

Women, Love and Sex in Scott Fitzgerald's Works

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F. Scott Fitzgerald

Abstract

After First World War only few writers spoke about younger generation, F. Scott Fitzgerald was one of the best among them. He was the well-known writer who wrote with characters of Jazz Age. The unique quality on Fitzgerald's writing is seen in his portrayal of flapper characters in his works. Flapper means liberated young women who lived for enjoying Jazz Age. This article is an attempt to analyze Fitzgerald's view and idea on women through his works.

Key Words: Women Characters, Flappers, Jazz Age, American Society.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

F. Scott Fitzgerald is a well-known American writer who is famous for the Jazz Age Characters. The beginning of 20th century had the greater essence of the flapper, which brought distinct change in the status of women in American Society. There existed a carefree atmosphere admits the women of Jazz Age this was because of financial independence women were gaming during that period. Flappers were the dynamic symbols who exhibited the spirit of festive Jazz Age.

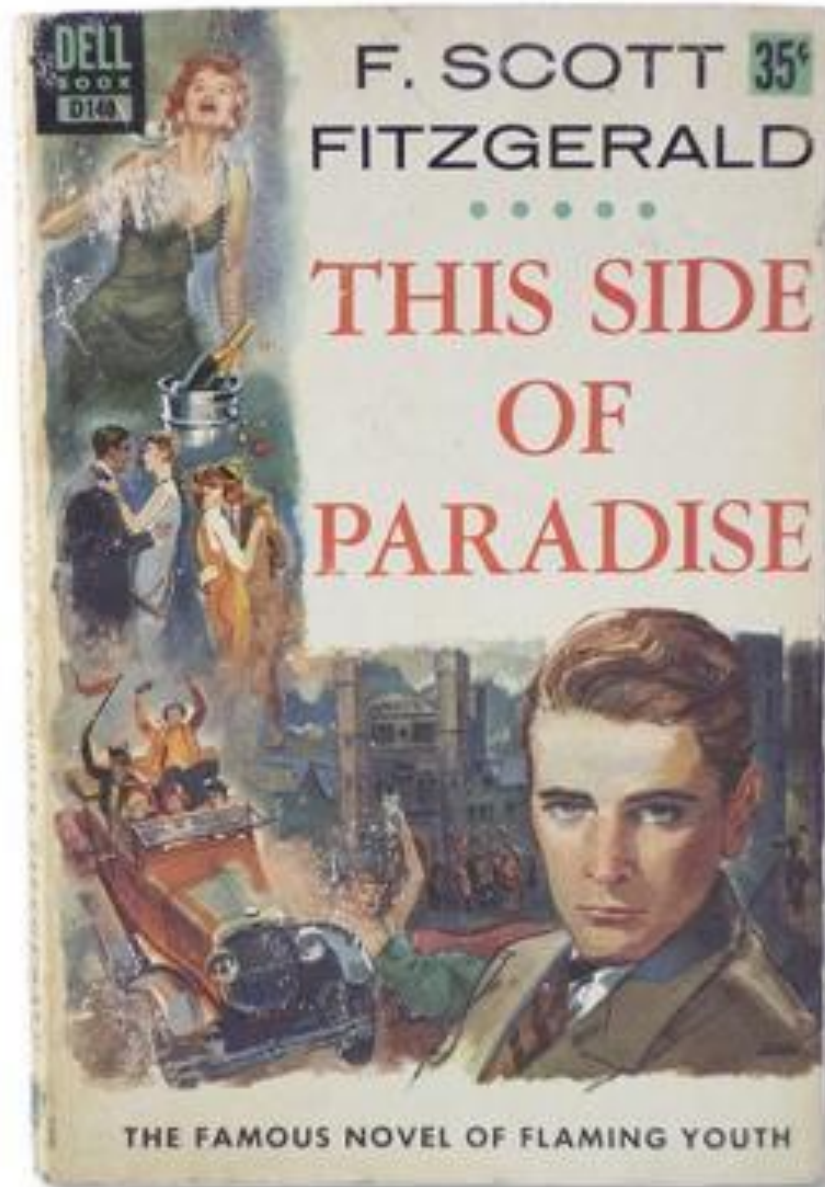
The first part of the 20th century is considered to be a turning point in American history. It is in this period urbanization was growing steadily in America. Women were given whole independence to participate in political life; this gave them equal position with men in society. In 1919 women got their right to vote, this encouraged them to pursue personal liberation. And it was seen that most of the liberated women during the 20th century were flappers. Liberated young women had bobbed hair, short skirts, they did not obey their parents instead shocked them by their manners; they were not interested in being a perfect lady. They believed that they have achieved their liberation. The young women of the age lived alone and were working, this created many strange changes in their manners and look they were mostly behind beauty and boyish look.

By 1930's smoking and drinking in public became obvious among the adolescent boys and girls. The number of children and youth going to school increased gradually this separated the youngsters from their parents, leading to a drastic change in manners, morals and ideals from that of their parents. The most alarming issue among the parents was the youth and sex of their children. Sexuality became more common and frank. Dating, partying and petting became more famous during 1920's. The youngster had no proper idea about marriage, for them love, marriage and sex were fun. They did not completely break their elder morality rules instead they bent it little for their convenience. Young women of this age wanted their husbands to be more of friends and sexual partners.

Jazz Age

Fitzgerald is stating that the coming of the Jazz Age has changed the entire social status and let it to lose the people's originality. He through his writing says that the youngsters are far away from their roots this creates sadness in the minds of the parents. Flappers were young women who enjoined free modes of behavior, young girls with short skirts, cigarette lips and dancing jazz are the predominant symbol of the 20th century. Fitzgerald helped to popularize this type of Jazz culture which was developing steadily during his period. Many writers wrote about Jazz Age viewed it with possibilities of tragedy in their situation, but Fitzgerald gave the Jazz Age in his writing with admiration, celebration, and appreciating the adventurous characteristics of the flapper era. He created female characters so strong, dictating the young women of his society not to feel shame for doing what they please this made him more popular during his age. His heroines in *This Side of Paradise* became more attractive for the young generation, as the female characters were molded with defiant attitude and beauty which they used deliberately for their own selfish motives. Rosalind, a character in the novel is described by her sister as "average – smokers sometimes, drinks punch, frequently kissed..." (*This Side of Paradise* 182). These characters fascinated the young readers as they were able to relate themselves with the characters of the novel.

Generation Gap That Existed



Courtesy: <https://www.abebooks.com/Side-Paradise-D140-Fitzgerald-F-Scott/12175917618/bd>

In *This Side of the Paradise* Fitzgerald says that, “None of the Victorian mothers and most of them were Victorian had any ideas how casually there were accustomed to be kissed.” (*This Side of Paradise* 64). These lines show the generation gap that existed during the century. In Fitzgerald’s work the readers can find more liberated women who have the same rights and liberties as the men had and considered the accusations of immorality unjustified. Amory, the protagonist of *This Side of Paradise* says,

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. . . Saw girls doing things that even in his memory would have been impossible. Eating three – O'clock after – dance suppers in impossible café's, talking of every side of life with an air half of earnestness, half of mockery, yet with a furtive excitement . . . (*This side of Paradise* 65)

These words express how much the Jazz Age has changed the youngsters especially the changes in the young women's mindset about the atmosphere of newly discovered freedom which the young ladies enjoyed at the time of change.

The Offshore Pirate

In *The Offshore Pirate*, the protagonist **pleases** the heroine Ardita “. . . if you'll swear on your honor as a flapper- which probably isn't worth much- that you'll keep that spoiled little mouth of yours tight shut for forty- eight hours . . .” (*The Offshore Pirate* 6), Fitzgerald through these lines expresses his responsibility of a best flapper creator. The girl characters, Fitzgerald sketches were far from other writers for the female characters in his writings were the product of his keen observation of the flappers of Jazz Age.

Initiator and Agent of Change

Fitzgerald's stories not only described about flappers but also had an influence in spreading these changes national wide. The Age was a turning point in sexual behavior. There was a gradual growth in sexual behavior from strict Victorian standard to freer sexual habits. The youngster believed that love is erotic. Fitzgerald was the spokesman of the young and praised social upgrading in his writings, this is more obvious in his love scenes, though he speaks more about sexuality, he also includes the manners of the youngsters, with infidelity and incest, all these are not given directly by the writer but he has veiled his sexuality topic in his writings. He in his early stage of writing he created heroes and heroines so much attached to sex than love.

Amory in *This Side of Paradise* says that he is not tempted by the idea of sleeping with a prostitute. Gloria in *The Beautiful and Damned* in spite of her high reputation is a virgin till she gets married later her failure in marriage makes her feel everything ridiculous.

A girl who had misunderstood how the game of popularity worked could drift into a real sexual affair, not understanding that virginity is necessary for perfect marriage. A good example for this is Dorothy in *The Beautiful and Damned*, she loses her virginity in a silly relationship with a local boy, she makes a mistake of sharing this with a friend of her and as the news spreads, she loses her reputation in her town. Fitzgerald has also mentions about sexual dilemmas of young women in twenties that depicts, that morality was also greatly appreciated by the young girls of age, Gloria in *The Beautiful and Damned*, referred as “Public drinking glass” (182). She gains reputation by staying in her limits and was able to keep her good name in the marriage market, Fitzgerald's women characters are so strong and had taken complete break from the past. All the women characters in his writing are strong, self-liberated and wise.

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