

"All the lost youth in the world":
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YOUTH WORSHIP IN F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S
TENDER IS THE NIGHT

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To Lydia

. . . that madness about it akin to
the love of an aging man for a young
girl. It was a deep and desperate
time-need, a clock ticking with his
heart, and it urged him, against the
whole logic of his life . . . you can
blunt a quality you have lived by for
twenty years.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Last Tycoon

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ABSTRACT

The new economic prosperity and disillusioned temper of the Twenties made possible a widespread revolution in American society, and led to the emergence of a separate youth culture. The American adult, especially those members of the expanded leisure class, was drawn to the vitality and promise of this new youth movement. Dr. Dick Diver's fascination with immaturity in F. Scott Fitzgerald's Tender Is the Night is a symptom of his professional and personal decline, and reflects as well the prevalent youth worship of the Twenties. His attraction to a variety of youthful figures represents an attempt on his part to recapture his lost youth, a time of great promise and expectation, in contrast to a less satisfying or unfulfilling present. Ultimately this quest for lost youth becomes a flight from adult commitment and adult perception, a repudiation of traditional values and an attempt to escape historical necessity. This break with the moral order of an older America results in a blurring of the traditional roles of parent and child, as well as in a further confusion of sexual identities.

"All the lost youth in the world":

YOUTH WORSHIP IN F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S

TENDER IS THE NIGHT

The new economic prosperity of the 1920's made possible a widespread revolution in both American manners and beliefs; Americans coming of age in the Twenties were increasingly discontented with traditional values and institutions.¹ F. Scott Fitzgerald, in This Side of Paradise, describes this rebellious "new generation . . . grown up to find all gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken."² Disillusioned by the war--"a disaster that ended the most hopeful era in Western history"--many attributed their disillusionment to a distinct moral failure on the part of American society, a failure stemming, according to Frederick J. Hoffman, from the irreconcilable commitments to American idealism and American opportunism. Hoffman also maintains that Fitzgerald's final statement, had he made it, would have been that "the failure resulted from a fundamental lack of a clear moral sense . . . which caused men in the very beginning to have the wrong dreams."³

The contradictory impulses of mercantilism and idealism, while on the one hand irreconcilable and mutually exclusive, ultimately became inextricably confused within the American experience or vision. The American, asserts W. H. Auden, equates personal merit with wealth.⁴ This confusion of the material and the ideal or spiritual results in a materialism bereft of human value, and an idealism that has lost touch with reality--an "impossible idealism trying to realize itself, to its utter destruction, in the gross materiality."⁵ The end result, as in the representative case of Jay Gatsby, is, according to Marius Bewley,

"a failure of the critical faculty that seems to be an inherent part of the American dream."⁶

This recognized American failure explains H. L. Mencken's scalding criticism of the "booboisie," underlined by his belief that "the descendants of the first settlers [have tended] to move plainly downward, mentally, spiritually . . . ; the American of the old stock is not unaware of this steady, and, of late, somewhat rapid deterioration."⁷ Civilization in the United States, a volume of essays edited by Harold Stearns and published in 1922, expressed a similar dissatisfaction with then-current American opportunism and materialism, finding "the most amusing and pathetic fact in the social life of America today [to be] its emotional and aesthetic starvation."⁸ As Ezra Pound put it in 1928, in the United States "everything above comfortable brute existence is a vacuum." The conviction that America was an "industrial giant" but an "emotional dwarf" dominated the nation's self-criticism throughout the Twenties, resulting in a generation of Americans who believed themselves "a race that [had] drained away all its spiritual resources in the struggle to survive."⁹ Material plenty was accompanied by a sense of spiritual impoverishment.

Spurred by the disillusioned temper and economic prosperity of the decade, a separate youth culture emerged, equipped with its own behavioral codes and beliefs. American youths gained temporary freedom from the more sober responsibilities of adult commitment--a freedom both envied and condemned by their elders.¹⁰ Outwardly discernible by their distinctive dress and sometimes shocking public displays, these young people were eager to make a different and better way. It appeared only a matter of time, Fitzgerald was to write, "before the older people

would step aside and let the world be run by those who saw things as they were."¹¹ Beneath the surface cynicism of its many postures of repudiation, however, the youth movement remained a vigorous and fundamentally optimistic phenomenon, armed with the explosive conviction that anything was possible or at least "okay" as long as it was honest or daring.¹²

Fitzgerald regarded 1922 as the apex of the youth movement, "for though the Jazz Age continued, it became less and less an affair of youth."¹³ As the elders endeavored to emulate the young, traditional roles were reversed. The American adult--especially those members of the leisure class given the opportunity to reassess their position--was drawn toward the glamour, vitality and regenerative promise of the youth. Just as Adrian Smith in Fitzgerald's "The Rough Crossing" had "discovered something he thought lost with his own youth forever" in the young Betsy D' Amido,¹⁴ Americans seemed increasingly obsessed with retrieving their lost or compromised youths. In its most elementary form this became an essentially hedonistic and often tasteless affair, culminating in the "national adolescence" so emblematic of the decade. In 1924 an article by Robert L. Duffus which appeared in The Independent, "The Age Of Play," vehemently declared: "The chains of necessity have been loosened . . . The right to play is the final clause in the chapter of democracy."¹⁵ The Jazz Age mushroomed into "a children's party taken over by its elders": by "1923 the elders were tired of watching the carnival with ill-concealed envy . . . and with a whoop the orgy began."¹⁶ As long as the economic boom continued, it was possible to ignore previous adult commitments and problems of American society and concentrate on the good life. Fitzgerald would later observe that

while participating in the "orgy," he was at the same time "pretty sure living wasn't the reckless, careless business [his contemporaries] thought."¹⁷

The general search for lost youth during the Twenties marked a break with the moral order of an older America, a break involving a reorientation of cultural values, and resulting in the blurring of the traditional roles of parent and child, husband and wife, as well as in a further confusion of sexual identities. This change in cultural values can be seen as a further example of what Leslie Fielder has called the post-romantic cult of child-worship: "One of the major shifts in modern thinking involves moving the child from the periphery to the center of art--and, indeed, to the center of life." Such a shift "ends in a child-centered society, where the parent not merely serves but emulates his immature offspring." Such emulation can have disastrous, even incestuous, consequences--"child-lover and child-rapist: these are two sides of a single coin."¹⁸

In this respect, Dr. Diver's representative fascination with youth in Tender Is the Night, [as I will argue,] is both a cause of his personal decline and a symptom of America's cultural and spiritual deterioration. Tender Is the Night can also be read as the history of the American consciousness, more specifically as the history of the romantic imagination in the United States.¹⁹ The "American dream" which embodies this consciousness, is, according to John F. Callahan, an essentially illusory belief that man can conquer or escape time and history through a platonic self-conception. Dr. Diver, who believes that aesthetic contemplation can imaginatively create personality, begins his career with the assumption that history and self-created

personality are separate entities.²⁰ Armed with the national illusions of "eternal strength and health and of the essential goodness of people," and with his own youthful imagination, Dick challenges the inevitabilities of time and history.²¹ His later infatuations with a variety of youthful figures represent his attempt to return to this time of promise, a time imaginatively free from factual reality when "lucky Dick" of Damenstiff Strasse in Vienna felt sure that he had "hit it," and that "nobody knew it was there before he came along" (116). Two years later this same young man would inform the resident pathologist at Dr. Dohmler's clinic on the Zurichsee, Franz Gregorovius, that he planned to become "a good psychologist--maybe to be the greatest one that ever lived." Dr. Gregorovius finds Dick's plans "very good--and very American," while he, a European whose career is bounded by shrines and statues of past heroes fixed throughout the city, must, in contrast to Dick's optimistic intention, reconcile himself to the contracted horizons of his legacy. For Dick as well as the nation, it is in his youth, in the past, where the purest sense of the future lies.²² Like Gatsby, Dick wants "to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps," and believes that "if he could return to a certain starting point and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was. . . ." ²³ Dr. Diver's attempt to recapture his lost youth and promise thus epitomizes the nation's prevalent worship of youth, while at the same time it affirms America's belief in its redemptive mission. America, no less than the American, needs to be regenerated, self-created. Though Tender Is the Night is securely attached to a particular period in history, and examines the confusions and disorders of expatriate Americans in the Twenties, it is concerned as well with the etiology of those disorders.

Devereux Warren's seduction of his fifteen-year-old daughter serves as the major symbol in this novel of an older generation generally infatuated with its offspring, and narcissistically in love with its own youthful image and promise. Nicole, Devereux's daughter and the very embodiment of American youth, possesses "a moving childish smile that was like all the lost youth in the world" (134). Outwardly the Warren family--"an American ducal family without a title" (158)--represents the fulfillment of the American quest for wealth and power. Devereux is an American success story: "he was a fine American type in every way" (125). Representing an extreme version of the typically American quest for perpetual youth, Warren's seduction originates in an unhealthy family relationship, one wherein daughter replaces an absent mother. "After her mother died when she was little she used to come into my bed every morning," Devereux informs the doctors. "Sometimes she'd sleep in my bed" (129). In turn, Nicole, encouraged by her father's responses, adopts an equally unhealthy view of the parent-child relationship: "Now let's not pay any attention to anybody else this afternoon--let's just have each other--for this morning you're mine" (129). When Daddy becomes lover, however, Nicole is psychologically unhinged and develops a pathological mistrust of all men.

Nicole's understandable fear of the assertive male personality initiates her attraction to Dr. Diver. In an early letter to Dick, she admits, "I've only gotten to like boys who are sissies. Are you a

sissy?" Moreover, Nicole admits that Dick seems "quieter than the others, all soft like a big cat" (121).²⁴ Nicole repeatedly refers to Dick as a cat in their courtship letters. She responds to Dr. Diver as an unassertive masculine personality--she knows his "masculine side" least and "she was afraid of it" (142)--and as a father-figure providing a new basis of trust and psychological security. When she marries Dick, she is seeking an unbetraying father-husband, but in so doing she perpetuates the original incestuous situation. Dick, like Devereux, responds to Nicole as "a projection of youth," one who possesses "a promise Dick had not seen before" (141): "He was enough older than Nicole to take pleasure in her youthful vanities and delights" (137), and "nothing had ever felt so young as her lips" (156). Nicole's youthful promise completes Dr. Diver's fascination: he finally succumbs to her promise of "a warm beach where [they] can be brown and young together" (161).

Disregarding the advice of his colleagues and the dictates of his own future, Dick marries Nicole, fully aware that "the Warrens were going to buy Nicole a doctor" (152). From this point Nicole's personality mends and she begins to resent "the places she played planet to Dick's sun" (289). Finally, after ten years of marriage, she is stable enough "to cut the cord forever" (302). Concomitantly, Dick's character deteriorates: he moves from being a first-rate psychiatrist with a promising future--"the last hope of a decaying clan" (302)--to being an obscure quack, who must relocate from Lockport to an even smaller town in upstate New York following a medical lawsuit and an entanglement with "a girl who worked in a grocery store" (315).

During the course of their marriage Nicole senses her husband's preoccupation with immaturity, his attraction to girl-children. Through

these youthful figures Dick attempts to recapture his youth in reaction to a less satisfying present. The Divers' Christmas vacation in Gstaad, following Dick's summer liaison with actress Rosemary Hoyt, prompts Nicole's intuitive jab into this developing area of contention:

'Please be happy Dick,' Nicole urged him.

'Why don't you meet some of these ickle durls and dance with them in the afternoon?'
 . . . 'I don't like ickle durls. They smell of castile soap and peppermint. When I dance with them, I feel as if I'm pushing a baby carriage.' It was a dangerous subject--he was careful, to the point of self-consciousness, to stare far over the heads of young maidens (172).

However, Dick is unable to ignore this desire for very long. That same evening in Gstaad, sitting around the dinner table with Franz Gregorovius and Nicole's sister, Baby Warren, discussing the proposed clinic at Zurich, Dick momentarily scans the room for "that special girl" (174), and senses her presence at the table behind them. As the conversation grows more serious, Dick wonders "if the girl at the table behind was listening, too. The idea attracted him" (176). Dick punctuates the professional situation at hand with speculative thoughts of strange young faces, and once again he is the young boy of Buffalo, New York, dutifully erect during his father's Sunday sermon, yet "more worried between five or ten cents for the collection plate, because of the girl who sat in the pew behind" (195). Later Dick notices the mystery girl

during a sleigh ride to a neighboring municipal dance, but as the romance fades from the warm enclosure, Dick becomes aware that "he had hounded the girl out of consciousness" (177). Back in Gstaad, under the reflective moonlight flooding through the large windows of the bar, "Dick found the girl devitalized and uninteresting--he turned from her to enjoy the darkness" (179).

This indiscriminate attraction to the young girl demonstrates a casualness on the part of Dick new to the Divers' relationship: moreover, Dick realizes his growing dependence on the Warrens' vaults, and his imaginative pursuit of the young girl of Gstaad is an attempt to ignore a reality he would rather not accept. It is during this vacation that Dick, for the first time since his freshman year at New Haven, "had bottled up malice against a creature" (177). Dr. Diver's resentment of Baby Warren's monied insolence surfaces in a series of rude remarks to her English escort which simultaneously alarms the Warren sisters. Dick's disenchantment with his professional and personal affairs can no longer be controlled by the rigid order he has created for his family. Although the Divers leave Gstaad with the affirmation of a new stability and contentment made possible by the proposed clinic, Dick's ritualistic farewell to the resort--"Good-by, Gstaad! Good-by, fresh faces, cold sweet flowers, flakes in the darkness. Good-by, Gstaad, good-by!" (179)--signals his increasing dissolution (and also foreshadows the farewell message to his ancestors during his father's funeral in Virginia.)

Later, located at the new clinic in Zurich, the Divers settle into a professional and domestic calm, beneath which Dick's intactness continues to dissolve. Here Niccle, reluctant to establish her own

identity, persists in "owning Dick who did not want to be owned": whenever "he turned away from her into himself he left her holding Nothing in her hands and staring at it, calling it many names, but knowing it was only the hope that he would come back soon" (180). In addition to his wife, Dr. Diver has several patients solely dependent on him, the most interesting case an American woman of thirty who had lived many years in Paris as a painter. On her admittance to the clinic she was regarded as an exceptionally attractive woman, since reduced to an agonizing crust of nervous eczema. "I am here as a symbol of something," she demands of Dick, who in the interest of the patient must reduce the conversation to the level of treatment and cure. "Yet in the awful majesty of her pain he went out to her unreservedly, almost sexually. He wanted to gather her up in his arms, as he so often had Nicole . . . He stooped and kissed her forehead" (185). Dick empathizes with this woman's misfortune in much the same way that he did with Nicole's similar situation; his response to her signals a further, and perhaps more perverse, confusion of professional purpose and personal regard. Leaving her room, he calls on yet another victim of the destructive impulses of the decade--"an American girl of fifteen who had been brought up on the basis that childhood was intended to be all fun." An overprotective father had only succeeded in preventing the girl "from developing powers of adjustment to life's inevitable surprises" (186), a situation somewhat reminiscent of Nicole's relationship with her father. In his responses to his patients, as with his wife, Dick confuses identities and is compelled to be both father and lover.


During this stay at the clinic, Dick falls into a brief encounter with the daughter of another patient, "a flirtatious little brunette":

"In an idle, almost indulgent way, he kissed her" (187). Following the incident Nicole receives an irate letter from the parent accusing Dick in no uncertain terms of child seduction. When confronted with the letter, Dick undergoes "a sense of guilt as in one of those nightmares where we are accused of a crime which we recognize as something undeniably experienced, but which upon waking we realize we have not committed" (190). Certainly Dick is innocent of the charge; nevertheless, he recognizes an increasing laxity on his part affecting both his progress at the clinic and in his marriage. Nicole alleges there is some substance to the story and remains obdurate in her speculations and hostility toward her husband. Only after a break-down at a country fair, climaxed by her suicidal attempt to run the car off a steep embankment, does she adopt a more realistic view of the supposed affair. Seriously troubled by the accusation and its aftermath, Dick secures a month's leave from the clinic, trusting Nicole to the guidance of his partner, Franz Gregorovius.


The leave of absence begins as a thinly disguised intention to attend a psychiatric convention in Berlin; however, his real purpose is a flight from "adult" responsibilities and complexities. Upon boarding the plane to Munich, Dick withdraws from a present he no longer wishes to affirm, while his once promising future becomes more surely a thing of the past: "He was not young anymore with a lot of nice thoughts and dreams to have about himself" (311). On the plane, after confidently dismissing the conference as a waste of time, Dick daydreams of seducing a young peasant girl in Savona, only to abandon her for a lost girl on the shores of Greece.²⁵ Dick's fantasies reveal a further confusion of roles--doctor, lover, father, rapist--and a desire to retreat from the

realm of the responsible to a time of youth when anything seemed possible. While in Munich Dick encounters Tommy Barban in a small gambling cafe in Marienplatz where he learns of Abe North's violent death. Awakening the next morning as a column of World War I veterans pass his window, Dick is momentarily seized "with regret for Abe's death, and his own youth of ten years ago" (200). Abe reminds Dick of his own irrecoverable youth and vitality; moreover, in Abe's brutal end Dick senses his own decline.

Reaching Innsbruck that same evening, Dick soon realizes that "he was in love with every pretty woman he saw now, their forms at a distance, their shadows on a wall."²⁶ Watching a mysterious girl in the dark gardens surrounding the hotel, he decides that "strange children should smile at each other and say, 'Let's play'" (201-2). At this point, Dr. Diver's fascination with immaturity has combined with his intimations of mortality to induce an indiscriminate and adolescent attraction to the opposite sex. The years of control and restraint required in the care of Nicole have taken their toll, and certainly contribute to this compensatory response on the part of Dick. Later, passing this girl in the lobby and discerning her approval of him, Dick elects not "to belittle all these years with something cheap and easy. He was excited, though," but purposely returns to his room. A forwarded telegram from Nicole--"he delayed opening it before dinner--perhaps because of the garden" (202-3)--releases the shock of his father's death. Attending his father's funeral in Virginia, Dick realizes the separation between him and his ancestors, and ritualistically bids farewell to their older faiths: "'Good-by, my father--good-by, all my fathers'" (205).



Traveling on to Rome Dick once again encounters Rosemary Hoyt; this time, however, he lacks the assurance and pervasive charm so integral a part of his personality four years prior. "Moreover, Dick had been at an emotional peak at the time of the previous encounter," and now must struggle "to collect all that might attract her" (208). By contrast, Rosemary in "starry-eyed confidence" remains "young and magnetic" (207), possessing the same youthful appeal which captivated Dr. Diver during their first meeting on the Riviera.

Rosemary had arrived on the Riviera a creature "who had magic in her pink palms and her cheeks lit to a lovely flame, like the thrilling flush of children after their cold baths in the evening. Her body hovered delicately on the last edge of childhood . . . nearly complete but the dew was still on her" (3-4). ~~Throughout the novel Rosemary strongly represents adolescence as well as youth; Dick's continued pursuit of her is emblematic of the decade's pursuit not only of youth,~~  ~~but of unripened youth.~~²⁷ During their first day together on the beach, Dick informs Rosemary that he is captivated by her sense of "becoming," and that she is the first girl he's "seen for a long time that actually did look like something blooming" (22). Rosemary's childish vitality-- "the strong young pump of her heart" (4)--offers Dick the same youthful promise as had Nicole.

Dick attempts to dismiss his growing interest in Rosemary as a spirited form of fatherly concern. At the Divers' dinner party Dick speaks to Rosemary "with a lightness seeming to conceal a paternal interest" (28), and even during their first kiss she is yet a child-- Dick is "chilled by the innocence of her kiss." Following this impetuous embrace in the Paris hotel, Nicole's proximity across the hall prompts

Dick to recover his fatherly composure, and add, "when you smile . . . I always think I'll see a gap where you've lost baby teeth" (64). However, Dick does respond to the allure of Rosemary as does the nation: Rosemary Hoyt is Daddy's Girl--a national symbol of "all the immaturity of the race." The final scene of this famous film, shown privately in Paris during Abe's farewell trip, captures "a lovely shot of Rosemary and her parent united at the last in a father complex so apparent that Dick winced . . ." (69). Yet he follows Rosemary to the Films Par Excellence studio in hopes of securing time alone with the actress. Dick's own immaturity in the matter is emphasized: "He went around the block with the fatuousness of one of Tarkington's adolescents"²⁸ (91). Dick has clearly become identified with an immaturity that once merely attracted him. Moreover, his relationship with Rosemary--as with Nicole--is shaded with incestuous overtones as he plays father as well as lover.²⁹

Rosemary returns Dick's affection; he easily becomes "the ideal by which Rosemary measured other men" (211), and for many years no one can duplicate the rigid, larger-than-life image of Dick she helps create. Mrs. Speers is Rosemary's only parental influence--"I don't love anybody but you, Mother, darling" (13)--her father is only a memory. Placing Dick in the role of father, Rosemary is filled with "the sense that Dick is taking care of her" (21): "his voice promised that he would take care of her" (16). Furthermore, Dr. Diver fits the memory of her late father: "'Oh-h,' she smiled delightedly. 'My father was a doctor too'" (63); additionally, both men share an Irish ancestry. As Nicole recovers from her role as Daddy's girl, Dick falls in love with the young actress.

Alone again in Rosemary's room four years later, with Nicole many miles away, Dick pulls Rosemary onto the bed, her passion still "young and eager and exciting" (210). This meeting reaffirms Dr. Diver's apprehension "that Rosemary had her hand on the lever more authoritatively than he" (85), for this time it is Rosemary, rather than Dick, who denies the consummation, notwithstanding that the grounds of her refusal are primarily physical. Dick conceals his disappointment and suggests a walk, during which Rosemary "cavorted childishly for him until he smiled and she laughed and they began having a good time" (212). Only when Rosemary resumes the role of child and the father-daughter framework is re-established, does the old feeling return.³⁰ The next day, following a pleasant lunch--Rosemary insists on picking up the bill--and a few drinks, they drive back to the hotel where Rosemary "wanted to be taken and she was, and what had begun with a childish infatuation on a beach was accomplished at last" (213).

Yet this union is marred when Dick's immature and "unjustified jealousy began to snow over the qualities of consideration and understanding with which she felt at home" (218). He slips from his original paternal posture into an unmistakable loss of control, and in so doing again becomes identified with an immaturity that had only fascinated him in the past. Dick's irrational behavior is best exemplified by his obsessive recollection of an incident in a private train compartment involving Rosemary and a New Haven undergraduate. Collis Clay had first disclosed the details of the couple's indiscretion to Dick while in Paris, and from that point on Dick is intermittently haunted by the episode.³¹ In Rome he is disturbed by Rosemary's leading man in The Grandeur that was Rome, his growing distress over

Nicotera interlaced with an adolescent probing of Rosemary's past romances. This leads to a decisive argument wherein Rosemary's persistent parent-child approach to the affair--"Why couldn't we just have the memory anyhow? I feel as if I'd quarrelled with Mother"--survives Dick's self-pitying good-by: "'I guess I'm the Black Death,' he said slowly. 'I don't seem to bring people happiness anymore'" (219).

Dr. Diver's loss of control results in a bitter farewell and a night of drunken dissipation in Rome, terminated by a humiliating arrest. Accompanied by Collis Clay in a prominent bar of the city, during a saner period of the evening, Dick's vicious intolerance of the Italian populace, permeated by a prevailing sense of ill humor, dissolves as a young girl smiles at him from across the room. "She was a young English girl . . . and she smiled at him again with an invitation he understood, that denied the flesh even in the act of tendering it." Dick seizes the opportunity and while they dance he speaks "to her so sincerely that his voice trembled" (222). Promising to join him later at his table, the young girl mysteriously disappears and with her fades the promise of the evening as far as Dick is concerned. Disspirited and rather intoxicated, Dick tussles with a group of taxi drivers over an outrageous fare, ultimately collides with the Roman police, and is severely beaten. Mistaken at the jail for the rapist of a very young girl, Dick delivers a mock confession to the jeering crowd: "'I want to explain to these people how I raped a five-year-old girl. Maybe I did'" (235). Reminiscent of Dick's sense of guilt following the accusation of child seduction at the Zurich clinic, the incident suggests to Dr. Diver a further laxity and decline on his part. Moreover, this sense of guilt psychologically stems from Dr. Diver's recognized attraction to immaturity. After his

criminal arrest, Dick feels he will "be a different person henceforward, and in his raw state he had bizarre feelings of what that new self would be" (233). Furthermore, he now realizes that Baby Warren, who helped clear up the matter as the typical American woman with her "clean-sweeping irrational temper that had broken the moral back of a race and made a nursery out of a continent" (232), will possess a moral sovereignty over him for as long as he proves useful.

With "the ethics of his profession dissolving into a lifeless mass" (256), while his personal relationships become increasingly confused, Dr. Diver retreats to the comfort of his children at the Villa Diana. Here Nicole grows more independent and critical of Dick as their marriage methodically disintegrates. "She guessed that something was developing behind the silence, behind the hard, blue eyes, the almost unnatural interest in the children" (267). Certainly Dick secures solace and perhaps escape from his present anguish through the children; in addition, he must realize the inevitable split between himself and his family. However, like John Andros in Fitzgerald's "The Baby Party"-- "It was little Ede as a definite piece of youth that chiefly interested him"--Dick responds to the children as a reflection or source of youth.³² Dick's interest in both children increases as they approach adolescence; and though it is natural that Dick should compare Topsy to Nicole, he also attributes a portion of Rosemary's appeal to his daughter: "She was young and magnetic, but so was Topsy" (207). While extremely conscientious in the government of the children, and, of course, constantly faced with the far-reaching effects of Devereux's behavior, Dick still must remind himself: "What do I care whether Topsy 'adores' me? I'm not bringing her up to be my wife" (257).

Once again on the beach, Dick attempts to impress Rosemary with his aquaplane stunt, while Nicole, ever more perceptive, understands the motivating force:

She knew though, that he was somewhat tired, that it was only the closeness of Rosemary's exciting youth that prompted the impending effort--she had seen him draw the same inspiration from the bodies of her children and she wondered coldly if he would make a spectacle of himself (282-83).

After the abortive stunt, Dick floats spent and expressionless in an isolated stretch of ocean, and while recovering under an umbrella with Rosemary, he inquires:

'Did you hear I'd gone into a process of deterioration?'

'Oh, no. I simply--just heard you'd changed. And I'm glad to see with my own eyes it isn't true.'

'It is true,' Dick answered . . .

'The change came a long way back--but at first it didn't show. The manner remains intact for some time after the morale cracks' (285).

For some time Dr. Diver has sensed the validity of his revelation

to the young actress. Earlier, while soul-searching in Innsbruck, Dick realizes

He had lost himself--he could not tell the hour when, or the day or the week, the month or the year . . . between the time he found Nicole flowering under a stone on the Zurichsee and the moment of his meeting with Rosemary the spear had been blunted (201).

Although Rosemary's initial impression of the Divers had been one of starry-eyed admiration, "in reality a qualitative change had already set in that was not at all apparent to Rosemary" (22). This change surfaces, for the first time, while in Paris, as a moment of confusion wherein "his usual grace, the tensile strength of his balance was absent" (65). His confusion develops into an impulsive desire to relinquish control of his relationship with Rosemary, a control which he recognizes as an essential part of his appeal for the young actress, and he is "shaken by the impetus of his newly recognized emotion" (85). Later that day, as he loses all composure in the face of mounting jealousy over Rosemary, Dick experiences a definite "change taking place within him." He suddenly realizes that "what he was doing marked a turning point in his life--it was out of line with everything that had preceded it." Fitzgerald attributes this break in character to "some submerged reality" (91). Moreover, Nicole, during the final confrontation between her husband and her lover, Tommy Barban, informs Dick that "things were never the same after Rosemary" (308).

Dick's fall from being a respected professional and a charming

host--his break in character--additionally represents his abandonment of the older American order of his father. Dick was brought up on the belief that nothing could surpass the traditional values of "honor, courtesy, and courage" (204). Esteeming his father as "his moral guide" (303), Dick constantly relied on the Reverend Diver's judgments to shape his own behavior. Although the break with his father's values began long before the elder Diver's death, it is not until the actual funeral, facing a hundred headstones of his past, that Dick finally and fully recognizes the totality of the fracture. Unable to sustain the strictly scientific orientation of psychiatry, and unable as well to maintain the rigid ethical code of his ancestors, Dick severs his ties with the old order. The finality of his decision had been augured, while lunching in Paris with Nicole and Rosemary, by his observation of a group of American women who had come to mourn their dead. Noticing "their happy faces, the dignity that surrounded and pervaded the party," he perceives "all the maturity of an older America" (100-01). Through these "gold-star muzzers" Dick regains a sense of his past loyalties, and is momentarily under the powerful sway of his father. "Almost with an effort he turned back to his two women at the table and faced the whole new world in which he believed" (101), a world which will lead him to Geneva, New York, where he will bide his time with a large stack of papers on his desk, "known to be an important treatise on some medical subject, almost in process of completion" (315).

The "new world" Dick embraces, however reluctantly, is of course T. S. Eliot's "waste land" of disillusion and defeat. The Riviera in Tender Is the Night is simply a gaudier version of the "valley of ashes" in The Great Gatsby, a sterile world peopled by hollow men and women

who can find no relief in a present cut off from the sustaining traditions of the past. That older, "beautiful lovely safe world" of Reverend Diver and prewar America, of gallantry and honor, faith and belief, "blew itself up" (57) in the Great War. Appropriately enough, Dick introduces Rosemary to the new world when he takes her to the party at the palace of Cardinal de Retz on the Rue Monsieur. Its outer masonry, which continues to reflect the era of its construction, contrasts sharply with the interior of "blue steel, silver-gilt and gun-metal." Dick undergoes "an electric-like shock, a definite nervous experience, perverted as a breakfast of oatmeal and hashish" (71-2) as he crosses the threshold. The guests at the party appear like actors on a set, a set which dominates the individual, while emphasizing the quality of "make-believe" that characterizes the world of Tender Is the Night.

The decadent, contemporary interior of the palace, replete with "cobra women" in dark tailored suits, cropped hair and boyish faces, suggests a sexual license and confusion at once frightening and distasteful to Rosemary as she hurries to Dick's side. Yet it is, or will be, her world, for she--like Nicole and Mary North--is a survivor, whereas Dick and Abe are "casualties,"³³ victims of the new cultural and sexual dispensations. The lesbians that so affright Rosemary provide but one instance of the sexual confusion that abounds in the novel. There are instances of both actual and implied or symbolic incest (the later exemplified in Dick's relationships with Nicole and Rosemary), as well as numerous references to homosexuality.³⁴

The foremost example of the sexual ambiguity of the decade is, of course, the nationally acclaimed film Daddy's Girl, where father and daughter become, psychologically speaking, father and lover, with

the incestuous longing for lost youth presented as a family picture. Devereux's enactment of the film's underlying theme is only an extreme version of Dick's response to the youthful promise of Nicole, and of "Daddy's girl" herself. Moreover, during the course of his marriage, Dick assumes the responsibilities of father and mother to Nicole; until their final separation "she must continue her dry suckling at his lean chest" (279). Dick is not unaware of his need to direct and nurture the "ever-climbing, ever-clinging, breast-searching young" (311) to whom he is so attracted; his role and attraction, presented in those terms, are further marks of a culture and an age in which sexual identities and roles have been distorted. This "new world" smashes traditional, sexual responses, which indicates, according to Milton R. Stern, a breakdown of moral identities and the dissolution of a civilization. Stern maintains that Fitzgerald employs a complex sexual motif running throughout the novel to equate sexual identity with morality: "The breakdown of sexual identities is a sign of the breakdown of moral identities."³⁵

Other incidental references to Dr. Diver's sexuality re-enforce his implied femininity and sexual ambiguity. During Rosemary Hoyt's first visit to the Riviera, Dick appears on the beach in a pair of "transparent" black lace trunks fashioned by his wife. The prank is labeled a "pansy's trick" (21) by the obviously bitter and excluded McKisco, yet this action does suggest a lessened form of masculinity on the part of Dr. Diver. Much later, on the yacht of T. F. Golding harbored in the Nicean Bay, Dr. Diver's sexual character is again opened to question when Lady Caroline Sibly-Biers absurdly accuses Dick of associating with a homosexual crowd in Lausanne. During Rosemary

and Dick's second meeting in Rome, it is Rosemary who is the disciplined professional, engaged in a successful career, while Dick has become progressively dependent on Nicole's money. Rosemary asserts her growing independence by the small gesture of buying the meal for the two. By traditional standards Rosemary has acquired the more masculine identity, justifying Mrs. Speers' earlier observations about her daughter: "You were brought up to work--not especially to marry . . . economically you're a boy, not a girl" (40).

★ The women Dr. Diver has closely influenced--Nicole, Rosemary, even Mary North-Minghetti--all gain material success and a sense of personal well being; conversely, Dick loses ground. He squanders a promising career, relinquishes his chances for happiness, and ultimately, in the footsteps of Abe North, becomes the broken man of his professional and social circle. Dick, like General Grant, is used and then discarded by the powerful industrialists of his time. His fall from Geneva, Switzerland, to Geneva, New York, cannot be attributed to a single cause. Several symptoms signal his decline: his increased drinking, his disintegrating social charm, his outbursts of temper and pique, and his pervasive preoccupation with immaturity. "The lust for false youth is itself," according to Callahan, "a fearful, immature response"--a flight from adult perception and adult commitment. Rosemary Hoyt, while on the screen, lures the world away from historical fact, and, off the screen, lures men like Dr. Diver away from "life's unalterable necessities."³⁶ Youth becomes timelessness; it becomes the power to avoid historical reality.

Dr. Diver's "new world" is nothing more than a vast irresponsibility--a repudiation of traditional and historical necessity; and, in

this very irresponsibility lies "the real meaning behind the obsessive youth-worship of popular culture in his own day."³⁷ On a national level, it is the failure of American idealism or romanticism to embrace historical fact. On a more personal level, as in the case of Dr. Diver, it is the defeat of Dick's own imagination, an imagination romantically fed by those dream-illusion by-products of industrial America. Yet the American imagination or dream, in its search for fulfillment, had never before taken, as in the Twenties, so childish a form. Child worship, as Leslie Fiedler asserts, is a self-destructive flight from maturity; moreover, "this nostalgia for innocence and the child is suicidal."³⁸ Dick Diver's infatuation with immaturity is both a symptom of his decline and a self-destructive impulse, an impulse implicit in the youth worship of the Twenties. Tender Is the Night is the story of the failure of a man; it is also the documentation of a failure within American society.

NOTES

¹George Mowry, ed., The Twenties: Fords, Flappers & Fanatics (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), pp. 1-3; see also Arthur Mizener's introduction to F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), pp. 5-7; Mark Sullivan, The Twenties, Our Times: The United States 1900-1925, IV (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), pp. 385-86.

²F. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), p. 282.

³Frederick J. Hoffman, The Twenties: American Postwar Writing in the Postwar Decade (New York: The Viking Press, 1955), pp. 11, 111.

⁴W. H. Auden, The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 335-36.

⁵John Henry Raleigh, "F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby," in F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Arthur Mizener (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), pp. 99, 101.

⁶Marius Bewley, "Scott Fitzgerald's Criticism of America," in Mizener's Collection, pp. 138-39.

⁷H. L. Mencken, "The Anglo-Saxon," in The Vintage Mencken, ed. Alistair Cooke (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), p. 130.

⁸Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920's (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 191.

⁹Hoffman, pp. 11-12.

¹⁰Leonard A. Podis, "The Beautiful and Damned: Fitzgerald's Test of Youth," in Fitzgerald/Hemingway Annual 1973, ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli and C. E. Frazer, Jr. (Washington, D.C.: Microcard Editions Books, 1974), p. 141.

¹¹F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Echoes Of The Jazz Age," in The Crack-Up, ed. Edmund Wilson (New York: New Directions Pub. Corp., 1945), p. 22.

¹²Arthur Mizener, The Far Side of Paradise: A Biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald (New York: Avon Books, 1965), pp. 21-22, 208.

¹³Fitzgerald, "Echoes Of The Jazz Age," in The Crack-Up, p. 15.

¹⁴F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Rough Crossing," in The Stories Of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Malcolm Cowley (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 264.

¹⁵Robert L. Duffus, "The Age of Play," in The Twenties: Fords, Flappers & Fanatics, p. 46.

¹⁶Fitzgerald, "Echoes Of The Jazz Age," in The Crack-Up, p. 15.

¹⁷Fitzgerald, "Early Success," in The Crack-Up, p. 87.

¹⁸Leslie A. Fiedler, Nol in Thunder: Essays on Myth and Literature (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), pp. 253-54, 276.

¹⁹Edwin Fussell, "Fitzgerald's Brave New World," in Mizener's Collection, pp. 43-44.

²⁰John F. Callahan, The Illusions Of A Nation: Myth and History in the Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), pp. 56, 165.

²¹F. Scott Fitzgerald, Tender Is the Night (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), p. 117. All subsequent references are to this edition and will be indicated by page number in the text.

²²Milton R. Stern, The Golden Moment: The Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), p. 409; see also Alan Trachtenberg, "The Journey Back: Myth and History in Tender Is the Night," in Experience in the Novel, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce (New York: University of Columbia Press, 1968), p. 112.

²³F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), pp. 111-12.

²⁴Fitzgerald, "The Ice Palace," in The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, p. 72. Fitzgerald more fully develops the cat imagery in this earlier short story, wherein the heroine instinctively classifies men as either canine or feline personalities, with "feline" implying a subdued or lessened form of masculinity.

²⁵Richard D. Lehan in F. Scott Fitzgerald And The Craft of Fiction (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1966), p. 127, notes that Fitzgerald associates the theme of wasted youth and child seduction in Tender Is the Night.

²⁶Callahan in Illusions Of A Nation, p. 158, suggests that Dick is seeking Rosemary in these anonymous images.

²⁷Allen, Only Yesterday, p. 89.

²⁸Scott Donaldson in "'No, I Am Not Prince Charming': Fairy Tales in Tender Is the Night," (Fitzgerald/ Hemingway Journal 1973, p. 106), also uses this passage to indicate Dick's deterioration, more specifically his loss of emotional control.

²⁹Robert Stanton in "'Daddy's Girl': Symbol And Theme In 'Tender Is the Night'" (Modern Fiction Studies, IV [Summer 1958]) examines the "incest-motif" as a major unifying device of the novel; D. S. Savage in "The Significance of F. Scott Fitzgerald" in Mizener's Collection, suggests that the incest motive is central to all of Fitzgerald's novels.

³⁰Callahan, p. 158.

³¹Fitzgerald lifts this scene, in some parts almost verbatim, from the short story "Basil and Cleopatra," in Afternoon Of An Author: A Selection of Uncollected Stories and Essays, ed. Arthur Mizener (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), pp. 58-60. Interestingly enough, in this original version he attributes the obsessive jealousy to a very immature Yale freshman.

³²Fitzgerald, "The Baby Party," in The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, p. 371.

³³Callahan, pp. 112, 119-20.

³⁴Matthew J. Bruccoli in The Composition Of 'Tender Is the Night': A Study Of The Manuscripts (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), pp. 158-60, notes that several such references, one quite elaborate, were ultimately abandoned by Fitzgerald.

³⁵Stern, pp. 321-24.

³⁶Callahan, pp. 184-85; Lionel Trilling, in "F. Scott Fitzgerald" in Mizener's Collection, charges Dick with a lack of the basic instinct of self-protection--an inability to find the necessary balance between the world and his own creativity.

³⁷Fussell, p. 48.

³⁸Fiedler, pp. 284-86.

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