Malignant Narcissim: A Psychoanalitcal Study of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*

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Fitzgerald's interest in abnormal psychology finds expression in his delineation of narcissistic characters. Fitzgerald has created them with ease and poise without excessively violating the behaviour of a normal man in society. His characterization seems to substantiate Grace Stuart's comment on modern civilization: "Our civilisation suffers from the circumstance that some kinds of psychosis (of the paranoid-narcissistic type) are able to function in our midst because they are not as yet acknowledged as psychosis, but accepted as normal by a neurotic culture-pattern."(Narcissus: A Psychological study of self-love, 98-99). As such, Fitzgerald's narcissistic characters, unlike the victims of traumatic neurosis do not appear to be overtly abnormal, but a closer analysis exposes the psychopathological symptoms in them.

Every human being has a touch of narcissism in him, which expresses itself in the form of self-centredness, conceit, and vanity. Petty failures depress him; even mild, criticism makes him feel worthless and slighted. Yet, he continues to exist as a healthy person in society. But a high degree of narcissism becomes pathological and proves harmful both to the individual and to others. Narcissism as Freud sees it, is basically a sexual perversion, the attitude of a person who treats his own body as that of a sexual object. He derives sexual pleasure in gazing, caressing, and fondling his own body till complete gratification ensues ("On Narcissism: An Introduction," in *Collected Papers* IV, 30).

Narcissism, however has another side that can be identified as the social side which conceals the original perversion. Here, the narcissist's activities are centred on this aberration and they seriously impair his social as well as marital adjustments. Stekel defines the two kinds thus:

The narcissistic process may lead to either physical or mental self-love: that is, one narcissist will be infatuated with his own body [. . .] other narcissist will adore his psychic personality, his intellectual abilities, and other properties of this order. In many instances, these two aspects

merge in varied combinations. (*Patterns of Psychosexual Infantalism*,320) For a narcissist, everything that belongs to himself alone is real and important.

The evolution of narcissism in a person can be traced to the first year of infancy. Early interactions between the child and the mother determine the child's object relations, which, if smoothly developed, cause the libido flow to her and to other objects to form object-libido. Psychoanalytic literature attributes prolonged narcissism to a distorted mother-child relationship. It incapacitates the child from differentiating the self from the object. According to Jacobson,

> . . . the small child's fantasies of fusion with his love objects are expressive of the early infantile situation, in which he must actually borrow the mother's ego for his own need fulfillments. If this situation is maintained for an unduly long period, the child's object relations may remain fixated forever at this primitive narcissistic level. This may be caused by unfavourable parental attitudes of a narcissistic, masochistic, or hostile, neglectful, overdepriving, or overgratifying and over protective nature. (*The Self and the Object World*, 58)

So narcissism is a prolonged state of childish dependency and a narcissist has not secured his self-identity. He is "an insufficiently differentiated person," who "has not become a securely independent person -- not created a core of himself" (Stuart, *Narcissus*, 45). As a result of his inability to achieve proper object relations, the libido, which is destined to flow towards external objects, is invested in the ego. So the self with the body becomes his sole love-object. English and Pearson explain the process as follows:

> If the early development of the child has been hindered so that the genitalization of the libido was not accomplished in an adequate manner, the greater part of the libido returns to the point where the hindrance of development occurred, and the sex energy, instead of flowing outward toward the world, becomes centered in the individual with the development of traits of seclusiveness, lack of interest in the outside world, and gradual withdrawal from and denial of reality and anti-erotic behaviour, either actual or phantastical. (*Common Neuroses of Children and Adults*, 47)

The damming up of the libido in the ego inflates the self and makes it be concerned with its interests alone. So the individual shuns all relations with the external world as well as with others. He remains preoccupied with the interests of the self.

Amory, the central character of the novel has developed a precocious sexuality fostered by indulgence and suppressed by puritan upbringing that predisposes him to abnormality associated with sexual situations. Freud explains the situation thus:

> As mother, the neurotic woman who is unsatisfied by her husband is over-tender and over-anxious in regard to the child, to whom she transfers her need for love, thus wakening in it sexual precocity. The bad relations between the parents then stimulate the emotional life of the child, and cause it to experience intensities of love, hate and jealousy while yet in its infancy. The strict training which tolerates no sort of expression of this precocious sexual state lends support to the forces of suppression, and the conflict at this age contains all the elements needed to cause lifelong neurosis. ("'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness," in *Collected Papers* II, 97)

As a frustrated mother, Beatrice, through her indulgent behaviour, arouses sexual precocity in Amory who consciously calls her by name, "Beatrice" as if she were his beloved. At the same time, she is strictly religious and pious in a narrow sense and brings him up on Catholic morals and principles. Her scrupulous preoccupation with his well-being engenders in him a strong sense of mistrust about himself, his activities, and potentials, with a sense of fear and fragility. As a child, he develops a precocious, puritan conscience as a defence against mistrust and shame which is a source of anguish and travail and it does not allow him to get away with anything. It works against his precocious sexuality. As a result, a strong sense of guilt and revulsion marks his sexual expressions.

It is first evident in his kissing his little playmate, Myra. This is a precocious adventure where he shows an extreme daring as well as revulsion. He kisses her passionately but his reaction to it is strange enough:

> Sudden revulsion seized Amory, disgust, loathing for the whole incident. He desired frantically to be away, never to see Myra again, never to kiss anyone; he became

> conscious of his face and hers, of their clinging hands, and he wanted to creep out of his body and hide somewhere safe out of sight up in the corner of his mind. (338)

Amory's daring act appears incestuous to him as the precocious, puritan conscience asserts itself. His longing for withdrawal and isolation implies, as Stavola observes in *Scott Fitzgerald: Crisis in an American Identity*, as a 'retreat into original narcissism' (83). His incompatible feelings towards love and sex hinder his attempts at making relationships with others and make him seek shelter in narcissism.

According to Stavola, the psychoanalytic source of Amory's sexual disgust is an oedipal failure:

> His abnormal closeness and identification with his mother compels Amory to treat every female he gets close to as his mother. He also expects every woman to dominate him as his mother did and therefore he relates to her as an inferior and courts rejection. Feelings of attraction and revulsion seize Amory when he kisses Myra because the image of his mother in Myra draws him on emotionally, while the actual physical contact produces disgust because the stronger feelings of inferiority and incipient incest also rush into his consciousness.(83)

This sexual ambivalence continues to bother him in his later encounters with women. It drives him to hallucinatory experience in the ghost scene. He goes to a private flat in the company of his friends and some call-girls. In the proximity of one of the girls, Axia, temptation creeps over him which could have led him to further sexual adventures. But he suddenly hallucinates, and sees to his shock an absurd old man invisible to others, whom he has seen under similar circumstances in a cafe minutes before. He is terrified, his brandy cup falls down, and his lust flies away.

He finds the old man's legs grotesque and extremely repulsive:

> Then, suddenly, Amory perceived the feet, and with a rush of blood to the head he realized he was afraid. The feet were all wrong . . . with a sort of wrongness that he felt rather than knew. . It was like weakness in a good woman, or blood on satin; one of those terrible incongruities that shake little things in the back of the brain. He wore no shoes, but, instead, a sort of half moccasin, pointed, though, like the shoes they wore in the fourteenth century, and

with the little ends curling up. They were a darkish brown and his toes seemed to fill them to the end. . . . They were unutterably terrible. (398)

This repulsive image is a self-preserving force, given impetus by his puritanical conscience which cannot tolerate such casual affairs. So far, Amory has taken even kissing seriously. The grotesque figure instils an eternal dread of sex and a mentality to associate it with evil. As Sy Khan observes in "*This Side Of Paradise*: The Pageantry of Disillusion", "This image of the devil is the symbol of shock, born of the impact of sensuality upon Puritan morality, conscience, and Catholic sense of sin" (37). On the way back to his apartment, he feels he is being pursued; hears footsteps, and again encounters the devil:

> Then something clanged like a low gong struck at a distance, and before his eyes a face flashed over the two feet, a face pale and distorted with a sort of infinite evil that twisted it like flame in the wind; but he knew, for the half instant that the gong tanged and hummed, that it was the face of Dick Humbird. (400)

Fitzgerald, in these ghost scenes, offers a chance for the application of the hallucination theory for the explication of the visual anomaly.

Dick, Amory's alter-ego, is a fine representative of aristocracy, but his death in a car accident due to drunkenness, stubbornness, and recklessness is most unaristocratic. The spot of the accident disgusts Amory and Dick's corpse reminds him of a dead alley cat. It is not the terrible scene but the disgusting, unaristocratic way in which his ideal meets his end that shocks him. His grief reaction is blocked by the shock. The suppressed feelings of disappointment, disgust, and grief change his attitude to Dick. Unconsciously, Dick becomes associated with evil. In the ghost scenes, the white lights and the moonlight recall the arc-light which spotlighted Dick's death and anticipate the spectral appearance of the old man and dead Dick. Dick, associated with evil, is now associated with sex, which, to him, is also evil. Moreover, his flight down the moon-drenched streets leads him to an alley "whose sexual symbolism makes him psychologically experience what he has physically avoided" (Sy Khan, "*This Side Of Paradise*: The Pageantry of Disillusion," 37).

Hallucination occurs when the ego-control fails, resulting in the breakdown of the barrier between the conscious and the unconscious. The individual dreams while awake. Various

impulses that are a source of disturbance are projected out. The projected image may represent defensive efforts apart from wish fulfilment, enhancement of self-esteem, self-punishment, and so on Fitzgerald employs hallucination as a means of self-defence which preserves Amory from the contamination of sex. Associating sex with evil, the superego gets over the ego and makes him psychotic for a moment. For physical intimacy, which to them is vulgar and degrading, they seek concubines.

A narcissist cannot love anyone as normal adults do. His 1ove-relations are still in the infantile stage. He cannot differentiate himself from others. He uses others as mirrors only to reflect his own concept of self. Stuart observes:

> Except, however, in the extreme of suicidal isolation, the narcissist does make object relations of a kind peculiar, to himself, and of an extremely precarious nature. He will both build an imaginary and compensatory 'good picture' of himself and for himself and also seek to use others, either to reflect back to him this picture of his own making, or to give him and others scraps old self-esteem which they may be willing to offer . (78)

So his motive of establishing relationships with others is purely narcissistic. His love is self-centred and he loves himself in others. His need for them is marked by a childish dependence.

The inter-personal relationships of Fitzgerald's characters reflect overtones of the narcissist's preoccupation with the self. Amory, for instance, undergoes a series of love-relations in the pursuit of popularity. His love-making is egocentric and the girl he chooses are not absolutely feminine. They are his counterparts to his narcissism or projections of his ego. These girls are masculine with fierce independency and egotism, and are personifications of youth, beauty, electricity, sparkle, vividness, and superiority. Amory do not love any of them but wants to be approved by them. What he sees in them is the mirror image of his own self who he loves. After his last ride with Eleanor, he hates her and realizes that he hates himself: "But as Amory had loved himself in Eleanor, so now what he hated was only a mirror" (472). Amory's girls of pursuit represent the extensions of his own grandiose self, the 'projection of his ego-ideal, and his need, a magical union with an idealized partner. His relationships with them, according to Madelyn Hoffman, represent "a quest for reunion with the narcissistic Beatrice to whom he was

originally merged. In other words, they show a longing for the return to the security of the womb.

Among the narcissists in the neurotic world of Fitzgerald, there are two seemingly narcissistic mothers who make their Sons their narcissistic object choice, though it is implied that the mothers of the narcissistic characters are narcissists themselves. These women are sexually frigid and emotionally "unsatisfied by their husbands. They pour their outrageous affection upon their sons, paving the way for the growth of narcissism in their children, their attitude is in tune with Healy's observation that "sexually or affectionally unsatisfied mothers make the child their love-object and pour boundless tenderness and caresses upon it. Such a child will grow into a neurotic; insatiable in its demands for love" (*The Structure and Meaning of Psychoanalysis*, 184).

Here, the cycle of narcissism is complete: women, frustrated by narcissistic husbands, dote upon their sons and foster self-love in them. These women love their children desperately and intrusively and smother their autonomy. According to Menninger, 'generally much that passes for excessive mother love is self-love' (*Love Against Hate, 29*). They love themselves in their children. They tend to be children and they have infantile phantasies of merging with their children as they fail to differentiate them as separate entities. The child to the narcissistic mother is just an extension of her own self. In the word s of Jacobson:

> … fantasies of merging with the child can be observed in cases wh parents sacrifice their own needs to those o the child to the point of self extinction, as well as in situations where they either over-power or dominate the child and keep him passive and dependent, or treat him as but an extension of their own self, ignoring his individual needs and sacrificing them to their own narcissistic requirements. (*The Self and the Object World*, 58)

Such a mother substitutes her own needs for her child's and cripples its healthy growth by over-imposition. By gratifying her own needs through the child, she imparts touches of adornment and assurance to her empty, insecure self.

Beatrice Blaine in *This Side of Paradise,* whose "youth passed in renaissance glory," is disenchanted in her married life. She is frustrated by a passive and ineffectual husband. She is an

aimless alcoholic, a spiritual and physical hypochondriac. She takes refuge from her boredom by having periodic nervous breakdowns and renewing her faith in Catholicism, She had looked upon her son Amory's birth as a burden but she finds him a spot for diversion. She adopts a seductive attitude towards her son and takes delight in the precocity developed in him by 'her companionship'. She substitutes him for her husband and allow him to call her by name. At the same time he is an image of her and by adoring and adorning her boy she adores and adorns herself. She fails to fulfil his needs because she fulfils her own need instead, mistaking them for his. For instance, she says to Amory when her nerves are on edge, "I want you to take a bath-as hot as you can bear it, and just relax your nerves" (332). In her attitude there is no acknowledgement of her son's existence. He is just part of herself. Moreover, she expects him to love her as she does. What Wolman speaks of such schizogenic mothers is true of Beatrice:

> Frustrated in childhood and disenchanted in their marriages, they perpetuate their childish love-demanding attitude and expect from their child . . . all the love they have failed to receive elsewhere, Mothers of schizophrer4ic children often neglect their own physical heal and do it ostentatiously, widely publicizing their true or imaginary ailments (*Children Without Childhood: A Study of Childhood Schizopherenia*,54).

When she meets her son after two years she tells him how she missed him during the period and how she suffered from ill-health. She thus appeals to Amory's love and sympathy and makes him say, "Poor Beatrice… Beatrice." Again, she asks him whether he had horrible years of separation from her and anticipates his affirmation (342). Since she cannot love she is convinced that she is unlovable and expects to find some goodness in her in the love and approval of her son.

The narcissist has an over-grown superego which sets high standards for behaviour. The superego is the internalized parent whom he unconsciously wants to please in his conscious actions. Dick loves his father, admires his virtues, and wants to follow his foot-steps. His profession is insecurely motivated, and modelled after his father's. He becomes a healer of minds where as his father was a healer of souls. His compulsion to exercise charm, win admiration and love, is "an oblique stratagem to gain the love and approval of others as a surrogate for the approval of his father" (*Tender Is The Night,* 319). The death of his father shatters him. Symbolically his superego dies along with his father. He is threatened by his unconscious sexual

and aggressive impulses and fears that he can no longer control them, now that his father (superego) is no more. Consequently, he seduces Rosemary to whom he had denied himself once; falls in love with every pretty woman he sees; gets involved in a drunken brawl; and in short, does everything that his superego had once abhorred.

The interaction of the superego is equally strong in Amory who has identified himself with Father Darcy reject his own ineffectual father. This identification is incest motivated, since Darcy had been his mother's lover. So, through the priest, according to D.S.Savage, "the incest is indirect expressed and religiously sanctioned."('*The Significance of F.Scott Fitzgerald'*, 153). His internalized parent saves him from the contamination of sex. When he sacrifices his reputation for the sake of his friend Alec, who violate the "Mann's Act" by taking a girl to his room, he sees the ghost of Father Darcy watching him and his good deed, not with approval. This spectral appearance cannot be justified on any other ground than Amory's desire to please his superego.

While Fitzgerald's characters try to please their internalized parents in their endeavours, a lack of narcissistic supplies impel them to a frantic search for recognition and approval. They stand withdrawn and keep their peace as long as their idealized image is not threatened. When the feeling of insecurity threatens they frantically search for resources. Amory, being accustomed to being shown off as a precious jewel by his mother, continues to show himself off. This attitude wins the contempt and hostility of his class mates. When he fails to succeed in the realm of athletics and games he madly tries to win popularity by indulging in literary endeavours, neglecting his studies. Amory's grandiose self, as Hoffman observes, needs to perform constantly before an admiring mother or mother-surrogates ("*This Side Paradise:* A Study in Pathological Narcissism", 182).While such people are selfish they cling like leeches to others.

William Mealy considers idealism as a 'hiding place of narcissism' (251). Unable to cope with or compromise with conventional codes, he formulates his own code or something that is coined for him though it is contrary to his taste. Amory's equation of beauty with evil is just a rationalization of his inability to win a beautiful girl or to materialize a successful seduction. His fascination with principles of specialness, elitism, etc. is an outgrowth of narcissism. According to Hoffman, Amory is a narcissistic personality "reinforced by a social pathology" (178). His

ultimate embracing of socialism contrary to his original elitism is also not genuine. It is a clumsy way of trying to modify his grandiosity through another means.

When the self-image is threatened, the narcissist frantically searches for narcissistic supplies. When he fails in his attempt, he gives himself to self-hate and depression. Self-hate, as Stuart observes is an attempt to destroy the bad self that cannot win love (126). The depressive narcissist has periodic mood swings of self-confidence and despair. Depression leads to alcoholism and at times to suicide. Fitzgerald's narcissistic characters undergo periodic depression with feeling of worthlessness, emptiness, and loneliness. Retaliation on the part of the love-object becomes a heavy narcissistic blow for the narcissist.

Amory receives the first blow at the crest of his egotism: the withdrawal of Isabella's love. Here, actually, the loss does not matter; but it is a blow to his self-esteem. When he is rejected by Rosalind he sinks into acute depression and heavily depends on alcohol. He finds himself empty when he loses Father Darcy, his friends who provide him with narcissistic supplies, Gordon seeks the help of alcohol to keep his self-image intact. He falls a victim to depression, and when the mounting tension becomes too unendurable he finds no other way to destroy himself.

Narcissism may also hide homosexuality. According to Freud, mother complex, inability to tolerate the castration in women, or castration fears as a retribution for Incest may cause the person towards a narcissistic object choice (241). Even if this perversion is not overt it may remain latent. It accounts for much sexual maladjustment.

Otto Friedrich observes that Amory' a problems with sex makes one think in terms of homosexuality ("*American Scholar*," 394). The girls he pursues are masculine and he admires and maintains relationships with men. He relentlessly identifies himself with them and tries to gain their approval. The sexual disturbances of Amory and Anson with women suggest the existence of an activated castration complex in them which makes them consider women inferior owing to their castration. Then men become the first sex objects.

Latent homosexuality may give rise to Don Juanism as a reaction to underlying feelings of weakness, passivity, and impotence The individual tries to cover his weakness by excessively taking part in heterosexual activities. According to Fritz Wittels,

> Erotomania frequently conceals latent homosexuality. Actually, the love partner of the opposite sex means little or nothing to a man of this type, and the excited, uninterrupted hunting of women is but a special veil to hide this formidable fact. This type of Don Juan is often content with merely a romantic, sometimes rather cynical adoration of women, and scrupulously avoids reaching his pretended goal (*Psycho-analysis Today*, 17).

Amory's ardent pursuit of girls all conceals homosexual propensities. It is a tool to repudiate their aversion to heterosexuality. Fitzgerald has, interestingly enough, created two lesbians as female counterparts to the homosexuals. Lady Caroline and Mary North (Tender Is The Night), dressed as sailors, try to pick up two girls or which they are arrested and confined. Latent homosexuality may take another form in which an individual worries about his own probable latent homosexuality. Here, unlike sexual predicaments, materialistic and idealistic failures promote the anxiety. Frazier and Carr summarize the problem thus:

Anxiety about being a homosexual may disrupt sexual functioning or the enjoyment of it. Such anxiety may be precipitated by the individual's failure to reach some nonsexual goal which nevertheless is equated in our own culture which being "feminine" or "masculine." Business failure or any competitive defeat may in the male, for example, (be equated with being a failure, hence "feminine" add "homosexual." Such anxiety has sometimes been labelled "pseudo-homosexual anxiety" since it is precipitated by nonsexual goals, rather motivations. (73)

The analysis of his characters does not imply that he consciously projects his debility in his writing, it cannot be overlooked. It was, perhaps, this element that gave impetus and direction to his career. His narcissism owes itself to the upbringing of a neurotic, narcissistic mother who was overprotective and oversolicitous. She, dissatisfied with her husband who was both a passive ineffectual and a failure in business, poured her frustrated, outrageous affection upon her only son. His home was dominated by his mother and the father's role remained insignificant, says Kenneth Eble, "Because of the wealth of his mother's family, because of that family's deeper roots in St. Paul, because of his mother's excessive and somewhat eccentric devotion, and because of the pallid character of his father then, Fitzgerald's youth was dominated by his mother and her family, (*F. Scott Fitzgerald* 20).

Though Fitzgerald was loyal to his mother for her extreme affection, he hated her at times embarrassed by and ashamed of her eccentricities and sentimentality. At school, the realization how bitterly he has to suffer because of the way she had spoiled him made him angry, on the other hand, he loved his father and liked his goodness and virtues: "I loved my father…always deep in my subconscious I had referred judgements back to him, Loved what he would have thought or done" (19). Despite his love for him, he could not admire or respect his father owing to his father's passive, failure, and subjection to his wife and others. His parents' inadequacies affected him and he tried to find a reason for his pent-up bitterness towards them by claiming that he was not their son but a foundling.

The unpleasant outcome of being under the shadow of a domineering mother and weak father was that Fitzgerald did not get a strong male model to identify himself with as a child. As a result, he failed to achieve the primitive masculine independence. As Sarotte observes in his essay *Francis Scott Fitzgerald: Self-Virilization and its Failure*: "Fitzgerald never effected a natural and definite introjection of the virile images throughout his life, he continued to search for heroes with whom he might identify and his virility was always precarious if this support failed him" (213). During his studies, he sought frantically to identify himself with Father Fay, a father-surrogate and his popular friends and afterwards with Hemingway. This failure of introjection is the basic cause of overt or latent homosexuality which is associated with narcissism. A failure to attain masculine independence suggests a failure to sever the tie with infantile psychosexual stage where object relations are narcissistic. As Savage puts it,

Failure of this primitive assertion of masculinity is at once a failure to achieve that indispensable measure of individuality upon which depends the corresponding power to individualize the "other", failure to assert the predominance of the "reality- principle" over the "pleasure-principle" (Freud), and failure to sever the infantile emotional bond with the mother and with the values of childish innocence. In consequence of the enchanted or charmed subjection of the diffused attraction of a generalized, maternal femininity, the sexual relation has a fatal tendency to regress to a childish stage which is also Incestuous, being innocent" and "guilty simultaneously or by turns. (154)

This incestuous regression differs from psychotic regression in the sense that in the latter the individual is entirely cut off from reality while in the former, object relation alone is impaired. His regression accounts for many anomalies in the personalities of Fitzgerald and his characters. Fitzgerald's biography attests to his severe marital maladjustments. In his wife Zelda, he found a counterpart to his narcissism. His relationship with her was inhibited, as she represented a mother-image. On the other hand, he lived uninhibited with Sheilah Graham, the companion of his later years, who hailed from a low background. Yet he did not marry her even when Zelda, during her incurable madness, asked him to divorce her and marry Sheilah.

Fitzgerald had developed anxieties about his own latent homosexuality. When Zelda and others falsely accused Fitzgerald and Hemingway of a homosexual relationship, he began to worry about his possible latent homosexuality. As a boy, he wanted both to be a daring man and a sissy. This tendency continues to exist. His appearance itself was feminine and he once appeared as a showgirl of the Triangle Club. According to Sarotte, in Fitzgerald's act of stripping before Hemingway, his alter-ego, there is an unconscious desire to make the latter say that Fitzgerald is not made to love women. For all his latent homosexual anxieties, Fitzgerald unconsciously associated masculinity with worldly success and moral responsibility. Hence he suffered from "pseudo—homosexual anxiety" precipitated by failure in non-sexual goals. After the publication of Great Gatsby in 1925 Fitzgerald underwent a period of creative sterility and moral irresponsibility which culminated in his crack-up. He could only watch himself deteriorate. While he could not write anything serious, he watched writers like Hemingway excelling him helplessly. Moreover, he feared that he would never write his best again. To reassure himself, he had to rely on alcohol. Apart from this, Fitzgerald considered his choice of vocation itself feminine. He contrasted his passive literary career with Hemingway's active, daring adventures in fishing, boxing, and hunting, besides his literary profession. As Collins summarizes,

Fitzgerald's notorious sensitivity about his masculinity as well as the acute homosexual doubts attested to in him by observers such as Morley Callaghan , may well derive not just from the fact that he was so often the self-confessed "woman" of his marriage, but from the Achilles' heel of his insecure masculinity as it related to matters of fact: Fitzgerald . . . appears to have suspected that he himself was the true homosexual in his choice of vocation. Homosexuality

therefore defines the circle of his creative difficulties in that he is homosexual both in his moral and artistic commitment and in his proneness to moral collapse: homosexuality can convey to him both his own much greater emasculation (the attenuations of art) and his own capacities for self- abandonment (the perils of self-indulgence).

So, Fitzgerald was both drawn to and repelled by homosexuality because the homosexual ernbodied an ethic of release. Unable to commit himself to either of these tendencies, he perhaps underwent a period of creative sterility.

Fitzgerald found his times narcissistic and the civilization searching for adornment. Stuart considers it "The Age of Narcissism, and "an age of unmade or half-made selves" (93). This implies a retarded maturation of the personality of modern man who needs adornment and adoration to feel whole and independent. Fitzgerald could see young people waste their energies in a frantic contest for popularity - the scale of their success. Reversal of roles was common, girls acting like men, while boys remained passive. Threatening feelings of diminished masculinity made the boys vigorously court girls and experiment in sex for reassurance. Menninger attributes a typical dating American boy's inhibitions, in his relationship with women and his passivity with other men, to an early identification with his mother, and a fear of his father. Masculine identification seems dangerous to him. Moreover, Fitzgerald was aware of the gross selfishness of a society in which all fee1ing of humanity had died. He, a shrewd observer of the society, could easily assimilate the subtle manifestations of self-love in the modern man and remould them into the various traits in his characters. So these narcissistic characters are not essentially different from a typical American individual of the Jazz Age as well as the modern age.

Fitzgerald, in his creation of narcissistic characters, has embraced a great many variety of psychopathological states associated with se1f-love. It depicts the subtleties of human interactions. Many of the traits of self-love, Fitzgerald exhibits in his fiction, adhere to modern psychoanalytic concepts. They testify to his realistic and perceptive understanding of human relationships. Fitzgerald's creation of narcissistic characters and an analysis of them are worthwhile as they enhance a deeper understanding of modern man.

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