“Oh, say can you see the tender color of remembered flesh?”: Patterns of Desire in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *Tender Is the Night*

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Fitzgerald's body of work—which includes four novels, an unfinished novel, and more than 150 short stories—reads as one lifelong meditation on human desire, and *Tender Is the Night* (1934), his final published novel, remains his most ambitious attempt to represent romantic desire in all of its anguish and bliss. For Scott Fitzgerald, lover of Keats, romantic desire is sexual desire aestheticized, so that *Tender Is the Night*—his most "romantic" book—is also his most sexual. With one marriage, two affairs, and the murder of an unknown black man, *Tender* is a sprawling narrative with countless themes and motifs, all of which constellate around matters of love, lust, and longing. Set against the wounded landscape of postwar Europe—in the liminal space of 1920s American expatriate lifestyle—F. Scott Fitzgerald's glittering narrative reveals how modern sexual desire is shaped by trauma and fantasy.

In his recent study on desire, Per Bjørnar Grande applies René Girard's mimetic theory of desire to *The Great Gatsby* (1925), arguing that Fitzgerald is "one of the great explorers of metaphysical desire" (Grande 131) and that *Gatsby* "reveals how desire to repeat the past ends in frenzy" (Grande 16). Similarly, in *Tender Is the Night*, American psychiatrist Dick Diver's sexual desire for Hollywood starlet Rosemary Hoyt leads to infidelity, humiliation, and divorce. Although *Tender*'s finale is far less dramatic than *Gatsby*'s homicide-suicide resolution, Dick's "dying fall"—a spiritual death echoed in the very real deaths of Jules Peterson, Abe North, and Dick's father in America—epitomizes René Girard's belief that "desire has no substance at all and leads to a nothingness that resembles death" (Grande 14). Taken together, Dick's spiritual death in Rome and Peterson's bewildering murder in Paris support Fitzgerald's own view that modern sexuality is symptomatic of a moral degeneration in America, just as Gatsby's narrative—his life,

his death—emblemizes the "loosening of traditional ethics" (Grande 16) in one's pursuit of the American dream. From a Girardian perspective, Peterson's death is crucial to *Tender Is the Night,* for the racialized violence inflicted upon Jules Peterson, an innocent black man, displaces the necessary violence of Dick's mimetic desire, and—satisfying Girard's "scapegoat mechanism" (Grande 8) theory—restores order, albeit briefly, to the Diver's marriage. Furthermore, Peterson's seemingly random murder in Paris exposes the novel's anxieties around its two most complicated yet tightly related themes: racial mixing and paternal incest.

Central to *Tender* is Dick Diver's Oedipal attraction to Rosemary Hoyt, a silent film star who is visiting Europe with her mother. By casting the seventeen-year-old in *Daddy's Girl*—an incest-suggestive film which idealizes her childlike beauty—Fitzgerald patterns Dick's sexuality as a pathological fantasy to play "daddy" to Daddy's Girl. Through flashback, Fitzgerald reveals the Freudian foundation for Doctor Diver's marriage to his adolescent patient, Nicole Warren, who survives paternal incest at the cost of her mental health, and who attaches herself to her handsome psychiatrist through a Freudian sort of transference. Dick's desire for both adolescent women resembles Girard's concept of metaphysical desire, which "arises when the protagonist desires an object via a *mediator/model*" (Grande 3). For Fitzgerald's protagonist, the father-mediator's illicit love for the daughter arouses in Dick an intense desire to imitate the father and pursue the daughter. By positioning expat psychiatrist Dick Diver as voyeur in both affairs, Fitzgerald furthermore suggests that Hollywood and modern psychiatry are equally voyeuristic, that the rise of the movie industry cannot be separated from the popularization of Freudian psychology, that modern desire is negotiated in the private darkness of the movie theater or the dark fantasy-space of the mind, and that, in either case, modern postwar sexuality threatens Victorian values.

Nicole Warren Diver ultimately quits her "role" as daddy's girl for the sake of discovering her own modern female sexuality, which tends towards a (modified) miscegenation fantasy, characterized by her attraction to half-French mercenary Tommy Barban. Nicole's illicit affair with Tommy satisfies her desire for an interracial relationship that is as thrilling as it is "safe." With tan, leathery skin that is not-quite-black, Tommy has the same "dark" sex appeal as Nicotera, who stars across Rosemary in her new film, *The Grandeur that Was Rome*, and who entirely represents Hollywood sex symbol Rudolph Valentino, the "Latin Lover." Late in the novel, Fitzgerald attaches Nicole Diver to *her* Latin lover, Tommy Barban, in the liminal space of a Riviera yacht party, where the mythic African continent exists just beyond the horizon, and where Nicole's mythic female sexuality—what Freud considered a "'dark continent' for psychology" (Freud 38)—starts to materialize. Although *Tender* resists any sort of black-white interracial sex, Nicole's decision to "go native" with Europeanized Tommy suggests the rise of a global modernity which favors miscegenation over paternal incest, Europe over America, and the expression of female sexuality over the violence of masculine mimetic desire.

In this thesis, I will analyze Dick Diver's mimetic desire for Rosemary Hoyt, as mediated by Hollywood and Freudian psychology. As Rosemary performs a sex script influenced by the film industry, Dick somewhat reluctantly pursues his daddy's girl fantasy, which ultimately leads to his own dissipation. I will analyze both of the novel's "black" deaths—Peterson's murder in Paris and Dick's spiritual death in Rome—in order to shed light on Fitzgerald's bizarre tendency to condemn white paternal incest by metaphorically racializing it. I will interpret Nicole Warren's adolescent desire for Dick Diver, which she mediates through American jazz music, and I will analyze her practice of cosmopolitan tanning on the French Riviera, an affinity for which suggests her desire to perform a "darker" sexuality, to borrow from the blackness of the African *other*

without ever mixing with—or becoming—the other, herself. I will argue that Nicole Diver's affair with Tommy Barban allows for her to preserve her whiteness, in effect, while also fulfilling her desire for interracial sex, and finally, I will suggest that Nicole's expression of modern female sexuality frees her from the sexual trauma of her past, and that her marriage to Tommy, in the end, gestures towards a Spenglerian decline of the West, which Fitzgerald ambivalently grieves.

♦

In the opening pages of *Tender Is the Night*, Fitzgerald establishes a cinematic vision for his novel which casts Hollywood starlet Rosemary Hoyt as the innocent American girl touring Europe and expat Dick Diver as her worldly and sophisticated "leading man." Fitzgerald's Hollywood-infused narrative begins with an exquisite description of the French Riviera:

> On the pleasant shore of the French Riviera, about half way between Marseilles and the Italian border, stands a large, proud, rose-colored hotel. Deferential palms cool its flushed façade, and before it stretches a short dazzling beach …
>
> The hotel and its bright tan prayer rug of a beach were one. In the early morning the distant image of Cannes, the pink and cream of old fortifications, the purple Alp that bounded Italy, were cast across the water and lay quavering in the ripples and rings sent up by sea-plants through the clear shallows … Merchantmen crawled westward on the horizon; bus boys shouted in the hotel court; the dew dried upon the pines. (3-4)

From the start, Fitzgerald's Riviera evokes a sensual experience—the "rose-colored hotel" with its "flushed façade," the "dew [drying] upon the pines"—as he establishes an intimate, liminal space on the Mediterranean, "a short dazzling beach," which sits between city and country, Alp and sea. As Paul Hackman observes, Fitzgerald provides his reader with striking "visual descriptions, with a focus on space over time" (Hackman 72), as though a camera were sweeping a Hollywood set. The bright colors of the French Riviera—pink, blue, and green—evoke Hollywood's Technicolor process, and the reader's introduction to actress Rosemary Hoyt is "entirely visual" (Hackman 73), as Fitzgerald's narrator observes the rosiness of her youth: the "magic in her pink palms," "her cheeks lit to a lovely flame, like the thrilling flush of children after their cold baths in the evening" (Fitzgerald 4). The *camera* focuses on Rosemary's hair, which "burst into lovelocks and waves and curlicues of ash blonde and gold" (Fitzgerald 4), and again her cheeks: "the color of her cheeks was real, breaking close to the surface from the strong young pump of her heart" (Fitzgerald 4). In its opening pages, Fitzgerald's narrative represents Rosemary Hoyt as a young American girl abroad: feminine, childlike, and ready.

Before introducing the reader to protagonist Dick Diver and his glittering group of American expatriates, Fitzgerald suggests that Rosemary's story will be one of sexual awakening. He writes: "Her body hovered delicately on the last edge of childhood—she was almost eighteen, nearly complete, but the dew was still on her" (Fitzgerald 4). Fitzgerald sexualizes Rosemary's adolescence as though through Dick's eyes, for her youth will, inevitably, attract his gaze. Rosemary's gaze is entirely romantic, her eyes described as "bright, big, clear, wet, and shining" (Fitzgerald 4), the expressive eyes of a silent film star, eyes as "dewy" as her pubescent body. When she finally meets Dick Diver—"the man in the jockey cap" (Fitzgerald 13) who's twice her age—he expresses concern for her sunburnt "crimson legs" (Fitzgerald 13), and after "fac[ing] the

seascape together momentarily" (Fitzgerald 14), almost cinematically, Dick looks into the eyes of fatherless Rosemary Hoyt, and "for a moment she lived in the bright blue worlds of his eyes" (Fitzgerald 14), the vibrant blue Technicolor vision of her leading man, whose "voice promised that he would take care of her," that "he would open up whole new worlds for her" (Fitzgerald 20). Even Dick announces Rosemary's emerging sexuality, when he looks at the seventeen-year-old on the beach, "with cold blue eyes," and says, "thoughtfully and deliberately" (Fitzgerald 26): "'You're the only girl I've seen for a long time that actually did look like something blooming'" (Fitzgerald 27). Though *Tender* will inevitably tell the story of Diver's dissipation, Fitzgerald throws the reader off the scent, initiating instead a cinematic vision for adolescent Rosemary's sexual awakening in France, her blossoming, her "blooming."

Although Dick acknowledges Rosemary's youthful beauty on the French Riviera, and although they share a few drunken kisses in the back of a Paris taxi on the night of her eighteenth birthday, Dick Diver does not desire Rosemary Hoyt, in earnest, until after the screening of her film *Daddy's Girl*, in which her innocence is idealized on-screen:

> There she was—the school girl of a year ago, hair down her back and rippling out stiffly like the solid hair of a Tanagra figure; there she was—*so* young and innocent—the product of her mother's loving care; there she was—embodying all the immaturity of the race, cutting a new cardboard paper doll to pass before its empty harlot's mind. She remembered how she had felt in that dress, especially fresh and new under the fresh young silk.
>
> Daddy's girl. (88)

Rosemary Hoyt is a child, who has only turned eighteen the evening prior. Fitzgerald's narrator romanticizes, sexualizes, even fetishizes Rosemary's childlike beauty as Daddy's Girl, her "young" and "innocent" body "fresh and new under the fresh young silk" of her character's dress. Dick responds quite profoundly to her performance, telling her: "'I'm simply astounded. You're going to be one of the best actresses on the stage'" (Fitzgerald 88), and although he "winced" at "the vicious sentimentality" of the film's "father complex" (Fitzgerald 88), Rosemary's innocence in *Daddy's Girl*—with its "implied incest" (Hackman 75)—inspires him to pursue her sexually. With *Daddy's Girl,* Fitzgerald effectively packages together Freudian psychology and the film industry as two forces of postwar modernity which mediate desire by alchemizing one's private fantasies into explicit sexual desire.

Daddy's Girl mediates Dick's desire, for desire—in Girard's view—is not "primarily generated by objects but is mediated through what other people desire" (Grande 4). Of course, actresses are desired by many in the private darkness of the movie theatre, where the silver screen glitters with youth, beauty, and sensuality, where moviegoers experience what David Thomson calls "the voyeur's pleasure" (Thomson 52), and while the silver screen certainly mediates Dick's desire for Rosemary Hoyt as celebrity, the film's father-figure mediates Dick's mimetic desire for Rosemary as *daughter*. The father's subliminal desire for the daughter in *Daddy's Girl* intensifies Dick Diver's existing Oedipal attraction to Rosemary Hoyt, just as a "'so-called 'transference'"" (Fitzgerald 181)—for better or for worse—mediates Doctor Diver's romance with Nicole Warren in Switzerland. In both affairs, Dick imitates the father-mediator and—after becoming completely "entangled" (Grande 4) in the father's desire for the daughter—invariably crosses an ethical line: either by having sex with his eighteen-year-old patient, or by seeking out an adulterous relationship with an eighteen-year-old actress. Fitzgerald suggests that Dick's desire is rarely predicated on

love, but on a deep sexual desire which resists moral judgment and pathologically tends towards a metaphorical incest plot. As Hackman observes, "incest is committed by the older generation against the young and innocent" (Hackman 84), and while Dick Diver does not make any incestuous advances on his biological daughter, Topsy, he certainly takes advantage of the young "daughters" who adore him—Nicole Warren and Rosemary Hoyt—both of whom are gorgeous, naïve, and fatherless, offering themselves to him, worshiping at his feet.

While Fitzgerald casts Rosemary Hoyt as Daddy's Girl, he likewise envisions paternal incest victim Nicole Warren as a Hollywood starlet, particularly in Book II's flashback sequence at the Swiss sanatorium, where Nicole's beauty is enhanced often by cinematic lighting and where her adolescence excites expat psychiatrist Dick Diver:

> Nicole was waiting for him … Her hair, drawn back of her ears, brushed her shoulders in such a way that the face seemed to have just emerged from it, as if this were the exact moment when she was coming from a wood into clear moonlight. The unknown yielded her up; Dick wished she had no background, that she was just a girl lost with no address save the night from which she had come. (175)

As Nicole Warren "steps" into the artificial moonlight of a film set, Dick grieves her story—the schizophrenia, the incest—wishing, instead, that she was a girl with "no background," an orphan of the night. Doctor Diver romanticizes his mental patient, in effect, perceiving Nicole's smile as "a moving childish smile that was like all the lost youth in the world" (Fitzgerald 174). Fitzgerald romantically associates Nicole with "clear moonlight" for her adolescent beauty and the horror of her sexual trauma evoke the moon's dark and mysterious glamour, and although Diver regrets

Devereux Warren's assault on Nicole, the taboo nature of the incident thrills him. At the hotel in Caux—after encountering Nicole on the Glion funicular in Montreux—Dick's gaze follows her as the orchestra plays "Poor Butterfly," and he thinks about Nicole and her father: "he thought of the dishonor, the secret. Oh, butterfly—the moments pass into hours—" (Fitzgerald 198). Fitzgerald's aestheticization of Nicole's sexual abuse via popular music serves as catalyst, then, for the Divers' marriage, for that night Dick chooses to become husband-psychiatrist to eighteen-year-old Nicole Warren, his "poor butterfly," his "girl lost": daddy's girl.

Subtextual to Dick Diver's attraction to both Nicole Warren and Rosemary Hoyt is his irrepressible fetish for teenage girls, as confirmed by the novel's insistence that he find beautiful, blonde adolescents wherever he goes. As Hackman observes, Fitzgerald "finds use for Hollywood lighting to make Dick's longing for the various women he encounters more concrete to the reader" (Hackman 80). Fitzgerald plays with shadow and moon to vivify "a desire within Dick to see these women in the same way he might see Rosemary or any other starlet on the big screen—carefully lit for his erotic contemplation" (Hackman 79). Hackman's use of the word "women" is generous, of course, for Dick Diver encounters *girls* more frequently than women—"their forms at a distance, their shadows on the wall" (Fitzgerald 261)—and the aestheticization of their youthful beauty by Hollywood lighting confirms his preference for a voyeuristic sex script. However, Dick's desire falls flat if not mediated, in some way, by Freudian psychology. After having disappointing sex with Rosemary in Rome, Dick dances drunkenly at a basement cabaret with a British girl, who "'looks like somebody in the movies'" (Fitzgerald 288), before she disappears from his vision. Fitzgerald suggests that the British girl is but a specter of Rosemary, just as the girl who Dick encounters in the gardens of Innsbruck—"the shadow" (Fitzgerald 262)—is but a phantasmic replica of his wife, Nicole. Like the British girl, "the shadow" slips from his gaze.

Though he is clearly attracted to both girls, Dick Diver's sexuality falters without a Freudian plot mediating his desire. Nevertheless, he will "press on toward the Isles of Greece, the cloudy waters of unfamiliar ports, the lost girl on shore, the moon of popular songs" (Fitzgerald 253), gazing at teenage Electras through the final pages of the novel.

Dick Diver's "erotic contemplation" (Hackman 79) of "the girl" indicates an interest in a performative incest plot, where he is actor, director, and voyeur all at once. Although he turns down Rosemary's request for a screen test—he'd "'rather look at [*her*]'" (Fitzgerald 89)—he does become her "leading man," as their tryst takes on a cinematic quality:

> lovers now they fell ravenously on the quick seconds while outside the taxi windows the green and cream twilight faded, and the fire-red, gas-blue, ghost-green signs began to shine smokily through the tranquil rain …
>
> They looked at each other at last, murmuring names that were a spell. Softly the two names lingered on the air, died away more slowly than other words, other names, slower than music in the mind. (94)

Fitzgerald evokes Hollywood's Technicolor process, again, for a sexually-charged scene that is mystical and noir, "the fire-red, gas-blue, ghost-green" neon signs glowing softly in the Paris mist. At dusk, in the liminal space of a taxi, Dick Diver and his starlet initiate their performative passion, at last: "then they lurched together as if the taxi had swung them. Her breasts crushed flat against him, her mouth was all new and warm, owned in common … Nerves so raw and tender must surely join other nerves, lips to lips, breast to breast…." (Fitzgerald 95). Their Hollywood sex script continues back at the hotel: the "camera" follows the couple as they walk five flights of stairs,

kissing at each landing, their "fingers slipping apart" (Fitzgerald 97) as they finally say goodbye. Of their affair, Fitzgerald writes: "They were full of brave illusions about each other, tremendous illusions" (Fitzgerald 95), and Rosemary Hoyt—for all her naivety—seems to understand the affair as illusion, when she says to Dick: "'Oh, we're such *actors*—you and I'" (Fitzgerald 135). In fact, Rosemary considers her Parisian affair with Dick Diver to be "one of her greatest rôles," into which "she flung herself" quite "passionately" (Fitzgerald 82), a roleplay into which her leading man enters somewhat ambivalently, for Dick is both aroused—and troubled—by Rosemary's young age, stirred by "the youth and freshness of her lips" (Fitzgerald 83), and yet wishing she weren't so young, "[kissing] her breathlessly as if she were any age at all" (Fitzgerald 81).

Inherent in Dick's attraction to the adolescent actress is an emotion he can't quite name and a feeling he can't quite shake: the incredible shame associated with lusting after a teenager. As Hackman argues, "the novel makes clear that Dick's reluctance to sleep with Rosemary is as much about a feeling of sexual perversion as about staying faithful to his wife" (Hackman 84). Rosemary Hoyt is not his daughter, but she might as well be, for when Diver encounters the actress in Rome, he thinks: "She was young and magnetic, but so was Topsy" (Fitzgerald 269), and, later, as he reflects on his parenting approach—and his daughter's resemblance to Nicole—he remarks: "What do I care whether Topsy 'adores' me or not? I'm not bringing her up to be my wife" (Fitzgerald 330). By invoking his protagonist's biological daughter, Fitzgerald exposes Dick's shame for pursuing an aestheticized daddy's girl fantasy with Rosemary, and, perhaps, his regret for the Freudian implications of his marriage to Nicole Warren, another sort of daddy's girl. In fact, it's nearly impossible for Dick to separate the two relationships, though he is convinced that he has "lost himself" (Fitzgerald 260) somewhere in the mess: "Between the time he found Nicole flowering under a stone on the Zürichsee and the moment of his meeting with Rosemary the spear

had been blunted" (Fitzgerald 261). Fitzgerald suggests that Dick's sexual desire—for Nicole, for Rosemary—leads ultimately to his dying fall, as his somewhat obsessive longing "to be loved" (Fitzgerald 172) by teenage girls *in bloom* threatens his profession and his poise, causing him to lie, drink, and cheat, his desire: a prison of his own making.

To reinforce his twin themes—Hollywood and Freud—Fitzgerald electrifies Dick's desire for Rosemary through voyeurism imagined. Over wine in Paris, Collis Clay—Rosemary's friend from Yale who desires her romantically if not sexually—divulges to Dick that the actress may have had sex with another Yale student, and Dick Diver reacts quite viscerally:

> With every detail imagined, with even envy for the pair's community of misfortune in the vestibule, Dick felt a change taking place within him. Only the image of a third person, even a vanished one, entering into his relation with Rosemary was needed to throw him off his balance and send through him waves of pain, misery, desire, desperation. The vividly pictured hand on Rosemary's cheek, the quicker breath, the white excitement of the event viewed from outside, the inviolable secret warmth within.
>
> —Do you mind if I pull down the curtain?
>
> —Please do. It's too light in here. (113)

Dick's mimetic desire for Rosemary Hoyt intensifies in light of her alleged promiscuity, for although he is attracted to innocence, Dick Diver is all the more captivated by *loss* of innocence. "With every detail imagined," Dick's voyeuristic impulse helps to transition his abstract desire for Rosemary as Daddy's Girl—virginal and innocent on the cool, silver screen—towards a more desperate desire for Rosemary Hoyt: the not-so-innocent celebrity. Here, Diver's angst brilliantly

represents Girard's triangular mimetic theory of desire, where "the image of a third person" produces in Dick both envy and desire, and where "desire" is inexplicably bundled with "pain," "misery," and "desperation" (Fitzgerald 113). The line of imagined dialogue, "—Do you mind if I pull down the curtain" (Fitzgerald 113), repeats as a songlike refrain in Dick's mind as he considers having sex with Rosemary, for just as Collis is happy to discover that she is "not so cold as you'd probably think" (Fitzgerald 112), Diver nearly comes undone at the mere suggestion that the eighteen-year-old girl who "chilled" him with "the innocence of her kiss" (Fitzgerald 81) has experienced the "inviolable secret warmth" (Fitzgerald 113) of sex.

Fitzgerald suggests that Hollywood is the industrialization of masculine voyeurism, as well as the impetus for cultural voyeurism, where the movie star becomes an object of desire in the popular imagination, and where voyeurism—literal or imagined—becomes one crucial aspect of the modern male-female sex script. Voyeurism, moviegoing, sex: in every case, participants "are being allowed to see something that ought to be forbidden," and, as such, "it captivates [them]" (Thomson 47). Rosemary, too, becomes "captivated" by the forbidden, for Dick Diver is not the novel's only voyeur. Early in *Tender*'s dizzying Paris sequence, Rosemary Hoyt overhears Dick and Nicole arranging to meet up for afternoon sex, and the "vast secretiveness" of the passionate exchange leaves her "breathless" and "astonished," the Divers' dialogue "echo[ing] in her mind" (Fitzgerald 68). Just as Dick Diver's imagined voyeurism of Rosemary Hoyt mediates his desire for the Hollywood starlet, Rosemary's erotic eavesdropping on the Divers—and the discovery that their relationship is not "something cooler" (Fitzgerald 68)—accelerates her sexual awakening, for although the eighteen-year-old can't quite identify the "strong current of emotion" which "flowed through her" (Fitzgerald 68), she certainly feels attracted to the scene, having "none of the aversion

she had felt in the playing of certain love scenes in pictures" (Fitzgerald 68). The Hollywood actress is ready for the "real" thing.

Although Rosemary becomes slightly "jealous" (Fitzgerald 85) of Nicole, looking at her "in a new way, estimating her attractions" (Fitzgerald 68), their relationship never develops into overt rivalry. Dick Diver's mimetic desire for Rosemary Hoyt, on the other hand, escalates into jealousy and anguish, even desperation, after he hears Collis Clay's evocative story:

> [Dick] was rendered so uncertain by the events of the last forty-eight hours that he was not even sure of what he wanted to do; he paid off the taxi at the Muette and walked in the direction of [Rosemary's] studio, crossing to the opposite side of the street before he came to the building. Dignified in his fine clothes, with their fine accessories, he was yet swayed and driven as an animal. (115-116)

Fitzgerald presents Dick Diver not as a man in-love, but as a man overwhelmed by sexual desire, "an animal" dressed in "fine clothes," eager to be with the young woman he craves. When he finally speaks to Rosemary Hoyt on the phone, his breathing is abnormal, and he asks her if she's alone, confessing: "'I'm in an extraordinary condition about you. When a child can disturb a middle-aged gent—things get difficult'" (Fitzgerald 119). Later, when he visits her in her hotel room, "she saw [Dick] as something fixed and godlike as he had always been, as older people are to younger, rigid and unmalleable," and yet he "saw her with an inevitable sense of disappointment" (Fitzgerald 134), for although Rosemary is a gorgeous young actress—"her body calculated to a millimeter to suggest a bud yet guarantee a flower" (Fitzgerald 134)—she will never truly satisfy. Desire, in Girard's view, "'is always reaching past its ostensible objects and finds

little or no real satisfaction in them'" (Grande 4), so that Dick's desire for "'Miss Television'" (Fitzgerald 134), the eighteen-year-old actress who is not his wife, is insatiable, even devastating, "result[ing] in pain, again and again" (Grande 5). In fact, the "lines of pain" (Fitzgerald 134) are visible on Dick's face, even as he invites the starlet to sit on his lap.

Their sexual encounter is almost immediately interrupted, and Fitzgerald first suggests this disturbance, not with Abe North's knock on the door, but with the anticipatory *darkening* of his narrative. When his protagonist nervously decides to have sex with Rosemary, Fitzgerald strays from his cinematic vision, conjuring instead a Gothic aesthetic: a heavy rainstorm moves through Paris at four o'clock in the afternoon, "the leaves on the Champs-Élysées singing and falling, thin and wild" (Fitzgerald 133), and "Dick moved on through the rain, demoniac and frightened, the passions of many men inside him and nothing simple that he could see" (Fitzgerald 134). Godless and blind, Dick Diver travels through the dark romance of the foreboding rain, towards Rosemary's hotel room, as the growing anguish of his guilt-ridden desire searches for catharsis, resolution, and relief. Girard contends that desire, inevitably, "leaves people barren, filled with a nothingness that resembles death" (Grande 6), and *Tender Is the Night*'s first real hint of death comes shortly thereafter with the disturbing murder of Afro-European Jules Peterson, whose intrusion into Fitzgerald's narrative not only interrupts Dick and Rosemary's illicit affair, but results in "a typical modern sacrificial scene in which violence is engendered indirectly and at random" (Grande 164), in order to restore equilibrium among principal characters. In *Gatsby*, Myrtle dies—violently, tragically—as does Gatsby, so that the affluent, white Buchanans don't have to. In *Tender*, Peterson's role as "sacrificial victim" (Grande 163)—though analogous—is far more complicated, for through Jules Peterson's explicitly racialized and unnecessarily violent

death, Fitzgerald clusters his narrative themes of Hollywood, incest, and sexual desire around an implicit fear of racial mixing.

♦

Although Dick Diver deems Peterson's murder "'some nigger scrap'" (Fitzgerald 141), he goes to great lengths to unlawfully remove the black man's dead body—and blood-stained sheets—from Rosemary's hotel room in Paris. Fitzgerald positions black violence as inconvenient and intrusive, and clarifies Dick's urgency in protecting the actress from scandal:

> Quickly Dick and Nicole exchanged bundles across the corridor; after spreading this covering on Rosemary's bed, Dick stood sweating in the warm twilight, considering. Certain points had become apparent to him in the moment following his examination of the body; first, that Abe's first hostile Indian had tracked the friendly Indian and discovered him in the corridor, and when the latter had taken desperate refuge in Rosemary's room, had hunted down and slain him; second, that if the situation were allowed to develop naturally, no power on earth could keep the smear off Rosemary—the paint was scarcely dry on the Arbuckle case. Her contract was contingent upon an obligation to continue rigidly and unexceptionably as "Daddy's Girl." (141)

Fitzgerald refers twice to Jules Peterson, an Afro-European, as "the friendly Indian," for after corroborating a story that "a Negro" (Fitzgerald 136) robbed Abe North in Montparnasse, Peterson "was rather in the position of the friendly Indian who had helped a white" (Fitzgerald 136), dying

inevitably at the hands of the wrongfully-accused black men, two African-American expats, the "hostile Indian[s]." Fitzgerald associates black violence with a belligerent, "native" violence, for both presences—black, Native—are equally threatening to Diver's white male American identity. Amalgamating the African other with the Native American, Fitzgerald's American protagonist likens the violence of the "hostile Indian" to field sport. Dick Diver is hardly concerned with the details of Peterson's death, nor is Fitzgerald, but the consequential location of the black man's dead body—on the white Hollywood starlet's bed—suggests that Jules Peterson, though unjustly murdered, poses an inherent threat to the privacy and propriety of Fitzgerald's white characters, as Peterson's lifeless black body signifies sexual violence, in Dick's mind.

Fitzgerald reveals Dick's anxiety around sexual violence with his second observation: "that if the situation were allowed to develop naturally, no power on earth could keep the smear off Rosemary—the paint was scarcely dry on the Arbuckle case" (Fitzgerald 141). By alluding to Hollywood's first major sex scandal—in which film actor Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle was accused of raping and murdering silent film star Virginia Rappe—Fitzgerald indicates that Dick Diver will do anything to protect Rosemary Hoyt's Hollywood reputation. However, Fitzgerald is entirely unclear as to what "situation" (Fitzgerald 141) Dick truly hopes to avoid. In the most basic sense, he is protecting the movie star from an international celebrity scandal where the discovery of a dead black man in her Paris hotel room would not only suggest her complicity in his murder, but may also suggest sexual relations, violent or otherwise, with a black man. And yet, Jules Peterson never lays a finger on Rosemary. In fact, "if the situation were allowed to develop naturally" (Fitzgerald 141)—had there not been a knock on the door—Dick would have simply cheated on his schizophrenic wife with an eighteen-year-old girl. Fitzgerald's bizarre allusion to the Arbuckle case, then, gestures towards Dick's shameful desire for Daddy's Girl, a sexual fantasy which he

associates—at least subconsciously—with sexual perversion, even rape. Black violence is not merely a dramatic plot device, then, for Fitzgerald evidently uses Jules Peterson's murder to reveal his protagonist's desire, guilt, and shame.

Fitzgerald furthermore positions black violence as an unwelcome intrusion into the psychosexual well-being of affluent Americans abroad. Black violence becomes analogous with white paternal incest, as the blood of a black man signifies Nicole Diver's sexual violation, triggering in her an episode of hysterics, which dramatically concludes Book I:

> And now Rosemary, too, could hear, louder and louder, a verbal inhumanity that penetrated the keyholes and the cracks in the doors, swept into the suite and in the shape of horror took form again …
>
> Nicole knelt beside the tub swaying sidewise and sidewise. "It's you!" she cried, "—it's you come to intrude on the only privacy I have in the world—with your spread with red blood on it." (143)

In rescuing the Hollywood starlet from scandal, Dick Diver neglects his significant role as husband-psychiatrist to Nicole, carelessly handing her the blood-stained coverlet, which triggers the memory of her sexual assault. As Chris Messenger argues: "Black male blood shed in violence 'stands in' for the white heroine's blood, the incestuous rape 'evidence'" as Nicole Diver's "rape is reinvoked through the death of a black man in the Hollywood heroine's bed" (Messenger 169). Fitzgerald layers Nicole's trauma upon Rosemary's coverlet, for just as the blood stain mimics the mark of Nicole's sexual violation, the blood of a black man replaces Rosemary's blood—from menstruation or defloration—had her affair with Dick continued. At once, Fitzgerald associates

racial violence with sexual violence, and racial mixing with sexual perversion, for though the "bloods do not commingle" (Messenger 169), Peterson has somehow sexually violated the paternal incest victim and metaphorically raped the Hollywood starlet. He is both Devereux Warren and Fatty Arbuckle. Peterson's violent murder functions, then, as a sort of displaced miscegenation, which violates the *white* sophistication of "one of the most fashionable hotels in the world" (Fitzgerald 142), and which provokes psychological distress in the minds of *Tender*'s white female characters, particularly Nicole Diver. However, Nicole is not speaking to the dead Afro-European. She is screaming hysterically at her father, Devereux Warren, for "intrud[ing]" on her "privacy" (Fitzgerald 143), for robbing her of her sexual innocence. She is also yelling at her husband: for involving her in this "'nigger scrap'" (Fitzgerald 141), for triggering the memory of her sexual assault, for failing her as doctor and husband, for having an affair, for betraying her trust.

Fitzgerald condemns paternal incest by metaphorically racializing it, for Jules Peterson's blood not only "stands in" for Nicole Diver's blood, but Peterson likewise "stands in" for Dick, who is far from sinless, guilty for both his Freudian relationship with Nicole—a marriage which psychosexually repeats Devereux's incestuous act—and his illicit fantasy to sleep with the star of *Daddy's Girl*, an infidelity which would, in effect, psychosexually repeat his marriage to Nicole. In Book II, Fitzgerald audaciously links Dick Diver's questionable relationship with his mental patient to his illicit affair with Rosemary Hoyt, when he suggests that Baby Warren intends on "buy[ing]" her sister "a nice young doctor, the paint scarcely dry on him" (Fitzgerald 199), a phrase which recalls—verbatim—Book I's allusion to the Arbuckle case. As Messenger argues, Dick Diver "has already been the sublimated black rapist in the starlet's bed, both the racist nightmare of the Jim Crow South posited in Hollywood's infancy [via] D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915), and also in his role as the paternal substitute in Nicole's bed for Devereux Warren"

(Messenger 169-170). The father is the husband is the black man is Fatty Arbuckle, the rapist. Nicole Warren Diver is Rosemary Hoyt is Virginia Rappe. Fitzgerald makes explicitly clear these "fierce surreal substitutions of blood and sex, black and white, male and female" (Messenger 170), as Peterson's dead body quite literally replaces Dick's body on Rosemary's bed, just moments after Abe knocks on the door. The complicity with which Dick "quickly jerked the wrinkles out of the bed where they had been sitting" (Fitzgerald 135) finds its parallel in his ability to dispose of Peterson's "light and ill-nourished" (Fitzgerald 141) black body, "[smooth] back the grain of the plush floor rug" (Fitzgerald 141), and "smooth" things over with the hotelier, Mr. McBeth, wiping his hands clean of the incident entirely, a dynamic which not only evokes Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, but likewise recalls the privilege and charm with which Daisy and Tom Buchanan avoid blame for Myrtle's violent death in *The Great Gatsby*. As in *Gatsby*, Fitzgerald finds the catharsis his narrative needs, as the unknown black man "becomes" the incestuous father and dies—as sacrifice—for the white male protagonist's mimetic desire. With Jules Peterson's murder, the Divers' summer in France "'die[s] violently instead of fading out sentimentally'" (Fitzgerald 48), precisely what Dick Diver—giver of "*bad* part[ies]" (Fitzgerald 34)—desired all along. And yet, Doctor Diver must "recommit" to his marriage—albeit half-heartedly—until Fitzgerald has him die his own black death in Rome.

While Peterson's murder is violent and physical, Dick's spiritual death is quite cerebral. Fitzgerald invokes British Romantic poet John Keats—who died at the age of twenty-six from tuberculosis—as his protagonist walks the streets of Rome in aestheticized misery, having finally consummated his affair with Rosemary Hoyt:

> Dick evoked the picture that the few days had imprinted on his mind, and stared at it. The walk toward the American Express past the odorous confectionaries of the Via Nazionale, through the foul tunnel up to the Spanish Steps, where his spirit soared before the flower stalls and the house where Keats had died. He cared only about people; he was scarcely conscious of places except for their weather, until they had been invested with color by tangible events. Rome was the end of his dream of Rosemary. (286)

Sexual desire, in Fitzgerald's work, becomes confused quite often with a romantic dream, where the desired object becomes so highly idealized in the subject's mind—such as Gatsby's obsessive love for Daisy—that the subject's desire almost immediately dissolves upon realizing the dream. In *Tender*, Fitzgerald's cinematic vision of Rome—a city which serves as setting for Rosemary's new film, *The Grandeur that Was Rome*—memorializes Dick Diver's "vague dissatisfaction" (Fitzgerald 277) upon discovering "that he was not in love with [Rosemary], nor she with him" (Fitzgerald 281), his desire for her "less an infatuation than a romantic memory" (Fitzgerald 277). Dick forfeits career, marriage, and morality, only to discover that sex with the actress pales in comparison to the "wild submergence of soul, a dipping of all colors into an obscuring dye, such as his love for Nicole had been" (Fitzgerald 281). As such, Dick gloomily refers to himself as "'the Black Death'" (Fitzgerald 284), the bubonic plague, the "fourteenth-century ravager of Europe" (Messenger 168), a bizarre self-nomination which "only stamps Dick further as part of the final chapter of the epic fall of Rome" (Messenger 168), for he has not only lost *his* grandeur, but "he brings a sort of 'death'" (Messenger 168) wherever he goes.

In his black death, Dick Diver becomes a refraction of Jules Peterson, and by blackening Dick's entropic dying fall, Fitzgerald effectively racializes his protagonist's illicit sexual desire,

drunken dissipation, and public disgrace. Adopting a metaphorical blackness which lacks moral integrity, Dick Diver drinks himself into oblivion and—losing his decorum, "his dignity, and his 'whiteness'" (Messenger 171)—initiates a bloody altercation with the Italian police. Dick is thrown into jail, only to be rescued by his icy sister-in-law Baby Warren in "the violet dawn" (Fitzgerald 299), and finally, in the "yellow, hazy morning" (Fitzgerald 302), in his physical agony and absolute humiliation, Dick Diver—the Black Death—is misidentified by a crowd outside the courtroom as a child rapist and murderer. Inside, an Italian lawyer informs Dick that "he was freed—the court considered him punished enough," to which he protests, "'Punished for what?'" and although Collis Clay urges him to move along, Dick cries, "'I want to make a speech … I want to explain to these people how I raped a five-year-old girl. Maybe I did—'" (Fitzgerald 303). Fitzgerald makes painfully clear the weight of his protagonist's sexual guilt and shame: his preference for an aestheticized incest fantasy, his pathological desire for adolescent girls, his devastating, adulterous affair with the star of *Daddy's Girl*, all of which may be mistaken as rape, even murder. Again, Fitzgerald condemns paternal incest by racializing it, for American expatriate Dick Diver—in his black death—*stands in* for the Italian rapist in Rome, just as Peterson stood in for the incestuous father in Paris. However, Dick will not be tried as a rapist, nor killed in Rome, for the black man has already died the necessary black death.

Taken together, *Tender*'s black deaths—Peterson's murder in Paris and Dick's catastrophe in Rome—reveal Dick Diver's patterned sexual desire for "the girl" at the expense of the "other." Prior to his "disaster" (Fitzgerald 304) with the Italian police, Dick joins Collis Clay at a basement cabaret and dances with a British girl who looks like an actress:

> They drank a bottle of Italian mousseux, and Dick became pale and somewhat noisy. He called the orchestra leader over to their table; this was a Bahama Negro, conceited and unpleasant, and in a few minutes there was a row …
>
> The Negro got up sourly and went away, leaving Dick in a still more evil humor. But he saw a girl smiling at him from across the room and immediately the pale Roman shapes around him receded into decent, humble perspective. She was a young English girl, with blonde hair and a healthy, pretty English face and she smiled at him again with an invitation he understood, that denied the flesh even in the act of tendering it. (287-288)

The blonde girl's beauty distracts Dick Diver from the nasty argument he is having with the "Bahama Negro" band leader over how much money Dick has given him and whether he is welcome to sit at his and Collis's table. Messenger argues that, in this scene, Fitzgerald effectively "isolates and diminishes [Dick's] signature desiring fetish, the blonde girl who distracts him from the black man," for Dick's "instant gratification" is almost always "obtained from the vision of 'the girl'"—young and white and pretty—who, in this case, "is a generic copy of Rosemary, who is a copy of Nicole" (Messenger 171). Fitzgerald further suggests that Dick Diver's gaze is entirely American, that the object of his desire is not unlike the feminized New World, and that he, the colonizer, must look past the Bahama Negro to see the girl.

The British girl at the cabaret is but a shadow of Dick's "American" girls—Rosemary and Nicole—who adore him, worship him, and mediate their desire for him through "the artifacts of American popular culture" (Antonelli 487), Hollywood and jazz. While Rosemary Hoyt embodies the glamour and commerce of California's new industry, Nicole Warren Diver—the wealthy Chicagoan "granddaughter of a self-made American capitalist" (Fitzgerald 67)—emblemizes an

early American continent that has been sexually violated and destroyed, for she is perceived by Doctor Diver in Switzerland as "this scarcely saved waif of disaster bringing him the essence of a continent" (Fitzgerald 177). As an American self-exile displaced on the European continent, Dick finds symbols—in Paris, in Rome, in Switzerland, in a plane flying over the Alps—which narrativize his sexual desire as a sort of manifest destiny, where the girl must remain inviolate and pure, even as he sexualizes her "continent" to his liking. Fitzgerald furthermore uses his black characters—the Bahama Negro in Rome and the friendly Indian in Paris—to gesture towards a settler colonialism that Dick Diver would likely defend, and although Jules Peterson asks for "'only a chance in life,'" speaking "with the sort of precise yet distorted intonation peculiar to colonial countries" (Fitzgerald 137), the Afro-European—the friendly Indian—is useful to Fitzgerald's narrative only in his death, just as indigenous people were "useful" to the early American narrative only in their erasure.

While on private holiday, Dick encounters Tommy Barban in Munich and learns of Abe North's violent death in New York, an echo of Peterson's murder and a premonition of Dick's own looming violence in Rome. By telegram, in Innsbruck, he learns of his father's unexpected death and solemnly returns to America to bury the body:

> For an hour, tied up with his profound reaction to his father's death, the magnificent façade of the homeland, the harbor of New York, seemed all sad and glorious to Dick, but once ashore the feeling vanished … Only as the local train shambled into the low-forested clayland of Westmoreland County, did he feel once more identified with his surroundings; at the station he saw a star he knew, and a cold moon bright over Chesapeake Bay; he heard

> the rasping wheels of buckboards turning, the lovely fatuous voices, the sound of sluggish primeval rivers flowing softly under soft Indian names.
>
> … Flowers were scattered on the brown unsettled earth. Dick had no more ties here now and did not believe he would come back. He knelt on the hard soil. These dead, he knew them all, their weather-beaten faces with blue flashing eyes, the spare violent bodies, the souls made of new earth in the forest-heavy darkness of the seventeenth century.
>
> "Good-bye, my father—good-bye, all my fathers." (265-266)

While Abe's death causes Dick Diver to grieve "his own youth of ten years ago" (Fitzgerald 259), the death of his beloved father, "his moral guide" (Fitzgerald 263), triggers a grief for his country. In Westmoreland County, he vaguely grieves his father, his father's father, all of his "fathers," and as he grieves the land to which he is no longer tethered—"the brown unsettled earth," "the hard soil" (Fitzgerald 265) of Virginia—he ultimately grieves for himself, as his father's death repeats the cruel devastation of World War I, in which Dick Diver's "'beautiful lovely safe world blew itself up'" (Fitzgerald 72). Not unlike Fitzgerald, Dick idealizes his father, and "an older America" (Fitzgerald 128), and the values of the Old South: "honor, courtesy, and courage" (Fitzgerald 264). From his father, he "had learned the somewhat conscious good manners of the young Southerner coming north after the Civil War" (Fitzgerald 213), so that when his father dies, Dick Diver's "politeness" (Fitzgerald 35), his charm, his "'beautiful manners'" (Fitzgerald 231), fracture irrevocably. As Nicole says to her husband: "'you used to want to create things—now you seem to want to smash them up'" (Fitzgerald 341).

However, Dick's concept of America was already broken, and his concept of the Old South emphatically ignores the vulgarity of the very institution on which it was founded, an institution

which Fitzgerald tries his best to keep hidden, even as Dick grieves "the spare violent bodies" (Fitzgerald 265) of his seventeenth-century Virginia ancestors. In fact, the violent vulgarity of early American slavery—and the sexual violation of black and indigenous women at the hands of white settlers and white Southerners—packages Dick Diver's sexual pathology as part of an ancestral inheritance of sexual violence, which Dick can't quite repress, and which ultimately finds its analogue in Nicole Diver's inability to repress her sexual trauma. In "the forest-heavy darkness of the seventeenth century" (Fitzgerald 266), Dick hears "the sound of sluggish primeval rivers flowing softly under soft Indian names" (Fitzgerald 265) and nothing else, for slavery is but a nameless shadow in *Tender*'s America. Although Fitzgerald repeatedly labels Afro-European Jules Peterson "the friendly Indian" (Fitzgerald 141), Peterson certainly represents the African slave, now free, whose narrative presence, at once, threatens Dick's opportunity to cheat on his wife, and threatens Nicole's attempt to repress her incest trauma, a scandal which the white, affluent Warren family—Devereux, Baby—try so hard to conceal. African blackness, then, becomes the subliminal *trauma* of Fitzgerald's narrative, for just as Abe finds himself "in an atmosphere of unfamiliar Negro faces bobbing up in unexpected places and around unexpected corners" (Fitzgerald 136), Fitzgerald's reader finds him or herself surrounded by "Negroes" in *Tender*'s psychosexual discourse on race. Like Abe North, Fitzgerald "succeed[s] in evading all of them, save Jules Peterson" (Fitzgerald 136), for frankly Fitzgerald *needs* the black man's black blood to uniquely expose the "terrible honesty" of Nicole's sexual trauma. As such, *Tender*'s pattern of racism becomes the pattern by which Fitzgerald's reader may start to understand Nicole's complex female sexuality. Sara Antonelli boldly refers to Nicole's sexual preference as a "miscegenation fantasy" (Antonelli 503), and whether or not that is "true," the Paris hotel scene certainly imagines a world where black men are found in the beds of white women.

Although Fitzgerald's narrative does not allow for any explicit black-white racial mixing, he does write "the novel's white female leads into the beds of darker men" (Messenger 174), such as half-French Tommy Barban or the "exotic" Nicotera, an Italian actor who stars across Rosemary Hoyt in her new film, *The Grandeur that Was Rome*:

> presently [Dick and Rosemary] went there and watched Nicotera, one of many hopeful Valentinos, strut and pose before a dozen female "captives," their eyes melancholy and startling with mascara.
>
> Rosemary appeared in a knee-length tunic.
>
> "Watch this," she whispered to Dick. "I want your opinion." …
>
> "They say it's the first thing I've had sex appeal in."
>
> "I don't notice it."
>
> "You wouldn't! But I have."
>
> Nicotera in his leopard skin talked attentively to Rosemary … (275)

On-screen and off, Rosemary and Nicotera represent a film industry which codes "ethnic" white men as seductive, and their female counterparts as white, virginal objects of desire. Adored by his female fans, Nicotera "struts" around the film set—Valentino-esque in his sexuality, animal-like in his leopard print—and Rosemary Hoyt, made famous by *Daddy's Girl*, yet now "'a woman of the world'" (Fitzgerald 270), finally has "'sex appeal'" (Fitzgerald 275) on-screen, though Dick Diver pretends not to notice. As Fitzgerald "blackens Nicotera" (Messenger 166), he sexualizes Rosemary Hoyt, for she is no longer Daddy's Girl. As a mature actress, Rosemary is far more self-possessed in Rome than she was in France, and she's ready to be "taken," at last, by her leading

man, the man in the jockey cap, Dick Diver. After a boozy lunch, the couple "drove back to the hotel, all flushed and happy, in a sort of exalted quiet. She wanted to be taken and she was, and what had begun with a childish infatuation on a beach was accomplished at last" (Fitzgerald 276). However, Rosemary and Dick are no longer "under the beach umbrella" (Fitzgerald 66), or enveloped by "the diffused magic of the hot sweet South" (Fitzgerald 44), for Dick Diver is now the "Black Death," the fall of Rome, destined to become "dissipated doctor" (Fitzgerald 365), yacht-party-crasher, drinker of "'black drink'" (Fitzgerald 324), destined to lose "his two women" (Fitzgerald 128) to darker, sexier men, in the end. The next time he sees Rosemary Hoyt, in Rome, Dick tries to restore the daddy's girl fantasy: "She lay across his knees on a big sofa, he ran his fingers through the lovely forelocks of her hair" (Fitzgerald 281). As Messenger argues, this provocative sort of position suggests "a child about to be spanked or worse by her 'father'" (Messenger 167), while also gesturing towards Nicole's future affair with Tommy Barban, in which she will metaphorically "lay across his saddle-bow as surely as if he had wolfed her away from Damascus and they had come out upon the Mongolian plain" (Fitzgerald 377). With the introduction of Nicotera in Book II, and the (re)introduction of Tommy in Book III, Fitzgerald's narrative shifts from its paternal incest theme towards an interracial sex fantasy, to be played out by *Tender*'s most modern characters: Tommy and Nicole.

Dick Diver ultimately loses his Hollywood heroine, Rosemary, to a *darker* male hero, just as he loses his wife to Tommy Barban, "a ruler" and "a hero" (Fitzgerald 254), the novel's *darkest* and most sexual (white) male character. Messenger suggests that "Tommy's fantasy seduction with Nicole is a displacement of Dick's repressive sexuality" (Messenger 166), for only Tommy Barban—"the soldier with skin like worn dark leather" (Messenger 166)—can satisfy Nicole's craving for uncomplicated sex. While Rosemary and Nicotera epitomize Hollywood's power in

shaping—even "coloring"—modern female desire, Fitzgerald finds in Nicole Diver an active expression of this darker female sexuality. As Nicole embraces her expatriate lifestyle in Europe, her modern sexuality inevitably finds its "truest" expression with Tommy, and their vaguely interracial affair reveals how Nicole's desire is intimately connected to her love of jazz music in Switzerland and her practice of cosmopolitan tanning on the French Riviera.

♦

In her adolescence, Nicole Warren uses jazz music to mediate her desire for Doctor Diver, an attractive psychiatrist ten years her senior. After their first meeting, Nicole promises to play for him some modern tunes from America, and upon their second meeting, Dick follows his mental patient to a private corner of the grounds of the sanatorium to listen to her records:

> They went to the cache where she had left the phonograph, turned a corner by the workshop, climbed a rock, and sat down behind a low wall, facing miles and miles of rolling night.
>
> They were in America now … They were so sorry, dear; they went down to meet each other in a taxi, honey; they had preferences in smiles and had met in Hindustan, and shortly afterward they must have quarrelled, for nobody knew and nobody seemed to care—yet finally one of them had gone and left the other crying, only to feel blue, to feel sad.
>
> The thin tunes, holding lost times and future hopes in liaison, twisted upon the Swiss night. (175)

The "playlist" of American jazz, which "so evocatively speaks of love, flirtation, separation, and longing" (Antonelli 485), transports exiles Dick Diver and Nicole Warren from Switzerland to "the racially promiscuous aural landscape of America" (Antonelli 485), where Nicole is no longer a mental patient, and Dick no longer her doctor. As Antonelli argues, the "lyrics seem to conjure up a series of ready-made love scenes [Dick and Nicole] can freely inhabit and use as springboards for their fantasies" (Antonelli 487). In fact, Fitzgerald uses jazz to trace Nicole's transition from trauma to fantasy, from woundedness to romance. In Switzerland, the psychiatrists fear "'she might harden with it all twisted inside her'" (Fitzgerald 169)—"it" being the trauma of her incestuous abuse—but after giving "'her a little Freud to read'" (Fitzgerald 169), and allowing her older sister to send her some records from America, Nicole "'seems hopeful and normally hungry for life—even rather romantic. Sometimes she speaks of 'the past' as people speak who have been in prison'" (Fitzgerald 169). Jazz music "frees" Nicole from her mental prison—her acute "fear of men" (Fitzgerald 165), a symptom of her schizophrenia—so that she may, ultimately, desire an older man. By associating jazz with "white mental chaos and sexual anxiety" (Antonelli 481), Fitzgerald suggests that adolescent Nicole finds an analogue for her psychological fragility, and, perhaps, psychosexual confusion, in the sexually chaotic aesthetic of American jazz music. Finally, the music "twists" upon the Swiss night, so that the trauma of her father's sexual abuse cannot—and will not—"twist" inside her.

Claiming she is "'not under any restraint at all'" (Fitzgerald 175), Nicole Warren lives vicariously through the summer-hot sensuality of black jazz music. During her and Dick's first meeting, after months of epistolary correspondence, Nicole "walked to a rhythm—all that week there had been singing in her ears, summer songs of ardent skies and wild shade, and with [Dick's] arrival the singing had become so loud she could have joined in with it" (Fitzgerald 173). During

their second meeting, she does join in, singing jazz to her psychiatrist: black lyrics on white lips. Nicole Warren's performance of black music is so provocative that "Dick stood up suddenly" (Fitzgerald 176), and when Nicole stands to join him, she stumbles over the phonograph, her body pressing into his. As Mark Goble observes, the choreography of the scene "makes not only for an intensely mediated carnal moment but also for an experience of racial meaning that cannot be communicated" (Goble 206), for black music mediates the promiscuity of Fitzgerald's white characters, providing "ardent skies and wild shade" (Fitzgerald 173) under which their sexual fantasies may thrive. Fitzgerald not only treats jazz music and "black musicians as narrative accessories for a jazz-age aesthetic," but furthermore offers black music to his white character Nicole Warren, so that she might "'channel' [a] fantasy of race" in order to "get what [she] desire[s]" (Goble 201). And, it works. As Antonelli writes: "'Thin' and not-so-thin tunes, a series of romantic love scenes, money and women going from hand to hand, from man to man, a troubled rich girl from Chicago made audacious by a handful of risqué lyrics learned in a black kitchen. For Dick, it is enough to succumb" (Antonelli 488), for although he plays the part of detached doctor—"[becoming] less and less certain of his relation to her" (Fitzgerald 175)—Dick is entirely enchanted by Nicole and her music, drawn to a racialized aesthetic he can't quite name.

At the hotel in Caux, Nicole tells Dick: "'I can remember how I stood waiting for you in the garden—holding all my self in my arms like a basket of flowers'" (Fitzgerald 202), for at the sanatorium, Nicole "promises" herself to Doctor Diver, packaging the fragility of her troubling sexuality—her "self," her flower—with the sensuality of her song:

> She smiled at him, making sure that the smile gathered up everything inside her and directed it toward him, making him a profound promise of herself for so little, for the beat

> of a response, the assurance of a complementary vibration in him. Minute by minute the sweetness drained down into her out of the willow trees, out of the dark world …
>
> "I've got one more record," she said. "—Have you heard So Long, Letty? I suppose you have."
>
> "Honestly, you don't understand—I haven't heard a thing."
>
> Nor known, nor smelt, nor tasted, he might have added; only hot-cheeked girls in hot secret rooms. The young maidens he had known at New Haven in 1914 kissed men, saying "There!"—hands at the man's chest to push him away. Now there was this scarcely saved waif of disaster bringing him the essence of a continent.… (176-177)

Dick compares Nicole Warren—an affluent, white teenager embodying "a racialized aesthetic that does not belong to her" (Goble 218)—to the "hot-cheeked" American girls who "push him away," and finds his mental patient far more intoxicating. As *continent*, Nicole represents the brazen sexuality of the flapper who loves jazz, yet also the wounded innocence of an abandoned "waif." Nicole Warren is both confident New Woman and orphaned New World, for she "not only takes Dick back to America, but she is also promising him to possess it" (Antonelli 488). Like Rosemary Hoyt—who is both sexualized and infantized on the silver screen—Nicole's performance of jazz appeals to Dick Diver's New World fantasy, his daddy's girl kink, his obsession with innocence and innocence perverted. Wounded by her father's violation and corrupted by the promiscuity of "black" music, Nicole Warren is, to Dick, a motherless, fatherless orphan in need of a "daddy." Furthermore, as Goble argues, "part of what Dick finds so appealing—so familiar, so like America—is the sound of black music as only a white body can reproduce it" (Goble 205), for Doctor Diver would not be so aroused by a black girl singing black tunes. As such, Fitzgerald

uses white-blonde Nicole Warren, with "her softly shining porcelain cheeks" (Fitzgerald 203) and moonlit hair, as a Dick-approved vessel for black music. *Tender* borrows from the "allure of jazz," which "is irresistibly modern" (Goble 201), to suggest that Nicole—in Dick's eyes—is, likewise, "irresistibly modern" and altogether alluring. However, as Goble suggests, "Nicole's racialization is a patent artifice, a screening fiction" (Goble 213), for Nicole Warren is able to "borrow" from black love stories, and perform a provocative, aestheticized black identity in the Switzerland moonlight, all the while preserving her fundamental whiteness.

As Goble boldly claims: "Blackness mediates almost every aspect of Nicole's character" (Goble 202), and just as she borrows from the sensuality of black music, Nicole Warren Diver borrows from a bodily aesthetic of blackness through the modern practice of cosmopolitan tanning. Goble observes: "When we first see [Nicole Diver] in the south of France in 1925," she has "already 'darkened'" (Goble 203). In fact, the Nicole of *Tender*'s first and third books is quite different—in appearance and attitude—than the Nicole of Book II. In Switzerland, adolescent Nicole Warren's "very blonde hair dazzled Dick" (Fitzgerald 175), and when he unexpectedly encounters her on the Glion funicular, she is blindingly white: "She wore a sweater of powder blue and a white tennis skirt—she was the first morning in May and every taint of the clinic was departed," her blonde hair "bobbed" and "fluffed into curls" (Fitzgerald 193). However, as she settles into her expatriate life on the French Riviera, Nicole Diver's physical appearance shifts from "white and fresh and new" (Fitzgerald 206), to a decidedly harsher, brown-gold aesthetic: "She had been white-Saxon-blonde but she was more beautiful now that her hair had darkened than when it had been like a cloud and more beautiful than she" (Fitzgerald 86). When Rosemary first encounters Nicole Diver on the beach, she is intimidating and beautiful, browned by the Mediterranean sun: "Her bathing suit was pulled off her shoulders and her back, a ruddy, orange

brown, set off by a string of creamy pearls, shone in the sun. Her face was hard and lovely and pitiful" (Fitzgerald 7). Fitzgerald captures this fundamental turn in Nicole's appearance through Book II's cinematic "montage" of the Divers' "early married life" (Hackman 81), which elegantly transitions the reader from the hotel in Caux—where the sky *darkens* with rain as Dick Diver kisses Nicole Warren—to the "short dazzling beach" (Fitzgerald 3) on the French Riviera, where Nicole Diver's "orange brown" (Fitzgerald 7) body glistens in the sun. The transition happens by way of Australia, then Africa: "…We travelled a lot that year—from Woolloomooloo Bay to Biskra … Oh, the poor little naked Ouled Naïl; the night was noisy with drums from Senegal and flutes and whining camels" (Fitzgerald 208). Nicole's commitment to the tanning of her skin is, perhaps, a deliberate aestheticization of a global or African *nativeness*. In fact, Fitzgerald's narrator "[refers] to the Divers as indigenous natives" (Keller 138) in the novel's opening pages, as though to suggest that these displaced American expatriates are entirely Mediterranean.

Fitzgerald's narrator codes those who have darkened in the Mediterranean sun—the Divers, the Norths, Tommy Barban—as fashionable, sophisticated, and modern, so that newcomer Rosemary Hoyt gravitates naturally towards "the dark people" over "the light" (Fitzgerald 6), and after getting sunburnt on her first day, wisely buys a bottle of cocoanut oil:

> As [Rosemary] came out of a drug store with a bottle of cocoanut oil, a woman, whom she recognized as Mrs. Diver, crossed her path with arms full of sofa cushions, and went to a car parked down the street … She sat in the car, her lovely face set, controlled, her eyes brave and watchful, looking straight ahead toward nothing. Her dress was bright red and her brown legs were bare. She had thick, dark, gold hair like a chow's. (18)

It's no surprise that Rosemary Hoyt spies "Mrs. Diver" while purchasing "a bottle of cocoanut oil," for Nicole Diver—in her "bright red" dress, with her "brown bare legs," her tanned arms full of newly-purchased home decor—epitomizes a postwar leisure class with plenty of money to spend, and plenty of time to properly brown their bodies. In "the brutal sunshine" (Fitzgerald 5) of the French Riviera, "suddenly conscious of the raw whiteness of her own body" (Fitzgerald 6), Rosemary soon learns that cocoanut oil will "help her achieve the cosmopolitan look" (Keller 140) so elegantly embodied by Nicole Diver and company. As Susan L. Keller observes: "Nicole's brown skin matches the attitude of aloof sophistication that she projects while living on the Riviera, a presentation of leisured elegance that takes no effort and needs no instruction" (Keller 148). With the cocoanut oil vignette, Fitzgerald suggests Rosemary's initiation into a leisure class that is characterized by Nicole Diver's purchasing powering and the aestheticization of her body—that "infinitely malleable fashion accessory" (Keller 130)—through the "rigorous, yet seemingly effortless, construction of [her body] via tanning" (Keller 137). As Rosemary's skin gradually tans, Nicole "teaches" her how to shop—for dresses, for perfume—as part of her "induction" into an upper-class sorority of ease and elegance: "It was fun spending money in the sunlight of the foreign city, with healthy bodies under them … with arms and hands, legs and ankles that they stretched out confidently, reaching or stepping with the confidence of women lovely to men" (Fitzgerald 124). The "confidence" with which these young women carry themselves evokes an unspoken sort of sensuality, their tanned bodies glowing in the Paris sun. However, both women "[whiten themselves] with powder" (Keller 148)—Nicole explicitly, Rosemary implicitly—to prepare for their separate affairs, an aestheticized choice which suggests, in Fitzgerald's novel, an intimate relationship between skin color and female sexuality.

Embedded in *Tender Is the Night* is an important assumption: the darker a character's skin, the "darker" his or her sexuality, so that whiteness signifies sexual innocence. After Fitzgerald's narrator establishes the Riviera's class hierarchy—the "light" people and the "dark," yet both white—Rosemary is warned by the "group with flesh as white as her own" (Fitzgerald 6) about "'getting burned the first day … because *your* skin is important'" (Fitzgerald 8), an intonation which suggests that Rosemary's skin is particularly valuable—and vulnerable—for she is both Hollywood actress and Daddy's Girl. Fitzgerald further associates Rosemary's innocence with a powdery whiteness when he writes: "her damp powdery young body came up close to [Dick] in a crush of tired cloth" (Fitzgerald 99), and later: "There was the remembered dust of powder over her tan—when he kissed her face it was damp around the corners of her hair; there was the flash of a white face under his own, the arc of a shoulder" (Fitzgerald 120). Dick Diver sees a reflection of his own "white face" in Rosemary Hoyt, whose emphatic whiteness, like her "dewy" body, indicates that she is a virgin. Surprisingly, Nicole Diver "whitens" herself for sex with Tommy Barban, "cover[ing] her body with a layer of powder" (Fitzgerald 369), for Nicole has been robbed of her sexual innocence—her virginity stolen by her incestuous father—so that she must use "consumer products to transform herself back into the virginal girl she once was" (Keller 148). After sex, Tommy scans her naked body—"the oblong white torso joined abruptly to the brown limbs and head"—and announces with a laugh: "'You are all new like a baby'" (Fitzgerald 374), a comment which not only suggests Nicole Diver's sexual rebirth, but furthermore suggests that she has retained a white identity in her core, as represented plainly by her "white torso," but also by her newly-acquired "'white crook's eyes'" (Fitzgerald 371), which she attributes to her capitalist grandfather, Sid Warren: "'if my eyes have changed it's because I'm well again. And being well perhaps I've gone back to my true self—I suppose my grandfather was a crook and I'm

a crook by heritage'" (Fitzgerald 371). Fitzgerald associates "whiteness," then, with innocence and with capitalism, so that Rosemary Hoyt's whiteness and Nicole's whiteness are entirely different, yet both still American. Fitzgerald makes clear that Nicole Diver—through the practice of cosmopolitan tanning—*gains* "brown limbs" (Fitzgerald 374) without losing her essential whiteness, and just as Nicotera's leopard skin permits him to "strut" around the film set, "tanning affords white characters like Nicole … a way safely to 'try on' a darker sexuality" (Keller 144). Nicole Diver's newlywed dream to live with her husband "near a warm beach where [they] can be brown and young together" (Fitzgerald 209) reveals how her desire for a "dark" and glamorous lifestyle of leisure on the French Riviera cannot be separated from her sexual desire.

Fitzgerald clarifies Nicole's desire to perform a darker sexuality by having her sleep with, and ultimately marry, Tommy Barban. After a precarious conversation about their marriage, the Divers crash T. F. Golding's yacht party, where Nicole Diver encounters Tommy, and—attracted to the ambiguity of his dark appearance—attaches herself to him:

> There were a white, a red, a blurred dress, and laundered chests of several men, of whom one, detaching and identifying himself, brought from Nicole a rare little cry of delight:
>
> "Tommy!"
>
> Brushing aside the Gallicism of his formal dip at her hand, Nicole pressed her face against his. They sat, or rather lay down together on the Antoninian bench. His handsome face was so dark as to have lost the pleasantness of deep tan, without attaining the blue beauty of Negroes—it was just worn leather. The foreignness of his depigmentation by unknown suns, his nourishment by strange soils, his tongue awkward with the curl of many

> dialects, his reactions attuned to odd alarms—these things fascinated and rested Nicole—in the moment of meeting she lay on his bosom, spiritually, going out and out.… (343-344)

Like Nicole, Tommy Barban is characterized by the color of his skin. In the opening pages of the novel, Tommy is depicted as aggressively attractive, his brown eyes "fierce" (Fitzgerald 22) and unforgettable. From Rosemary Hoyt's perspective, however, the "unmistakably Latin young man in black tights" (Fitzgerald 7), who speaks "with a slight French intonation" (Fitzgerald 22), is far "less civilized" (Fitzgerald 24) than his friends, Abe North and Dick Diver. At Golding's yacht party, Tommy Barban is even *darker*, as Fitzgerald positions the color of his leathery skin in the liminal space between tanned whiteness and African blackness. As Messenger observes: "Tommy comes from everywhere, hence from nowhere; his stakes have always been military and economic. He is the hero-in-waiting in *Tender,* continually dropping back into the novel to worship Nicole Diver" (Messenger 163). In fact, Tommy's vague racial identity makes him the perfect match for Nicole, for he is not quite white, yet certainly not black, and as Golding's yacht embarks on its brief voyage—from Nice to Cannes—and as day folds into night, Nicole responds almost mystically to Tommy's presence, her spiritual response, the "going out and out" (Fitzgerald 344), reminiscent of a boat's voyage through liminal waters. Nicole Diver's attraction to Tommy suggests a postwar shift towards racial mixing, the crossing of national borders for love and sex. As such, *Tender* shifts from its paternal incest theme towards a miscegenation plot, which, like Golding's yacht, exists in the liminal space between Europe, Africa, and the "East."

To Nicole, Tommy Barban's dark and handsome masculinity makes him "'look just like all the adventurers in the movies'" (Fitzgerald 344), and, by alluding to actor Ronald Colman, Fitzgerald further solidifies Tommy's status as the "dark" and "exotic" male hero popularized by

the film industry. In Tommy, Nicole discovers "a dark nuance more suited to her new taste" (Antonelli 502), and as Tommy Barban becomes her "leading man," the couple becomes a reproduction of Rosemary Hoyt and Nicotera, for just as Nicotera struts and poses for his female captives, Nicole Diver becomes Tommy's "captive." As Messenger writes: "When Nicole and Tommy finally play their first seduction scene en route to Monte Carlo," Fitzgerald's narrative effectively "recast[s] all-European Tommy as a desert sheikh with Nicole as his harem captive" (Messenger 165), "wolf[ing] her away … out upon the Mongolian plain" (Fitzgerald 377). For her part, Nicole Diver seems satisfied with a sex fantasy in which her lover's vaguely exotic identity—his "dark, scarred, and handsome" (Fitzgerald 373) appearance—promises and provides the "simplest of pleasures" (Fitzgerald 373). Ultimately, Fitzgerald's narrative—which favors "brown limbs" (Fitzgerald 374) over white or sunburnt skin, and certainly favors tanned white skin over black—suggests that Tommy and Nicole are just dark enough for each other, while still being entirely white. As Antonelli writes: "Being brown, but with a white core, or being dark, but without the bluishness of 'Negroes,' suggests how Nicole and Tommy can have access not to a dangerous admixture but to an anodyne mingling that promises an empowered whiteness and simultaneously a safe and pleasurable blackness, sprinkled with electrifying Orientalist traits" (Antonelli 502). In this way, Dick Diver is, at once, too white and too black for his wife Nicole. As the metaphorical white father, he perpetuates Nicole's psychosexual confusion as paternal incest victim, and in his dissipation—as Black Death, as refraction of Afro-European Jules Peterson, as "deposed ruler" (Fitzgerald 357) of the French Riviera—Dick threatens his wife's continued psychological health.

The Margin—Fitzgerald's flawless name for Golding's yacht—creates a liminal space where Nicole can transfer her affections from Dick Diver, her "ruined" husband-psychiatrist, to

Tommy Barban, the masculine mercenary. During the party, Nicole finds her husband on the bow of Golding's yacht, vaguely contemplating suicide:

> there was a spring wind that blew Nicole's hair abruptly when she reached the bow, and she had a sharp lesion of anxiety at seeing Dick standing in the angle by the flagstaff …
>
> He turned away from her, toward the veil of starlight over Africa …
>
> His face, wan in the light that the white spray caught and tossed back to the brilliant sky, had none of the lines of annoyance she had expected. It was even detached; his eyes focused upon her gradually as upon a chessman to be moved; in the same slow manner he caught her wrist and drew her near:
>
> "You ruined me, did you?" he inquired blandly. "Then we're both ruined. So—"
>
> Cold with terror she put her other wrist into his grip. All right, she would go with him—again she felt the beauty of the night vividly in one moment of complete response and abnegation—all right, then—
>
> —but now she was unexpectedly free and Dick turned his back sighing …
>
> Tears streamed down Nicole's face—in a moment she heard someone approaching; it was Tommy. (348-349)

Dick Diver's desperate attempt to ease his pain—and to take his wife down with him—evidently empowers Nicole to "free" herself from her nihilistic husband, whose face is "wan in the light" (Fitzgerald 349), yet whose heart is "black" (Fitzgerald 290), just as Tommy arrives on the scene. Nicole Diver abandons her role as daddy's girl, choosing instead to "go native" with half-French Tommy Barban, and, in choosing Tommy, initiates her second—perhaps more authentic—sexual

awakening. Lover of black music, Nicole naturally pursues a dark sex fantasy that is safely European. As her "dark continent" of female sexuality begins to materialize, Fitzgerald makes clear that Nicole Diver will only borrow from black sensuality insofar as she doesn't become black, or mix with someone who is black, and although Fitzgerald positions the African continent in both Divers' line of vision—"the veil of starlight over Africa" (Fitzgerald 348)—that dark continent will ultimately remain on *Tender*'s periphery.

In Fitzgerald's narrative, and in Nicole's psyche, African blackness cannot be separated from white paternal incest, and the complicated way in which Peterson's black blood triggers the memory of Nicole's sexual abuse is the precise reason why Tommy Barban, in the end, becomes her "sexual solution" (Messenger 171) and her "'protector'" (Fitzgerald 394). He is neither Negro, nor father. He will not violate her, nor will he cheat on her with teenage girls, unlike Dick Diver, of course, whose infidelities—his affair with Rosemary Hoyt, and, later, his alleged seduction of a fifteen-year-old girl at the clinic—Fitzgerald associates with both blackness and paternal incest, so that he may hypothesize upon Nicole Warren Diver's psychosis. Fitzgerald's narrative seems to suggest, ultimately, that Nicole's "episodes" are reactions to her husband's continued betrayal. In Book II, at the Ägeri Fair, Nicole flees from Dick—"her yellow dress twisting through the crowd" (Fitzgerald 244-245)—and, after laughing hysterically at the top of a ferris wheel, accuses her husband of infidelity: "'Don't you think I saw that girl look at you—that little dark girl. Oh, this is farcical—a child, not more than fifteen.'" (Fitzgerald 246). Nicole's yellow dress, which "twists" through the crowd, recalls the doctors' concern that her trauma would "twist" inside her. At once, Fitzgerald blends Dick Diver's rumored infidelity with the girl at the clinic—"a flirtatious little brunette" (Fitzgerald 242), who is a *darker* version of an adolescent Nicole Warren—with the memory of Nicole's incestuous abuse, an incident which happened when she, too, was "a child,

not more than fifteen" (Fitzgerald 246). The image of "that little dark girl" (Fitzgerald 246) recalls "the poor little naked Ouled Naïl" (Fitzgerald 208), with whom Nicole sympathizes in Algeria, and who are mentioned in the same breath as her delusion about her own daughter, Topsy: "…If I could get word to my husband who has seen fit to desert me here, to leave me in the hands of incompetents. You tell me my baby is black—that's farcical, that's very cheap" (Fitzgerald 208). By endowing Nicole's daughter with a racialized nickname, Fitzgerald not only invokes *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, but furthermore codes Topsy Diver as a sort of racially mixed daughter, whose birth triggers Nicole's first major relapse: "after my second child, my little girl, Topsy, was born everything got dark again" (Fitzgerald 208). Topsy's name—and the psychological darkness that follows for Nicole after her birth—suggests that Nicole Warren Diver, as *daughter*, has been tainted, darkened, "blackened" by incestuous abuse. However, Topsy Diver is certainly not black. Neither is the brunette girl at the clinic, and yet there is some truth to Nicole's delusion—and accusation—at the Ägeri Fair. When Dick tells her, "'this business about a girl is a delusion,'" she responds quite lucidly: "'It's always a delusion when I see what you don't want me to see'" (Fitzgerald 246). Moments later, Nicole nearly kills her husband and children by intentionally crashing their car, for she is certainly not guiltless. In fact, Fitzgerald's narrative casts the vampiric Nicole as *femme fatale*, his protagonist referring to her as: "Ophelia … the sweet poison" (Fitzgerald 384). However, Nicole Diver is somewhat justified in her psychotic behavior, for her husband's betrayals—his affair, his lies, even his botched attempts to help his schizophrenic wife truly recover—mirror Devereux Warren's fundamental betrayal, and, in the end, Nicole chooses fatherlessness over farce.

While Freud claims, "the sexual life of adult women is a 'dark continent'" (Freud 38), mythic and unknown, Fitzgerald's narrative suggests that Nicole Warren Diver, reader of Freud,

releases herself from the prison of her incest trauma by expressing her modern female sexuality and possessing her dark continent for herself:

> Nicole relaxed and felt new and happy; her thoughts were clear as good bells—she had a sense of being cured and in a new way. Her ego began blooming like a great rich rose as she scrambled back along the labyrinths in which she had wandered for years. She hated the beach, resented the places where she had played planet to Dick's sun.
>
> "Why, I'm almost complete," she thought. "I'm practically standing alone, without him." And like a happy child, wanting the completion as soon as possible, and knowing vaguely that Dick had planned for her to have it, she lay on her bed as soon as she got home and wrote Tommy Barban in Nice a short provocative letter. (367)

Fitzgerald uses floral imagery to suggest sexual awakening, and while Rosemary "looks" like something "blooming" (Fitzgerald 27) in Book I, Nicole's ego truly blooms in *Tender*'s final book. Lover of gardens, of soil and sun, Nicole is naturally drawn to Tommy Barban's earth-bound physicality and instinctive sensuality, and, for him, she "[makes] her person into the trimmest of gardens" (Fitzgerald 369), so that her physical appearance may match her inner desire, *blooming*. In the presence of her "blunt and simple lover" (Hackman 81), Nicole Diver claims to be "'well again,'" her "'true self'" (Fitzgerald 371): untamed and unbothered, passionate and self-possessed. When she asks Tommy, in French, "'Do you like what you see?'" he admits, "'I like whatever I see about you'" (Fitzgerald 371), for he sees Nicole in a way that Dick Diver's *gaze* could never truly *see* Nicole or Rosemary, and although Tommy can't quite name what *he* sees, he approves. To be sure, Nicole's affair with Tommy Barban does not make her "'well again'" in and of itself.

However, the affair does strongly suggest that Nicole has healed, or is healing. As Goble observes: "Nicole's affair with Tommy is not only healthier because he is not, and never was, her doctor, but also because her desire for his more brutal, aggressive masculinity … shows the full extent of her recovery from the schizophrenia for which she is being treated" (Goble 202). Significantly, Nicole Diver's empowered decision to sleep with Tommy Barban is predicated on her ability to think for herself. As Fitzgerald's narrator writes: "Either you think—or else others have to think for you and take power from you, pervert and discipline your natural tastes, civilize and sterilize you" (Fitzgerald 367). Nicole (re)discovers her "natural tastes" on Golding's yacht—as embodied by Tommy Barban: "his nourishment by strange soils, his tongue awkward with the curl of many dialects" (Fitzgerald 344)—and as she moves to claim her sexuality for herself, Nicole discovers *her* truth. She will no longer "play planet" to Dick Diver's sun, nor will she play daddy's girl to her drunk, teenage-obsessed husband. Most crucially, Nicole Warren Diver will no longer "delude herself" (Fitzgerald 367), nor move through life "flinching at the word 'father'" (Fitzgerald 368), nor stay married to the man who treats her trauma with kid gloves.

In her mature sexuality, Nicole surrenders to the thrill of straightforward sex that is far from Freudian, and as she swims with Tommy "in a roofless cavern of white moonlight," gradually "all that Dick had taught her"—about love, about sex, about psychology and the world—"fell away and she was ever nearer to what she had been in the beginning … Tangled with love in the moonlight she welcomed the anarchy of her lover" (Fitzgerald 377). Nicole chooses the "anarchy" of her *dark* lover, for sex with Tommy is the perfect antithesis to Dick's cerebral melancholy and failed psychiatry. In fact, Tommy Barban's sexual prowess comes as a narrative relief, as Nicole Diver is portrayed as a woman reborn, free to self-indulge without penalty or self-condemnation. She is no longer nineteen, but, instead, "a woman of twenty-nine [who] is nourished on subtler

stuff. Desirous, she chooses her apéritifs wisely" (Fitzgerald 370), and, as such, chooses Tommy. As Fitzgerald writes: "Nicole did not want any vague spiritual romance—she wanted an 'affair'; she wanted a change" (Fitzgerald 370), and her affair with Tommy plays a decisive role in the Divers' marital warfare. Nicole Diver wants "out" of this toxic romance. Their final battle ends in surrender, on Dick's part, and although *Tender*'s narrator states: "The case was finished. Doctor Diver was at liberty" (Fitzgerald 383), it is Nicole who seems most free.

♦

Although Fitzgerald's narrative suggests that Nicole Warren Diver's psychological scars "heal" as she becomes her "truest self" with Tommy Barban—whose dark skin is literally "scarred" (Fitzgerald 373)—*Tender Is the Night* also suggests that lovers will undoubtedly hurt one another, that even Nicole and Tommy, "their skins fresh and glowing" (Fitzgerald 378), will hurt each other, eventually. Just moments after she has had sex with Tommy, Nicole thinks about her husband, comparing his body to Tommy Barban's—"his figure was darker and stronger than Dick's, with high-lights along the rope-twists of muscle" (Fitzgerald 374)—and Tommy, too, thinks about something else: "Momentarily he had forgotten her too—almost in the second of his flesh breaking from hers she had a foretaste that things were going to be different than she had expected. She felt the nameless fear which precedes all emotions, joyous or sorrowful, inevitably as a hum of thunder precedes a storm" (Fitzgerald 374). The metaphorical "hum of thunder" in Monte Carlo recalls the ominous thunderstorm in Switzerland, when Dick and Nicole share their first kiss, and Tommy Barban's "darker" body, with its "rope-twists of muscle" (Fitzgerald 374), recalls Nicole Warren's trauma "twisting" inside of her, jazz music "twisting" upon the Swiss

night, her yellow dress "twisting" in the crowd, as though Fitzgerald wants to intimate that this marriage, too, will end in madness, in grief.

And yet, Fitzgerald's narrative seems to approves of their love-making—Tommy and Nicole—casting them as the new "rulers" of the French Riviera, their bodies "black and white and metallic against the sky" (Fitzgerald 399), as Dick Diver, "the last hope of a decaying clan" (Fitzgerald 384), grieves the beach he "'discovered'" (Fitzgerald 397) and once knew, grieves his wife and their marriage and the Nicole he once knew, and, finally—after "[blessing] the beach" (Fitzgerald 400)—returns West, to America, in anonymity and obscurity, for *Tender*, in many ways, is about the decline of the West. Dick loses his American female objects of desire to darker, more hedonistic European men, just as he loses his American male relationships—with Abe North, with his father—to death, to tragedy. Diver's dying fall is as inevitable, then, as Gatsby dying in his pool, for the loss of the mythical American dream is Fitzgerald's most favorite narrative theme. Like Gatsby, however, Dick's "dream" was never entirely pure, and *Tender* makes clear the fleeting nature of sex and fantasy, for flesh can break apart just as quickly as it comes together.

After Tommy's flesh "breaks" from Nicole's in Monte Carlo, Fitzgerald introduces an American battleship into his narrative. The battleship sounds its bugle call, as Tommy is "pulling the shoulder strap of [Nicole's] slip into place with his teeth" (Fitzgerald 376), and as the boat launches out to sea, a throng of young women wave goodbye to their Navy boyfriends:

> One of the girls hoisted her skirt suddenly, pulled and ripped at her pink step-ins and tore them to a sizable flag; then, screaming "Ben! Ben!" she waved it wildly. As Tommy and Nicole left the room it still fluttered against the blue sky. Oh, say can you see the tender

> color of remembered flesh?—while at the stern of the battleship arose in rivalry the Star-Spangled Banner. (377)

Here, F. Scott Fitzgerald gorgeously perverts the lyrics to "The Star-Spangled Banner"—which was written by his distant relative, Francis Scott Key—to suggest an abstract "rivalry" between America and sexuality, between the American flag and the "sizable flag" of the young European woman, a flag made in haste—and fashioned from ripped lingerie—so that she may be *seen* by her American lover. As her pink lingerie "flutters" against the blue Mediterranean sky, it becomes a profound representation of sex and memory, "remembered flesh" (Fitzgerald 377), a beautiful phrase which recalls Dick's recollection of Rosemary's sunburnt skin: "Already he felt her absence from these skies: on the beach he could only remember the sun-torn flesh of her shoulder" (Fitzgerald 213). Rosemary Hoyt's "sun-torn flesh" indicates her loss of innocence in hedonistic Europe, just as the women in Monte Carlo, who Tommy refers to—sarcastically, perhaps—as "whores" (Fitzgerald 376), emblemize that same "fleshy" hedonism. Fitzgerald's novel suggests, then, with great ambivalence, the rise of a global modernity which favors racial mixing over incest, the European continent over the American continent, the *wild* expression of modern female desire over male sexuality: repressed and repressive.

The American sailors leave, the "whores" remain. The memory of Rosemary's "tender" flesh remains. *Tender*'s "incestuous" fathers—Devereux, Dick—return to America, but Tommy remains. Tommy and Nicole leave the Monte Carlo hotel, and yet, the lingerie flag remains: feminine, pink, and torn, fluttering softly, tenderly against the blue sky.

♦ ♦

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