literary poaching, and ended with a ruinous marriage. Fitzgerald would become an alcoholic, eventually dying from a heart attack whilst Zelda after experiencing a mental collapse would die in a fire at an asylum. "So she lost her mind, dying at last in a fire in a mental hospital in 1948. Not a dancer, not a writer, not a wife, not a belle" (Abbott, 1983: 109).

Zelda's tragic journey from splendor to ruin is predicted in the writings by Fitzgerald, in which he reflects his fluctuating and ambivalent feelings for the South. Marriage brought an unexpected change to their relationship. As Bruccoli writes, "Before the wedding Zelda was a Montgomery celebrity and Fitzgerald was one of a crowd of suitors. In New York, Fitzgerald was the famous one. ... It became increasingly difficult for her to accept the subordinate role of wife to F. Scott Fitzgerald" (Bruccoli, 1991: 157). As she became the adjunct of the most successful writer in America, as Abbott puts it, she realized that "glamour suddenly ceased to suffice. For a Southern belle, this must have been the most self-destructive of insights" (Abbott, 1983: 109). She would not only destroy herself, but devastate her

husband as well. Chastity was one of the main characteristics of the Southern belles, and Zelda would fail in that, too.

From their marriage to the time they parted for health issues, Fitzgerald modeled his romantic heroines after Zelda; he even quoted Zelda's own words in his fiction, as we have seen. He was fascinated by her and driven to write these many stories about this ideal Southern girl and he reflected autobiographically what he had with Zelda, the best and the worst. About the Southern Belles the *Memory and Myth: The Civil War in Fiction and Film from Uncle Tom's Cabin to Cold Mountain* quotes C. Hugh Holman as, "the embodiments of a tradition stretched back before the Confederacy and that enchanted and hypnotized men for a century, permanent embodiments of the dream of beauty and youth and the romantic aspiration of the aggressive male," and it is written that "such woman, regardless of their geographical provenance, would preoccupy Fitzgerald throughout his career" (ed. Sachsman, 2007: 165).

The first story of the Tarleton trilogy, "The Ice Palace" (1919) clearly demonstrates the acute dissimilarity experienced by the Northern gentleman, Scott, and the Southern belle, Zelda. Fitzgerald returns to Alabama both in person and in prose for a number of times, and this time when he does, he favors the South and the Southern belle, and denigrates the North and Northerners. Bruccoli quotes, "Fitzgerald's Southern stories drew on Zelda and the responses to her world that were generated by his love for her" (Bruccoli, 1991: 127).

"The Ice Palace" was published a few months before Scott and Zelda's marriage in 1920, and it is a story which grows out of Fitzgerald's ideas about Zelda, and about how he imagined she would feel in the North, with a story that explores her southern nature. Zelda was sensitive about the space and the history of Montgomery as she cared about the Confederate soldiers just as the Southern belle in this story. In this symbolic tale, the Southern belle/Zelda character, Sally Carrol Happer, feels trapped in a South and seeks to marry a Northern gentleman in order to escape from her mundane life in the South. She becomes engaged, then, to a Yankee, Harry Bellamy, and goes to the North to visit her fiancée. At the ice palace, at a winter festival in Minnesota, in Harry's home town, the cold and the icy terror of the festival freezes her "heart, body, and soul" (Fitzgerald, 2010: 46), makes her feel out

of place, and thus, she chooses the South over the life offered in the North. The nineteen-year-old Sally Carrol is identified with the South, but at the same time, “there’s a sort of energy – the feelin’ that makes [her] do wild things” that prompts her eagerness to live in the North, and she desires a different kind of world and wants to live “where things happen on a big scale” because “[She] wants to go places and see people. [She] wants her mind to grow,” (Fitzgerald, 2010: 29). Her passion for Harry Bellamy derives not from love but from what he can offer her. A typical characteristic of the Southern belles in Fitzgerald’s short stories is that they all appear to be desirous of wealth and power. Sally Carrol loves Harry because he has everything she wants; as a Northern man, he is socially skilled and is determined to climb up the social ladder and become a man of wealth and social status. In comparison with the lazy and poor Southern men, he is ambitious and full of energy. She has naïve fantasies and a willingness to become a modernized woman by marrying this Northerner before her transitory beauty fades away. In this way, she can escape the dreariness of her Southern life where “even the shops retire into a state of utter and finite coma” (Fitzgerald, 2010: 28). Eventually, she sees her engagement to Harry as necessary. Yet, when she goes North, the frustration she feels changes her opinions. This urban Northern culture, no matter how enchanting, cannot replace her homeland. She begins to view Northern people as “righteous, narrow, and cheerless, without infinite possibilities for great sorrow or joy”, and the women as “dull, spiritless and devoid of personality” (Fitzgerald, 2010: 38). Fitzgerald remarkably states in the Bellamy household the commodities which are “a lot of fairly expensive things” actually have no history, a progress that came too quickly as they “all looked about fifteen years old,” very much like he writes in 1923 that is “wealth without background, tradition, or manners” (Fitzgerald, 2004: 57). In the end, she determines that she is better off in the South. Fitzgerald symbolically contrasts the cultural and social differences between the industrial Gilded North and agrarian Genteel South. Their marriage, though as a symbol of the unification of both, is not the best idea for the South as it still holds the lost finer values and manners. As much as she desires to converge the differences, she doesn’t want to be alienated from her own environment and identity. Fitzgerald, in this story, finally favors the South and its personification, the belle, whilst critiquing the Northern

values and the “gloomy”, “melancholy”, and “brooding rigidity” of Northerners (Fitzgerald, 2010: 38). And the warmest representation of the New South in the 1920’s, when Zelda’s influence on him was more positive, is demonstrated through the naïve and charming Southern girl Sally Carrol. We should note, however, that even in this relatively positive representation the relationship between north and south, which always runs parallel to the relationship between Scott and Zelda, is doomed to failure.

CHAPTER THREE

FADING VENEER OF THE SOUTH

3.1. CHANGING SENTIMENT TOWARDS THE SOUTH

Although Fitzgerald at first appreciated the Southern rejection of North American commercialism, he then started seeing it as a backward fixation, a Southern regress. Due to the certain events in his life, the period starting in 1922 was the time when he realized the North was progressive whereas the South was regressive. The place that made money was north. He was always aware of the importance of money but during and after getting married to Zelda, the issue became more problematic because now being a married superstar, he started to have more responsibilities, and had to fulfill the expectations especially of his wife and his circle. His financial burden had begun to cause him emotional damage. In his most recognized novel, *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald gives a haunting vision of the American Dream just as he states in a letter in 1925, "America's greatest promise is that something is going to happen, and after a while you get tired of waiting because nothing happens to people except that they grow old, and nothing happens to American art because America is the story of the moon that never rose." (Fitzgerald, 1994: 488) *Gatsby* is a story of disillusionment, disappointment, and disenchantment. It is the story of the Nouveau Riche, Robber Barons which demonstrates the mindset of industrial North, New York night life, all levels of society, money dealings, hopeless marital difficulties, and betrayal. The treatment of the themes of money and poorness, success and failure as recurrent issues takes us to the root of Fitzgerald's first encounter with these problematic issues: his father and thus the South.

The regional mutability of the South shook his faith in the courteousness and nobility of the region, and he recognized his father's downsides more than ever. "Edward Fitzgerald instilled in his son not only beautiful manners, but a sense of honor ... He also inadvertently gave him a model of masculine failure" (Milford, 1983: 25-26). He felt the humiliation of his father more than ever before when he struggled for his dreams. His father's failure later on "led Fitzgerald to dismiss his father as alternately as a 'moron' and, more generously, a representative of that

‘good heart came from another America’ – that is, the Victorian age that modernity had rendered obsolete” (Curnutt, 2007: 13). Fitzgerald even, as Brucoli claims, “became convinced that Edward Fitzgerald had never recovered from the Civil War and that his disappointments had sapped his ambition” (Brucoli, 1991: 16). Because now he realized having not enough money would make you a no one and that you had to work hard for it, and even if you did, the consequences would be always so bright.

Due to the distressing importance of money and the slow but visible change of the South started to bother him. He could neither see the old values of the South kept nor could he see the self-made and prosperous ones living the life they dreamed. In his stories, Fitzgerald excoriated both the post bellum South and Southern identity, in losing the morality and chivalry like North but at the same time being backward. The South was going through a period when the values they thought they had a claim to were beginning to be lost.

Inspired by Mark Twain’s statement on how, “it was a pity that the best part of life came at the beginning and the worst part at the end”, (Fitzgerald, 1922b). Fitzgerald penned “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” in 1922. It is a fantasy story with an anachronistic, and thus grotesque, baby being born on the eve of the Civil War, in 1860, into the Southern Button family who “held an enviable position, both social and financial, in ante-bellum Baltimore,” and who “were related to the This Family and the That Family, which, as every Southerner knew, entitled them to membership in that enormous peerage which largely populated the Confederacy” (Fitzgerald, 2010: 150). Mr. Roger Button runs to the hospital to see his new born, “with much less dignity than was expected from a Southern gentleman of that picturesque period” (Fitzgerald, 2010: 151) only to learn an anomaly waiting for him. The baby is in the form of an old man with almost white hair and beard, looking about seventy years of age, a septuagenarian. Named as Benjamin, he is a torture whom Roger is ashamed of due to the effect it will create on his reputation and his social status. He even wishes the baby was born black so he could sell him at the slave market. Having to endure his fate, and in an effort to conceal his aberrance, he dyes Benjamin’s hair to a darker color to “retain something of his own self- respect- not to mention his position in Baltimore society” (Fitzgerald, 2010: 154). Thanks to

the outbreak of the Civil War, people's attention dissipates. However, Benjamin ages backwards; he transforms into a younger man over time, at eighteen he becomes "as erect as a man of fifty," (Fitzgerald, 2010: 159) and gets married to the beautiful daughter of General Moncrief which creates various rumors among which claims "he was John Wilkes Booth in disguise" (Fitzgerald, 2010: 163). When he is sixty years old and a grandfather to his son Roscoe's baby, he looks and acts like ten years of age, and at the end of his life he becomes a baby. To whom Benjamin's "presence was a source of torment" (Fitzgerald, 2010: 170), Roscoe, like his grandfather Roger, tries to avoid any scandals in connection with his family. The chronologically and biologically reverse transformation of Benjamin resembles the social and political transformation of the world around him. In this story, the significance of the Southern social position is emphasized through both Benjamin's father and son, as they are obsessively concerned about their image and prestige in the society. Here while touching upon the issue of aging embed on a abnormal male body, Fitzgerald comments on the social mores of the well established Southern families in a humorous tone. Also, though agitated the South remains in a disabled masculine form, the cultural distinctiveness slowly fades like Button who was born at the beginning of the Civil War. In this story, Fitzgerald depicts the evolving South, starting with the beginning of the Civil War goes through the Reconstruction era and ends in sometime close to the publication of the story. This reverse aging thereby recounts changing Southern region, and its complying with the progressive North ideology.

A similar story that deals with the binaries of North and South is "Two for a Cent" (1922). Abercrombie, a southerner by birth and is now forty-five years old, rich and successful, visits his "worthless" hometown and the house he was born in and lived in till he was seventeen before moving to New York and which now looks "hideous and cheap" and is abandoned (Fitzgerald, 1922a). He meets Henry W. Hemmick, a southern man who has recently moved out of Abercrombie's old house. There the two start talking about staying in the South and going to the North. Abercrombie relates that he went North only by a coincidence rather than ambition as he was a jelly bean at that age when all he "wanted was to take it easy through life" and that his picture of the South is now "a skinny dark-haired young man with a

gun on his hip and a stomach full of corn liquor or Dope Dola, leaning up against a drug store waiting for the next lynching” (Fitzgerald, 1922a). For Henry, Abercrombie is like a Yankee, “a man who was a Southerner by birth, who was successful – moreover, who was confident and decisive and persuasive and suave –” (Fitzgerald, 1922a). Henry explains why he was not able to leave although he “had the bee to go North” and his professor at the university told him “business wasn’t going to amount much down [in the South] for the next fifty years” (Fitzgerald, 1922a). The circumstance that prevented him from going to North is because of coincidence of losing a penny. That exact penny found by Abercrombie who at the time needed one more cent to buy a train ticket to Atlanta on the way to where he met a man who changed his life. There is criticism for the Southern man as well as the changing South as now there are “cheap bungalows” in the town which “for thirty years ... had satisfied the canons of the middle class” and which “built by a race whose more energetic complement hoped either to move up or move on ...” (Fitzgerald, 1922a). The new South looks “hideous”. As Abercrombie resents he didn’t realize how futile the town was when he was younger because it is “worthless” to stay there to become a loafer, a jelly bean, “who’d have lived and died [there] happily and never known there was anything better” (Fitzgerald, 1922a).

Another story of 1922, “The Diamond as big as the Ritz” is an allegorical satire that discusses the American materialism and the South, and highlights the values that are changed in the South, though not entirely. John T. Unger, coming from a small Southern town called Hades where “the inhabitants have been so long out of the world that, though they make a show of keeping up to date in dress and manners and literature, they depend to a great extent on hearsay...” (Fitzgerald, 2010: 173). But also whose sky lights seem “full of a warm and passionate beauty” (174). John comes from a well-known family who regard Hades as “too small to hold their darling and gifted son,” (173) thus, they send him to Boston for education where, in St. Midas school, John meets his classmate Percy Washington who claims his father is “by far the richest man in the world” (175). When John hears about the extravagant wealth of the Washingtons, in an awe he responds, “I like very rich people. The richer a fella is the better I like him,” (175) because the ideology of the town which reads, “the simple piety prevalent ... has the earnest worship of and

respect for riches as the first article of its creed,” (177) has permeated in him. John agrees to spend the summer with Percy at Washingtons’ estate in the middle of Montana Rockies. A chateau with excessive luxury on a diamond mountain “as big as the Ritz-Carlton Hotel,” (181) very securely preserved. Barradock Washington, Percy and Percy’s sisters Kismine and Jasmine’s father, to keep the diamond mountain’s secret safe, keeps people as captives and even kills the visitors. When Kismine and John fall in love, Barradock plans his death, but John escapes. That night, an Italian escapee of Washingtons’ prison, reveals the secret of the family property. Whilst the place is under attack, Barradock offers diamond as a bribe to God. Jasmine, Kismine and John escape and as Kismine remarks, “enter the middle class” to live in Hades.

Enslaved to his materialism by his own territorial greed, Braddock Washington descends from the slaveholder “father of the country” George Washington. Although at first the endless riches at the Washingtons’ look breathtaking, the luxuriated belongings only depict the corrupting lure of materialism and greed, and the American Dream turns into an American nightmare. Washingtons are the first to discover the untouched land which resembles the discovery and capture of new lands in Manifest Destiny. Fitzgerald uses exaggeration to create a comic effect where there is ardent worship and respect for riches. He satirizes the Washingtons’ slave exploitation, and mocks the microcosmic brutality, and the extravagance of the ‘20s. Criticizing the opulence the Robber Barons and social Darwinists hold like Carnegie and Rockefeller through exploitation, Fitzgerald shows that wealth is a false god. He critiques America’s obsessions with wealth, where people deify the wealthy and worship capital. Though astonished at first, John realizes a man as extravagantly opulent as Braddock Washington is the embodiment of insatiable desire for wealth, faithlessness and selfishness by exploiting slaves and killing others for personal purposes, only caring about his self preservation; all the values Fitzgerald criticizes. Though the Southerner John is obsessed with materiality too, compared to Percy and Percy’s family, he is freer. Fixation of opulence being the main theme, South represented by Ungers, though not far off in giving importance to the riches, show that the South still isn’t entirely captured by the possessing an acquiring frantically.

Fitzgerald wrote “Dice, Brassknuckles & Guitar” in 1923. The protagonist, Jim Powell (though they have the same name with the protagonist in “The Jelly Bean”, they are not the same character) is a Southern gentleman from Tarleton, Georgia. On his way to north for the summer with his body-servant Hugo, he meets Amanthis Powell. Due to sharing the same surnames, Jim suggests the possibility of being kins as he also says he comes “from mighty good people” (Fitzgerald, 1923). He opens an academy where he teaches crap shooting, jazz, guitar, and self defense to rich people of Southampton, Long Island. He invites Amanthis to his successful school to introduce her to the society. Though Amanthis becomes socially successful, Jim is disappointed when he finds out he is considered as “no better to those people than a servant” and “under no provocation were such things said to white people as had been said to him there” only because he is an outsider and of lower class though he constantly says he comes from “right good folks”. He kicks Martin Van Vleck out of the school for drinking, and this causes the place to shut down as two women from the society accuse Jim of doing immoral business. The night when there is a dance party given for Amanthis, she pretends it is not given for her, and tries to persuade Jim to go with her. Being a “child of the South – brooding was alien to his nature”, he decides to go back south where he feels at home.

This story, which highlights the regional differences, is about a southern man’s attempts to fit into the northern society but failing to do so because to the Northerners he is outbred, and thus, outclassed. Jim is a guileless romantic man who has no idea of how the social order works in the North. The main theme is the emergence of the New South, in its struggle to keep up with the progressivism of the North, both economically and socially. Jim is a retrograde Southern man, and he opens a school which is useless, it is about enjoyment and entertainment, and which is doomed to fail in the progressive North where there is hollow hierarchy. Thus, this is a southerner’s attempt to become Americanized/ Northernized, but also the failure to accomplish a complete change as they are humiliated and ostracized.

3.2. DISENCHANTED BY THE SOUTHERN BELLE

Zelda hadn't set foot in the North before marrying Scott. The first time she did was for her marriage in New York, and "since she had arrived in New York with frilly Southern dress, one of her first priorities was to purchase a chic New York wardrobe" (Bruccoli, 1991: 153). However, it was not only her clothes that changed when Zelda moved to the North. Even such a short time after their hardly idealistic marriage, Fitzgerald felt disappointed, all the more, disillusioned and disenchanted in his relationship with Zelda. The sweet flavor of money, success, fame and love started to taste sour quickly. Autobiographical in origin, in his stories he reflected all the changes and the incidents that caused the changes, as well as his self-disapproval of their own marriage, and most significantly, the Southern belle, who should have become a Southern Lady after marrying, and be a pious, submissive, passive, a good mother and caretaker who perpetuates the social system indefinitely. Zelda was nothing like that. She turned out to be a woman he did not expect; a careless mother, a bad housewife, a betrayer, a very selfish woman who became his inspiration in many stories. Especially her involvement with a French naval aviator made Fitzgerald feel betrayed, as he quoted, "something had happened that could never be repaired" (Fitzgerald, 1978: 113). Scott Donaldson in his "Scott Fitzgerald's Romance with the South", writes, "It is the Southern girl in whom Fitzgerald invests his romantic illusions – and it is by the Southern girl, too that these illusions are shattered" (Donaldson, 1973: 6). It is stated in *Memory and Myth*:

P. Keith Gammons links Fitzgerald's southern belle to the mythology of the Lost Cause, arguing that this character type becomes a medium through which the Old South can be constructed as the epitome of beauty, honor, and grace. ... [He] shows that Fitzgerald's disillusionment with the myth of the Lost Cause increased as his relationship with Zelda became more problematic. This disenchantment with the South became a synecdoche for the larger failure of American dream in *The Great Gatsby*, a novel in which a beautiful and charming southern belle, Daisy Buchanan, is shown to be morally deficient (ed. Sachman, 2007: 170).

In addition, as compared to the pre-flapper era, women's role in the society began to change rapidly in the '20s; now they voted, worked, wore revealing clothes, and felt liberated in living their pleasures. And Zelda would be the "it-girl" of this modern period representing all aspects of the flapper lifestyle. Being the Flapper Southerner, Zelda was turning into something that frustrated Fitzgerald. In the stories

which frame the story of a Northerner male and a Southern belle, he demonstrated his discontent. On Zelda's side, she felt like she became the adjunct of the most successful writer in America, and as Abbott puts, she realized, "Glamour suddenly ceased to suffice. For a Southern belle, this must have been the most self-destructive of insights" (Abbott, 1983: 109). She would not only destroy herself, but devastate her husband as well. Hence, "his stories began as social comedies of manners, but quickly mutated into what might be called tragedies of manners, stories of young ambitious young men undone by moral dissolution and dangerous, vampiric women, who absorb the energy young men waste" (Fitzgerald, 2010: x). And thus the southern belle came to be an indictment of the New South.

An account of Fitzgerald and Zelda's road trip from Westport to Montgomery, Alabama where Zelda grew up, *The Cruise of the Rolling Junk* (1922) narrates Zelda's craving for the southern peaches and biscuits for breakfast in a comical account of how they got on each others' nerves and tested one another's endurance along the way. Not being a fictive story, in which "he employs comic lines, his progress is from enthusiasm to disappointment," when they travel from the North to the South (Gale, 1998: 88).

"The Sensible Thing" (1923) tells the story of poor young George O'Kelley, in love with a Southern belle Jonquil Cary. It is a "Gatsby cluster story" which "drawing on his courtship of Zelda, Fitzgerald wrote about a young man who loses a Southern girl because he is too poor to marry her" (Brucoli, 1991: 222). Jonquil has a "picturesque fragility with adolescent worship," (Fitzgerald, 2010: 269) although she too loves George, she is "nervous" about getting married to him, meaning "that the prospect of marrying into a life of poverty and struggle was putting too much strain upon her love" (266). And later on, she refuses to marry him saying "I can't because it doesn't seem to be the sensible thing," (271) because he cannot take care after her due to his low income as an insurance clerk. That is, her marriage decision is based on sensibility but not on love. Disappointed, George leaves, and comes back, in a short time, "risen from poverty into a position of unlimited opportunity" (273). He wins Jonquil back, but "he traded his youth for strength and carved success out of despair" in order to have done the sensible thing, but "with his youth, life had carried away the freshness of his love" (276). Though now he is rich and has the captured

the girl, he cannot recapture the “same love twice,” (Fitzgerald, 2010:277) and the realization of the killing of youthful intensity of feelings, their romance is doomed.

This story, along with the stories he wrote after 1922, “reflect his inner desire that marriage should not have occurred and that he would have been better able to maintain a lifestyle which deviated less from the one in which he was nurtured” (Wickstrom, 1990: 35). It is a story which Fitzgerald remarked, “about Zelda and me, all true,” (qtd in Donaldson, 1973: 6) which frames the ironical story of the emotions a man has to give up to do the rational thing, and to go and earn enough money, but never feels the same love again even after coming back with loads of money in a year. This is what Fitzgerald himself went through when he was trying to get married to Zelda, and he knew by experience that you could have “never the same love twice”, as nothing was the same after marriage. In his essay, “Early Success”, he writes:

“I was in love with a whirlwind and I must spin a net big enough to catch it out of my head, a head full of trickling nickels and sliding dimes, the incessant music box of the poor. It couldn't be done like that, so when the girl threw me over I went home and finished my novel” (Fitzgerald, 1937).

Everything changes with time, and true love shouldn't depend on money. Zelda refused to marry him because of his low income, and when he hit the jack spot with his first novel, she immediately accepted to marry him. But after such a short time of saying “I do”, he realized the love wasn't the same. In addition, before getting married, just like Jonquil, Zelda tortured him by seeing other beaux, and this is his resentment of binding/getting caught up. This story is then the testimony of his regret in marrying Zelda.

Fitzgerald wrote “Gretchen's Forty Winks” in 1924. Bruccoli writes that “at this time Fitzgerald still could turn his domestic problems into moneymaking humor” (Bruccoli, 1991: 222). Even such a short time after his marriage, his self disapproval of his matrimony was apparent through his characters. Fitzgerald once asserted that “the most enormous influence on me in the four and a half years since I met her has been the complete fine and full hearted selfishness and chill-mindedness of Zelda” (Bruccoli, 1991: 191). By 1924 Zelda's influence on his writing had become less positive and, the romantic and nostalgic illusions he connected to the Southern belle were becoming more ambivalent. “Gretchen's Forty Winks” tells the story of Roger Halsey, a man in advertising business, with an important project to be finished due in

six weeks that will make him rich. To this end, he drugs his beautiful southern wife, Gretchen, as she hinders his business because of her materialistic attitude, constant wish to be entertained, and need to be admired preferably by someone rich. As the narrator claims, she truly “[is] a Southern girl, and any question that had to do with getting ahead in the world always tended to give her a headache” (Fitzgerald, 2010: 248). She yearns for social excitement, and thus spends time with George Tompkins, a wealthy interior decorator whose prosperity she admires. For her, Roger’s request for an undisturbed forty days of work is “such a long time- when everybody else is having fun” (Fitzgerald, 2010: 252). This can be related to Fitzgerald’s own experience, as Brucoli notes:

Zelda was to learn that a writer spends most of his time writing; Scott often very nearly had to be chained to his desk in order to work. Friends often noted that the couple fought frequently.... [She] was not interested in house-keeping. She was bored when he was writing and would go off by herself to seek amusement; then Fitzgerald couldn’t write because he was worried about what she was doing (Brucoli, 1991: 163).

When Roger asks for peace, “she minds like the devil” (Fitzgerald, 2010: 252). She is a woman for whom boredom is quite alarming, and when Roger wants to end her all too frequent meetings with George, she objects by saying, “I’ll go out with him all I want” (Fitzgerald, 2010: 257). To have one last day to work uninterrupted, Roger drugs Gretchen to sleep. When she wakes, after missing a whole day, and learns about Roger’s success and the \$40,000 a year income that he has secured, what she first asks is whether she can buy a dress and a house like George’s. She also says that she won’t be going out with George anymore. Gretchen’s love and fidelity is questioned like Zelda’s in Fitzgerald’s own life in parallel with a real-life crisis after Zelda’s romance with a French naval aviator, Edouard Jozan while the Fitzgeralds were living on the Riviera in France, which Brucoli comments as, “must have seemed to her like a replay of Montgomery in 1918” (Brucoli, 1991: 231). The Southern lady’s materialistic and self-absorbed attitudes as well as the breach of trust bring the marriage to a destructive point both for Roger, and Fitzgerald himself. Indeed, Fitzgerald would soon completely lose faith in Zelda, and view everything they shared as an “illusion”. In the years to come, as Megan McLaughlin writes, “Scott, even more harshly and less justifiably, would [...] insinuate that Zelda’s

mercenary instincts were the only reason she would marry him” (McLaughlin, 2014: 13).

Fitzgerald’s short fiction career suffered because of his heavy drinking and marital problems. And although the short stories didn’t give the author as much satisfaction as his novels, as for Zelda, “she didn’t share his contempt for short stories and was pleased that they brought in what she regarded as easy money” (Bruccoli, 1991: 225). The couple’s spending habits also attracted attention to such an extent that in 1924 Fitzgerald wrote “How to Live on \$ 36,000 a Year” in which he humorously and accurately told about their expenses as if “they were collaborators in extravagance” (Bruccoli, 1991: 226). His infatuation with Lois Moran, an American actress who inspired the character Rosemary Hoyt in *Tender is the Night* (1934), caused his marriage to become even more chaotic, leading Zelda to seek out her own creativity through painting, writing and dancing.

CHAPTER FOUR FROM DISILLUSIONMENT TO BITTERNESS

4.1.GONE WITH THE WIND

“Rather than a merely reflexive adherence to the Confederacy, what one detects in Fitzgerald’s writing in Robert Roulston’s words are ‘two distinct ... attitudes toward the South, ‘which ‘epitomizes for him glamour and romance’ even as ‘it often also represents sloth, inertia, failure’ (Wegener, 2012: 243). Through the end of the 1920s, just as Fitzgerald lost confidence, illusion and briskness, and Zelda, her mind; the South lost the “lost values” it held.

His fears of the South’s mutation had come true, and the South became something he was no longer able to sympathize with. The gentle aristocracy his father inculcated in him was irrevocably altered, and as he favored the southern manners to the northern, he could not take socioeconomic progress that came from the shifting of regional identity well. From late ’20s till the day he died, he perceptibly went through an emotional bankruptcy. “By 1929 Fitzgerald knew he had lost something. Not his genius, not his capacity to feel intensely, not even his capacity for work. He had lost his belief that ‘life was something you dominated if you were any good’” (Brucoli, 1991: 340). The ’30s was an aching period for Fitzgerald. In 1931, his father, Edward died. In his unfinished essay “The Death of My Father”, Fitzgerald notes, “He came from tired old stock with very little left of vitality and mental energy but he managed to raise a little for me” (Fitzgerald, 1931b). Now that his link with the American past was gone, old standards of manners and impeccable conduct vanished. In “On Your Own” (1931), a short story written just after Edward’s death expressing his feelings about his father through the character of an American actress, Evelyn Lovejoy, who returns from England for her father’s funeral in Rocktown, Maryland, Fitzgerald writes, “Good-bye then Father, all my fathers” (Fitzgerald, 1931c).

Fitzgerald favored regional progress but without big outcomes which would mean the changing of the region’s identity totally. Frye comments on this “fretting over assimilation and incompatibility” as “ultimately inseparable from the author’s depiction of doomed inter-regional romances and physiologically distinct

Southerners” (Frye, 2012: 65). He realized the Southerners were trapped in an ancestral history which they could not escape, and now they became like Northerners which created a big conflict causing them to become even more corrupt. We can read this dynamic in various texts by Fitzgerald. “More Than Just a House” (1933) is a story of the gradual decline of a Southern family described through the Gunther family’s three daughters’; Amanda, Jean, Bess. Lew Lowrie gets to know the family after saving Amanda’s life when he pulls her out of the path of a donkey engine in 1925. He later asks Amanda to marry him, but she says she just became engaged to George Horton, a man from New York. The chief reason why she accepts to marry George is to “get away from this old barn... this old thumb” where “father won’t allow a radio, and not even a phone till last summer.” Heartbroken about Amanda’s engagement, he relates Amanda to the family home in Baltimore, saying, “just gone out; just left; just gone”, and he recognizes:

Too late in every way – even for the house. Thinking over her tirade, Lew saw that he had come too late for the house; it was the house of a childhood from which the girls were breaking away, the house of an older generation, sufficient unto them. To a younger generation it was pervaded with an aura of completion and fulfillment beyond their own power to add to. It was just old (Fitzgerald, 1933).

In 1929 Lew encounters Jean at a party in New York and, later, visits her at her house, where he learns that Bess takes care after her father who suffers from senile dementia. When he is at the house, he also learns that Amanda has died when giving birth to her baby. Like the house, he sees its inhabitants as “the broken old, the youth breaking and growing old with it, the other youth escaping into dissipation” (Fitzgerald, 1933). Now it is 1933, after leaving for Wall Street, he returns to Baltimore to learn Jean is now married and living in China, and Bess will be married next week. What is more, after learning Beth has got nothing other than the clothes she wears and the horse she rides, and that all the Gunthers’ house is taken away, he goes back to the house to find “one of the finest houses he had ever known” in a “desperately forlorn” condition, with a “jungled garden ... abandoned, rotted paintless on the roof, a broken pane gaped from the library window” (Fitzgerald, 1933). Due to Bess’s penniless financial condition, he asks her to marry him.

As the title of the story suggests, the house isn't just a house. The Gunther house is the main setting of the story as well as the symbolic representation of the family and its demise. At the beginning of the story, though still in good shape the young dwellers are discontented with it and think it should be modernized. And due to not having been taken care of for many years, it collapses along with the memories and the privacy it provided. At the beginning of the story Lew is a promising lower class man who in the end becomes a serious businessman in the North, whereas the Southern Gunther family gradually declines and Lew is the one to save the last remaining member of the house in Maryland. As he realizes that Mr. Gunther suffers from memory loss and confusion, Amanda dies at childbirth, and Jean is a drinker and gets married to a "Chinaman", and finally, Bess is left penniless. Thus, through all these degradation process, Fitzgerald shows the deterioration "experienced by the family is not only economic. It is therefore also physical, mental, and above all, moral" (Pascale Antolin, 2004: 74). It's the fall of the Southern family in every aspect. Fitzgerald's Civil War obsession never waned as he matured.

"The Night at Chancellorsville" (1935) offers an account of a Northern prostitute, Nora, caught in the middle of a battle on her way to Virginia from Philadelphia by train. She is bewildered and infuriated because the attack, the cruelty of the war is not mentioned in the papers the next day. In this brief short story Fitzgerald does not depict the Civil War as he did in his apprentice years. He neither favors the South nor does he see it as heroic. The narrator and the protagonist is a prostitute, and there is not chaos as the Union and Confederate soldiers get on and off the train.

As Federick Wegener states, "The End of Hate" (1940) "was subject to one of the various Civil War anecdotes with which Edward Fitzgerald had continually entertained his son" (Wegener, 2012: 240). The story takes place during the Civil War in a territory held by Confederates. As Captain Doctor Pilgrim and his sister travels to the south from Ohio, on their way, Tib Dulany, a Confederate soldier, takes them to Prince Napoleon as he needs dentistry help. While the Doctor is pulling Napoleon's tooth out, Tib and Josie get interested in each other. At that moment, the Union troops approach, and they end up hanging Tib by his thumbs. Later Josie cuts him down, and they plan to get married, however when he discovers the Doctor

amputated his thumbs, he gets angry with Josie and leaves her as he accuses her of trying to pay for what Doctor did to Tib. The war ends and Tib looks for Doctor to shoot off his thumbs, but Josie stops Tib, and they again plan to get married. “Undaunted, Fitzgerald felt compelled to retain the thumb scene, possibly out of its importance to his own family’s history. In a letter to screenwriter and producer Edwin Knopf, he claimed that being hung up by the thumbs ‘actually happened to a cousin of my father’s in the Civil War’” (Fitzgerald, 1994: 430). The mutilation of Tib’s thumbs is an inescapable sign of the new post-war identity a Southern man gains.

The most crucial point of the two stories is that, though both Civil War stories of Fitzgerald’s reminisces, they are much different from what he used to write before, especially deep-rooted Southern sympathies wise.

As in “The End of Hate”, the Civil War in “The Night at Chancellorsville” is notably different from that of Fitzgerald’s early short stories. This Civil War is gritty, noisome, and hard-edged, a far cry from the romantic backdrop of Jack Sanderson’s heroic deeds in “A Debt of Honor” (ed. Sachman, 2007: 170).

In 1936, he published his autobiographical essays, namely the “Crack-Up”, which were a “self autopsy and funeral sermon” and that “... the private life and the public life, literary life and real life ... are one and the same,” (Wescott, 2006: 16-22,) in which he talks about his personal depression. Fitzgerald’s secretary Laura Guthrie writes in her diary:

He makes me think of a lost soul, wandering in purgatory- sometimes hell. He tries so hard to drown it out with drinking and sex. ... “Life is not happy,” as he says it. It isn’t for him. He said it was a good thing he was not a rich man or he would have been dead by now (killing himself with indulgences!) but that the necessity of doing work had kept him going (qtd in Donaldson, 2006: 87).

By the middle 1937, he matured enough to see his self deception of the 20s, as he became a man of despair, he “compared himself unfavorably with his own father, a man who had failed without seeking scapegoats” (Donaldson, 2006: 90). Seeing Zelda’s mental collapse and his absorption in drink as “many years of private misfortune”, Fitzgerald wrote in “Early Success” that he “told everyone about it and even wrote about it with as little reticence as if [he]’d lost a leg in a railroad accident” (Fitzgerald, 1937).

4.1 ULTIMATE REJECTION OF THE SOUTHERN BELLE

The material embodiment of the South and Southern belles is lost through the passage of time, and for Fitzgerald it was mostly thanks to Zelda's ill effects; cheating, hence, destroying trust; constant demand for extravagance whilst financial insecurities; petulance; volatility; as Ernest Hemmingway warned Fitzgerald, "Zelda wants to destroy you" (qtd in Bruccoli, 1991: 324).

"The Fitzgeralds' behavior as couple became ominous and dangerous. ... Zelda dared Fitzgerald to match her risky antics, and their competition sometimes seemed to reveal a mutual destructive compulsion" (Bruccoli, 1991: 296). In a letter in 1932, Fitzgerald remarks, "My God, my books made her a legend and her single intention in this somewhat thin portrait is to make me a nonentity" (Bruccoli, 1991: 380). During Zelda's psychiatric treatments, their life drifted apart, and "while the Sayre family blamed Scott's alcoholism, he attributed it to their long history of mental instability, including the suicides of both Zelda's maternal grandmother and aunt" (Curnutt, 2007: 23). Fitzgerald argued that "Zelda has always been eccentric and reckless, that their way of life was largely the result of her refusal to accept any domestic responsibility, and that there was a long history of nervous disorder in the Sayre family" (Bruccoli, 1991: 346). Zelda's insanity was not only due to her southern heritage and the exhaustion of the Jazz Age but also genetics, and starting in the late '20s, she lost her mind and was at clinics the whole time.

In 1929, in his final attempt to write about the South and its belles, Fitzgerald reflects his prevalent tone of loss, resentment, and bitterness in "The Last of the Belles". In this story, the Northern narrator, Andy, recalls the past, and the summer 15 years ago, during which he was stationed at an army camp in Georgia. He depicts Ailie Calhoun, the girl he fell in love with there, as:

the Southern type in all its purity. ... She had the adroitness sugar-coated with sweet, voluble simplicity, the suggested background of devoted fathers, brothers and admirers stretching back into the South's heroic age, the unflinching coolness acquired in the endless struggle with the heat. There were notes in her voice that ordered slaves around, that withered up Yankee captains, and then soft, wheedling notes that mingled in unfamiliar loveliness with the night (Fitzgerald, 2010: 402).

Deeply infatuated, Andy becomes her confidante whilst she dates "tall young officers," (403) and toys with her suitors while trying to decide on which non-

Southern suitor to marry. Ailie is attractive and fascinating but at the same time heartless and artificial girl. When an infatuated lieutenant commits suicide in the belief that she is married to someone else, the only feeling she has is “mock-despair,” (405) and the only thing she seems to care about is her reputation in case the reason of this suicide gets revealed. When the war is over, Andy goes back to the North, finishes his law degree at Harvard, and there reminisces about “the lost midsummer world of [his] early twenties, where time had stood still and charming girls, dimly seen like the past itself, still loitered along the dusky streets” (412). And he contemplates, “that poetry is a Northern man’s dream of the South” (412). To visit the South and reconnect with Ailie, he returns to Tarleton 6 years later, only to find a new South, and a changed Ailie to whom he proposes and by whom he is rejected, as she will be marrying a Southern man and she “could never marry a Northern man” (414). He finds the new generation less dignified, and as the archetypical symbol of what South represents, Ailie acts just like the old south, who “lost the battle, waged behind the white pillars of her veranda... admission of defeat,” and that, “the modulations of pride, the vocal hints that she knew the secrets of a brighter, finer ante bellum day, were gone from her voice; there was no time for them now as it rambled on in the half-laughing, half-desperate banter of the newer South” (413). Realizing now that his dreams are shattered, and in search of his memories, he visits the site of the army camp to find it all gone like his youth, the past, the time, and the soon to be married, Ailie. He looks for his vanished “youth in clapboard on strip of roofing or a rusty tomato can,” and acknowledging Ailie as lost, he declares, “This place that had once been full of life and effort was gone, as if it never existed, and that in another month Ailie would be gone, and the South would be empty for me for ever” (415).

The change in Tarleton and its inhabitants in just six years suggest that everything that belonged to the past and South changed entirely. The Ailie, Andy met fifteen years ago, is another woman now, just as Zelda was to Fitzgerald by this time. Though the Southern belle is depicted as even more egotistical, self centered, unscrupulous and desirous of acquiring wealth and the best social position, she is now also outdated, and she either learns or knows that she cannot be transplanted as the South is the only place in which she belongs. Compared to his earlier Southern

belle stories, John Higgins states that: "... older Fitzgerald is now able to add a Postscript viewed from the vantage point of six years later. By implementing this retrospective viewpoint through the use of an ironic first-person observer-narrator, he achieves the double vision that he was too young to perceive in 1920" (Higgins, 1971: 104). This was Fitzgerald's last Southern belle, and by the time Zelda's mental health was declining, the belle, as well as his youth, was lost to him and to time.

Another story Fitzgerald wrote in 1932 about an unhappy marriage between a Northern man and a Southern belle is "Flight and Pursuit". It is the story of Virginian belle Caroline Martin's "desperate, reckless" marriage to a young lieutenant from Ohio, George Corcoran. After being jilted by Sidney Lahaye, she runs away to be married with George and moves to Ohio to live with him and his mother who "disliked her good manners, her Southern ways." (Fitzgerald, 1932b) At the end of three years of unhappy marriage, she receives a phone call from Sidney, with whom she would prefer not to talk. The next day, while the phone is ringing again, she packs her suit cases and runs away, taking her son Dexter with her. Two years later, while working as a stenographer in New York, Caroline encounters Sidney whom she remonstrates with. A few months later, Helen O'Connor – who Sidney is employed – employs Caroline as a secretary and travel companion, and they leave for Europe. There, Caroline drinks and smokes too much, and catches tuberculosis. Taken to a sanitarium by Sidney, she begins to recover. After several months, she reads in the newspaper that Sidney is lost in Black Sea. Crushed by the news, she wants to leave the hospital to find him only to receive a telegram stating he is alive. She, then, writes a letter revealing her love for him.

In this story, like the changed Southern woman of Fitzgerald's latter stories, she runs away, works, and earns her own money. She makes her own decisions without caring about the consequences. She is the failure of unattended tradition. She regrets getting married to a Northerner and she mourns for her "vanished youth..., unsatisfied and unfulfilled" (Fitzgerald, 1932). This is Fitzgerald's acknowledgement of the change in his Southern woman and that she belongs to the South.

In the end, when all was failing, Zelda's nostalgic longing for the South, for things, such as, wisterias, hollyhocks, sycamore trees, and tea-time, can be observed in a 1935 letter to Scott written at a Sanitarium:

I thought of the south and a happy past I'd never had and I thought I was part of the south ... I wish I had thought something else – but it was a confederate, a romantic and nostalgic thought. ... We were gold and happy all the way home. Now that there isn't any more happiness and home is gone and there isn't even any past and no emotions (Fitzgerald, Z., 1935).

In his later stories about the Southern belles Fitzgerald suggests that the Jazz Age altered the social environment and thus the belles who illustrate the loss of the older generation. The stories convey the big change in the manners and old belles to the new free flappers, contrasting the modern he grew with to the traditional ideals that he longed for. He used Zelda as his source, and at the end, they no longer embodied the romantic life of an idealized past but rather the materialistic greed and unfettered freedom of a new disappointing era.

CONCLUSION

Fitzgerald genuinely welcomed the 1920s and its concomitant modernity with eagerness, though it also caused him feelings of bitterness for losing the exquisite values of pre-Civil War days. Though chiefly analyzed as a Northerner novelist, Fitzgerald examined the myths of the Southern past and chivalry extensively. As not much observation has been made focusing on his biographic relation with the South on his life and stories, this study has attempted to demonstrate the autobiographical elements of Fitzgerald's life related to the South, and his gradual disillusionment with the South as portrayed in his stories. Examining his short stories in that sense allows us to observe the curious blend of a gaze in the change of history, and his life as well as the distancing between the old and the new, and the South and the North.

Fitzgerald penned the cultural, social, and economic reflection of the coming of the Jazz Age and the South's proud stand in it, and then, the gradual loss of its values. After the defeat of the South in the American Civil War, though the South was thought to be in a distinguished state, it began going through an inevitable change. Fitzgerald culturally and socially criticized not only the South but also the North in relation to the South in the "Jazz Age" and its aftermath. The two most important figures in Fitzgerald's life that shaped his ideas towards the American South, his father Edward, and his wife Zelda, first caused him to admire and sympathize with the South starting in 1910s as reflected in, "A Debt of Honor", "The room with Green Blinds", as well as "The Jelly Bean" and "The Ice Palace". However, not long after his marriage to Zelda in 1920, his ideas and narrative about the South began to transmute into a more negative one that can be detected in the stories he wrote from 1922 till 1926. The change is, as I have shown, was largely due to his feelings towards his father's failure, the South's slow teetering towards change as well as Zelda's selfish demands brought lack of money and defeat under the spotlight as reflected in "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button", "Two for a Cent", "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz", "Dice, Brass, Knuckles and Guitar", "The Sensible Thing", and "Gretchen's Forty Winks". And the unavoidable change in the South reflected in Fitzgerald's ideas about the South and the change in the moral

norms are delineated in “More Than Just a House”, “The Night at Chancellorsville”, “The End of Hate” as well as “The Last of the Belles”, and “Flight and Pursuit”.

From the conviction during his amazing early success in his twenties that “life was something you dominated if you were any good,” Fitzgerald, at the end of his life, came to embrace “the sense that life is essentially a cheat and its conditions are those of defeat, and that the redeeming things are not ‘happiness and pleasure’ but the deeper satisfactions that come out of struggle” (Callahan, 2006: 142). As Fitzgerald matured so did his portrayal of the South from romantic to skeptic. One of the most important themes Fitzgerald touched upon was the Civil War. From his wrote teenager stories, “Debt of Honor” (1910) and “Room with the Green Blinds” (1911), to his mature ones, “The Night at Chancellorsville” (1935) and “The End of Hate” (1940), the change in his ideas in three decades illuminate “the ways in which Fitzgerald’s vision matured as the romantic ideals of boyhood gave away to a modernist concept of the human condition as characterized by ambiguity, disjunction, fragmentation, instability, and chaos” (Sachmann, 2007: 166). From heroism, honor and courage, his civil war stories conveyed indeterminacy, uncertainty and turmoil, as in the early stories was through the Southern point of view, whereas in the latter ones who the enemy and the comrade is unstable.

Fitzgerald consistently modeled his romantic heroines after Zelda, often employing the southern belle trope. As the symbol of lost times, a Southern belle was “a designated object or work of art of her culture; the emblem of her as a statue on a pedestal” who projected the South and its vices (Siedel, 1985: xv). The supposedly graceful, elegant guiles, pure, refined, trusting, loving, and unselfish belles of the South metamorphosed into the opposite. Fitzgerald accounted the purity of the old-world Southern belles and its disappearance, and this, he reflected in his short stories. His idealized Southern belles, then, began as the representation of older, naïve, idealistic values, and the embodiment of beauty, youth, romance as well as the old aristocracy, but they eventually became bewildering, cynical representation of the dissolute. And thus, the charming vulnerable and naïve Sally Carroll of the ‘20s transformed into the grasping, heartless and cruel Ailie Calhoun, who became, literally, the “last” of Fitzgerald’s belles. Zelda and the failure of the Fitzgeralds’ marriage is at the root of all this, as they were both codependent in and destructive

for each other. Living irresponsibly, wishing to maintain the social position bestowed upon them was ever present in the couple's life, and resulted in irrevocable damage. It was the traits she showed, and things she did that metamorphosed Fitzgerald's transfigured the innocent Southern Belle to the femme fatale. As can be observed, this transition from the mythicized Southern belles to the increasingly self centered, irresponsible, artificial and capricious women he reflected in his portrayal of Zelda like characters – the diverging Southern belles, starting with the first to the last render Fitzgerald's gradual disillusionment with the South and his southern wife.

In a letter to their daughter Scottie in 1938, Fitzgerald would confess:

When I was your age I lived with a great dream. The dream grew and I learned how to speak of it and make people listen. Then the dream divided one day when I decided to marry your mother after all, even though I knew she was spoiled and meant no good to me. I was sorry immediately I had married her... I was a man divided—she wanted me to work too much for her and not enough for my dream. She realized too late that work was dignity, and the only dignity, and tried to atone for it by working herself, but it was too late and she broke and is broken forever. ... The mistake I made was in marrying her. We belonged to different worlds – she might have been happy with a kind simple man in a southern garden (Fitzgerald, 1994: 363).

As Ronald Berman in his *Modernity and Progress: Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Orwell* states, South is not only “a warm, pleasant, and lazy place, a home of good manners and elegant traditions, a garden which, for Fitzgerald, grew Southern belles and jelly-beans,” because it also exists due to its relation to the North (Berman, 2005: 20). Fitzgerald considered the South as romantic and glorious, and the defeat of it as a cultural catastrophe. “For while Fitzgerald's expression of regional difference in biological terms reflects his intellectual investment in eugenic thought and also his marital frustration, it more importantly shows how seriously he regarded the problematic demarcations separating region and nation” (Frye, 2012: 65).

When the conflict between the North and the South, between progress and tradition ceased to exist, as the latter turned into the first, unifying under a remade nation, Fitzgerald's disillusionment and loss of hope was fortified. The forces of industrialism inevitably defeated agriculture, money defeated breeding, and Fitzgerald saw the outcome of the struggle in the formation of the New South he did not happily receive as the legendary graciousness and gallantry of the South gave its place to Northern mindset. The modern South, its inhabitants, and its vices proved the definite rupture from the uncorrupted, noble, innocent or ideal old days. As his illusions collapsed with the change of the South and were disintegrated, so did the

North, so he did himself and overall America in general in these fraught periods, with “a despair that swept the nation” (Wilson, 1965: 88). His shattered dreams, distorted illusions of America came in a national experience along with his spiritual and physical deterioration. “Fitzgerald had long felt that the cycles of his own life paralleled the rises and falls of American society in the 1920s and 1930s” (qtd by Bryer, et al, 2000: 205). All in all, the outcomes of the period prompted him into critical skepticism on the American South and the United States of America in general.

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