Gender Identities and Consumerism in Selected Short Stories by F. Scott Fitzgerald

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Tutkielmassa analysoidaan uushistorismin näkökulmasta seuraavia F. Scott Fitzgeraldin novelleja: “May Day” (1922), “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” (1920), “Myra Meets His Family” (1920), “Winter Dreams” (1922) ja “Babylon Revisited” (1931). Tutkielmassa pohditaan moderniteettia 20-luvun Amerikan kontekstissa. Näkökulmiksi on valittu sukupuoliroolit ja kuluttajuus; tarkemmin näiden ilmentäjinä tutkitaan nuoren modernin naisen kulttuurista tyyppiä flapperia ja ihanteellista modernia mieheyttä. Hyödynnän muun muassa Thorstein Veblenin teoriaa kerskakulutuksesta. 1920-luvun ilmiöitä on relevanttia tutkia, koska aikakaudessa voidaan havaita kiinnostavia vastaavuuksia nykyaikaan, kuten esimerkiksi kuluttamisen keskeinen merkitys ja velaksi eläminen.

Tutkielmassa tarkastellaan, kuinka kuluttajuus kiinnittyy hahmojen elämään ja vaikuttaa identiteetin muokkaamiseen. Lisäksi pohditaan millaisen kuvan Fitzgerald luo flapper – ilmiöstä, ja miten hänen tekstinsä suhtautuvat muotoutuvaan ideaaliin mieheyteen. Aineiston perusteella nousee esiin kahtalainen näkökulma varallisuuteen; se mahdollistaa mukavuuksia ja nautintoa, mutta toisaalta voi johtaa kuluttamisen oravanpyörään, itsekkyyteen ja suhteettomaan kilpailuun. Kulutuskulttuurissa ihmisten objektivointi on helpompaa, ja kaikkia tarpeita pyritään täyttämään kuluttamalla. Flapper –hahmoissa olennaista puolestaan on näkyvyys, androgyyniys, suhteellinen riippumattomuus miehistä ja vapaus ilmaista itseä. Moderni mieheys puolestaan painottaa persoonallisuutta, kilpailuhenkisyyttä, vastakkainasettelua naiseuteen ja menestyksen imagon välittämistä.

Avainsanat: F. Scott Fitzgerald, modernity, consumerism, gender, flapper, ideal masculinity

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1. Introduction

The 1920's is a relevant decade to look into due to the parallels to the present situation: economic boom was followed by unanticipated depression. Our daily lives are marked by consumption as much as ever, and the huge availability of options underscores the material wealth we are surrounded by. Actually, marketers are talking about *consumer hyperchoice* and how consumers are empowered by the emergence of the social media and the availability of information to make informed selections. We live in a full-blown consumer culture: relationships are framed by consumption and it has become the most substantial process for identity-building.

However, it is becoming clear that we are living on credit and thrusting the costs of our standard of living on the next generations. According to Oxfam, the combined amount of wealth of the richest one percent of the world population will soon overtake that of the rest (Oxfam International). This means there is huge inequality in the way wealth is divided globally, even though globalization was supposed to create a more prosperous life for everyone, and the divide is widening. People are aware of the fact that several planet earths would be needed to supply natural resources, if all had the same standard of living as Western people. "Vested interests" prevent world leaders from making decisions for a fairer world, corporations evade taxes, and too little is done to push for a global deal on climate change (ibid.) There have been discussions about capitalism being in crisis as the limits to natural resources are evident, and people demand a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

In the Twenties the marks of this lifestyle were already visible, and today we are facing the ultimate outcomes. Then the process of the intertwining of culture and economy that takes place in a consumer culture began. In this thesis I will elucidate the era of the Twenties and the phenomenon of consumption through F. Scott Fitzgerald's (1896-1940) short stories and other material. Another designation for the Twenties is the *Jazz Age*, a term coined by Fitzgerald, commonly perceived as a mindless era of excess and waste. On the other hand it is represented as a glamorous time of

liberation and glitzy parties, jazz being expressive of the decade due to its vitality and frenzied rhythm. F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife Zelda were celebrated in publicity as "the golden couple" of the era. Fitzgerald sought to fund their extravagant lifestyle mainly by the fees he received from magazines such as *Saturday Evening Post* for his short stories. His first novel *This Side of Paradise* (1920) sold remarkably well and granted him renown as the depicter of the young generation and the flapper. His major work *The Great Gatsby* (1925) has been studied extensively for example through the framework of the American Dream. It is notable how his career resembled the cycle of the Jazz Age; after the Great Depression of the 1930s his fame diminished as he worked mainly in screenwriting, his alcoholism took over and Zelda suffered from mental illness. He died prematurely, but interest in his writing revived in the forties. In general, Fitzgerald was applauded for his description of the modern society.

Zelda functioned for Fitzgerald as the model of the quintessential flapper: in addition to her looks she was made desirable by her wealthy background. Reinsch (2013, chapter 1) notes that the Jazz Age was a time of increasing economic prosperity, vibrant cultural phenomena and social changes. Women were granted suffrage in 1920, and the *New Woman* represented progress in being more independent and emancipated (ibid). Freedman (1974, 373) notes that women did not utilize the vote in great quantities, and some critics suggest that women preferred sexual freedom to political participation (379). The term *flapper* refers to "apolitical" young women who were recognized mainly through their style of fashion, which became the most coveted and controversial trend among youth (Reinsch, chapter 2). The characteristics of a flapper included bobbed hair, makeup such as rouge and powder, and fancy dresses with dropped waist-line and short hem. Famous film celebrities such as Colleen Moore in *Flaming Youth* (1923), and Clara Bow in *It* (1927) promoted the flapper aesthetics, as well as the overall lifestyle (ibid). Reinsch states that the flappers' behavior was hedonistic, for instance "smoking in public, driving in cars, dancing the Charleston or Shimmy, excessive consumption of alcohol in times of prohibition, nightly

celebrations in jazz clubs and at petting parties, where men and women had premarital sexual experiences" (ibid). This hedonism was marked by all kinds of consumption: of consumer goods, popular culture and urban entertainment (ibid).

Furthermore, it is important to understand in the context of the flapper, that they sought liberation through androgyny: "The less 'feminine' a woman's appearance is, the less 'marriageable' she is considered to be" (Reinsch, chapter 3). In other words the flappers downplayed the conventionally feminine qualities, and their agile and slim body accentuated that they were not born to motherhood. Reinsch states that, for example, the short hair and flattened chest were "… the expression of a blurring of gender roles". The flapper relates to the former ideal, the *Gibson Girl* of the end of the 19th century, named after the illustrator Charles Dana Gibson, (ibid). The main difference was that Gibson Girls wore long dresses, had a voluptuous body shape, behaved elegantly, and were more traditional and upper-class, whereas flappers were more openly sexual and mainly middle-class (ibid). 'Flapperhood' concerned women between the ages 16 to 29, who were possibly at the same time employed as secretaries or salespeople (Reinsch, chapter 5). In comparison to men, women received a lower salary and their professional life was limited. Due to their low income, unmarried women were usually bound to their parental home, but they could act as consuming subjects due to their own money. Due to this lucrative market segment, flapper characters "often appeared on magazine covers or in advertising" (ibid). Finally, Reinsch states in chapter 8 that while this economic freedom was only temporary, flapper girls could make decisions on their life "without being bound to men".

To proceed to other concepts present in Fitzgerald's work, the themes of disillusionment and longing profile him as belonging to *The Lost Generation*, in other words those who lived through the First World War while in their twenties or thirties (British Library Online Gallery). In American literature, the term refers to modernist authors of this period, many of whom expatriated to Paris; among the most famous along with Fitzgerald are Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway and Ezra

Pound. The war created a sense of temporariness, which induced people to want to have fun and enjoy life while they had the chance. Paris attracted artistic talent, being "the capital of bohemian culture". Its bars and cafés hosted many of the intellectual discussions taking place among the artists, whose life was cosmopolitan and took place on the international stage (ibid).

Baz Luhrman's rendition of *The Great Gatsby* in 2013 brought renewed attention to Fitzgerald's works, and on its part promoted the fashionable image of the Twenties. All in all, the Jazz Age might reverberate especially well with the people of the present, because it is conceived of as the era when consumer culture, a highlighted sense of visuality and the basis for modern urban life came into existence. At the moment we are facing a cultural crisis: people are seeing the faults of capitalism more acutely, and that there are limits to economic growth. In the Twenties people felt care-free and wanted to forget the dismal war. The elite lost themselves in partying and spending, and nowadays it is the case that people want to dismiss the uncertainty of the world by cultivating themselves. This cultivation seems to be achieved through acquiring branded goods, taking part in marathons, following strict diets and fitness programs and decorating the home. People are concerned with image, and showcase their lives in the social media. It is certain that not everybody can take part in these activities due to the lack of cultural or financial capital (terms of Pierre Bourdieu), and there have been worries about people living in a bubble, not participating in active citizenship or the political sphere. An omnipotent personality has become the cultural ideal: the "individual 2.0" strives for self-improvement. However, the idea of civilization has changed, because the bourgeoisie now are defined by lifestyle rather than learning (Valkama). Thus a different type of valued cultural capital has emerged.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note what kinds of female protagonists young adults' novels put forth in the 2010s. A fitting representative is Katniss Everdeen in Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*, basically a tomboy, who is active in shaping her own life, capable and feisty. She challenges the conception that characteristics coded as masculine can only be found in men.

Cultural idols represent the changes taking place in the gender system, and similarly media images and advertisements reflect gender perceptions. What is noteworthy about the novel series is how it draws from classical mythology: the gladiator contests and "bread and circuses" needed to keep people content. The dystopia employs the anxieties felt towards the future, the excessive competitiveness of culture and the desensitizing violence shown in the media. It might be the case that people turn to the roots of the Western civilization, that is, Antiquity, in times of profound cultural change. This was also the case in the 1920s, and the phenomenon could be discerned especially in dance (Isadora Duncan), the nude culture (the appreciation of the natural beauty of the human body), architecture (clear-cut motifs of Antiquity) and on the whole in the way bodily fitness became a focus in the form of sports, sun-bathing and gymnastics, for example (Hapuli 1995, 130).

The flapper and the prosperous young businessman are cultural types that accentuated the changes taking place in the urbanizing society. In this thesis I will study the flapper characters of Fitzgerald, as well as the modern young man of the era, paying attention to such issues as beauty ideals and body politics. The First World War influenced the changing ideas of masculinity and made women's contribution to society more substantial as they entered the work force, for instance. The term *modernity*, focusing on American urbanization in the Twenties, functions as a central framework through which I will observe the characters' experience. I aim to bring substance to my analysis by comparing theoretical material with present-day phenomena. I focus on the changes taking place in the gender system in the Twenties, and I will discuss the development of the consumer society, and the role of consumption in the formation of identities. In short, this thesis answers the following questions:

- How does consumption intermingle with the characters' lives and shape their identities?
- What are the flapper characters of Fitzgerald like, and how does he discuss the changes in ideal masculinity in the Twenties?

Furthermore, in this thesis I will deploy *New Historicism* as the applied literary theory, as my perspective is both historical and cultural. The approach arose in the 1980s, originating as a reaction against the formal approach of New Criticism, which was criticized of downplaying the political implications of literature (New World Encyclopedia). The prefix 'new' refers to a divergence from "prior methods of writing history", for instance in the opposition to the focus on solely politics and "great men", and the myth of historians' objectivity. New Historicist critics have a dual goal: to understand a text through its historical context, and interpret cultural history through literature. The concepts of power and ideology developed by Foucault lie at its background, because of the attempt to uncover the impact of societal power structures on literary works. Nevertheless, New Historicism has prompted critique about reducing literature's import as artistic expression, due to treating it as "another historical artifact". According to New Historicism, however, the original meaning of a text is impossible to attain, because people cannot wholly understand bygone times or transcend their context. The approach analyzes literature by looking at other contemporary texts and the possible influences on the author, in the attempt of understanding the relationship "between a text and the political, social, and economic circumstances in which it originated" (New World Encyclopedia).

I have chosen to examine five short stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald: "May Day" (1922), "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" (1920), "Myra Meets His Family" (1920), "Winter Dreams" (1922) and "Babylon Revisited" (1931). I have chosen these stories because they form an overview on relevant themes to my study; here I will shortly introduce their plots. "May Day" depicts the situation in America just after the ending of the First World War, focusing on a single day and the destinies of a rich young man and his acquaintance, a former gentleman who has forfeited his prospects. "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" and "Myra Meets His Family" represent the light-toned and humorous stories of Fitzgerald's, the first recounting the transformation of a Victorian-type girl Bernice to a popular flapper aided by her easy-going but selfish cousin Marjorie, and the latter a hoax played upon a young husband-hunter Myra by her fiancé about the weird quality of his family. Myra finds out

about the family members being in truth hired actors in the attempt to uncover if she is only after the family's wealth. Then Myra prepares a scheme of her own, tricking the fiancé into a fake marriage, then deserting him and happily going after new adventures. In turn, "Winter Dreams" is one of the most famous stories of Fitzgerald's, focusing on similar themes to *The Great Gatsby*: the protagonist, Dexter Green, pursues an upper-class life, but without a privileged family-background his self-acquired wealth does not seem to suffice. He obsessively covets the beautiful and affluent socialite Judy Jones, who it seems impossible for him to possess. Finally, "Babylon Revisited" looks back on the opulence and perversion of the Jazz Age. It relates the story of Charlie Wales, who ends up both personally and financially bankrupt after a spending spree in Paris, which was ultimately finished by the stock market crash of 1929. He lost his wife as a result of a drunken quarrel, as she ended up wandering the streets in the snow and got sick. Charlie also forfeited the custody of his little girl Honoria, which he aims at winning back, as he has established a position as an international businessman. Nevertheless, the past returns to haunt him in the form of his alcoholic acquaintances, and he is prevented from having a future with his child.

2. Modernity in the Twenties

In this chapter I will outline the fundamentals and major transformations engendered by *modernity*. The term refers to an overall novel sensibility, a feeling that people were experiencing a transition, forming because of the changes taking place in society due to industrialization and the new technologies (Bradshaw & Dettmar 2008, 9-10).

> New means of mobility and communication – telephone and radio, bicycles and automobiles, ocean liners and aircraft – compressed time and space. Electric lighting spread through major cities, eliminating the division between day and night. And new materials – large sheets of glass, cast and wrought iron, steel and reinforced concrete – demanded ways of building for which traditional styles offered little guidance. The speed and scope of these changes was matched by intellectual developments. (Bradshaw & Dettmar 244)

Thus modernity is defined as "a modern self-consciousness", marking a disruption from traditional values like religion and patriotism, which were experienced as outdated (ibid). Urbanity framed people's experience and demanded new strategies for coping; for example, they had to learn to manage the strain the abundant sensory stimuli put on cognitive capacity. Living in a city required a hectic pace, showcased a diversity of ways of life and people from different walks of life. On the whole, urban publicity designated being on display: the streets, cafés and department stores became venues for presenting one's self and observing others (Hapuli 130). The feeling of getting lost in the crowd could create a sense of loneliness, even though surrounded by people. The masses of people granted anonymity, and it was possible to survey people or the new fashions. *Flanerie* refers to a habit of leisurely gentlemen of idling about, lounging in public venues and strolling aimlessly in the city (Wolff 1990, 38). Wolff notifies the specific worldview city-dwellers develop, due to the "fleeting" and "anonymous" encounters taking place in the urban surroundings (35). This lifestyle was restricted to men; Wolff remarks that above all, modernist literature "describes the experience of men" (34). This is the case because the majority of the narratives are concerned with "the public world of work, politics, and city life", representing the arenas from which women were excluded or in which they were virtually invisible, or in the sidelines (34). What is more, Charles Baudelaire

relates to the flaneur, as he utilized the character in his writings on urbanity (38). In fact, Wolff claims that the flaneur is a modern hero, who is free to explore cities, embracing the possibility of "lone travel, of voluntary uprooting, of anonymous arrival at a new place" (39). Thus flanerie is a means to get accustomed to the phenomena engendered by modernity, and experiencing the lifestyle permitted by it.

After the years immediately following the First World War people started to have faith in a better future as prosperity was increasing, and the emergent generation did not experience such existential despair as the Lost Generation (Hapuli 1995, 69). Nevertheless, the new era evocated also critique towards civilization: the skeptics of metropolitan life anticipated ruin, vice and moral collapse: they conceived that "modern becomes antique once", evocating parallels between ancient Rome and the eventual fate of the modern civilization (Hapuli 44-45). A noticeable feature of city-dwelling was the breakdown of the organic communities in the countryside, as people flocked into the cities: the urban way of life demanded constant psychic tension, which called for amusement as a form of recreation (ibid). Another drawback was the alleged frivolity and superficiality of urban lifestyle: cities basically catered to the same needs all around the world, and regardless of national boundaries the habits and behavior of people began to resemble each other (45). Especially the Americanization of culture was noticeable in the form of the spreading fashions and leisure activities (46). Reconstruction effectuated this process, since America had become the leading nation in the aftermath of the war, while the mass media diminished the distance between the continents, and American products flooded the market (78). Concrete, asphalt, arched bridges, glass-covered stations, the underground and skyscrapers lighted by advertisements became symbols of the new reality (Hapuli 106).

It is understandable that doubt was the universal condition in the face of the fast-paced and transforming world; the new means of transport, for example the train, inspired both admiration and fear. It was customary to compare machines into living organisms, for example cars to growling

beasts in order to make them more relatable and familiar. At the same time views about white racial superiority versus the belief in universal kinship of human beings were in existence. Colonialism was visible in daily lives, as many commodities such as cotton or coffee were imported; the elite obtained luxuries such as silk or pearls from overseas. Along with the flow of goods, ideas and impressions were transmitted: foreign influences affected architecture and tastes, and on the whole the possibility of travel gave birth to the genre of travel literature (Bradshaw & Dettmar 126). It became fashionable to travel and own exotic objects; thus it was possible to show off one's wealth and privileged status. For example, the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb in 1922 generated an enthusiasm for Egypt, and therefore ancient art had an effect on the designs of Art Deco.

On the whole scientific knowledge became the foundation of life, but on the other hand Freud's uncovering of the unconscious, in addition to the mechanized and cruel war, shook the belief in human rationality (Bradshaw & Dettmar 56). What is more, Darwin's thoughts drew attention to the baser animal instincts affecting human behavior, and were used by Social Darwinist's to advance the idea of societies driven by competition (56). In a similar manner, biology was used in defending the status quo between the sexes, as women were argued to be innately inept for suffrage or study (59). Concerns were expressed that education "would damage the reproductive health of women"; thus women were defined in relation to men as wives or mothers. This view of women arose from traditional gender roles, according to which they were understood as frail creatures who could not handle pressure, and entering the realm of man would make them unsexed and unattractive as a result (Bradshaw & Dettmar 59). Nevertheless, the First World War served to transform the relations between the sexes, as due to necessity women entered the work force, performed the tasks that had belonged to men, and learnt to trust their competence (Hapuli 56-57). They were understandably reluctant to abandon their positions after the war, and views of "satisfied professional housewives" and "unstable career women" were culturally promoted (Freedman 383). However, the war had shown men the meaning of companionship, and

thus their preferences for women altered as well: they should be more brisk and adventurous partners (Hapuli 57). Young people experienced new freedoms, for example in the form of automobile excursions.

Nevertheless, life was not so carefree for the working classes, as in factory work they became governed by the machines determining a basically inhuman pace (Hapuli 47). For instance, Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936) illustrates the consequences of assembly line toil, that is, monotony and stress, hinting that all could not adapt. A more contemporary futuristic film, Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) envisions a dystopian society divided into layers of subservient workers and the governing leisurely elite. It exhibits the central power-generating machine of the city as a temple for human sacrifice in a similar manner to ancient Babylonia. The great city also flaunts a new Tower of Babel, which symbolizes greed and corruptible human reign. The film includes a scene of a Jazz Age "whore of Babylon", dancing seductively scantily dressed, making men madly lust after her, and calling forth the deadly sins. As a matter of fact Hapuli (111) reports that there was a tendency to personify cities as feminine, and the symbol of "the whore of Babylon" clad in glorious jewelry and superfluous clothing functioned as a portent of doom, signifying the perilous union of money and power. This is relevant as Fitzgerald utilizes these symbolic meanings in "Babylon Revisited".

A natural solution in order to recover from the wearing life or mechanized work was physical fitness: it was conceived of as a way to maintain the significance and wellbeing of the body. The fitness movements of modernity are understood in part as a reaction against the over-sophisticated fin de siècle, after which there was a turn to naturalness and healthy living (Hapuli 65). Liberation extended to the body, because it aimed at eliminating the old-fashioned bourgeois distaste toward corporeal being, and the double standard concerning middle-class men that permitted the exercise of vice behind an honorable façade (66). Modernity also reformed sexuality, and made it more acceptable by breaking social taboos and norms (63). The eventual aim of dance or sports was to connect body and mind, and a trimmed body became fashionable. The ideals of athleticism, and an

active and inured body were spread by photography. As an example, the nude cult utilized the heroic statues of Antiquity that demonstrated controlled vigor in defining ideal masculinity (186). In fact, muscularity was originally associated with manual labor and coarseness, but as a contrast the admired body of a sportsman was acquired during leisure time. As the Western society grew more affluent, there was more time for self-improvement, but of course the upper classes had a wider array of opportunities (189). The following quote of Hapuli outlines the modern dilemma and its possible outcomes:

> What is the emblem of the future generation? Is it a nude, tanned youth, in the glittering sunshine, a giant concrete wall on the background; or is it an abnormity deformed by pleasures and mechanical convenience, with an unnaturally developed braincase, a decrepit body, hands atrophied by switches and legs by elevators? (47, my translation).

The ideal modern man described in the passage possesses a disciplined body that the organized modern society functioning according to the clock demanded (Hapuli 48). He epitomizes vitality that could make technology subservient to the building of a better future for all of mankind. The fact that the youth is naked constitutes an interesting parallel to Antiquity; it stresses the harmonious human body to be utilized in various pursuits. In fact, the belief in a better and brighter future aided by technology anticipated an advanced humankind for which to toil.

Finally, Modernism as a movement in literature or arts in general stems from the new view of the world promoted by modernity. The modern novel sought to distinguish itself from its Victorian precursor, “which tended to moralize or idealize, whereas the priority should have been more realistic and aesthetic” (Bradshaw & Dettmar 215). Literary modernism focused on the artificial nature of texts as constructs, and the fluidity of interpretation as narratives could include several perspectives (43). The focus was on the inner experience of the characters, and the actual plot became less important (45). The visual quality of texts also gained momentum as modernists utilized tools such as the close-up appearing in cinematography, and described the everyday (67-68). Through sensory appeal it was possible to defamiliarize the common, thus making people react more keenly and see things from a new perspective (ibid). The above is true in connection to

Fitzgerald, as he utilizes detailed and cinematic descriptions of the milieu, molds multifaceted characters and includes non-linear narration. He lets the readers decide for themselves, and does not single-handedly judge the characters.

3. Urban Experience

In this chapter I will outline the basics of consumer culture, address the problems engendered by it, explain the theory of conspicuous consumption of the leisure class, and describe the lifestyle of the young that Fitzgerald's stories convey. On the whole, urbanity is the landscape of modernity, and as traditional means of class recognition began to crumble with the demise of close-knit communities in the countryside, commodities became a novel way to showcase wealth, accomplishment and status. Money and possessions increased their position as the measures for personal success. It is problematic, how consumer culture channels personal relationships, shapes consumer wants and promotes materialistic values.

3.1 The Prime of Consumer Culture

According to the perspective of economics, consumers are rational and goal-directed choosers of commodities: they are maximizers of utility and their ultimate well-being. People choose goods based on their preferences that can be basically any kind. Consumers look for different kinds of value: functional, economic, symbolic or emotional. Commodities are meaning-laden, and consumption functions according to cultural codes that inform what is desirable, what ideal masculinity or femininity is like, and overall what qualifies as successful life. McCracken (1986, 72) posits that the meanings of commodities are manifest in the advertising and fashion systems alongside with consumption processes and rituals (such as a banquet). Cultural values or symbols become attached to consumer goods, and through consumption the meanings pass onto individual consumers (ibid). Thus, what we consume informs how we want to be perceived by others, and what we value.

Malkmes (2011, 7-8) points out that in a consumer culture consumption is the prime cultural value per se. He defines it as "a culture in which mass consumption and production both fuel the economy and shape perceptions, values, desires, and constructions of personal identity" (10), the

aesthetics of consumer culture being observable in advertising, the cityscape, and product design (20). Modern consumer societies are social infrastructures "in which choice and credit are readily available, in which social value is defined in terms of purchasing power and material possessions, and in which there is a desire, above all, for that which is new, modern, exciting and fashionable" (12). Thus consumer culture includes a narcissistic element of instant gratification and potentially insatiable desires instead of justifiable needs. It subsumes both consumerism and materialism, *consumerism* denoting "…the equation of personal happiness with consumption and the purchase of material possessions" (11).

In the 1920s the markets were burgeoning, which caused the retail infrastructure to develop and marketing to become a core business function. Marketing promised everyone the chance to get their share of the material wellbeing and boost their attractiveness. In general, marketers instructed in achieving the modern good life, aided by their offerings. At first marketers were believed to hold the authority, and they handled market segments as objects. However, instead of just offering inflated claims of product benefits, they changed policy by making products symbolically stand for desirable attributes; branding is effectual still today.

Peiss remarks that "Consumption is coded as a female pursuit, frivolous and even wasteful, a form of leisure rather than productive work." Nevertheless, women had agency in the market as selectors of commodities, and they functioned as the main procurers of the household. Women had to make functional choices and act as informed consumers, but they participated in the novel activities offered to women as well, such as "attending a matinee, eating at a restaurant, or going to the beauty parlor" (ibid). Peiss notes that *consumer identity* was intertwined with the feminine: "Born at the same time, the 'organization man' and 'Mrs. Consumer' in many ways reprised the older dichotomy of manly producers and domestic women." Thus the standard man of the era was *a businessman*, representing the emergent professional class of college-educated white-collar men. Their conception of an ideal masculine identity was based on a tendency to uphold "efficiency,

method, and control" (Peiss) In the role of consumers, men sought to build up a fashionable and tasteful style, because looks were seen crucial for managing everyday transaction, be they business or romance –related. Thus for men style was a functional matter, whereas for women its role was seen as merely decorative (Peiss). The prevalent ideology of female self-making enhanced objectification, as women were pushed to seek their identity through beautification (Curnutt 94). Love matches could be conceived of as a marketplace exchange, and thus beauty was cherished as "a woman's best currency" (Curnutt 105).

All in all, in capitalism the individual gains a primary focus. Consumerism is problematic because it easily emphasizes self-centeredness, and the satisfaction of egoistic wants. Money becomes the epicenter of life, and potentially the determiner of human value; a mark of achievement and influence. If everyone is a free subject, equipped with intellect and personal opportunities, according to this belief all people share the same prospects, and are left to their own will-power and abilities to shape their life. This liberal myth could make people more indifferent and unsympathetic, as life is conceived of as a contest for success. As the zeitgeist in part defines morality, if all others behave in a similar manner, for example conducting business deceitfully or speculating for personal gain, pangs of guilt are more easily allayed. Money is treacherous, in that it may become the measure for everything, beginning to frame and control life. Affluence can also hold the illusion of omnipotence, or the ability to obtain anything. Fussell (1952, 292) points out that Fitzgerald often addresses the upper-class pursuit of perpetual youth and beauty: "…the appearance of eternal youth and beauty is centered in a particular social class whose glamor is made possible by a corrupt social inequality. Beauty, the object of aesthetic contemplation, is commercialized, love is bought and sold." This remark suggests that the aim of consumerism is hollow and misguided: it is rotten at the core, because it depends on social inequality and the deprivation of the working classes. Commodification deprives authenticity, as money is the most

attractive quality for example in one's associates or potential spouse. Affluence can cause disproportionate indulgence, or a needless display of luxury in dressing and property.

Curnutt (2004, 89) states that the "consumerist fascinations" of Fitzgerald's "… are everywhere evident in his fiction, which luxuriates in the tints and textures of consumable goods". For instance, in "May Day" (3) "…the merchants had flocked thither [New York] from the South and West with their households to taste of all the luscious feasts and witness the lavish entertainments prepared – and to buy for their women furs against the next winter and bags of golden mesh and varicolored slippers of silk and silver and rose satin and cloth of gold". Indeed, Fitzgerald is famous for describing the life-style of the rich, their décor and leisure activities such as golf and club visits. However, he is also known of his double-vision towards the elite: "…Fitzgerald lived within and without the life of money and privilege he catalogued and that some of his gaudiest celebrations of [that life] are simultaneously the most annihilating criticisms" (Del Gizzo 2010, 35). Fitzgerald was both fascinated and put off by the glamorous and seemingly carefree lives the upper classes led, because they promised prospects, comforts and the ability to acquire, but on the other hand caused frivolity and negative effects on character, such as narcissism and irresponsibility. People still continue to be envious of the rich, willing to grasp their seemingly unlimited possibilities, but at the same time feeling their lives are smoothed out and snobbish. It is a common misconception to think that only the rich are refined and cultured: sometimes down-to-earth intellect is more useful, and what truly makes a person sophisticated is respect for others. In fact, this represents a case of confusing financial with cultural capital, even though they do not go hand in hand.

Curnutt (2004, 90) outlines three concerns consumerism introduced for cultural argument, firstly, does the marketplace offer novel possibilities for self-definition, or does it confine individuals in "mechanistic spending habits"? In other words, there has been controversy on whether marketing creates unnecessary wants. In addition, people understand that the polished,

sleek images of advertising are unrealistic, but anyhow they have an impact on our perceptions and aspirations. Self-definition takes place inside the market system, and thus it is difficult to demand something truly different, or discern meanings outside of the influence of the prism of the market. The second concern relates to whether "the abstraction of financial values" (ibid) in the forms of increasing stock speculation and credit accumulation entail an abstraction in ethical values as well. The bull market favored risk-taking in the hopes of greater profit, and many people made decisions on a hunch, rather than long-term investments. It made becoming rich seem like an easy task, that did not demand earnest work.

Furthermore, "Increasingly, leisure and acquisition of objects were presented as the right of all hard-working Americans, putting them – in a sense – on a par with the rich": this phenomenon is referred to as "the democratization of desire" (Del Gizzo 2010, 36). It represented a limitation, however, because the lower classes could not afford major consumer items without incurring debt. Del Gizzo elaborates that "In fact, consumer debt skyrocketed in the 1920s due to the new, nearly ubiquitous availability of credit and the destigmatization of personal debt" (ibid). The emphasis shifted to spending rather than saving, to the exhibition of wealth instead of putting the premium on using one's talents in work: "A consumer-based society entailed a departure from the Protestant work ethic, or the belief that hard work and thrift yield success and social respect…" (ibid). "…Personality, attitude and the image one projects publicly, bolstered, of course by commodities" (37) became primary to self-concept and status instead of necessary character traits or personal integrity. Finally, the third criticism of consumerism addresses "the normalization of wastage through planned obsolescence" (Curnutt 90), and the conception of "disposability as not only an earmark but a privilege of abundance" (15). Consumption implies "using things up" until they have no remaining value. If this mode is applied to relationships, it would be possible to abandon people when they have nothing to offer anymore. Another drawback is that if it is possible to obtain anything through money, the feeling of specialty fades. On top of this, too much hedonic pleasure

numbs the senses, and the satisfaction gotten out of objects easily wears off. The ideology of cultural progress makes producers strive for superior and more covetable products, but at the same time squandering has become a major issue.

To further contextualize, the consequence of the skyrocketing consumer debt and stock speculation paved way for the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the Great Depression of the years 1929-1939 (History.com). It proved to be "the deepest and longest-lasting economic downturn in the history of the Western industrialized world" (ibid). First, the Crash inflicted a Wall Street panic, as the surest way to become rich failed when stock prices plummeted, bankrupting millions of investors. Banks had also invested savings in stocks, and bank runs ensued as people lost trust in their solvency. "By 1933, when the Great Depression reached its nadir, some 13 to 15 million Americans were unemployed and nearly half of the country's banks had failed" (ibid). The Gold Standard that tied currencies together aided the spread of economic difficulty, and the Great Depression caused extremist political movements to emerge, Nazi Germany being the most notorious specimen (ibid). As a matter of fact, we might be on the verge of a turnaround crisis today, due to the swelling debt of several Western countries, especially Greece.

In fact, some believe that people are not in control of the capitalistic system, and profit maximization has gained the upper hand. Patel (2009, 89) cites Karl Marx, who stated that "capitalism bred vampires"; signifying that consumers and corporations are driven by insatiable desires, caring little for the ultimate harms caused. Patel (35-36) notifies that the pursuit of wealth does not create happiness, and the revelation has become "an almost universal cultural axiom". Patel (ibid) points out that research has discovered that avarice causes psychological harm, and if money becomes the center point of life, the consequences on overall well-being are negative. On top of this, in 1974 it was uncovered that "once a country had moved beyond a level of income where basic needs for housing, food, water and energy could be met, average happiness did not increase" (ibid).The ownership of an apartment and several utilities has represented the bourgeois

ideal centered on materialism and competitiveness, in order to "keep up with the Joneses". Del Gizzo (50) references the concepts of Karl Marx: *reification* and *commodity fetishism*, the first denoting the societal process of embracing commodity exchange as the default option to satisfy all needs. When this is internalized, commodities take on "mystical" or anthropomorphized qualities and function as building blocks of identities (51). Market exchange defines and mediates the relations between people, and it results in the perception of people as objects (ibid.)

As a matter of fact, stemming from these concerns, in the twenty-first century the ideology of *downshifting* has spawned a consumption lifestyle movement aiming towards moderation and simplification (Cherrier 2007, 325). People have begun to question the values of consumerism; "They no longer find the taken-for-granted Western value of ''more stuff is better'' fulfilling" (327). Instead, people have begun to value deliberation in consumer choices, decrease possessions, uphold tradition and quality, generally aiming at both inner and outer balance and wellbeing (ibid). People no longer unquestioningly accept the middle-class ideal; in fact some perceive it as a bubble, not guaranteeing happiness and fulfilment: individual life choices have become more acceptable. Some opt for more leisure time or adventure through travel, others reduce their amount of work, focusing on family relations. Cherrier (328) points out that the voluntary simplicity movement can be seen as "a predictable consumer response to difficult and uncertain times." The transformation in consumption is in part a consequence of the global awareness of the ecological and economic crisis (ibid). However, it still remains a Western prerogative to downsize, because we are surrounded by the abundance from which to decline.

3.2 Conspicuous Consumption

According to Veblen's critique of consumption individuals are not rational utility-seekers that ponder their choices, but conspicuous consumers who against better knowledge take part in wealth rivalry (2002, 7). By the term *conspicuous consumption* Veblen refers to a social code which

obliges people to consume in a showy manner and more than they can perhaps afford, the ultimate motive being to earn status (10). As a historical background, the structure of the American economy was based on a powerful class of tycoons: *The Theory of the Leisure Class* is thus an interpretation of the American class of millionaires and its manner of living (11-12). In "Winter Dreams" (8)[1] the dwellings of the upper class are described in the following manner:

> The dark street lightened, the dwellings of the rich loomed up around them, he stopped his coupe in front of the great white bulk of the Mortimer Joneses house, somnolent, gorgeous, drenched with the splendor of the damp moonlight. Its solidity startled him. The strong walls, the steel of the girders, the breadth and beam and pomp of it were there only to bring out the contrast with the young beauty beside him.

The premises of the rich are separated in a specific area, apart from mediocre housing; it mirrors their societal position as the leading folk that are singled out due to their accumulated affluence. The robust greatness of the palace-like building accentuates the lasting power of the elite.

As property is the source of public appreciation and envy, it also forms the basis for self-respect. People strive to attain the same level of wealth as their peers, but it gives more pleasure to own more than is the norm in one's community (2002, 30-31). In "Winter Dreams" (2), Dexter Green is captivated by the urge to achieve and acquire: "He wanted not association with glittering things and glittering people—he wanted the glittering things themselves. Often he reached out for the best without knowing why he wanted it--and sometimes he ran up against the mysterious denials and prohibitions in which life indulges". He reaches for the standard set by the elite, but eventually he cannot gain access to all of the privileges that established wealth permits. Inherited wealth ensures an enduring social standing and a position in the high society, and the upper classes have traditionally perceived productive work as degrading. Furthermore, the ability to lead a life of leisure is the most effective way to showcase wealth (Veblen 33).

The upper classes hold the belief that the effects of leisure are refining and aesthetic: since the Antiquity people have understood sophisticated life to require distance from common work, which

[1] The e-texts include page numbers

denotes weakness and subservience (34). For instance, in Winter Dreams the protagonist "… caddied only for pocket-money" (1). Dexter Green is resolute and class-conscious; there is no other way for him to become affluent than to work, due to his family background. First, he chooses to quit caddying, because he does not want to serve Judy Jones, a descendant of a wealthy patron: "As so frequently would be the case in the future, Dexter was unconsciously dictated to by his winter dreams" (WD 2). These "winter dreams" allude to dreams of extravaganza Dexter muses during the winter in his provincial home-town. For example, "He became a golf champion and defeated Mr. T. A. Hedrick in a marvellous match played a hundred times over the fairways of his imagination" (1). Dexter covets status and admiration, he wants to be a person that counts, and he is captivated by the idea of being able to showcase manly capability:

> Again, stepping from a Pierce-Arrow automobile, like Mr. Mortimer Jones, he strolled frigidly into the lounge of the Sherry Island Golf Club-- or perhaps, surrounded by an admiring crowd, he gave an exhibition of fancy diving from the spring-board of the club raft . . . (ibid)

Here masculine prowess is symbolized by the expensive car. The imagined stoic attitude emphasizes the early acquired natural ease and confidence of the upper classes. Clubs, in turn, are places of exclusion and male socialization; club membership functions as a badge of belonging to the inner circles. Furthermore, the chasm between the Old Money and the Nouveau Riche is presented in "Winter Dreams". For instance, the following description of Judy's suitors foregrounds it:

> He knew the sort of men they were--the men who when he first went to college had entered from the great prep schools with graceful clothes and the deep tan of healthy summers. He had seen that, in one sense, he was better than these men. He was newer and stronger. Yet in acknowledging to himself that he wished his children to be like them he was admitting that he was but the rough, strong stuff from which they eternally sprang. (WD 4)

Moreover, Dexter chose "…the precarious advantage of attending an older and more famous university in the East, where he was bothered by his scanty funds" (2). He values impressions and prestige, and is determined to compete with the privileged offspring of the rich. The reference to

Dexter's strength implies that he is willing to take matters into his own hands, because he has not received everything on a silver platter. In college he did not afford to partake proms, and of course he had to be naturally gifted and smart in order to enter without preparation.

It is notable, that in the quote tan is a sign of an active outdoor lifestyle and travelling to exclusive resorts. Indeed, a life of leisure does not implicate total idleness; it refers to pastimes that are simply unproductive. Leisurely gentlemen have to be able to present some proof how they have spent their private time to guard their honorable name. Examples of appreciated intangible skills include the knowledge of Latin, novel fashions in dress and design, sports or the raising of dogs and thoroughbreds (Veblen 37). "Sophisticated taste, behavior and lifestyle are useful evidence of noble descent, because good upbringing demands time, diligent effort and money" (39). Veblen refers to the propensity of the leisure class to admire and idealize the cultural habits and ideals of classical antiquity, instead of for instance familiarizing oneself with the everyday life and aspirations of the ordinary folk of the modern present (201).

Furthermore, the upper classes cultivate subtleties of taste, and are recognizable by their self-confidence. Important means of dissociation from the "common folk" are good manners, civilized speech and a knowledge of the etiquette (38). Nowadays it is still important to know the correct consumption code by which to choose the trendiest articles. Veblen's ideas converge with Pierre Bourdieu's theory of *cultural capital*; his thoughts are based on Karl Marx, who likewise believed "that capital formed the foundation of social life and dictated one's position within the social order" (Social Theory Rewired). Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital refers "to the collection of symbolic elements such as skills, tastes, posture, clothing, mannerisms, material belongings, credentials, etc. that one acquires through being part of a particular social class", generating a sense of collective identity. Thus "out" and "in" –groups arise, and the forms of cultural capital of the upper classes are valued over others, because social power is concentrated in them. *Habitus* is a widely known concept of Bourdieu, denoting "the physical embodiment of cultural capital",

including dispositions, skills and taste "for cultural objects such as art, food, and clothing". Habitus is so deeply ingrained, that people have mistaken it for an innate ability to have "a feel for the game" while competing for position on social fields (for example art, education), even though habitus is culturally developed (Social Theory Rewired).

In "Winter Dreams" Dexter is acutely aware of the social demands in order to be an eligible gentleman: "When the time had come for him to wear good clothes, he had known who were the best tailors in America, and the best tailors in America had made him the suit he wore this evening. He had acquired that particular reserve peculiar to his university, that set it off from other universities" (4). Dexter knows what is expected of him, and he is for example ashamed of his scanty knowledge of music and literature. But clothing is an important sign of success; it functions as a visible cue of social standing, verifying the affluence and lack of productive work of the wearer. The appeal of "patent leather shoes, spotless linen, a gleaming top hat, or the walking stick that greatly increases the natural charm of a gentleman" is based on this (Veblen 96). In addition, Veblen points out that higher-class women's dresses have historically been impractical, expensive, and preventive of worthwhile action. For example, the corset represents a truncation, a lessening of the vitality of the wearer, at the same time increasing her regard in terms of status (97). While the husband functioned as the breadwinner, the woman ran the household, consuming in the husband's name and governing the servants (54). Thus women were reduced to the position of dependents, their duty being to represent the solvency of their husband (102).

3.3 The Lifestyle of the Upper-class Young

Fitzgerald utilizes New York as the symbol of urbanization, and it is hailed as the American center of action, promising the fulfilment of lofty aspirations: "Fifth Avenue and Forty-fourth Street swarmed with the noon crowd. The wealthy, happy sun glittered in transient gold though the thick windows of the smart shops, lighting upon mesh bags and purses and strings of pearls in gray velvet

cases; upon gaudy feather fans of many colors; upon the laces and silks of expensive dresses…" (MD[2] 11). Here New York is depicted as a place of abundance, were money can buy seemingly anything; even the sunlight echoes the fortunate disposition of the nation. However, even though the purpose of May Day is to demand rights for laborers, the city-dwellers celebrate materialism. The story also refers to the May Day riots, but the actions taking place therein appear as meaningless as those of the partying upper class.

The following quote demonstrates the hopes of the young working women of reaching a pleasing standard of living; they expect that the future will permit them exquisite luxuries. On the other hand window-shopping functions as a form of recreation focused on materialism.

> Working-girls, in pairs and groups and swarms, loitered by these windows, choosing their future boudoirs from some resplendent display which included even a man's silk pajamas laid domestically across the bed. They stood in front of the jewelry stores and picked out their wedding rings and their platinum wrist watches, and then drifted on to inspect the feather fans and opera cloaks; meanwhile digesting the sandwiches and sundaes they had eaten for lunch (ibid).

The city is also a fitting place for socializing and passing time: young people were interested in having fun, the various entertainments like going to the theatre or cinema, and generally partying. A major feature of urban life was the mass nature of entertainment: "It was during this period that Hollywood became established - not only as a center of film production, but also as a cultural institution that valued conspicuous consumption, sexual display, physical culture, and youth" (Addison 2006, 6). Hollywood became the dream factory that promoted "the new standards of behavior, appearance, and lifestyle to which the public was to aspire" (ibid). As an illustration, films could be advertised in the following vein, revealing the interests of young people: "brilliant men, beautiful jazz babies, champagne baths, midnight revels, petting parties in the purple dawn…" (16).

The city was an appropriate spot for dating, and for example in "Myra Meets His Family" Myra visits New York, living in a hotel with her mother: "throughout armistice year she left the

[2] The stories are cited in abbreviated form after initial mention

ends of cigarettes all over New York on little china trays marked "Midnight Frolic" and "Coconut Grove" and "Palais Royal" (3). She attended college, but failed midyear examinations because of a crush she was having; consequently Myra's education seems to have been recreational, and in order to make her a more distinguished spouse. Her lifestyle is outgoing and fast-paced: she is a "prom trotter" or "the famous coast-to-coast Myra" (3). The city is a fitting backdrop for meeting acquaintances as well: "It was an afternoon in September when she broke a theater date in order to have tea with young Mrs. Arthur Elkins, once her roommate at school" (ibid). Myra's friend is introduced in terms of her husband's name; the practice highlights the importance of the head of the household. The friend reminds Myra: "…don't get married unless you're absolutely through playing round. It means giving up an awful lot, you know" (ibid). The "playing round" refers to the irresponsibility and non-seriousness of the life phase before entering marriage. Myra is a little tired with the "husband-hunting" she is occupied with, and she has decided to enchant a man: "Believe me, I may be a bit blasé, but I can still get any man I want" (ibid).

The process of dating is described in more detail in the following passage:

> The afternoon had been like a dream: November twilight along Fifth Avenue after the matinee, and he and Myra looking out the swarming crowds from the romantic privacy of a hansom cab – quaint device – then tea at the Ritz and her white hand gleaming on the arm of a chair beside him; and suddenly quick broken words. After that had come the trip to the jeweler's and a mad dinner in some little Italian restaurant… (MMHF 5).

The script seems carefully planned, and Myra uses her feminine charms in a calculating manner in order to ensnare an eligible gentleman. The Ritz often appears in Fitzgerald's texts; it represents exclusivity, sophistication and glamour. Even though Myra is a product of her environment, vain and airy, Fitzgerald treats the character sympathetically, grieving her limited prospects. She represents a type of young woman: "…the Myras live on the Eastern colleges as kittens live on warm milk" (3). The choice of word implies that this is an interphase in the lives of young women, and their ultimate aim is to settle down and catch a suitable husband. The story concerns a particular

Myra, in the middle of her debutante career, but she is spunky, and is not clueless in the face of a crisis. She devices a ploy of her own, not being willing to marry the man who treated her falsely.

> When Myra is about twenty-four she thinks over all the nice boys she might have married at one time or other, sighs and does the best she can. But no remarks please! She has given her youth to you; she has blown fragrantly through many ballrooms to the tender tribute of many eyes; she has roused strange surges of romance in a hundred pagan young breasts; and who shall say she hasn't counted? (MMHF 3).

In turn, "May Day" describes a posh dance, where debutantes and college graduates gather: "They were headed by a famous flute-player, distinguished throughout New York for his feat of standing on his head and shimmying with his shoulders while he played the latest jazz on his flute" (MD 35). People are in search of a spectacle, and the dances constitute a possibility for carefree enjoyment: "Edith had danced herself into that tired, dreamy state habitual only with débutantes, a state equivalent to the glow of a noble soul after several long highballs" (ibid). The quote draws attention to the quite unrestricted use of alcohol at parties. It hints that people want to experience numb forgetfulness and unreality, but the fun young people are having ultimately appears flat. People do not face each other intimately, and the frivolity of their lifestyle obliterates real concerns.

Celebrations continue till early morning, and afterwards people flock into an informal restaurant for breakfast: "Within its pale but sanitary walls one finds a noisy medley of chorus girls, college boys, debutantes, rakes, *filles de joie* – a not unrepresentative mixture of the gayest of Broadway, and even of Fifth Avenue" (MD 48). Broadway represents the center of American entertainment, and the cross-section of people in the cafe forms a continuum of merrymaking, the last types representing dissoluteness and debauchery. At the end of "May Day" Fitzgerald refers to the statue of Columbus, raising associations to the original American Dream of conquest and success. People have turned the natural realm into a construction of their own, a great city representing the craft of human. The skyscrapers crane the skies, and people modify nature and its resources to their pleasing. However, Fitzgerald makes a point on the eventual futility of the

achievement, as people have only turned to mindless pleasure-seeking instead of concrete accomplishments.

> The great plate-glass front had turned to a deep blue, the color of a Maxfield Parrish moonlight – a blue that seemed to press close upon the pane as if to crowd its way into the restaurant. Dawn had come up in Columbus Circle, magical, breathless dawn, silhouetting the great statue of the immortal Christopher, and mingling with a curious and uncanny manner with the fading yellow electric light inside (MD 52).

The morning light refers to a sense of the historical, and how it mingles with the man-made objects of the present. It is interesting that Fitzgerald refers to Maxfield Parrish, a popular American illustrator and artist of the 1920s, who was known for neoclassical imagery, and a special cobalt blue he utilized (National Museum of American Illustration). The reference relates to how popular culture modifies the perception of reality; it also draws the attention to fabulousness and the Antiquity. In the Twenties people generally wanted the "bread and circuses" instead of combining their potential for something more important. This mirrors the beginning of the story, as it is suggested that the invincible greatness of America is a myth; their soldiers are not gallant in reality, and similarly, the grandeur of the Antiquity is partly a belief about history we foster. In the Twenties people were perhaps blinded by the obtained comforts, believing that prosperity would last forever, and trickle down to the lower classes as well.

4. Gender Ideals

To return to Wolff, the role of a *flaneuse* did not exist, because historically it was unacceptable for women to promenade unaccompanied in the city (41). Could the flapper be seen as a modern heroine? She sought entertainment and modern impressions in a similar manner to the flaneur. In the following chapters I will outline the concept of gender, and discuss the premium value that beauty gains in women's lives and in connection to the analyzed stories. Then I will examine the flapper characters of Fitzgerald, paying attention to their personality and attitude. I will also ponder how the flapper as a cultural female type challenged gender perceptions. Finally, I will look into how the stories address the transformation of ideal masculinity in the Twenties.

4.1 The Gender System

Ridgeway et al state that *gender* is primarily "an institutionalized system of social practices for constituting people as two significantly different categories, men and women, and organizing social relations of inequality on the basis of that difference" (2004, 510). Gender is further divided into levels of operation: at the macro level it comprises "cultural beliefs and distributions of resources", at the interactional level "patterns of behavior and organizational practices" and identities at the individual level (511). Gender does not naturally stem from biological sex, for it is a social and cultural construction, a conception on what 'feminine' and 'masculine' stand for.

Gender roles specify what is appropriate and suitable for men and women, whereas everyone possesses a *gender identity,* or a personal sense of gender. Hegemonic cultural beliefs that "define the distinguishing characteristics of men and women and how they are expected to behave" are the core in maintaining or changing the gender system (Ridgeway et al 511). The term 'hegemonic' refers to how the beliefs "…are institutionalized in the media, government policy, normative images of the family, and so on" (513). For instance, women are perceived as naturally submissive and emotional, whereas men are codified as active and resourceful. Thus gender difference is defined in

terms of polar opposites, wherein the qualities coded as feminine are in the negative end. The gender divide has been utilized in order to trivialize and control women, binding them to the domestic sphere, whereas men have been understood as innately suited for the public sphere, for leading and being in charge. Of course perceptions of gender vary historically, and such a shift was taking place in the 1920s: cultural changes enabled women to find more personal freedom. Cultural beliefs and rules for behavior are in operation especially in "social relational contexts" (Ridgeway et al 511): in the analyzed stories the prominent places where young people interact are clubs, dance halls, hotels and sports venues such as golf courses.

Gender functions as a neat way to categorize people and to simplify; it hinders the perception of others as eminently individuals. The most ingrained features of the gender system seem to be "the household division of labor, the sex segregation of jobs, or gender differences in status and authority" (512). Men have been historically less bound to the home, and women have taken care of the household chores and the raising of children. This responsibility limited women's career possibilities, because family life could not be combined with working life, and on the whole men's positions were seen as more important. Women are perceived as "communal" and men as "agentic and instrumental" (513). Thus it has been natural to single men out as actors and foster their privilege in education, for example. Young women in Fitzgerald's texts hardly achieve anything substantial, but flit from party to party and pass time at the universities in search for a husband.

Nevertheless, "alternative gender belief systems exist in the culture along with hegemonic beliefs. The modern-day girl-power movement is one example of an attempt to present a stronger image of girls, thereby reducing the differentiation between girls and boys" (Ridgeway et al 514). In comparison, the flapper represented a more androgynous gender ideal, highlighting that girls could be active, lively and feisty instead of submission and passivity traditionally associated with their sex. In the 2010s self-cultivation through fitness has grown into a global trend, which may replace thinness as the norm (Hyvärinen 2013). It is suggested that people strive for a healthy and athletic

body, focusing on personal well-being due to the uncertain economic situation (Hyvärinen). In addition, the fitness movement can be understood as a counter-reaction to the central position that technology and automation hold in our society (ibid).

In the 1920s the economic boom enabled a heightened focus on the self; becoming absorbed in pleasures provided by the consumer culture. Women abandoned corsets and stiff skirts, favoring scanty and lightweight clothing apt for natural movement. In contrast, the fitness movement of today promises that "strong is the new skinny": no one has to be small and weak due to the dominant beauty ideal; instead young women can choose strength and capability (Hyvärinen). It has been claimed that the fitness movement has an emancipating effect, offering a new cultural sector to "produce womanhood" through exercise (ibid). According to MacDonald (2013, 269) "The popular body movements of the interwar decades" similarly granted women a novel space for self-making, and a means to "perform modern selves". These included "keep-fit exercises and outdoor pursuits" such as hiking. In the 1920s women's bodies seemed to become more visible, and active life was conceived to have an effect on inner well-being as well: there was a "link between bodily control and autonomous selves" (268). There was a significant change in the conception that the body should be exerted in order to maintain "fitness and health", especially for women, because strain was previously understood as harmful for fertility (270-271).

Lamkin (2015) states that in the 1920s "Body ideals shifted to center on an idealized slimmer figure, leading to the popularization of various products and methods to reach this goal." Victorian mores upheld the notion that inner beauty matters most, but in contrast, modernity introduced the standard that everyone should groom their appearance, while negligence was indecent (ibid). In the 1920s slimness became a cultural ideal that was promoted by the media, and consequently, physical fitness became the vehicle for a toned figure: "Schools began to offer physical education classes" and athletic clubs promoted the popularity of golf and tennis (ibid). Biking, dancing or swimming were recommendable activities for women, because they helped in achieving a sleek figure (ibid).

In addition, Lamkin remarks that confidence was a cherished feature of the New Woman, and exercise could be used as a way to improve poise and bodily containment.

4.2 Beauty – Privilege and Cost

Rhode (2010, 5) points out that appearance-related practices have the potential to cumulatively limit women's lives: looks have an impact on employment, self-esteem and the status possessed in personal relationships. Rhode (19-20) remarks that we should culturally foster "more attainable, healthy, and inclusive ideals", including a wider spectrum of ages, body sizes and ethnicities. Historically especially women have complied with the need to invest in appearance, but young men are increasingly swept along by the cultural demand to look dapper. In the 1920s as well, a successful gentleman could be identified through his style: a suave manner, a finely cut suit with a derby, or a fashionable straw-hat with a more relaxed attire.

However, women face more elaborate demands related to grooming, and they have more variable styles to master: "Women face greater pressures than men to look attractive and pay greater penalties for falling short" (Rhode 7). Through cultivated looks and proper self-presentation it is possible to obtain more attention, social capital and possibilities. At the club balls that Fitzgerald describes women have great visibility, and their popularity is determined by the amount of men that cut in on them. Men without an escort are called *stags*, arousing associations to competing with other males on owning the best females. Beautiful women form the center of the social event, and its nature makes them pay attention to their looks. As an illustration, in "May Day" (24) Edith Bradin "…thought of her own appearance. Her bare arms and shoulders were powdered to a creamy white. She knew they looked very soft and would gleam like milk against the black backs that were to silhouette them to-night". She delights in being beautiful and "made for love" (24): "Her lips were finely made of deep carmine; the irises of her eyes were delicate, breakable blue, like china eyes. She was a complete, infinitely delicate, quite perfect thing of beauty, flowing in an even line

from a complex coiffure to two small slim feet" (ibid). These phrases elucidate how cultural practices condition women for self-objectification: Edith appears inert, and she is a traditionally feminine character: "…debonnaire, immersed in her own inconsequential chatter…" (MD 12). She trifles in the societies, being a high-class 'pure woman' and hence a fitting decorative spouse: "She´s still sort of a pretty doll – you know what I mean: as if you touched her she'd smear" (MD 5). The adjectives linked to her highlight fragility and pictorial attractiveness.

Another covetable feature along with beauty in a consumer society is youth. For instance the film industry strongly favored youth in the Twenties, connecting it to the desirable and glamorous life. Actually, Fitzgerald utilized young protagonists in the majority of his works, implying the outlook that youth is the best time of life, granting the top opportunities and liveliest experiences. As an example, Judy Jones in "Winter Dreams" is the most popular and coveted young beauty of her society, but an unhappy marriage and the wasting of her potential as an individual terminate her active lifestyle. Her beauty fades, making her inconsequential as she has not cultivated any other property: "… but he [Dexter Green] knew that he had just lost something more, as surely as if he had married Judy Jones and seen her fade away before his eyes. The dream was gone. Something had been taken from him" (WD 9). And he:

> …tried to bring up a picture of the waters lapping on Sherry Island and the moonlit veranda, and gingham on the golf-links and the dry sun and the gold color of her neck's soft brown. And her mouth damp to his kisses and her eyes plaintive with melancholy and her freshness like a new fine linen in the morning. Why, these things were no longer in the world! (ibid)

Dexter wants to possess Judy, and he does not treat her as a feeling individual; she is reduced to a symbol of the high life, of money-conserved beauty. Dexter has internalized the illusion that money can preserve anything, but Judy's fate seems to prove that "…there was no beauty but the gray beauty of steel that withstands all time" (9). In fact, consumer culture promises us in glossy advertisements that we can miraculously maintain beauty by using expensive products and embracing the luxurious lifestyle. Beauty is put on a pedestal, making self-improvement a continual

process demanding sacrifices; already in the Twenties for example film stars turned to plastic surgery in order to fight natural aging.

Furthermore, Judy is an illustration of how wealth and beauty do not endow happiness: “"I'm more beautiful than anybody else," she said brokenly, "why can't I be happy?"” (WD 8). The statement mirrors Daisy’s remark in *The Great Gatsby* that “a woman’s ideal identity” is that of “a beautiful little fool” (quoted in Sanderson 2006, 155). It apprises that it is best for a woman to be empty-headed and physically attractive, because cultural practices repress women’s possibilities. Autonomous and intelligent women are understandably unhappy in a mere decorative role, serving a man. Judy Jones is a character bothered by her narrow role, and her smile has got “… no root in mirth, or even in amusement” (WD 4). Judy has become a fluent actor, but she is frustrated by the opulence she is surrounded by, because it does not satisfy her innermost yearnings. Her smile is artificial, implying that interaction in the societies requires a false constitution in order to play one’s part.

Judy certainly possesses beauty - the best asset of a woman in order to attract suitors. However, Judy’s personality reveals that she might become a woman of substance, and achieve something important in her life, but she apparently does not have a chance to study or independently choose her aims. Her animate being shines on her face: ”This color and the mobility of her mouth gave a continual impression of flux, of intense life, of passionate vitality--balanced only partially by the sad luxury of her eyes” (WD 3). She is destined to marry into a fitting family, and she cannot escape it - she is treated like a thoroughbred her family wishes to exchange for personal benefit. In this reality Judy tries to carve out even a temporary space of her own by satisfying her needs.

Dexter Green covets Judy because of her qualities, not her intrinsic being: “It did not take him many hours to decide that he had wanted Judy Jones ever since he was a proud, desirous little boy” (WD 5). Dexter treats her as an object, a trophy that would prove his status as a refined gentleman.

According to Nussbaum (1995, 251) objectification denotes the "the seeing and/or treating of someone as an object", meaning that the intrinsic value of an individual is denied, and a willingness to control emerges. Sexual objectification reduces women to looks, rendering them unidimensional caricatures meant for male desire, stripping them of dignity. Nussbaum (257) lists the facets of objectification as follows*: instrumentality*, *denial of autonomy*, *inertness* (lacking in agency), *fungibility* (interchangeable), *violability* (boundary integrity), *ownership* (commodity-sense) and *denial of subjectivity* (experience and feelings do not matter). The following quote reveals that Dexter is denying Judy's subjectivity by making her stand for a certain mood, wishing to use her instrumentally in order to prop his own status, and fantasizing about ownership that would make her yield to his demands: "It was the exquisite excitability that for the moment he controlled and owned" (WD 5). Eventually, Dexter reasons that as the relationship did not succeed, he must have been inadequately authoritative: "Nor, when he had seen that it was no use, that he did not possess in himself the power to move fundamentally or to hold Judy Jones, did he bear any malice toward her" (WD 8). Dexter is not aiming for an equal partnership: he wishes to hold the upper hand and own Judy as an artful commodity that he could try his social stature on and buy with his merits. It may also be the case that no man suffices for Judy at the moment; she is not willing to settle down, cherishing her youth. She is uncaring towards Dexter's feelings, and she does not give love a chance. On the one hand her selfish folly causes her to lose chance of happiness, and on the other the surrounding society has made her resort to beauty as an offering.

Indeed, Judy Jones is a controversial character, because on one hand she is a victim of her circumstances, as she is consumed by the superficial and limiting social reality surrounding her, and on the other hand she seems narcissistic and spoiled. Judy attempts to utilize her youth to the maximum, travel around, dance and flirt with various men. She is not ready to marry and settle down until it is absolutely requisite. Eventually the readers are left with the information, that even though she possesses the qualities of a desirable and popular young modern woman, she is unable to

find happiness. Her ultimate husband ill-uses her, her exquisite beauty vanishes, and she is restricted to home and children.

It is problematic, that even today attention is directed towards women's appearance instead of their accomplishments; Rhode presents the public admiration Michelle Obama's toned arms and dresses received as an example (10). In the media and popular culture women have often been displayed in a decorative function - as enjoyment for male gaze. Beauty ideals dictate what standard beauty is like, and teach that self-worth arises from looks. Especially for women the body has acted as a canvas to modify, or as one of the few things over which one has control: "In a world where much of life seems shaped by institutions that individuals cannot control, advertising presents the body as a welcome site for self-expression and self-respect" (66). Nevertheless, consumption is a frail foundation for self-esteem:

> Like other forms of consumption, investments in appearance often do not yield enduring satisfaction. Once their novelty wears off, or one "problem" seems fixed, new forms of self-expression and self-improvement seem necessary. Social scientists refer to this pattern as a "hedonic treadmill". The more one has, the more on needs to have (Rhode 29-30).

Indeed, for instance Judy Jones handles men as commodities, as she seduces them, plays with them like a cat with mouse, and after tiring with a suitor she moves on to the next one: "She was entertained only by the gratification of her desires and by the direct exercise of her own charm" (WD 5). She might unconsciously be resisting her suitors' attempts to obtain her, keeping her affairs on a physical basis, avoiding anything intimate. She does not give anything substantial of herself; her ailment seems to be that she possesses no other agency than feminine lure. She in a sense "consumes" men, gets a thrill out of their differing qualities, and tosses them away as there is nothing to be gained left.

4.3 Flapper as the Icon of the Twenties

It is noteworthy, that the flapper has remained a lasting cultural type even though her short life-span. The flapper might be influential because of her exuberance and playful and positive attitude to femininity. Reiss (2009, 119) remarks about literary criticism on the flapper, that "The contemporary debate focuses on the flapper's 'revolutionary' nature, her 'costume', and its significance, as well as her agency (or lack thereof)." In addition, she reminds that the female type "emerged in the 1920s because the older generations of women made it possible" (120), referring to the accomplishments of the feminist movement. Yellis explicates that the term 'flapper' originated in England, depicting "girls of the awkward age, the mid-teens" who "had not yet reached mature, dignified womanhood" (49). The flapper relates to the burgeoning youth culture, which helped young people to assimilate into the modernized society (Reiss 121). This youth culture was "feminized", due to the heightened attention "paid to the leisure preferences of the young women, and because they were the dominant consumers of popular culture…" (125). However, it should be remembered that 'flapperhood' was mainly the pursuit of privileged girls, even though it could be practiced in various degrees: "Over the marble-topped tables were bent the excited faces of flappers whose fathers owned individual villages" (MD 48).

Furthermore, "the flapper 'associated agency with visibility', and the connection to a male 'object of desire' gave her power" (Reiss 124). It is claimed that the flapper costume challenged societal norms, accentuated sexual power and the freedom over one's body (Reiss 125). Yellis (1969, 44) states that "The flapper's aesthetic ideal was motion, her characteristics were intensity, energy, volatility." These characteristics made women more visible and meaningful, disputing the traditional supposition that women are frail and passive. In "May Day" even the more traditional beauty Edith Bradin is described in the following vein: "He had loved to draw her – around his room had been a dozen sketches of her – playing golf, swimming – he could draw her pert, arresting

profile with his eyes shut" (13). Thus Edith is pictured in the middle of activity, and her appearance implies vivaciousness.

Sanderson (2006, 143) states that Fitzgerald utilizes flapper characters as representatives of "…a new philosophy of romantic individualism, rebellion, and liberation, and his earliest writings enthusiastically present her as an embodiment of these new values." In the course of his career Fitzgerald began, however, to treat the flapper as a token of "social disorder" as well (ibid). Sanderson (144) remarks that "While some see him as a sympathetic spokesman for modern women, a large majority read the author's works as outright condemnations of women for their failure to live up to the male hero's romantic dreams". This seems a strange evaluation, because typically Fitzgerald did not create unidimensional characters, and even though the perception of Judy Jones, for example, is filtered through a male consciousness, readers are able to identify the reasons behind her conduct. Judy is constructed as the object of male fantasy, and thus she is habitually described in terms of her appearance and dressing:

> As she took her stance for a short mashie shot, Dexter looked at her closely. She wore a blue gingham dress, rimmed at throat and shoulders with a white edging that accentuated her tan. The quality of exaggeration, of thinness, which had made her passionate eyes and down-turning mouth absurd at eleven, was gone now. She was arrestingly beautiful. (WD 3)

The wealthy men playing at the golf course discuss her looks, and evaluate her playing-style and behavior: "she always looks as if she wanted to be kissed! Turning those big coweyes on every calf in town! It was doubtful if Mr. Hedrick intended a reference to the maternal instinct." (3) Here Judy is likened to an animal that uses it natural instincts to attract males. The men's comments reveal a condescending attitude and a willingness to control: "All she needs is to be turned up and spanked for six months and then to be married off to an oldfashioned cavalry captain." (ibid). They think that she should be put "where she belongs", that is, under the surveillance and control of an authoritative man. This instance includes many facets of objectification: *denial of autonomy* (from their point of view Judy is like a child or an animal), *violability* (she should be disciplined),

ownership (the notion that she could be married to an elect male) and *denial of subjectivity* (Judy is not free to act individually, and her breeziness is condemnable).

To continue, Sanderson (150) relates that "… the modern young girl's self-dramatization defies traditional ideals of female self-effacement. While a lady stayed out of public view, the flapper puts herself in the spotlight and flaunts her outrageously modern self. She invites the public gaze and grooms herself accordingly." Indeed, flappers are known for glamorous silk or bead embroidered skirts, fringes, elaborate headwear and such. Women were traditionally supposed to be modest, chaste "angels of the house" (Sanderson 145). Generally, "…from the 1890s into the 1920s, there was a rise in women's public power – a feminization of American culture" (145). As women began to participate in the public realm they at first pertained to "the higher morality" that men expected of them, promoting "domestic" values in a variety of reform movements, notably abolitionism, temperance, and women's rights" (ibid). It is problematic to categorize men as the morally inferior beings, and equally, to idealize women: "…men, acting from their own needs, tend to see women symbolically, as representations of virtue or of worldly taint" (Sanderson 154). This conduct arises from egocentricity, and the personality of the woman and her unique needs are disregarded. Fitzgerald also addresses the negative qualities of the new woman, such as "boredom, insincerity, triviality, and hedonistic irresponsibility" (153). Nevertheless, "…the weaknesses of the New Woman also reflect and magnify the weaknesses of the New Man" (ibid). In other words, both men and women possess the quality of uselessness and carelessness in Fitzgerald's fiction. Men are described as flawed in their difficulty of reacting to the changing womanhood in a fitting manner. Fitzgerald also depicts the problems of the sexes in understanding one another, and forming an equal partnership.

In "Winter Dreams" there is ambivalence towards Judy's vitality; there is "ungodliness" in her smile and also "Heaven help us!—in the almost passionate quality of her eyes" (1). This description mirrors the patriarchal notion, that it is suspicious or "wicked" for a woman to showcase

liveliness and briskness, because it implies that she is naturally autonomous. The phrase that Dexter "…was treated to that absurd smile, that preposterous smile—the memory of which at least a dozen men were to carry into middle age" (2), implies that Judy is acting, but on the other hand her pose succeeds marvelously. The term "treat" imparts that she is as if an exquisite prize worth pursuing. Dexter is dazed by Judy's antics, for example her driving a motorboat: she directly inquires: ""Well, do you know how to drive a motor-boat? Because if you do I wish you'd drive this one so I can ride on the surf-board behind"" (WD 4). Again Dexter is immersed in gazing her: "Watching her was without effort to the eye, watching a branch waving or a sea-gull flying", highlighting that it is natural to look at her. She is in her element and at ease: "When he looked around again the girl was standing up on the rushing board, her arms spread wide, her eyes lifted toward the moon" (4). Judy seems daring, contrary to the traditional feminine ideal.

In addition to playing golf and doing water sports Judy travels around and dances a lot: "She had passed through enchanted streets, doing things that were like provocative music" (7). The phrase accentuates how Dexter experiences Judy's life to be above the ordinary, enticing but intangible, and flowing as jazz. The expression "provocative" implies the sexual appetites she is arousing. Dexter is haunted by a picture of her: "Judy Jones, a slender enamelled doll in cloth of gold: gold in a band at her head, gold in two slipper points at her dress's hem" (7). It is impossible to soil her, because she is sheltered by wealth, and in a sense above such things. She is as if an objectified model doll, which with society plays. However, "No disillusion as to the world in which she had grown up could cure his illusion as to her desirability" (6). Judy is artificial, as the culture around her entails that beauty is a woman's most valuable property. In fact, after experiencing such an "upmarket" romance Dexter is discontent with his fiancé: "That old penny's worth of happiness he had spent for this bushel of content. He knew that Irene would be no more than a curtain spread behind him, a hand moving among gleaming tea-cups, a voice calling to children . . . fire and

loveliness were gone…" (ibid). The expression imparts the sense of calculating the costs and benefits of a relationship; in other words market terms transfer to the everyday contexts.

Nevertheless, Fitzgerald demonstrates that women can be lively and poised, and generally that femininity should not be defined so tightly; "It was Fitzgerald's American young girl with her "boyish" characteristics that helped to dismantle established concepts of male and female nature" (Sanderson 162). He held the belief that flappers were not "a type" of woman, but "a generation" (146); in other words the new generation was distinct from the older one, and the world was fundamentally reforming. A drawback to this process was that "Women were not just free to be modern – they were expected to be modern" (Sanderson 146). This is accentuated by the story "Bernice Bobs Her Hair", where Bernice, who relies on the Victorian conception of womanhood confronts the modern outlook, that her popular cousin Marjorie represents; "Marjorie never giggled, was never frightened, seldom embarrassed, and in fact had very few of the qualities which Bernice considered appropriately and blessedly feminine" (BH 3). Marjorie is generally sangfroid and competent in the courting etiquette. But "As a matter of fact Marjorie had no female intimates – she considered girls stupid" (2). Marjorie is conceited, as she feels girls such as Bernice, who appreciate demureness, are below her. Sanderson (146) explains that "Embracing the values of individual self-creation (and female rivalry), women sought to keep up with the new fashions in dress, attitude, and behavior." It is a negative consequence that other females became to be seen as competitors in a contest for popularity. "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" substantiates the belief "…that popularity was, in fact, the inevitable reward for a carefully constructed persona" (Sanderson 149). Marjorie promises to train Bernice in the art of self-fashioning, and she professes that "When a girl feels that she's perfectly groomed and dressed she can forget that part of her. That's charm" (BH 5). At first Bernice is hurt by Marjorie's bluntness and coolness; Marjorie is an admired society flirt, but at the same time selfish and crude.

Marjorie educates Bernice on the demands of the new era, pointing out that "Little Women" is an outdated guide for the modern world. Marjorie complains to her mother that "So many people have told you how pretty and sweet she [Bernice] is, and how she can cook! What of it? She has a bum time. Men don't like her" (3). She goes on to lecture Bernice on the following faults:

> Girls like you are responsible for all the tiresome colorless marriages; all those ghastly inefficiencies that pass as feminine qualities. What a blow it must be when a man with imagination marries the beautiful bundle of clothes that he's been building ideals round, and finds that she's just a weak, whining, cowardly mass of affectations! (5)

This highlights that men call for more than an agreeable appearance; they expect excitability and entertaining small talk. The outpouring reveals that marriage had become more of a partnership, involving the potential for mutual association. To first gain popularity in the society a girl has to craft an individual "line", and Bernice becomes known for boasting about bobbing her hair: ""I want to be a society vampire, you see', she announced coolly, and went on to inform him that bobbed hair was the necessary prelude"" (6). Here she refers to being a flapper and behaving promiscuously by exploiting female sexuality; a vamp refers to a seductress. Bobbing one's hair was considered a rebellious act connected to a scandalous reputation. Indeed, the transformation of Bernice renders her more narcissistic: "With the feeling that people really enjoyed looking at her and listening to her came the foundation of self-confidence" (7). The basis for her self-esteem is changed from respectability and kindness to appearance and the position she holds in the social hierarchy. The story has a sardonic tone, and it seems partly to criticize the negative traits that modern womanhood fosters.

The narrative also addresses female envy: at first Bernice is slightly jealous of Marjorie's popularity and social ease, and Marjorie is put off as her suitor switches to the charms of the newly alluring Bernice. Bernice realizes that she has done wrong by tempting Marjorie's admirer: "She had offended Marjorie, the sphinx of sphinxes. With the most wholesome and innocent intentions in the world she had stolen Marjorie's property" (8). This shows that girls could handle men as objects as well, and the mention of 'sphinx' alludes to the mysterious femininity, the ability to manipulate

men through sexuality. It also conveys the fear of female domination over the masculine. Bernice is finally pressurized to fulfill her promise, and bob her long, feminine hair: “Outside a passer-by stopped and stared; a couple joined him; half a dozen small boys’ noses sprang into life, flattened against the glass…” (9). Here Fitzgerald humorously highlights the attention the act of bobbing provokes. Afterwards Bernice feels that “Her face’s chief charm had been a Madonna-like simplicity. Now that was gone and she was – well, frightfully mediocre – not stagy; only ridiculous…” (10). Her Madonna-likeness accentuates traditional femininity adopted at her provincial hometown and down-to-earth beauty; amid the shock of the radical action Bernice cannot imagine herself as a flashy flapper posing for an audience. As a matter of fact, the story’s beginning depicts a country club dance as a theatrical performance, were the young actors form the center of attention, every line and nuance counts, and the old dames are observing the play suspiciously, disapproving of loose behavior.

Finally, it turns out that Marjorie tricked Bernice into the act, in order to make her look improper at a social occasion arranged for the cousins: ““Why, child”, cried Mrs. Harvey, “in her paper on ‘The Foibles of the Younger Generation’ that she read at the last meeting of the Thursday Club she devoted fifteen minutes to bobbed hair. It’s her pet abomination. And the dance is for you and Marjorie!” (10) Here the generational divide is visible, foregrounding the opposition towards the caprices and the apparent lack of decorum of young people, which was understandably greater at the countryside. Bernice is upset about the incident, and Marjorie seems to rub it in: “Bernice winced as Marjorie tossed her own hair over her shoulders and began to twist it slowly into two long blond braids until in her cream-colored negligée she looked like a delicate painting of some Saxon princess” (11). Further on, Bernice abruptly decides to end the visit, and leave the house in the middle of the night; wearing a set look she calmly deliberates her actions: “It was quite a new look for Bernice and it carried consequences” (ibid). The sentence mirrors the physical transformation she experienced, hinting that the bobbing and the other modifications have altered

her persona. Bernice has her revenge: she cuts Marjorie's braids unscrupulously while she is asleep, and delightedly relishes: ""Huh!" She giggled wildly. "Scalp the selfish thing!" Then picking up her suitcase she set off at a half-run down the moonlit street" (11).

Thus the story discusses the negative side of modern womanhood: the competition and harsh comparison taking place between females. What is more, Marjorie appears unfeeling and selfish, speaking her mind without inhibitions, and similarly as Bernice's "education" is finished, she cuts loose and acts meanly. Clearly the narrative is dramatized, but it hints that not all about the modern woman is so admirable. Interestingly, "In "Babylon Revisited" (February 1931), Fitzgerald sought to redeem the image of the young girl by making the girl younger, purer, a symbol of regained honor" (Sanderson 158). Even her Latin-based name, Honoria, signifies 'a woman of honor'. All in all, she acts in a decent manner and seems mellow and well brought-up: "He waited in the dark street until she appeared, all warm and glowing, in the window above and kissed her fingers out into the night" (BR part II). The story emanates a longing for the former Victorian morality, the centrality of the family, and the meaning of home as a protective place.

4.4 Ideal Masculinity

In this section I will discuss how the notion of ideal masculinity was transforming in the Twenties, why male personality became valued instead of innate character, and how consumerism affected male individuality. First of all, Forter (2006, 296) states that conceptions of masculinity were in the middle of prominent modification during the years 1890 to 1920, due to the collapse of formerly naturalized gender roles. Earlier, ideal masculinity was understood as an ability to accomplish prominence in "the capitalistic marketplace – to achieve economic autonomy, self-sufficiency, and ownership of productive property" (ibid). Thus "an aggressive assertiveness and competitive vigor thought of as innately male" (Forter 297) were needed in order to be successful. However, this model of self-making was more and more impeded by corporate capitalism that took over the proprietary one, and employees were put in the position of dependents in the bureaucratic structure of firms (297).White-collar work was seen to lessen masculine authority (ibid), as the Victorian masculine ideal had highlighted independence (Pendergast 1997, 56). This change engendered "a discursive shift"; *manhood* was formerly defined in antithesis to *boyhood*, whereas now *masculinity* was understood as in opposition to *femininity* (Forter 298). This entails that the focus was no more on the apt process of growing up, and an intensified need to guard the boundaries of proper "male and female identities" arouse (298).

Furthermore, in the previous gender system women were seen as having a civilizing and virtuous effect on men, now female influence was coded as an "emasculating danger" (Forter 298). This promoted the othering of women, as men should shun their softening company. As a counteraction men embraced for example bodily prowess and aggression, which had formerly been treated ambivalently (ibid). Through sports and other activities suitable for "the consumption of manhood", men could identify with older "and more artisanal forms of manhood" (ibid).

Forter remarks that a social need to redefine the meanings attached to masculinity and the collisions between different forms of it carve out "a space for agency and change" (299). However,

the standard of *hegemonic masculinity* prevails, denoting "…the norm to which men are held accountable despite individual conceptualizations of masculinity that depart from that norm" (Bird 1996, 120). It is maintained through "male homosocial heterosexual interactions", which sustain the meanings that ideal masculinity entails, in other words "emotional detachment, competitiveness and sexual objectification of women" (Bird 120-121). Thus prescriptive masculinity centers on the display of a façade of success, and it is conceptualized as in opposition to the inherently inferior female individuality; in a similar manner the existing non-hegemonic masculinities are considered subordinate (121).

Homosociality fosters the separation of men and women "through segregation in social institutions" (ibid). For instance, education used to be a male realm, and women functioned only as escorts at social clubs, which were establishments of male interaction. To illustrate, The Harvard Graduate School of Education began to admit women in the year 1920 and Harvard Medical School accepted women only in 1945 (Walsh, Harvard Gazette). Indeed, social power has been concentrated in male hands, and historically several institutions have been reserved all-male. All in all, clubs comprise an appropriate venue for establishing social hierarchy: according to the demands of hegemonic masculinity men are required to compete with each other, crafting their self as fittingly masculine (Bird 127). A proper man is a self-assertive individual, displaying placidity and thus forwarding the sense of control (122). If a man does not take part in social rivalry, he risks ostracism and the loss of "status and self-esteem" (128).

"May Day" illustrates these points; its protagonists Gordon Sterrett and Philip Dean are both Yale graduates, but the former is in trouble, losing the grip on his prospects, while the latter enjoys a secure position, and casually vacations in New York. The statement of Gordon's that "I've bled the family until I'm ashamed to ask for another nickel" (8) implies his desperate state, and borrowing money from a friend makes his misfortunes known in the social circles. His belief that

getting "… a week's rest and a new suit and some ready money" (ibid) would restore his former composure, discloses the importance of image rather than substantial character.

Philip is exasperated by the disruption to his holiday: "You've got to buckle down if you want to make good, suggested Dean with cold formalism" (7). The business-style remark imparts the notion that everyone is in charge of their life, and there are no results without effort. The business world favors formality and productivity, and there is no pity for those who do not perform and earn their place. Gordon seems idealistic, because he dreams of doing illustrations professionally, even though he does not afford the training needed. He is misplaced, because he has dropped out of the sharp-edge competitiveness business demands. Gordon's statement "I've become a damn beggar, a leech on my friends. I'm a failure. I'm poor as hell" (30) highlights the pivotal role of money in achieving autonomy in the modern world.

While Gordon wears a shabby suit and appears unkempt, Philip is polished and groomed: "Dean tied his tie precisely, brushed his eyebrows, and removed a piece of tobacco from his teeth with solemnity" (MD 9). Actually, Philip seems like a dandy, who is at home on the dancefloor, and suave, having a first-rate taste for style. As dandy-figures are highly aware of their looks and social persona, they project a self-possessed attitude. For example brushing one's eyebrows seems exaggerated especially for a male, and thus dandyism includes a streak of effeminacy. However, Philip is depicted as having a fit body, and a quality of ruggedness. But he appreciates comfort and luxury, as professed by his silk pajamas and various silk shirts. He is fashion-conscious, getting pleasure out of a shopping tour with a male acquaintance, inquiring of him: "Did he think narrow ties were coming back? And wasn't it a shame that Rivers couldn't get any more Welsh Margotson collars?" (MD 12). Stylishness demands knowledge of the things that are distinguished amid the right folk.

On the whole Philip has assimilated the notion that life is about "the survival of the fittest", everyone is responsible only for themselves, and there are no obligations to assist a misfortunate

fellow. According to hegemonic masculinity weakness is regarded as subservience, and Philip reacts contemptuously to Gordon's plight. He does not want to be seen as Gordon's companion, and regards the whole business as a nuisance to his personal amusement. He simply answers that lending the money Gordon requires would "…put a crimp in me for a month" (MD 13). The remark proves that Philip thinks only about his own interest when another person's whole life is in question. Philip decides "Think I'll go back to the hotel and get a shave, haircut, and massage" (ibid).

Philip's overall attitude is nonchalant, and he happens to be mindlessly celebrating around the city, as Gordon wakes up and finds out he is irrevocably trapped by a "cheap" woman Jewel Hudson. Everyone seems to be roaring drunk, and there is no point to the merrymaking. Gordon ends up committing suicide, as even his former lover Edith Bradin scorns him: "He wasn't at all light and gay and careless – a great lethargy and discouragement had come over him. Revulsion seized her, followed by a faint, surprising boredom" (MD 29). Thus an ideal upper-class man is in command, having a deportment that proves his status. However, this norm evokes selfishness and coldness for others' problems. Fitzgerald seems be showing that there is no actual difference between the rich and the dirty and unsophisticated poor that he depicts in the story; both classes are mindless and not for the glory of America. In fact, the title of "May Day" alludes to a nation that is developing and blooming, but Fitzgerald seems sceptic that America will achieve something substantial. It is described as a marketplace of plenty, but it is questionable whether it is the ultimate center of civilization.

All in all, a major shift from Victorian masculinity to Modern masculinity was taking place in the Twenties. The former valued *character*: "honor, loyalty, independence, self-control, a sense of duty and patriarchy" while the latter prized *personality*: "youth, malleability, cooperativeness, expressiveness and sexuality (Pendergast 57). In "Babylon Revisited" Charlie Wales deplores the

modern disintegration: “He believed in character; he wanted to jump back a whole generation and trust in character again as the eternally valuable element” (BR part I).

The mass media largely promoted the images and ideals associated with Modern masculinity, because it was appropriate for the facilitation of the growth of consumer culture (57-58). Contrastingly, in “Winter Dreams” Dexter Green believes in character, and that his qualities of ambition and integrity professed from early on will pave his way for success:

> All about him rich men's sons were peddling bonds precariously, or investing patrimonies precariously, or plodding through the two dozen volumes of the "George Washington Commercial Course," but Dexter borrowed a thousand dollars on his college degree and his confident mouth, and bought a partnership in a laundry. (WD 2)

For the upper-class young men it is possible to be careless, but Dexter does not have an inheritance. However, his father was an entrepreneur, but Dexter is more ambitious, and wants to expand his possessions.

> Men were insisting that their Shetland hose and sweaters go to his laundry just as they had insisted on a caddy who could find golfballs. A little later he was doing their wives' lingerie as well--and running five branches in different parts of the city. Before he was twenty-seven he owned the largest string of laundries in his section of the country. It was then that he sold out and went to New York. (ibid)

Dexter is a capable businessman; he knows the trade and insists on the best quality performance. Nevertheless, his ultimate goal is to become rich, and there is no other alternative for him than to work diligently. He represents the self-made man, who believes that it is possible to rise socially. The magnates that know him admire Dexter’s initiative and invite him to their circles: “When he was twenty-three Mr. Hart--one of the gray-haired men who liked to say "Now there's a boy"--gave him a guest card to the Sherry Island Golf Club for a week-end” (WD 2-3). Dexter has an ambivalent attitude: “One minute he had the sense of being a trespasser--in the next he was impressed by the tremendous superiority he felt toward Mr. T. A. Hedrick, who was a bore and not even a good golfer any more” (3). He cannot feel at ease, because he is given the entrance to the societies rather than having an innate right to enter them. He finds consolation in the thought that he

has a better-quality character than the rich, but in any case he endeavors to establish himself and acquire name for his descendants.

Dexter pursues his objectives relentlessly and plans his actions determinedly. In "… New York, where he had done well--so well that there were no barriers too high for him" (8), Dexter is on an upward trajectory to prosperity. He has adapted to the surroundings so well that he elicits a comment: "…I thought men like you were probably born and raised on Wall Street" (ibid). He works in the financial center of America, being a sangfroid and astute businessman. Indeed, modern masculinity transmitted the belief that consumption was a key to success (Pendergast 63). The proper personality could guarantee the sale, for example, and it could be propped by commodities (64). Male success in capitalism became to be seen as the outcome of "…the attention to the details of his appearance, his salesmanship. Masculinity came to be constructed in terms of how men presented themselves, not who they were. After all, in an urban corporate world one could not know a man's background but might recognize his brand of after-shave" (ibid). The notion of a malleable personality was foregrounded: "the rhetoric of consumption" informed that image was of top priority, and individuals could express themselves through the goods they purchased (Pendergast 68). Consumerism offered "…a constantly changing set of status markers and fashion trends to observe and obey" (75), promoting the expansion of the market, but at the same time enslaving people to its dictations. Fitzgerald discusses modern self-fashioning through the character of Dexter, as he adopts the mold of the shrewd businessman aware of the etiquette and the correct way of dressing. In a similar manner Jay Gatsby believed he could overcome the barriers of class, and transform himself into an impeccable high society gentleman.

In "Babylon Revisited" Charlie Wales, similarly, works in business in Prague. He assures to his sister-in-law's family: "I've learned. I worked hard for ten years, you know – until I got lucky in the market, like so many people. Terribly lucky. It didn't seem any use working any more, so I quit. It won't happen again" (BR part III). The explanation shows how wealth creates an illusion of

omnipotence and security, and swift success is blinding and makes indulgence probable: “”But it was nice while it lasted”, Charlie said. “We were a sort of royalty, almost infallible, with a sort of magic around us” (BR part I). Affluence makes it easy to believe that one is without fallacy, above the common folk, and entitled to exquisite things. Fitzgerald customarily utilizes the idea of magic in connection to money; it makes life seem wonderful and glittering, but ultimately it is only illusory. The infiltration of the language of the market exchange into everyday happenings highlights the grip money holds. Fitzgerald elucidates how relationships become transactions, individuals possess an exchange value, and people no longer consider objects in terms of utility, but of innate, profound meaning. The human race has always been willing to exploit other people, slavery being a glaring example.

“Babylon Revisited” depicts Paris in the wake of the stock market crash, when the swarms of Americans and other expatriates have disappeared. Paris functioned as the stage for an unbridled spending spree:

> He remembered thousand-franc notes given to an orchestra for playing a single number, hundred-franc notes tossed to a doorman for calling a cab. But it hadn’t been given for nothing. It had been given, even the most wildly squandered sum, as an offering to destiny that he might not remember the things most worth remembering… (BR part I).

Fitzgerald is able to draw on his own experiences and feelings, because he and Zelda were known for drunken stunts such as swimming in a fountain, boisterous partying, unrestrained use of money and adulterous behavior. It is interesting how Fitzgerald seems to condemn the Jazz Age in the understanding that ultimately everything about it was frivolous and debauched. Paris is likened to Babylon, breeding corruption and idolatry. It seems no coincidence, that idolatry is suggested: as money is put on a pedestal and worshipped as the most venerable thing in life, greed takes hold and distorts perception. Fitzgerald shows that the result of materialism is the rise of sinful nature and damaging behavior.

In the narrative the consequence of Charlie’s behavior is the breakdown of his family: “All the catering to vice and waste was on an utterly childish scale, and he suddenly realized the

meaning of the word “dissipate” – to dissipate into thin air; to make nothing out of something” (BR part I). Here the results of dissoluteness are put forth, and Fitzgerald was well acquainted with the debasing effects of alcohol. Unrestrained drinking was common in the Twenties, maybe even increased by the Prohibition, and cocktails and speakeasies became fashionable: “At noon he sat opposite Honoria at Le Grand Vatel, the only restaurant he could think of not reminiscent of champagne dinners and long luncheons that began at two and ended in a blurred and vague twilight” (BR part II). Adults behaved recklessly even if they had children, and Charlie painfully realizes that he lost several of the earliest years of his daughter’s growth. It may seem a cliché that the most important things in life are a loving family, gentleness of heart and moderateness. But if people sacrifice their hearts on the altar of consumerism the result is unhappiness and emptiness.

The jovial acquaintances of Charlie’s past have not remained untouched by their lifestyle: “Yesterday, in the restaurant, Lorraine had seemed trite, blurred, worn away” (BR part IV). Similarly, in the Ritz bar the bartender marvels about a certain man: “I don’t understand it, such a dandy fellow. Now he’s all bloated up…” (BR part I). The phrase ‘dandy’ implies a gentleman with a concern for appearance, having a tight-cut tuxedo and perhaps a neat flower in the breast pocket - but the aftermath of dissipation is not commendable. In turn, Lorraine appears ghostly and immaterial. Through Charlie’s eyes the readers see “…the women and girls carried screaming with drink or drugs out of public places” (BR part V). This is disturbing, because in the Victorian era women were thought to be morally superior. The story appears critical even towards the liberation of women, because the outcome is depicted as chaotic. “Babylon Revisited” paints another kind of picture of the Jazz Age, the result being ruinous. The decade did end abruptly, but in a sense foreseeably, as stock prices cannot rise forever: “So many fellows I hear about back in the States lost everything, maybe not in the first crash, but then in the second” (BR part V).

All in all, the story conveys a sense of regret and frustration. Paris is depicted curiously: “Outside, the fire-red, gas-blue, ghost-green signs shone smokily through the tranquil rain” (BR part

I). The milieu has an eerie quality, and it takes on a phantasmal feeling. Charlie ambles around the city: "He was curious to see Paris by night with clearer and more judicious eyes than those of other days. He bought a *strapontin* for the Casino and watched Josephine Baker go through her chocolate arabesques" (BR part I, italics original). Even the mention of the famous Twenties cabaret dancer performing her "arabesques" raises associations of primitivism and orientalism in connection to the theme of Babylon.

Perhaps it is only the reality of Charlie that is haunted, because there is also the ordinary world of the middle-class: "…people were already at dinner behind the trim little bourgeois hedge of Duval's. He had never eaten at a really cheap restaurant in Paris. Five-course dinner, four francs fifty, eighteen cents, wine included. For some odd reason he wished that he had" (BR part I). The expression conveys a sense of being above the bourgeoisie; Charlie sees their respectability and decorum as old-fashioned and dull. He senses, however, that his attitude was arrogant and unfounded. Charlie realizes as well, that he has wound up outside of all intimate human relationships. He is half a stranger to his own daughter, and he feels like an intruder amid the warmth of her family: "…the cheer of six o'clock spoke in the eager smacks of the fire and the sounds of French activity in the kitchen" (BR part I). The home is depicted as a haven amid the indifference of the city.

Eventually, Charlie is left bereft and hopeless, because his drunken acquaintances manage to invade his child's home. Charlie's sister-in-law is shocked, and declines to transfer Honoria's custody to him. Charlie cannot escape the wrong choices of the past, and his recollections of it begin to be colored in nightmarish tones. His former acquaintances "…liked him because he was functioning, because he was serious; they wanted to see him, because he was stronger than they were now, because they wanted to draw a certain sustenance from his strength" (BR part II). His companions are described as vampires, sucking out his life force as they have lost their own. They are left wandering the city purposeless, decayed by their night-life.

Alcoholism is similar to consumerism, in that it causes an insatiable urge that takes a total hold. Charlie in a sense gambled with his life, and he must bear the consequences. The idea of an 'emotional bankruptcy' that Fitzgerald utilized in relation to his own life, and that he describes in this story is an instance of financial language. It represents the most dreaded condition in capitalism. In Charlie's case the debts of the past outweigh his assets, and he ends up forlorn, even though he has managed to get a hold of himself and start anew in foreign trade. However, consumerism still plays a role in his life, as he tries to gain acceptance by giving gifts to the family: "…he bought presents for all the Peters – a piquant cloth doll, a box of Roman soldiers, flowers for Marion, big linen handkerchiefs for Lincoln" (BR IV). As Charlie finds out that he will not receive Honoria's legal guardianship, he thinks that "There wasn't much he could do now except send Honoria some things; he would send her a lot of things tomorrow. He thought rather angrily that this was just money – he had given so many people money…" (BR V). In other words, commodities become substitutes for affection. The story discusses proper fatherhood and male responsibility; for example the responsibility for Marion's death falls on Charlie, because he is supposed to be the head of the family. He has not acted honorably and considerably as a husband should, and he has forfeited the authority on his child.

5. Conclusion

In summary, Fitzgerald's short stories considerably utilize female characters, and he traces the lifestyle of the flapper. He handles the character as a representative of a novel kind of womanhood that is more outspoken, active and spirited. However, he describes how the modern personality demonstrates itself in both men and women. For example, "Winter Dreams" expresses the dilemma of 'sufficing' and authentically facing one another in a relationship, and the doubt that no man might be enough for the brilliant jazz heroine. The stories also strongly convey the limitations on female agency in the public sphere, such as the exclusion from education and genuine personal choice. The gender system also restricted men to the role of an accomplished competitor, who successfully coped with all areas of life. On the whole, Fitzgerald celebrates the comforts and wonders offered by the "new world", on the other hand he partly longs for the solidness and certainty of the past, as "Babylon Revisited" proves.

Key (2014, 655) remarks that "Considering Fitzgerald's personal preoccupation with money, it cannot be ignored that money and value are key themes across his oeuvre". In the short stories money is framed as the center point of life as material possessions measure happiness. However, Key (654) posits that Fitzgerald's style is recognizable for its "oxymoronic attitude" that is "at once fatalistic and optimistic" and "in which hope for the future is always tempered by disappointment with the past or present and a tone of confidence is forever undercut by the threat of impending crisis". In other words, this quality makes his writing modernist. On the one hand, Fitzgerald depicts wealth and glamor as pursuable, and on the other he detects the negative consequences of opulence and "the hedonic treadmill" on individuals. In a similar manner he nostalgically yearns for youth as the time of freshness and possibility, at the same time realizing its ephemeral quality and the harmfulness of clinging into it.

Money is blinding and transient, and it "…is the standard by which all values in society are rendered comparable" (Key 665). Consumerism promises fulfilment and wellbeing, but Fitzgerald

emphasizes that it is ultimately a fallacy. It is deceptive, because consumers cede their agency to the market, and commodities are deliberately equipped with qualities they cannot possibly live up to. If materialism is revered immoderately, authenticity and intimacy are lost. In a consumer society culture and economy are combined, and commodities begin deliberately to be used in identity-cultivation. The stories foreground, how the status of an individual is determined in terms of purchasing power and property.

Because consumption is promoted as the main purpose of life, its objectifying influence distils into human relationships. For instance, Fitzgerald addresses the phenomenon of "the trophy wife"; a beautiful, young and socially eligible woman is married in order to use her as an emblem of success, marking the achievement of the husband in the social competition. The woman is prized for the ability of the man to use her in displaying his wealth. In addition, Fitzgerald demonstrates how financial language, and exchange value begin to be applicable in the everyday context. Men use their wealth and status as assets in exchange for an entrance into high society, and similarly crafted male personality is utilized as a means to advance in the business world. 'Bankruptcy' is used to depict moral collapse, commodities enable bribing in order to make a favorable stance more probable, and they are substituted for care and personal contact.

All in all, masculinity takes shape as a hierarchy determined by dire competition. An ideal man is commanding, overcoming and self-sufficient. Modern masculinity is antithetical to Victorian masculinity that focused on respectability, and the role of the head and provider of the household. Formerly, hard work, a character of integrity and thrift were understood to guarantee achievement and social success. Modernity ruptured the past ideal, bringing to the forefront a properly cultivated masculine personality, an apt image propped up by the right commodities. For example, an automobile of a reputable brand guaranteed social recognition and admiration. Similarly to the men excelling in the Olympic games of Antiquity, ideal masculinity entails agency, control, shrewdness and vigor. Until today hegemonic masculinity has upheld prowess, eschewing weakness,

subservience and emotionality. Its most negative tendency is the sexual objectification of women, which facilitates their perception as prizes to be won, putting the premium on female looks that are meant for male enjoyment.

In connection, the dominant beauty ideals highlight attractiveness and youth as the basis for self-esteem and worth. Victorian womanhood valued inner beauty and modesty in greater degree, while the modern ideal foregrounded the importance of grooming and proper self-presentation. It is a historical truth that the attainment of beauty requires sacrifice, and facilitates harsh competitiveness and comparisons amongst women. Aging becomes unnatural and a looming threat, because it diminishes a woman's value and position. As an illustration, *Dove* has launched a "Campaign for Real Beauty" that attempts to challenge cultural perceptions on age and body size by displaying ordinary women in its advertisements. The company inserts such expressions in them as "grey or gorgeous" and "fat or fit", portraying women who are happy with themselves.

In fact, it is better to see the female body through what it can achieve, instead of how it looks. The fitness movement of today allows a novel kind of female self-expression that holds the potential for empowerment. It makes women more visible through persistence, esteemed muscularity and the development of physical strength. In the case of the flapper, her most noteworthy quality is visibility. It is a significant feature, because for instance in Afghanistan, a woman's face and body must not be seen publicly, and she is allowed to show herself solely amid the boundaries of the home, and for her husband. Thus the patriarchal culture governs women's bodies, and guards their morality relentlessly.

In the context of the flapper, self-dramatization took the place of traditional female self-effacement; even though her timespan was limited, flapperhood allowed independence and liberation from male control. Victorian women were expected to be "angels of the house", having a self-sacrificing motherly nature. Modern young women wanted to have a personal space amid the repressing culture and satisfy their own needs. Fitzgerald understands that ideal femininity has to

change with the times, even though he is not totally uncritical about the consequences of liberation. For him the flapper represented romantic individualism, and the suitability of the qualities of vitality, briskness and activity for women as well as men. It is groundbreaking, how the flapper phenomenon helped blur gender roles, accentuating through androgyny that women should be perceived above all as individuals, and that motherhood is not the only purpose of a woman's life. The flapper costume demonstrated freedom over one's body and the power women could hold over men through sexuality. In addition, through the sports activities that women took up, it was possible to establish the link between bodily control and autonomy.

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