

THE BEAUTIFUL BETRAYER: A STUDY OF THE ARCHETYPE  
OF THE BITCH-GODDESS IN SELECTED AMERICAN  
FICTION OF THE 1920s AND THE 1930s

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Although according to Jung the archetype originates in the collective unconscious and is therefore universal, the projected image of the archetype is colored by the experiences, the fears, and the desires of the individual writer who is projecting the image. As an archetype, the bitch-goddess is a direct descendant of the femme fatale. Nonetheless, she stands as a uniquely American daughter of the 1920s and 1930s. In Fitzgerald's fiction she is Rosalind and Eleanor (This Side of Paradise), Gloria (The Beautiful and the Damned), and Daisy Fay Buchanan (The Great Gatsby); in Hemingway's fiction she is Margot Macomber ("The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber"), Helen ("The Snows of Kilimanjaro"),

and Lady Brett Ashley (The Sun Also Rises); in Faulkner's fiction she is Cecily (Soldiers' Pay), Patricia (Mosquitoes), Belle Mitchell (Sartoris), Caddy Compson (The Sound and the Fury), and Temple Drake (Sanctuary); in Nathanael West's fiction she is Faye Greener (The Day of the Locust).

The bitch-goddess possesses virtually the same characteristics as her progenitor, the Fatal Woman; however, the connotations surrounding her title as bitch-goddess provide the basis for interpretation of her character. As goddess, she is omnipotent and omniscient. She is magnificently beautiful and adored because of her beauty. Although her appearance allures and entices her worshippers, the effects of an alliance with her are not benevolent. After having used her charms to captivate the male (she does not have female idolizers), her character changes to bitch. As goddess her form promises fulfillment; however, she never satisfies: her worshippers become victims and the goddess herself becomes a bitch. She is hard, cold, and selfish--an emasculator.

The reasons why the bitch-goddess emerged and flourished during the decades of the 1920s and 1930s can be identified through an analysis of the several changes in the social structure, behavior patterns, and attitudes occurring at the time. The image of the bitch-goddess reflects the changes which were occurring in women's roles. Although the liberated woman retains an aura of feminine mystique, she

becomes a challenger, a dominator, a destroyer. However, her symbolic significance is far greater than just dramatizing women's changing roles in society. She represents the whole of society which is shallow and devoid of meaning. She reigns then not over a plush, green Garden of Eden paradise or American land of opportunity, but over a morally decadent wasteland. The dream-image of her and all that she is has become nightmare.

The failure of the American Dream is most clearly defined through Fitzgerald's Daisy Fay and Nathanael West's Faye Greener. As fairy princess and sex goddess, both women captivate the male, but both women ultimately are betrayers.

Between the fairy princess and the tawdry imitation of a sex goddess, the bitch-goddess assumes a more masculine appearance in Hemingway's Lady Brett Ashley and Faulkner's Temple Drake. Both Brett and Temple possess money and power and are seeking sexual gratification, not love. In the pursuit of their selfish pleasures, these promiscuous women offer men only destruction and death. The males who encounter Daisy Fay and Faye Greener wish to possess them--both as female and as symbol. Instead, the female possesses them. On the other hand, the males who encounter Lady Brett Ashley and Temple Drake wish to conquer and control them. However, the female remains victorious and dominant. The power to possess and dominate in each case leads to conflicts and violence; and, though the bitch-goddess is the source of the violence, she remains impervious to that which surrounds her.

Continuous changes in America's social order cause an alteration in the projected archetype of the bitch-goddess. Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind provides the transitional figure of Scarlett O'Hara, the survivor who becomes the independent career-woman, who, in turn, becomes man's primary adversary--the bitch with no redeeming qualities. The evolution of the archetype from femme fatale through bitch-goddess to the bitch coincides with the evolution of and the manifestation of the writer's experiences, fears, desires, and insecurities.

## PREFACE

The Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s and 1970s has produced several critical evaluations of the female character depicted in fiction. The focus of much of the criticism has been to attack her characterization as being incomplete primarily because she has no role or function except in relationship to the male hero and his concept of her role in his world. It is not the purpose of this thesis to support the feminist's perspective, but rather to recognize that the bitch-goddess in the American fiction of the 1920s and 1930s is more than a representation of the author's concept of woman or the depiction of a role she plays in society. The bitch-goddess is a manifestation of the author's view of life itself--both beautiful and terrifying. If he did not admire her so much, he could never feel so threatened by her. She represents to him the inseparable duo of life-and-death.

Before considering the bitch-goddess as an archetype in American literature by examining the works of authors who have used this character, I shall briefly define the terms myth, collective unconscious, archetype, and anima. The main part of this thesis will reinterpret the works of some major

American writers of the 1920s and 1930s emphasizing their attitudes (as revealed through the hero) toward the archetype, showing how their handlings of the female character are indicative of American conscious and subconscious desires, fears, and inner conflicts, and indicating how the archetype affects characterization, how it illuminates theme, and how the archetypes differ in the several works.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Green Wyrick for the initial idea behind this study and without whom this thesis might never have come into being. I also appreciate the helpful guidance offered by Dr. Gary Bleeker who devoted many hours to reading and suggesting alterations in the manuscript. I am also grateful to Dr. Charles Walton for the editorial consideration that he gave to the manuscript. My foremost thanks must go, however, to my husband for his patience, his pressure, and his love.

O. D. J.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. Definitions of an Archetype

Recently in America the Women's Liberation Movement has caused great concern to be expressed about the role and image of woman in her daily life and the role and image she has been given in literature. One of these roles is that of the bitch-goddess which reached its apex in American literature during the 1920s and 1930s. The significance of the appearance of the bitch-goddess can best be explained by, first of all, defining the terms myth, collective unconscious, archetype, and anima and by then examining the sociological factors which existed at that time and exerted an influence on her appearance.

As a direct result of the psychoanalytic theories of Freud, literary critics began a reexamination of literature based on Freud's theories of psychology. Likewise, after Jung presented his views on the collective unconscious and the archetypes contained therein, the literary critics began again to reassess literature in terms of myth and archetype.

Since myth originates from and represents man's

instincts and offers insight into the universe and meaning of life, it should therefore be obvious that a myth is more than a fictitious narrative involving super-humans and the supernatural.<sup>1</sup> Susan Cornillon, a recent literary critic, suggests that myths "are dramatic embodiments of what a culture believes to be true--or what it would like to be true--or what it is mortally afraid may be true."<sup>2</sup> Her explanation parallels the various definitions of myth offered in A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature: "myths are the symbolic projections of a people's hopes, values, fears, and aspirations; myths are . . . collective and communal."<sup>3</sup>

Even though myths take their design from the cultures from which they spring, they are, nevertheless, universal. Their universality prevails because of the collective unconscious which Jung says "has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals."<sup>4</sup> These contents are called archetypes, and as such they elicit similar psychological responses.<sup>5</sup> Jung

<sup>1</sup>Percival William Martin, Experiment in Depth: A Study of the Work of Jung, Eliot and Toynbee, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Susan Koppelman Cornillon, ed., Images of Women in Fiction: Feminist Perspectives, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Wilfred Guerin et al, eds., A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup>C. J. Jung, The Archetype and the Collective Unconscious, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup>Guerin, p. 118.

further explains that an archetype is a "primordial image." In other words, the image is of an experience which did not happen to the individual receiving the image but to his ancestors, and the individual has inherited the results. A work presenting such an image will produce a "stirring in the reader's mind, within or beneath his conscious response" and, consequently, he will attach "special emotional significance" to that work.<sup>6</sup>

P. W. Martin, author of Experiment in Depth: A Study of the Work of Jung, Eliot and Toynbee, further explains that the personal unconscious contains many complexes, "twistings together"; however, some of these complexes move from the personal to the universal realm of the human psyche (collective unconscious). There they take shape--identifiable forms and personalities of their own.<sup>7</sup> The difficulty in dealing with these "autonomous complexes" lies in their ambivalent nature.<sup>8</sup> The complex with probably the most ambivalent characteristics is the one which takes on the characteristics of the opposite sex: for a woman the animus image has male characteristics, and for a man the anima image "normally takes the form of a mysterious, elusive

<sup>6</sup>Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup>Martin, p. 71.

<sup>8</sup>Martin, p. 72.

woman. . . ."9 The anima springs from the man's "experience of his mother and his racial idea of woman that he inherits as part of his collective unconscious, derived from man's experience of woman in the past."<sup>10</sup> Whatever elements combine to form the anima image (Jung indicates that the anima wavers between the two extremes of goddess and whore), <sup>11</sup> the male will project his image upon women in whom he takes an interest.<sup>12</sup>

The above-mentioned definitions, although brief, should serve to aid in an understanding of a recurring character type which has the status of archetype--the bitch goddess. Her appearance in American literature complies with the standard of universality, since wherever and whenever she appears, she elicits "comparable psychological responses."<sup>13</sup> These psychological responses to her character reflect the dichotomy evident in her ambivalent title, bitch-goddess; they are both positive and favorable and negative and evil.

Although the bitch-goddess is not specifically

<sup>9</sup>Martin, p. 79.

<sup>10</sup>Oliver Evans and Harry Finestone, eds., The World of the Short Story: Archetypes in Action, p. 14.

<sup>11</sup>Jung, p. 199.

<sup>12</sup>Evans and Finestone, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup>Guerin, p. 118.

identified as an archetypal figure, she does embody the characteristics of two archetypal women figures mentioned by Frye and Guerin, analysts of literary criticism. The bitch-goddess combines in her personality the characteristics of the "terrible mother" ("the witch, sorceress, siren--associated with fear, danger, and death") and the "soul mate" ("the princess or 'beautiful lady'--incarnation of inspiration and fulfillment").<sup>14</sup> However, Carl Jung in The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious considers the ambivalence of these attributes being embodied in one archetype which he identifies as "the loving and terrible mother."<sup>15</sup> The qualities he associates with this archetype are:

maternal solicitude and sympathy; the magic authority of the female; the spiritual exaltation that transcends reason; any helpful instinct or impulse; all that is benign, all that cherishes and sustains, that fosters growth and fertility. . . . On the negative side the mother archetype may connote anything secret, hidden, dark; the abyss, the world of the dead, anything that devours, seduces, and poisons, that is terrifying and inescapable like fate.<sup>16</sup>

Joseph Campbell also identifies the goddess' character as one of paradoxical ambivalence, being both creative and destructive.

The goddess . . . is the world creatrix, ever mother, ever virgin. She encompasses the encompassing, nourishes the nourishing, and is the life of everything

<sup>14</sup>Guerin, p. 120.

<sup>15</sup>Jung, p. 82.

<sup>16</sup>Jung, p. 82.

that lives.

She is also the death of everything that dies. The whole round of existence is accomplished within her sway, from birth, through adolescence, maturity, and senescence, to the grave. She is the womb and the tomb: the sow that eats her farrow. Thus she unites the "good" and the "bad," exhibiting the two modes of the remembered mother, not as personal, but as universal.<sup>17</sup>

Although Jung and Campbell identify the attributes of this female archetype, William James coined her title, "bitch-goddess." In a 1906 letter to H. G. Welles, James wrote of the American situation which he described as ". . . the moral flabbiness of the exclusive worship of the bitch-goddess SUCCESS. That with the squalid cash interpretation put on the word success--is our national disease."<sup>18</sup> Even though William James was not referring to a literary archetype, parallels can be drawn between what he describes as success and a female character type who is the apotheosis of success. She is alluring and demanding, and also cruel and destructive.

Further parallels can be drawn between the American attitudes toward success and women and the appearance of the bitch-goddess archetype in American literature. Around 1890 two significant social changes emerged: the business world

<sup>17</sup>Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, p. 114.

<sup>18</sup>Henry James, ed., The Letters of William James, p. 260.

became governed by a passion for money, and women began to experience a growth in their freedom.<sup>19</sup> Both of these social changes reached their apex in the twenties and during that decade the archetype of the bitch-goddess was most pronounced.

Most American writers prior to 1890 (with the exception of Hawthorne) depicted the female character as either Fair Maiden or Dark Lady.<sup>20</sup> The Fair Maiden was blonde and virginal--the type that men should marry. The Dark Lady was brunette and passionate and represented "the threat of both sex and death."<sup>21</sup> This antithesis was prevalent until the late 1800s when a "new sensibility" caused by growth in business and politics coupled with relaxation of morals helped to modify the image of woman into one which was "neither an angel or a devil" but one which combined "the benignity of the first with the piquancy of the second."<sup>22</sup> She is best represented by Gibson's portraits of the immortal American Girl. The literary representation of this attractive, fashionably attired member of the social set is found in the fiction of Howells, Dreiser, and James.

<sup>19</sup>Harry Hartwick, The Foreground of American Fiction, p. 203.

<sup>20</sup>Leslie A. Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel, p. 50.

<sup>21</sup>Fiedler, p. 293.

<sup>22</sup>William Wasserstrom, Heiress of All the Ages, pp. 34-35, 37.

Following World War I and the cultural changes wrought by psychoanalysis in the "structure of sexual morality,"<sup>23</sup> writers no longer feared dealing with the sexual theme.<sup>24</sup> The works of F. Scott Fitzgerald perhaps best reflect the changes that were occurring because of the social revolution in the United States. The female characters he depicts are "politically emancipated and economically independent . . . in rolled hose, rouge, and lipstick."<sup>25</sup> They are the flappers. More significant than Fitzgerald's portrayal of the flapper is the emergence during the twenties of the bitch-goddess whose character can best be outlined by considering Sigmund Freud's and Carl Jung's explanation of the unconscious.

Both Freud and Jung place crucial importance on the significance of the ambivalent influence of the mother.

In the beginning, the child perceives his mother as the source of all power--of food, security, and love; of frustration and punishment. Later, she is her son's first erotic object and thus becomes for him the prototype of all women he might love.<sup>26</sup>

This ambivalent attitude toward women reveals itself in the

<sup>23</sup>Charles I. Glicksberg, The Sexual Revolution in Modern American Literature, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup>Glicksberg, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup>James W. Tuttleton, The Novel of Manners in America, p. 163.

<sup>26</sup>Katharine M. Rogers, The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature, p. x.

works of Hemingway and Faulkner through the archetype of the bitch-goddess. More than any other thing, she causes the male protagonist to doubt his own masculinity and to fear her female dominance. Initially she seems to offer love and fulfillment; however, the final result of a liaison with the goddess is a castration by the bitch.

## II. The Bitch-Goddess as Archetype

The bitch-goddess presented by Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Faulkner, West, and Mitchell is an archetype, a recurrent character, and, therefore, universal. Her appearance in mythology and literature indeed shows that she does belong in the realm of myth and ritual.

The archetype for the bitch-goddess may be found in mythology in the mother or love goddess who is depicted with contrary and opposing characteristics. She is Ishtar and Kali and almost all the mother-goddesses. Ishtar is the Semitic name for the Sumerian goddess Inanna, "the most powerful goddess in Mesopotamia."<sup>27</sup> Her powers command an influence over the vast realms of existence. She is "a mighty goddess in battle" and can also "accuse vegetation," "command fear in mankind," "control both fertility and sterility," "preside over divination, incubation and oneiromancy,

<sup>27</sup>"Ishtar," Encyclopedia of World Mythology, p. 122.

the interpretation of dreams." She possesses "all the attributes of divinity" along "with all the great powers of womankind."<sup>28</sup> In her, one can see the basis for the paradoxical ambivalence: she is beautiful and beloved, "terrifying and tempestuous,"<sup>29</sup> a charmer as well as a destroyer, a combination of celestial and underworld elements.<sup>30</sup>

Likewise, Kali, the Hindu goddess of terror, is a character of antithesis who "presides over undeserved retribution as 'the Mother who nourishes but also punishes.'"<sup>31</sup> Though her character is supernatural, she typifies what Freud and Jung were later to describe as man's ambivalent psychological attitude toward women which evolves from the "twin experience of mother's love and mother's rage."<sup>32</sup> Edmund Bergler explains the psychological effects of these experiences on the child by indicating that, as the child grows older, he becomes cognizant of his dependence upon his mother. This awareness then prompts him to shift or project his own aggression upon the mother. Through that projection he views his mother as cruel and evil: "she intends to

<sup>28</sup>"Ishtar," Encyclopedia of World Mythology, p. 122.

<sup>29</sup>"Ishtar," Encyclopedia of World Mythology, p. 122.

<sup>30</sup>"The Mother Goddess," Encyclopedia of World Mythology, p. 33.

<sup>31</sup>"Woman," Encyclopedia of World Mythology, p. 29.

<sup>32</sup>"Woman," Encyclopedia of World Mythology, p. 29.

starve, devour, poison, choke, chop to pieces, drain, castrate" him.<sup>33</sup> These seven fears are pushed into the child's unconscious and may cause him as an adult to perceive women as cruel, mercenary, and malicious.<sup>34</sup>

Another reason for man's fear or dread of woman is derived from his image of her as a seducer "whose existence depends on draining the life from men."<sup>35</sup> The physical base for this image "is that the male organ 'dies' in orgasm," and the loss of the emitted sperm is "a loss to the male of some of his life-energy."<sup>36</sup> The man, consequently, first perceives woman as one who enchants and then destroys the male, much like the female praying mantis.<sup>37</sup>

A brief catalogue of this seductive female's appearance in literature will provide the foundation for the later discussion and analysis of her archetypal image presented in the selected American fiction of the twenties and thirties. In mythological literature, she is Circe and all of the sirens; in biblical literature, she is Delilah and Salome; in classical literature, she is Criseyde, Cleopatra, and

<sup>33</sup>Edmund Bergler, The Writer and Psychoanalysis, p. 43.

<sup>34</sup>Bergler, p. 44.

<sup>35</sup>"Woman," Encyclopedia of World Mythology, p. 30.

<sup>36</sup>"Woman," Encyclopedia of World Mythology, pp. 29-30.

<sup>37</sup>Frank Klock, The Predators: Tales of Legendary Liberated Ladies, p. 208.

la belle dame sans merci.

Circe was an enchantress who not only poisoned her husband but also cast spells upon everyone who landed on the island of Aeaëa and turned them into swine. Even though Odysseus was spared this fate because Hermes had given him an herb, moly, he stayed with Circe for a year. Upon his departure, Circe warned him of the sirens, and he took precautions so as not to fall victim to their power.<sup>38</sup>

The power of the sirens, later in German legend to become Lorelei, lay in the allure of their captivating voices. These sirens, sometimes depicted as half-bird, half-woman or half-fish, half-woman, would lure the living sailors to them and, consequently, onto the rocks of doom.<sup>39</sup>

Two biblical females who embody the characteristics of the archetype of bitch-goddess are Delilah and Salome. Both are beguiling enchantresses who have the power to allure. Through this power they not only attract man, but they destroy him also. Samson fell in love with Delilah, and she became his mistress. The Philistines then bribed her to "entice him" and discover the secret of his strength and the means by which they could overpower him, for which she would receive eleven hundred pieces of silver. She

<sup>38</sup>"Circe," New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology, p. 143.

<sup>39</sup>"Sirens," The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1911 ed.

accepted the bribe and tried several times to get Samson to tell her of his strength. Even though he deceived her twice, she persisted and finally persuaded him to reveal the truth to her after she had "nagged" and "pressured him" to the point of exasperation. She then lulled him into sleep and betrayed him to the Philistines.<sup>40</sup> Just as Samson was beguiled by Delilah, so was King Herod beguiled by Salome. Because she had pleased him by dancing for him on his birthday, he promised to give her whatever she would ask. She, by the request of her mother, asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter, and King Herod complied.<sup>41</sup> Although Salome did not physically behead John the Baptist, she was directly responsible for his death.

Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde depicts another female Criseyde who bears the responsibility for the death of a man. Criseyde, whose name later becomes synonymous with whore, is depicted as "a drifter, that type of woman who amorally follows the line of least resistance."<sup>42</sup> She does not consciously seek to destroy and yet by her actions and attitude she does destroy. After Criseyde's father effects

<sup>40</sup>The Anchor Bible: Judges, trans. Robert G. Boling, pp. 248-49.

<sup>41</sup>The Anchor Bible: Matthew, trans. W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, p. 175.

<sup>42</sup>Tristram Potter Coffin, The Female Hero in Folklore and Legend, p. 88.

an exchange to get Criseyde out of Troy, she no longer remains loyal to Troilus. When Troilus discovers a brooch he had given Criseyde pinned to a cloak torn from Diomedes during battle, Troilus is crushed and seeks death as a release from this world which has presented him with the enchantress Criseyde who is "amoral, unfaithful, ultimately sans merci. . . ."44

Although Cleopatra truly existed outside the world of literature, the legends that grew around her and the characteristics given her by various writers allow her image to be considered archetypal. Specifically, the Cleopatra created by Shakespeare shows her diverse character: she is "the greatest stateswoman in history, a femme fatale, a tawny harlot, love's martyr, and honeysuckle rose all at once--easily."44 Although legend has made her into something of a love-goddess, one cannot forget the selfish motivation underlying her initial desire to "capture" Antony.

The final variant of the bitch-goddess archetype which shall be considered here is la belle dame sans merci. She is a beautiful, fairy-like creature who captures the hearts of knights, takes them to her "elfin grot" and lulls them into sleep, a metaphorical death. When they awaken, they find themselves "alone and palely loitering" beside

<sup>43</sup>Coffin, p. 90.

<sup>44</sup>Coffin, pp. 28-29.

a sedge-withered lake. Women who are sans merci "have no feelings, no commitments they can make except to themselves. Beautiful, irresistible, selfish, they are cruel, without responsibility for it, to hearts that are true."<sup>45</sup> And although they are fatal to all men who love them, they always appear "full of life."<sup>46</sup>

All these variants of the archetype merge to form the composite picture of the bitch-goddess as one who gives life and also death, and as one who is regarded with the "mingled emotions of love and terror, trust and fear, admiration and resentment, desire and disgust, which men have blended in their image of woman all through history."<sup>47</sup>

### III. Historical Influences on the Bitch-Goddess Archetype

Just as man molds myth, so does myth mold man, and in the casting of that mold one should be aware of the shaping influences provided by history, sociology, and politics.<sup>48</sup> Two myths which changed their shapes during the twenties were those of success and woman. Not one event, but several,

<sup>45</sup>Coffin, p. 84.

<sup>46</sup>Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, p. 219.

<sup>47</sup>"Woman," Encyclopedia of World Mythology, p. 31.

<sup>48</sup>Wolfgang Lederer, The Fear of Women, p. 288.

can be attributed with the reshaping of these two myths.

The single event which can be credited with primary importance in causing the upheaval of the American way of life from that of the Gilded Age to the Roaring Twenties is World War I. The wounds which were received from that war were more than physical; they were psychological. As Alfred Kazin points out, "The war had . . . left them [the young adult generation of the twenties] entirely rootless."<sup>49</sup> Their lives had begun with "violence and death" which in turn caused the ties to their homes and "the old restraints" to be severed,<sup>50</sup> and they were to live their lives in "the postwar atmosphere of shock."<sup>51</sup>

Another part of the cultural shock of that era can be attributed to women's suffrage. Having gained the right to vote, woman could be looked upon as man's equal. With this new status, woman took on a new image. She rebelled against the old modes of dress and old dictums concerning manners and morals. She no longer wanted to be a Gibson Girl; she wanted to be a flapper, an "It Girl," personified by Clara Bow. To have "it" was to have sex appeal, and sex appeal was a short thin dress, powdered knees, and rouge and

<sup>49</sup>Alfred Kazin, On Native Grounds: An Interpretation of Modern American Prose Literature, p. 313.

<sup>50</sup>Kazin, pp. 313-14.

<sup>51</sup>Kazin, p. 317.

lipstick.<sup>52</sup> To further augment her liberated image and flaunt her rebellious attitude, she bobbed her hair and could often be seen smoking or carrying a flask of whiskey.<sup>53</sup> Not only did she drink the whiskey, which offered an escape and an intensification of a good time, she invaded the male's sanctuary of the saloon and turned the saloon into a cocktail lounge where the female has prerogative.

The flapper may have felt she had "a lot of living to do" to make up for lost time; however, that attitude was not hers alone. That attitude of getting more out of life and getting it faster was promoted by advertising. And the population responded because it wanted to be "smart." To be "smart" was to extend one's credit to its limits to purchase those luxuries that were unobtainable prior to the introduction of the installment plan.<sup>54</sup>

Two other important influences, the automobile and Freud, cannot be ignored. The automobile was "the most visible and dramatic symbol of the new forces that were eroding traditional standards."<sup>55</sup> Families were not spending their

<sup>52</sup>Jan Farrington, America Awakes: A New Appraisal of the Twenties, p. 56.

<sup>53</sup>Farrington, pp. 97-98.

<sup>54</sup>American Heritage, Vol. XVI, p. 71.

<sup>55</sup>Lawrence W. Levine, "Progress and Nostalgia: The Self Image of the Nineteen Twenties," in The American Novel and the Nineteen Twenties, eds. Malcolm Bradbury and David Palmer, p. 46.

evenings on the front porch visiting with neighbors or spending their holidays celebrating together in town; rather in 1920 they were touring the highways in their eight million automobiles, which by the end of the decade would increase in number to twenty-three million.<sup>56</sup> The automobile had helped change a way of life for Americans and so did their new "gospel," the "gospel" according to Freud. Probably the most popularized tenet of Freudian psychology was that "the first requirement of mental health was to have an uninhibited sex life."<sup>57</sup> To do away with one's inhibitions--and thereby to be "smart" and "modern"--conventions had not just to be broken, but smashed.<sup>58</sup> Contributing to the changes which were to be wrought in the existing "structure of sexual morality" was psychoanalysis.<sup>59</sup> Since that "sexual morality" was much more liberal, it allowed writers to deal with the sexual theme without fear of reprisal.<sup>60</sup> The psychoanalytic concepts of Freud also promoted the tenor of introspective literature. "The interest in self

<sup>56</sup>Eric Mottram, "The Hostile Environment and the Survival Artist: A Note on the Twenties," in The American Novel and the Nineteen Twenties, eds. Malcolm Bradbury and David Palmer, p. 246.

<sup>57</sup>Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the Nineteen-Twenties, p. 99.

<sup>58</sup>Allen, p. 112.

<sup>59</sup>Glicksberg, p. 11.

<sup>60</sup>Glicksberg, p. 8.

took the place, and argued the futility, of a sense of social responsibility. . . ."61

Consequently, because of all these eruptions in the political and social aspects of life, man had not only to adapt to a new life style and a new philosophy, he had to adapt to variations of two significant myths--the myth dealing with success and the myth surrounding women.

The American myth of success was centered in the "rag-to-riches" theme. Anyone could be successful as long as he did two things--worked hard and remained virtuous.<sup>62</sup> However, that myth was altered during the twenties largely because of mass production and the installment plan. The admiration for the person who worked hard all his life and remained honest and attained success was to be replaced by the worship of the almighty dollar. And when that happened business became "the religion of America."<sup>63</sup>

The myth surrounding the nature of woman had to be altered also as she, in society, adopted a new role. Prior to the twenties, her image, with few exceptions, was formed within the Puritan ethic. Both D. H. Lawrence and Leslie A.

<sup>61</sup>Frederick J. Hoffman, The Twenties: American Writing in the Postwar Decade, p. 202.

<sup>62</sup>Richard Weiss, The American Myth of Success from Horatio Alger to Norman Vincent Peale, p. 6.

<sup>63</sup>James E. Miller, Jr., "Fitzgerald's Gatsby: The World as Ash Heap," in The Twenties: Fiction, Poetry, Drama, ed. Warren French, p. 191.

Fiedler have indicated that in early American literature the paradoxical ambivalence in the writers' visions of women was treated by dividing those two concepts and presenting two distinct women: one is dark and the other is light. The dark one is sinful and sensual, and the fair one is innocent and pure.<sup>64</sup> The dark one is the tempter who "represents the threat of both sex and death"<sup>65</sup> while the light one is the savior who represents purity and innocence.<sup>66</sup> Even if the hero were attracted to the dark one, convention prescribed only two possible actions for him to take--either he married the light one or he did not marry at all.

The writers of the twenties merged the two female characters of Dark Lady and Fair Maiden (terms employed by Fiedler) until their traits blended to form the bitch-goddess. Understandably her character is linked with success. Those who worshipped at her altar, as those who worshipped at the altar of success, would suffer the same fate. They would find that which they had adored was shallow, indiscriminate, and ultimately destructive.

<sup>64</sup>D. H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature, p. 61.

<sup>65</sup>Leslie A. Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel, p. 293.

<sup>66</sup>Fiedler, pp. 50, 310.

## CHAPTER TWO

### FITZGERALD'S BITCH-GODDESSES

The epitome of the bitch-goddess exists in the fiction of the twenties. She portrays "the recklessness of the twenties: the restlessness left after World War I, Freud, prosperity, mobility, bootleg liquor."<sup>67</sup> The beautiful but selfishly indifferent female archetype is Rosalind in This Side of Paradise (1920), Gloria in The Beautiful and the Damned (1922), and Daisy Fay in The Great Gatsby (1925).

Each of the above-mentioned characters destroys the man she loves. She is a femme fatale who is viewed by the hero as an ideal woman, the epitome of goddess-like beauty. Although these attributes make her fascinating and alluring, her overwhelming selfishness and indifference make her a destructive force. An examination of each of Fitzgerald's heroines shows them as liberated women whose beauty and power only breed destruction and corruption.

<sup>67</sup>Sharon Dean, "Lost Ladies: The Isolated Heroine in the Fiction of Hawthorne, James, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner," Unpublished Dissertation, University of New Hampshire, 1973, p. 96.

## I. Rosalind

Of the several female characters in This Side of Paradise Rosalind is the one who embraces most fully the attributes of a bitch-goddess. Rosalind is beautiful and destructive. When Alec brings Amory Blaine home to meet her, she is preparing for her debut. The Connage household is in a turmoil catering to the spoiled and selfish debutante, whose mother informs Alec that Amory will "be a little neglected tonight. . . . When a girl comes out, she needs all the attention."<sup>68</sup>

When Mrs. Connage goes to help Rosalind dress, Cecilia, Alec's youngest sister, discusses Rosalind with Alec and provides the reader with an accurate character sketch. She tells Alec that Rosalind is "awfully spoiled," "treats men terribly," and "hates girls" (pp. 169-70). Cecilia further analyzes Rosalind's destructive nature by citing that "she's a sort of vampire" (p. 170). This comment reminds the reader of an observation of the Popular Daughter made by Fitzgerald, "the Social Historian of the Jazz Age,"<sup>69</sup> earlier in the novel: "The 'belle' had become the 'flirt,' the 'flirt' had become the 'baby vamp'" (p. 59).

<sup>68</sup>F. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, p. 169. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

<sup>69</sup>Tuttleton, p. 164.

Moreover, the Popular Daughter now smokes, drinks, and is kissed quite often. She is representative of the liberated American woman of the twenties who forms the model for later Fitzgerald heroines.

Although Rosalind, as well as other Fitzgerald heroines, may be interpreted as representative of the woman of the twenties, she is more. She is that archetypal female described by Keats as "la belle dame sans merci" whose beauty reaches goddess-like proportions. She has "glorious yellow hair . . . the eternal kissable mouth . . . gray eyes and an unimpeachable skin . . ." (p. 171). Her beauty also extends itself to her graceful movements and her enchanting voice. This latter quality evokes the primordial image or archetype of the siren whose enchanting voice led sailors to their destruction. Like the siren, Rosalind lures men toward herself; however, her selfishness, her dread of responsibility, and her inability to sacrifice cause men to become her victims.

When Amory meets Rosalind, he is at once captivated by her charms, little realizing that he too will become a victim. Unlike her current victim, Howard Gillespie, Amory will not bore Rosalind. She even falls in love with him and for two months they enjoy the blissful aura of their new-found love. Nevertheless, Amory will be cast aside because love calls for sacrifice and Rosalind is too selfish for

that. Amory's financial security cannot match that which Rosalind requires. She will not sacrifice the things that money buys for love. Because she worships at the altar of money, she views life with Amory as a deprivation--a deprivation to herself. They would have to survive on two hundred and seventy-five dollars a month. She tries to explain to Amory how insufficient this amount is when she tells him she does not even do her own hair and she cannot marry him because she cannot be his "squaw--in some horrible place" (p. 193). Her primary concerns are selfish. "She wants what she wants when she wants it" (p. 170), and money, not love, serves her desires. She can give up love for money, not vice versa. So Amory falls a victim not only before the archetypal bitch-goddess Rosalind, but also before the overwhelming bitch-goddess success.

Later in the novel, Fitzgerald draws another portrait of the dark lady in the person of Eleanor Savage.<sup>70</sup> Eleanor captivates Amory when he, in an attempt to heal the wounds inflicted by Rosalind upon his ego, is taking one of his habitual long walks in the country. Before Amory ever sees Eleanor, he hears her voice. She is singing "in a low, husky voice" (p. 224), from the top of a haystack. Amory joins her there and through his eyes Fitzgerald presents to the

<sup>70</sup>The qualities assigned to her character added to the ones given to Rosalind will later produce Daisy Fay Buchanan, Fitzgerald's most comprehensive portrait of the bitch-goddess.

reader the classical portrait of the temptress. She possesses "dark . . . bobbed hair" (p. 225), "pale skin, the color of marble in starlight" (p. 226), and "eyes that gleamed like a cat's" (p. 227). To use Amory's words, she is, in effect, "a witch" (p. 227). Like the sirens, her voice casts a spell over Amory and he finds himself "in a trance" (p. 228). The quality of her voice and the enchanting effect it produces will later be repeated in the character description of Daisy Buchanan.

In another way, Eleanor is an early expression of Daisy. She, too, laments her destiny as a girl--to be "tied to the sinking ship of future matrimony" (p. 257). Not only does Eleanor begrudge the role which society and convention have assigned her, she envies the male's position. She sees the man as being free, able "to lope about and get bored and then lope somewhere else, and . . . play around with girls without being involved in meshes of sentiment, and . . . do anything and be justified. . . ." (p. 237). She feels that convention prescribes that she must marry "into a dinner coat" and she must do it soon because she, also, like Gloria in The Beautiful and the Damned, recognizes that her youthful beauty, which gives her power and success with men, can only fade.

Although Fitzgerald has tried to establish with the reader the notion that Eleanor is both beautiful and evil,

the evil in her is difficult to discern. The first mention of Eleanor shows the ambivalence associated with the bitch-goddess archetype. "Eleanor was, say, the last time that evil crept close to Amory under the mask of beauty, the last weird mystery that held him with wild fascination and pounded his world to flakes" (p. 222). Part of her evilness seems to stem from her recent past when she shocked her Baltimorean relatives with her "Bohemian naughtiness" (p. 232). The only destruction she wields is the shattering of an illusion. She talks of herself, and as she does, "Amory's love waned slowly with the moon" (p. 240). She does not then strike a pose for Amory and Amory cannot deal with the real woman any more than he can be himself or accept reality.

In the final moonlight ride of Amory and Eleanor, Fitzgerald presents Eleanor as Amory's anima. Fitzgerald, however, does not develop this idea. In the concluding paragraph of the Amory-Eleanor episode, he says that "as Amory had loved himself in Eleanor, so now what he hated was only a mirror. Their poses were strewn about the pale dawn like broken glass" (p. 240).

Through Amory, Fitzgerald expresses a theme that will prevail in his later fiction. The theme relates to the American myth of success in which "the richest man gets the most beautiful girl if he wants her" (p. 277). The woman's

role in that myth is as a symbol--a symbol of something beautiful and yet perverse. As Amory says of the women in his life, they "were all removed by their very beauty, around which men had swarmed, from the possibility of contributing anything but a sick heart . . . ." (p. 263).

## II. Gloria

In his second novel, The Beautiful and the Damned, Fitzgerald creates a bitch-goddess, Gloria Gilbert, whose character is more fully developed than Rosalind's in This Side of Paradise. Like Rosalind, Gloria places a great deal of importance on money; however, unlike Rosalind, Gloria will not desert Anthony Patch, the man she loves, for someone with money.

Fitzgerald introduces Gloria through a parable whose only characters are BEAUTY and THE VOICE. We learn that BEAUTY is to be born again, as she is every one hundred years, only this time she is to be born in America--a land where

. . . ugly women control strong men . . . and women with receding chins and shapeless noses go about in broad daylight saying "Do this!" and "Do that!" and all the men, even those of great wealth, obey implicitly their women to whom they refer sonorously

as "Mrs. So-and-So" or as "the wife."<sup>71</sup>

BEAUTY in America will be a "society girl" who will be known as "a ragtime kid, a flapper, a jazz-baby, and a baby vamp" (p. 29). That society girl is Gloria Gilbert from Kansas City who begins her seduction of Anthony Patch in Chapter II, entitled appropriately "Portrait of a Siren."

As is typical of Fitzgerald's portraits of the siren, Gloria is a graceful, beautiful blonde whose profile is "completely classical, almost cold" (p. 58). She is the "shining, hard, dominant Ganymede--a cupbearer to strange gods."<sup>72</sup> Through the mythological reference Fitzgerald has made Gloria classical. Her character also parallels the one created by D'Annunzio in La Gloria (1899). In this work the Fatal Woman is described as "'pale, impure, wicked, voracious, consumed with pride, full of revenge, greedy for power and gold. . . .'"<sup>73</sup> We know Gloria is a Fatal Woman, and so does Anthony Patch. Once in his thoughts he referred to her as "la belle dame sans merci" (p. 329). It is perhaps significant that Fitzgerald had considered The Demon

<sup>71</sup>F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Beautiful and the Damned, p. 28. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

<sup>72</sup>Maxwell Geismar, The Last of the Provincials: The American Novel, 1915-1925, p. 300.

<sup>73</sup>Praz, p. 258.

Lover as a title for this book.<sup>74</sup> Like all Fatal Women, Gloria seems capable of setting the world on fire although she herself is cold. "Her beautiful and immaculate body that is incapable of passion . . . can hardly tolerate physical contact. . . ." <sup>75</sup> Her sexual frigidity is made clear through her thoughts about bearing children:<sup>76</sup> "Motherhood was also the privilege of the female baboon" (p. 393). Further references to her iciness include: "her eyes were gray, very level and cool" (p. 60), "her beauty was cool as this damp breeze . . ." (p. 102), ". . . this cool and impervious girl . . ." (p. 197), ". . . he was intimidated by her exceptional frigidity . . ." (p. 402).

In addition to the descriptive adjectives, classical and cold, Gloria's attitude and behavior can be described as restless. This restlessness is a standard attitude of characters created by the writers of what Gertrude Stein called the "lost generation." However, Gloria's restlessness does not express itself through promiscuity as it will in Hemingway's Lady Brett Ashley in The Sun Also Rises. Her restlessness rather shows itself through her gumdrop eating,

<sup>74</sup>Richard Astro, "Vandover and the Brute and The Beautiful and the Damned: A Search for Thematic and Stylistic Reinterpretations," Modern Fiction Studies, XIV (Spring/Winter 1968/69), 410.

<sup>75</sup>Geismar, p. 300.

<sup>76</sup>Geismar, p. 302.

nailbiting, and bathtaking.<sup>77</sup> Gloria's mother is the first to tell Anthony of Gloria's restlessness. "She has no sense of responsibility . . . she goes and goes and goes--"

(p. 39). Gloria herself tells Anthony that she does not "want to have responsibility and a lot of children to take care of" (p. 64).

Besides this restlessness, Fitzgerald assigns Gloria's character other attitudes which were magnified after World War I. Gloria scorns society and sees money as being the only thing of any value. Her philosophy of life is "Never give a damn. Not for anything or anybody . . ." (p. 203). She lives only for herself and moments of happiness. She tells Anthony, "'It'd be ridiculous for me to go about pretending I felt any obligations toward the world, and as for worrying what people think, I simply don't, that's all" (p. 227). Fitzgerald exposes her philosophy earlier in the novel when he states:

Because she was brave, because she was "spoiled," because of her outrageous and commendable independence of judgment, and finally because of her arrogant consciousness that she had never seen a girl as beautiful as herself, Gloria had developed into a consistent, practising Nietzschean. (p. 161)

She adheres to this negative principle because she views money as the only asset. When the discussion turns toward Dick Caramel, Gloria's cousin, and his production of popular

<sup>77</sup>Dean, p. 99.

fiction, Anthony and Maury Noble feel that he is sacrificing his true talent to the masses and for money. Gloria, however, "told him to go ahead and make as much money as he could--that was the only thing that counted anyhow . . ." (p. 222).

Gloria's philosophy of and priorities in life reveal her selfish nature. During Gloria and Anthony's courtship, her self-centeredness predominates. They go where she wants to go when she wants to go there and do what she wants to do. Not only do her actions reveal her self-centeredness, but so do her comments. The conversations between the lovers revolve around remarks about herself: her legs, her skin, her body, and her beauty. Once Anthony is even prompted to ask her whether she is interested in anything but herself. She replies, "Not much" (p. 112). Anthony is so enticed by Gloria's beauty and charm that he does not become fully aware of her selfishness until after they are married.

Another trait prevalent in the works of Fitzgerald is that the bitch-goddess believes she is androgynous. She delights in her dominance over men and views her history of courtships as a man might view his history of financial successes. She loved it "with a vanity that was almost masculine--it had been in the nature of a triumphant and dazzling career . . ." (p. 81). Gloria, as well as other bitch-goddesses after her, bobs her hair. In addition to removing

the long tresses of hair usually associated with womanliness, Gloria further asserts her masculine status when she declares that she has "a man's mind" (p. 134). She makes this statement to explain why she does not have any female friends. She is "largely unresponsive to any intimacy shown her by a woman" (p. 228) because she "loathes women" (p. 185) who can only talk of babies and distrust their husbands if they are charming or be bored with them if they are not. Some women may be jealous of Gloria's beauty, but others fear her presence among their men because they feel she "may be a vampire" (p. 186).

Men are drawn to Gloria not only because of her beauty, but also because of her casual air of indifference which they accept as a challenge. Anthony understood that "Gloria's indifference was her strongest appeal" (p. 135), because he himself had fallen victim to it.

At one minute she had liked him tremendously--ah, she had nearly loved him. In the next he had become a thing of indifference to her, an insolent and efficiently humiliated man. . . . She was beautiful--but especially she was without mercy. He must own that strength that could send him away. (p. 116)

He does succeed in capturing Gloria in marriage although he never does succeed in experiencing true dominance over "this cool and impervious girl" (p. 197). It is not unusual that Gloria is paired with Anthony who is "an utter coward" (p. 157). Quite the contrary, "the Bitch cannot tolerate a

Real Man. . . ."78

Anthony reveals his cowardliness to Gloria a week after they have been married. Shortly after they retire for the evening, Anthony is awakened by "a rattling flutter at the window" (p. 150). Fear overtakes Anthony, and he calls the hotel's night clerk and cries that someone has been trying to enter his room through the window. Gloria is shamed by her husband's fear of what was discovered to be only the wind. Later, when she and Anthony argue about money, the lack of it and the manner in which each spends it, in order to have the last word, she demoralizes him by saying, "You're just a pitiful weakling and you always have been!" (p. 375).

Anthony recognizes the truth in Gloria's words and on one occasion tries to assert himself over the "cool and impervious" Gloria. He feels that it is Gloria's selfishness which makes her insist that they leave the Merriam's to return home. They argue at the train station, but unlike all the times before when Anthony had "given in" and felt that for giving in Gloria "had despised him," he would answer her accusation of "coward" with physical violence. She retaliates by biting his thumb. After this incident, however, she is not converted into a doting wife. She

<sup>78</sup>Joanna Russ, "What Can a Heroine Do? or Why Women Can't Write," in Images of Women in Fiction: Feminine Perspectives, ed. Susan Koppelman Cornillon, p. 12.

persists in tormenting her husband by plaguing him about money and his inability to accumulate masses of it.

Anthony, in turn, has mixed feelings about Gloria. He both loves and hates her, since the bitch-goddess represents a "dichotomy between destruction and perfection."<sup>79</sup> She can take a man, here Anthony, to ecstatic heights as well as to the pits of despair. As Lionel Trilling explains, the hero "can conceive and realize a love that is beyond his own prudence or beyond his powers of dominance or of self-protection, so that he is destroyed by the very thing that gives him his spiritual status and stature."<sup>80</sup> Anthony is so preoccupied with Gloria that he knows if he ever lost her, he would be a wretched, broken man. He and Gloria cling to the memory of a love they once had and to the hope that through legal action his grandfather's estate will be declared theirs so that they may continue their idle drifting through life. However, by the time Anthony receives his fortune, "he has already become a mentally incompetent individual for whom money has no value."<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup>Dean, p. 215.

<sup>80</sup>Lionel Trilling, The Literal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society, p. 246.

<sup>81</sup>Astro, p. 407.

### III. Daisy Fay

As was mentioned earlier, the bitch-goddess not only represents the male's ambivalent attitudes toward the female, she also helps to delineate the paradox that the wealth and success inherent in the American Dream which promises "a good time" ultimately leads to destruction and corruption.

The theme in The Great Gatsby (which Fitzgerald wished later he had entitled Under the Red, White, and Blue)<sup>82</sup> deals with the American Dream, the mythic proportions of which are identified in Gatsby's quest for the grail, i.e., his attainment of Daisy, the archetype of the bitch-goddess Success. Another mythic ritual which exists in The Great Gatsby and in many of Fitzgerald's stories is the mythic ritual which "begins with an aspiring knight meeting a fairy's child and ends with the unhappy lover 'alone and palely loitering' beside some sedge-withered lake."<sup>83</sup> Obviously, Daisy Fay is the fairy queen with whom Gatsby, the aspiring knight, is seeking an alliance. Daisy's maiden name Fay creates the parallel between her character and that of Morgan la Fay.<sup>84</sup> The following

<sup>82</sup>Milton R. Stern, The Golden Moment: The Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald, p. 207.

<sup>83</sup>Coffin, p. 86.

<sup>84</sup>Coffin, p. 86.

description of the fay of Arthurian romance will help delineate the ironic portrait of the fairy queen who presides over a decadent society located in a wasteland that Fitzgerald created to symbolize those seeking the American Dream:

. . . the fay of Arthurian romance is essentially a supernatural woman, always more beautiful than the imagination can possibly fancy her, untouched by time, unhampered by lack of resources for the accomplishment of her pleasures, superior to human blemish, contingency, or necessity, in short, altogether unlimited in her power. Insistent love is a fundamental part of her nature, but she holds aloof and gives her favor only to the best and most valorous of knights. . . . When the inevitable result ensues, and he obeys her summons to the other world, his bewilderment becomes complete oblivion and he dwells in utter forgetfulness of all things mortal, conscious only of the delights the fay offers him.<sup>85</sup>

Daisy is that beautiful American fay whose power is an extension of wealth and social position. When she chooses her knight, he will have that same power of wealth and position. Gatsby, then, in order to win the favor of his fairy queen, must make himself worthy of her--after all, she was "by far the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville."<sup>86</sup> The only plot is "the attainment of Daisy, 'golden girl high in the white palace.'"<sup>87</sup> The ending,

<sup>85</sup>Lucy Allen Paton, Studies in the Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance, p. 5.

<sup>86</sup>F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby, p. 75. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

<sup>87</sup>Coffin, p. 86.

however, can never be "and they lived happily ever after" because in all respects The Great Gatsby is a perversion of that myth.

The setting is not some far-off romantic land, but rather a corrupt valley of ashes on Long Island Sound, New York. The hero, although a self-made man, is, nevertheless, a bootlegger. The princess is a fast, "sophisticated" flapper who cannot live or sacrifice for love. Therefore, she has married the wealth ogre, Tom Buchanan.<sup>88</sup> Gatsby attempts to win back his fairy princess, but she does not fulfill, nor could she ever fulfill, the romantic vision that Gatsby has created around her and her "rich" world. Gatsby perceives Daisy as the Fair Maiden to be won by the gallant knight. Gatsby feels that Daisy "was the first 'nice' girl he had ever known" (p. 148) and to him she represents success. Leslie A. Fiedler points out that "Daisy appears in the customary semblance of the Fair Maiden" and "represents to her status-hungry provincial lover, not the corruption and death she really embodies, but Success--which is to say, America itself."<sup>89</sup> Even though Gatsby knew when he first met Daisy that she had been loved by many men, that only seemed to increase her value for him. She is the beauty and "the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and

<sup>88</sup>Coffin, p. 86.

<sup>89</sup>Fiedler, p. 313.

preserves . . . safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor" (p. 150). If Gatsby can have Daisy, he will have attained the American Dream: "a happy ending complete with new car, big house, money and the girls."<sup>90</sup>

Just as Daisy Fay's maiden name generates a symbolic significance, so does her first name. The flower whose name she carries is one of "cool whiteness radiating from a golden center." The word daisy itself originates from "day's eye" representing obviously the sun. Daisy, in turn, represents "the white golden girl, promising the lasting golden moment." The promise given in her name and voice, however, "never fulfills the expectations of the extended golden moment, the moment of most sun."<sup>91</sup> Ironically, Daisy, by her own admission, always watches for the longest day of the year and then misses it (p. 12).

Actually, Daisy, like her progenitors Rosalind and Gloria, is a bitch-goddess. As was mentioned earlier, besides representing the male's ambivalent attitudes toward the female, the bitch-goddess in Fitzgerald's fiction is "identified with America,"<sup>92</sup> land of golden opportunities. She appears to offer fulfillment for the seeker's quest.

<sup>90</sup>Fiedler, p. 313.

<sup>91</sup>Stern, p. 272.

<sup>92</sup>John F. Callahan, The Illusion of a Nation: Myth and History in the Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald, p. 213.

However, she is a golden girl in appearance only; she is actually more like a whore who leads man on, "and, in betraying his expectations, destroys his Adamic, redemptive identity."<sup>93</sup> The woman Daisy is the dream of success for Gatsby. Her incarnation is completed when Gatsby wedded "his unutterable visions to her perishable breath" (p. 112) one October evening. As his dream, she "changes from woman to treasure. As woman, she is 'perishable'; as silver or golden girl, an immortal. Precious metal becomes the only way of preserving the ideal; silver, as incorruptible metal, permanently objectifies the dream, the idea of success."<sup>94</sup>

As a result, one of the novel's themes is the discrepancy between appearance and reality. Daisy Fay portrays the archetypal bitch-goddess who represents destruction and perfection. The symbolic contrast in her character serves to depict the ambiguous relation between "the physical glamor of the rich and their spiritual corruption."<sup>95</sup> Fitzgerald highlights this contrast of the beautiful and the horrible having the same identity through his descriptions of Daisy Fay. She is another one of his tainted Popular Daughters. Although she is associated throughout the novel

<sup>93</sup>Stern, p. 7.

<sup>94</sup>Callahan, p. 13.

<sup>95</sup>John W. Aldridge, "The Life of Gatsby," in Twelve Original Essays on Great American Novels, ed. Charles Shapiro, p. 217.

with white, her outward appearance of "innocence is merely an invitation to corruption."<sup>96</sup> Daisy's dresses are almost always white and, as such, they become "a sign of the cool elegance of the alluring world in which the imagined rich live. . . ."<sup>97</sup> That white dress of cool elegance, however, only clothes Daisy's "moral shallowness."<sup>98</sup>

That moral shallowness allows Daisy to betray Gatsby three times, to sell out the dream for money. The first betrayal occurs when Gatsby is overseas. Daisy has neither the strength nor the patience to wait for love, so she decides to marry the established and wealthy Tom Buchanan. Nick, Fitzgerald's narrator, reveals to the reader Daisy's decision-making process at this time. "Her choice is between a letter of love [from Gatsby] . . . and the three-hundred-and-fifty-thousand dollar pearl necklace [from Tom Buchanan]. . . ."<sup>99</sup> After a sobering bath, Daisy makes the same choice as did Rosalind in This Side of Paradise. She will marry for money.

Five years later, she will again betray Gatsby. Although her eyes have communicated to both Gatsby and Tom

<sup>96</sup>C. W. E. Bigsby, "The Two Identities of F. Scott Fitzgerald," in The American Novel and the Nineteen-Twenties, p. 134.

<sup>97</sup>Stern, p. 267.

<sup>98</sup>Miller, p. 199.

<sup>99</sup>Stern, p. 245.

that she loves Gatsby, she cannot say that she has never loved Tom. Her betrayal comes when she says to Gatsby, "I did love him once--but I loved you too" (p. 133). After Tom exposes Gatsby as a "common swindler," Daisy will again choose Tom's established aristocracy over Gatsby's newly acquired wealth. She will again betray Gatsby when she does not tell anyone, including Tom, that it was she, not Gatsby, who was driving the car which killed Myrtle Wilson.

Another, and perhaps the most significant, symbolic contrast in Daisy's character is revealed through her voice. Like the voice of a siren, it is musical and magical, warm and full of promise. Through the narrator Nick Carroway, Daisy's second cousin, the reader learns of Daisy's enchanting voice. Even when she is talking of inconsequential matters, "her low, thrilling voice" (p. 9) compels one to listen. Later, when Nick tries to verbalize the quality of Daisy's voice, he falters, evidently searching for the words with which to accurately describe it. Gatsby knows what her voice is and what charm it holds. When he tells Nick that her voice "is full of money" (p. 120), he is revealing "Daisy as an embodiment of the glamor of wealth."<sup>100</sup>

Daisy's voice may be full, but her character is hollow. She is a woman of gestures who drifts aimlessly through

<sup>100</sup>Marius Bewley, "Scott Fitzgerald's Criticism of America," The Sewanee Review, LXII (Spring 1954), 235.

life, following the direction of the most powerful force. At Gatsby's party the one person whom Daisy likes is the movie star "because she has no substance."<sup>101</sup> Daisy, like her, is concerned with image, gesture, and appearances. This is perhaps most directly revealed in her relationship to her daughter. Her daughter is not a person, but only an object, "a household ornament,"<sup>102</sup> which Daisy, on occasion will show. Upon learning that she had given birth to a girl, Daisy's only wish (or curse?) is that she be "a beautiful little fool" since "that's the best thing a girl can be" (p. 17). The "advantages" she "passes on" to her child are those "of beautiful, white, golden girl irresponsibility and shallowness."<sup>103</sup>

Daisy, also, like Gloria in The Beautiful and the Damned and other archetypes of the bitch-goddess, expresses scorn toward society. Whereas Gloria shows her lack of "concern for the social system"<sup>104</sup> by selecting friends who are not "first-rate" (BD, p. 79) and admitting "a streak of . . . cheapness (BD, p. 73), Daisy shows hers through ennui, "by being bored at Gatsby's party"<sup>105</sup> and by not heeding

<sup>101</sup>Bewley, p. 234.

<sup>102</sup>Dean, p. 110.

<sup>103</sup>Stern, p. 271.

<sup>104</sup>Dean, p. 103.

<sup>105</sup>Dean, p. 103.

society's laws . . . [by] running from an accident."<sup>106</sup>

Like Gloria, Daisy is a charmer and a flirt although she lacks the strength and dominant personality of Gloria. Her power over men displays itself when they feel they must take care of her. Even though Daisy is essentially a weak person, her very weakness is a destructive force and ultimately causes Gatsby's death.

Neither one of her major decisions, to marry Tom and to stay with Tom, show any strength. Instead, they only underline that she will finally not give up her membership with Tom Buchanan in the elite "secret society" of the rich for a romantic illusion of the past with Gatsby. Furthermore, she will allow Gatsby to sacrifice himself to save her.<sup>107</sup> She will not accept the responsibility for her own actions. To have done so would have saved Gatsby. Her weakness and her selfishness, coupled with Gatsby's desire to protect her will destroy him. Daisy is the one who had recklessly driven Gatsby's car that fateful evening, and Daisy is the one who cannot turn Gatsby's yellow roadster into another car; it is Daisy who "lost her nerve" (p. 145) and ran into Myrtle Wilson, Tom's mistress, and killed her. That night as Gatsby stands outside the Buchanan house

<sup>106</sup>Dean, p. 103.

<sup>107</sup>Hilton Anderson, "The Rich Bunch in The Great Gatsby," Southern Quarterly, VI (January 1968), 172.

waiting for a signal from Daisy, she and Tom are inside intimately "conspiring together." Nick, who knows the truth, leaves Gatsby there "in the moonlight--watching over nothing" (p. 146). Nick Carroway later tells the reader:

They were careless people, Tom and Daisy--they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made.  
 . . . (pp. 180-181)

Daisy, personally and symbolically, failed Gatsby,<sup>108</sup> and, in so doing, brought about his ruin and destruction, his death. He had perceived "the great world" of success and wealth as one of roses, only to finally discover as he walked "among the yellowing trees" down to the swimming pool "what a grotesque thing a rose is . . ." (p. 162).

Fitzgerald's women are like master puppeteers who pull the strings and their men, like puppets, respond to their master's commands regardless of the imposition, embarrassment, or humiliation. Each of Fitzgerald's bitch-goddesses controls her victims through her beauty and charms while the victim is attached to the bitch-goddess through his purse strings. Although the bitch-goddess is worshipped for those qualities that are elusive, the shrewd, materialistic bitch-goddess worships at the altar of the "Almighty Dollar," thereby creating an unholy union of selfishness, betrayal, and damnation.

<sup>108</sup>Bewley, p. 235.

## CHAPTER THREE

### HEMINGWAY'S BITCH-GODDESSES

Hemingway's bitch-goddess, like Fitzgerald's, is not a portrait of woman as female, but of woman as symbol. She is directly associated with money, power, destruction, and death, and as such, she is Lady Brett Ashley of The Sun Also Rises (1926), Helen of "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (1936), and Margot of "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" (1936).

#### I. Lady Brett Ashley

The bitch-goddess in Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises is Lady Brett Ashley, "a symbol of the pleasure-seeking, morally lost woman of the post-war decade."<sup>109</sup> Although in many ways Brett resembles Fitzgerald's flapper and Faulkner's perverse Southern belle, she is not, like them, seventeen. She is a thirty-four-year-old version of the hedonistic bitch-goddess, whose over-indulgence in bathing cannot wash away her hedonistic outlook, and though the bath affords

<sup>109</sup>Green D. Wyrick, "The World of Ernest Hemingway: A Critical Study," The Emporia State Research Studies, II (September 1953), 10.

her temporary sanctuary, she returns always to her bitch-goddess pursuits and pleasure-seeking ways.

Just like Fitzgerald's and Faulkner's bitch-goddesses, Brett has several masculine characteristics. Brett, long and lithe, topped by a boyish hair-do, cavorts about the bistros of Paris with her fellow "chaps" seeking the pleasures that life and the times have to offer. Hemingway heightens Brett's masculinity by costuming her in a man's fedora, wool jersey pullover, and rough tweed skirts. Other male traits are attributed to Brett through her manner and life style. She, like her fellow "chaps," pursues and stalks her intended victim. Hemingway reemphasizes this masculine trait in Brett's pursuit of the young bullfighter Romero.

Brett, like those before and after her, dominates all the men in her life, wounds all of them, and destroys almost all of them. She can dominate and wound the castrated Jake, but she cannot totally destroy him. He survives, but only because his main concern about life is how to live in it. Jake does love Brett, and that love is damaging; it gives her a hold on him. He does anything for her and because he cannot physically be her lover, he plays other parts for her, including pimp and priest-confessor. Brett and her entourage follow Jake out of France (the new materialistic world where money is supreme and buys everything, even

friendship) to Spain, the more primitive, ritualistic world where tradition reigns.<sup>110</sup> There they succeed in destroying a part of Jake's life for him. His friend Montoya who has identified Jake as a true "aficionado" avoids Jake and his "friends" after the young Romero seems to have fallen prey to the charms of Brett. Even though Jake is aware of all that Brett is and does, he continues to give support to her vision that they "could have had such a damned good time together."<sup>111</sup>

Good times with Lady Brett Ashley are short-lived. She is too selfish, too irresponsible, too inconsiderate, and totally incapable of sacrifice. After her affair with the nineteen-year-old bullfighter Romero, Brett tells Jake three times that she feels good about not being a bitch and destroying Romero. However, the underlying reason for her dismissal of Romero is not as noble as she tries to make it sound. She simply cannot become a woman. She cannot alter herself, she cannot let her hair grow out, and, consequently, she cannot ever be anything but the bitch-goddess that she is.

Brett's manner of living reflects a carelessness, a lack of responsibility which is a standard trait of the

<sup>110</sup>Delbert E. Wylder, Hemingway's Heroes, pp. 38, 49.

<sup>111</sup>Ernest Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises, p. 247. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

bitch-goddess. Hemingway depicts that carelessness when he shows Brett not showing up for appointments she has made, when he shows Brett running up bills and then wiring Jake for help, and when he shows Brett's disorderly hotel room in Madrid.<sup>112</sup> Hemingway indicates that Brett's carelessness is the result of always having had someone else to clean up after her and reestablish order. Early in the novel when Brett has brought the count to Jake's room, she is "smoking a cigarette and flicking the ashes on the rug" (p. 57). Not only does this action serve to underline her carelessness, it also depicts another action which can be considered masculine.

Brett is a temptress, a destroyer, or as Cohn has correctly labelled her, a Circe. All the men are attracted to her, but because she is not the traditional woman, the men are doomed. As Scott Donaldson has noted, Brett "satisfies her demanding sexual appetites at the expense of others, effectively turning Robert into a steer, Mike into a swine, and Jake into a pimp."<sup>113</sup> When Brett tells Jake that she is "mad about the Romero boy" (p. 183), and wants to do something about it, she reveals that she has "never felt such a bitch" ( p. 184). She knows her motives are purely

<sup>112</sup>Scott Donaldson, "Hemingway's Morality of Compensation," American Literature, XLIII (1971), 412.

<sup>113</sup>Donaldson, p. 412.

physical. Earlier Mike Campbell had recognized Brett's physical interest in Romero when he said to Jake, "Tell him Brett is dying to know how he can get into those pants" (p. 176).

Brett, as universal archetype of bitch-goddess, is also Hemingway's "female symbol of the Lost Generation."<sup>114</sup> As such her life is a continuous exercise in fighting boredom. The flight from boredom is punctuated with drinking, sexual encounters, and desperation, leaving in its wake only destruction and disillusionment. Brett can have a fling with Cohn in San Sebastian and, with no pangs of conscience, add him to her string of lovers. Cohn, however, refuses to accept Brett as less than his romantic ideal and their brief affair as anything but true love, so, consequently, he is doomed. Brett tells Jake and Mike Campbell of her affairs with other men. She even tries to get Mike to read the love letters that Cohn sent her. She publicly humiliates the men who are her victims. She emasculates Mike by compelling him to tell of several incidents that "reflect discredit" on him (p. 135). She is openly rude to Cohn by verbally dismissing him and indicating her preference for the company of Romero and Jake.

Even though Cohn will persist in his fantasy concerning Brett, Leslie A. Fiedler indicates that the Spaniards in

<sup>114</sup>Bertram D. Sarason, Hemingway and The Sun Set, p. 234.

Pamplona recognize Brett for what she is--"a terrible goddess, the avatar of an ancient archetype." She is a pagan belonging to a world "prior to that of the Christian churches."<sup>115</sup> She tries to enter the Christian world but fails. She either does not have a hat or changes her mind or simply says that she does not have the right face for it (p. 208). During the fiesta a group of riau-riau dancers circle around Brett because they want "her as an image to dance around" (p. 155), as they had previously danced around the icon of San Fermín. The dancers convey Brett to a wine shop where they seat her on a wine cask and thereby liken her to some Bacchanalian goddess.

The image of Brett as Dionysus is particularly apt. Wine, the god of wine, and Brett all have a double nature, possessing both positive and negative attributes. Brett, just like the wine, can intoxicate man and take him to dizzying heights of ecstasy and conversely plummet him to depths of despair. Brett is Dionysus, "man's benefactor and . . . man's destroyer."<sup>116</sup>

<sup>115</sup>Leslie A. Fiedler, "Men Without Women," in Hemingway: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Robert P. Weeks, p. 89.

<sup>116</sup>Edith Hamilton, Mythology, p. 72.

## II. Helen

After Lady Brett Ashley, Hemingway changes his concept and portrayal of what he envisions as the female predator. Though the traits of the bitch-goddess remain, neither Helen nor Margot has the overt masculine mannerisms of Lady Brett Ashley. Helen in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" is like Margot Macomber in that she is a dominating woman. Unlike Margot Macomber, however, whose dominance "takes the form of active bitchery," Helen's "dominance is passive."<sup>117</sup> As Margot wields power by way of her beauty and Francis' fear, so Helen wields her power through her money and Harry's dependency.

Helen bought Harry, whom she had admired as a writer, because she was afraid of being alone, and Harry allowed himself to be bought by the woman "who had the most money of all"<sup>118</sup> because her money offers him security and protection, an armor against the discomforts of life. Their marriage, then, is on the same kind of shallow basis as the Macomers'.

Because she possesses the money, she also possesses Harry.<sup>119</sup> Everything she gives him only strengthens her

<sup>117</sup>Robert W. Lewis Jr., Hemingway on Love, p. 97.

<sup>118</sup>Ernest Hemingway, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," in The First Forty-Nine Stories, p. 60. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

<sup>119</sup>Lewis, p. 106.

position as the dominant figure in their marriage, since each gift, whether it be "her wealth, her body, [or] her devotion,"<sup>120</sup> serves as a reminder to Harry that he has betrayed himself and, consequently, lost the freedom and independence that he values.

Harry, in turn, despises Helen because he does associate her with death. He feels that she and her money have corrupted and destroyed, actually drained him of his creative ability. Leslie A. Fiedler supports the concept that Helen is one of Hemingway's American White Goddesses who is a "dealer of death."<sup>121</sup> Harry blames the "rich bitch" for his inability to write, his artistic death. By marrying wealth and becoming dependent on it,<sup>122</sup> "he had traded away what remained of his old life" (p. 60) and lost the "strength of will to work" (p. 61). Helen's money and the luxuries it affords him cause him to become lazy and soft.

Besides associating money with destruction, Harry also associates eros with death.<sup>123</sup> As he thinks of Helen with "those good breasts and those useful thighs and those

<sup>120</sup>Lewis, p. 107.

<sup>121</sup>Leslie A. Fiedler, "Men Without Women," in Hemingway: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Robert P. Weeks, p. 89.

<sup>122</sup>Carlos Baker, "The Two African Stories," in Hemingway: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Robert P. Weeks, p. 119.

<sup>123</sup>Lewis, p. 106.

lightly small-of-back-caressing hands," he looks up and sees her smiling, and "he felt death come again" (p. 66). Helen, as archetypal bitch-goddess, offers death and destruction as well as comfort and security.

### III. Margot

The story "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" is about moral fulfillment and a contest between Margot and Francis for possession of his soul.<sup>124</sup> The attractive Margot Macomber exacts her revenge on Francis, her wealthy husband who reveals himself publicly as a coward when he bolts and runs away from the wounded lion, by emasculating him psychologically through her derogatory remarks and her adulterous behavior with Wilson, the guide on their safari. Margot finally kills Francis the moment he overcomes his fear and "becomes a man."

Like all predatory females, Margot has selected a weak mate. For eleven years their union has endured, in spite of her several indiscretions, because "Margot was too beautiful for Macomber to divorce her and Macomber had too much money for Margot ever to leave him."<sup>125</sup> Margot's

<sup>124</sup>Baker, p. 120.

<sup>125</sup>Ernest Hemingway, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," in The First Forty-Nine Stories, p. 27. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

beauty was such that she had even endorsed a commercial beauty product which she had never used. Her ability to "govern" Francis is directly related to her powerful beauty and his "sinister tolerance" coupled with his inadequacy with women. She belittles him in front of others, talks to him as if he were a child, and even openly cuckolds him because she knows he will "take anything."

Wilson identifies the Maccombers as a four-letter man and a five-letter woman. In other words, Wilson sees Francis as a "shit" and Margot as a "whore." He feels qualified to assess accurately Margot's character because "he had gone through his education of American women before now" (p. 15), and he sees them as "the hardest, the cruelest, the most predatory and the most attractive . . ." (p. 15). Margot, however, is not one hundred percent bitch as some critics have labelled her. At times, even to Wilson, "she seemed a hell of a fine woman" (p. 16). She is embarrassed for herself and her husband when he reveals himself a coward. "She seemed to understand, to realize, to be hurt for him and herself and to know how things really stood" (p. 16). Later, after Francis has shot three buffalo, she tells him that he was marvelous.

These moments for Margot though are short-lived. After their fleeting existence, Margot again presents herself as "simply enamelled in that American female cruelty"

(p. 16). Always when she is being a bitch, she is referred to as Margot (a name her husband gives her); when she is not a bitch, she is Margaret or Mrs. Macomber; when she is neither, she is "the woman." Significantly, she is referred to as Mrs. Macomber when she shoots her husband, and after the shooting she is identified as "the woman."<sup>126</sup>

Ironically, Mrs. Macomber kills her husband with the "Männlicher (cf. German 'manly') rifle."<sup>127</sup> When she does so, she is fully aware of her husband's new-found ability to stand solid and knows then that her "position of dominance" has changed.<sup>128</sup> He is no longer cowardly nor impotent. He is a man who has physical and moral courage--not only can he face a charging buffalo, he can leave Margot. When she notices this change in her husband, her face is not red from embarrassment, but rather white with dread. She fears the change in her husband. She has always ruled over him before, and he has always tolerated her cruelty. Now Francis seems capable of challenging her role as dominant figure in their marriage. As a predatory female, she has no choice but to kill him "at the moment when he symbolically gratifies

<sup>126</sup>William E. Morris, "Hemingway's THE SHORT HAPPY LIFE OF FRANCIS MACOMBER," The Explicator, XXIV (December 1965), Item 31.

<sup>127</sup>Lewis, p. 88.

<sup>128</sup>Lewis, p. 88.

her"<sup>129</sup> much like a queen bee, a black widow spider, and a praying mantis kill their mates.

Francis hardly ever acts independently of his wife. She accompanies Wilson and Francis on both hunting expeditions. On both occasions, the lion-hunt and the buffalo-hunt, Margot, from the back seat of the car, has the perfect vantage point to "see the whole thing." Prior to the lion-hunt, Margot senses from her husband's remarks about the lion's roar, which had kept him awake the night before, that he is afraid. She attempts to bolster his ego and offer him moral support by assuring him that she knows he will kill the lion "marvellously" (p. 19). After he fails, he indicates to Wilson how important it is to him that they find the buffalo the next day. He wants to compensate for his failure, not for himself, but for his wife, because as he tells Wilson, "It's not very pleasant to have your wife see you do something like that" (p. 17). Francis knows that Margot is displeased because upon returning to the car after he runs from the lion, Francis reaches over to take his wife's hand; she, however, removes hers from his and Francis knows then that his wife is through with him (pp. 26-27).

The next day they do spot the buffalo, and it is in the automobile during the forty-five-mile-per-hour chase that a change is wrought in Francis, and consequently, in

<sup>129</sup>Lewis, p. 92.

Margot. He loses his fear and in its place is "only hatred of Wilson" (p. 32). Margot had gone to Wilson's tent the night before. When she returned to Francis' tent, Francis called her "a bitch" to which she responded, "Well, you're a coward" (p. 28).

Francis, who says he hates Wilson, then patterns his behavior after Wilson's during the buffalo-hunt. This causes Margot's face to turn white with dread because Wilson is "the virile professional hunter, who despised women and could do without them very well,"<sup>130</sup> and if Francis, like Wilson, finds physical courage, he will also find moral strength and be able to leave Margot.

Francis is as pleased with the change in himself as his wife is frightened of it. His face is "shining" as he announces that he will never "be afraid of anything again" (p. 36). Margot tries to assert her dominance once again when she contemptuously asks her husband if it is not too late to become so brave. When he says, "Not for me," she backs into the corner of the seat because for her it may be too late.

When the hunters leave the car to face the wounded, charging bull buffalo, Francis turns to wave to his wife, seeking her attention and approval, an action much like that

<sup>130</sup>Katharine M. Rogers, The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature, p. 251.

of a small boy wanting the acknowledgement of manhood from his mother. Wolfgang Lederer explains:

All masculine striving, no matter how competitive between men, no matter how remote from anything feminine, seems in last analysis to be undertaken with an occasional glance over the shoulder, as it were: for there, like a nanny in a park, sits the Great Mother, looking on: whether with admiration or contempt, that apparently makes all the difference, that, as the saying goes, separates the men from the boys.<sup>131</sup>

Margot does not wave back. Because she is a bitch-goddess, she has been gratified by her husband's previous display of cowardice as it gives her another hold over him. Since she is not the great beauty at home that she once was, she needs that extra hold. When she sees her husband's individual bravery, she knows her position of dominance is gone and she becomes the destroyer because the "Bitch cannot tolerate a Real Man."<sup>132</sup>

Unlike Fitzgerald's sirens, Hemingway's women not only dress in a masculine way and assume male mannerisms, they also invade what was accepted as the male's domain: the cafés, bistros, the wilds of an African shoot, and the unconquerable mountains. There they emasculate their victims through ruthlessness, psychological warfare, and the power

<sup>131</sup>Wolfgang Lederer, The Fear of Women, p. 237.

<sup>132</sup>Joanna Russ, "What Can a Heroine Do? or Why Women Can't Write," in Images of Women in Fiction: Feminist Perspectives, ed. Susan Koppelman Cornillon, p. 12.

of wealth, and in the case of Margot Macomber when all else fails, the "man's rifle."

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FAULKNER'S BITCH-GODDESSES

Patricia of Mosquitoes, Belle Mitchell of Sartoris, Caddy Compson of The Sound and the Fury, and Cecily of Soldiers' Pay, and Temple Drake of Sanctuary are similar to Fitzgerald's flapper. They are young, boyish in appearance, and emancipated,<sup>133</sup> and they use their ability to attract or allure "for selfish ends."<sup>134</sup> They are like the destroyer Circe, enchanting and powerful.<sup>135</sup>

#### I. Patricia

Patricia, in Faulkner's second novel Mosquitoes, at eighteen is childlike, and she and Gordon, the sculptor, both note the resemblance between her and his marble sculpture depicting his "feminine ideal: a virgin with no legs

<sup>133</sup>Maxwell Geismar, Writers in Crisis: The American Novel between the Two Wars, p. 147.

<sup>134</sup>Sally R. Page, Faulkner's Women: Characterization and Meaning, p. xv.

<sup>135</sup>Naomi Jackson, "Faulkner's Women: 'Demon-Nun and Angel Witch,'" Ball State University Forum, VIII (Winter 1967), 19.

to leave me, no arms to hold me, no head to talk to me."<sup>136</sup> Patricia's torso, like the statue's, is "flat," "sexless, yet somehow vaguely troubling" (p. 24).

One of the females, Dorothy Jameson, aboard the yacht has noticed that Patricia effortlessly draws artistic men to her. She also draws David West, the steward, to her. She dominates him, puts him in a trance, and he follows her around like a dog.

In an attempt to capture a dream--an idyllic trip through Europe--and make it a reality, Pat and David leave the yachting party. They plan to elope to Mandeville. When they reach land and have to decide which way to go, David can logically determine where Mandeville would be and which road to take; however, Patricia says, "I don't think so. . . . Besides, I just know it's this way." His answer to her is always, "I guess you are right" (pp. 174-75). Even when she becomes in the swamp what she knows is an insufferable burden, he still pampers her. He has literally given her the shirt off his back in order to protect her tanned flesh from the attacks of the mosquitoes. He fans her with a branch and even carries her when she is too tired to walk. His concern for her far outweighs her selfishness which manifests itself in her desire for adventure--an escape from the

<sup>136</sup>William Faulkner, Mosquitoes, p. 26. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

boredom of her aunt's yachting party. She even says to David, "But if you were me, I'd leave you flat. That's what I'd do" (p. 202).

Their dream has become a nightmare; the reality of the mosquitoes has driven away Pat's childish illusions,<sup>137</sup> and given her only "sensations that are neither desirable, enjoyable, or beautiful."<sup>138</sup> Patricia, in all her self-centeredness, only lives to pursue the sensations that life offers and when they are unpleasant she returns to the yacht and her aunt's secure world of wealth "where conversation and social maneuvering replace the hard, intractable reality of experience."<sup>139</sup>

Patricia, like Cecily in Soldiers' Pay, is Faulkner's image of the flapper,<sup>140</sup> whose appearance is more masculine than feminine, a character for whom Faulkner has no great love. Dawson Fairchild, the author aboard the yacht, underlines Faulkner's view when he says that the modern woman is "not satisfying any more; just exciting and monotonous. And mostly monotonous" (p. 240). As a flapper, she bears some marked resemblances to many of Fitzgerald's females. She,

<sup>137</sup>Edmund L. Volpe, A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner, p. 64.

<sup>138</sup>Olga W. Vickery, The Novels of William Faulkner: A Critical Interpretation, p. 11.

<sup>139</sup>Vickery, p. 11.

<sup>140</sup>Geismar, p. 149.

like Gloria and Daisy, expresses scorn for society and certain conventions. She brings, at the last minute, Jenny, a shop girl, and her Italian boyfriend to her aunt's yachting party; she is impatient with the conversational and social amenities of the adults, and, consequently, her remarks to them are curt and blunt.<sup>141</sup>

Although Patricia is childish, a trait not commonly associated with bitch-goddesses, she is, nonetheless, extremely perceptive. She recognizes the similarity between Gordon's feminine ideal and herself; she knows the meaning of the "dumb yearning" look in David's eyes; she knows, perhaps more insignificantly, that Mr. Tarver is a weak, ineffectual man behind the name Talliaferro.

As bitch-goddess she is woman full of the promise of spring, but who, ultimately, can only destroy. Gordon, the sculptor, recognizes this dichotomy in her. During a discussion of his feminine ideal he says, "She is more terrible and beautiful than fire" (p. 329). He recognizes finally "that his love for Patricia is hopeless,"<sup>142</sup> and that she is an instrument of death: "o israfel ay wax your wings with the thin odorless moisture of her thighs strangle your heart with hair" (p. 48).

<sup>141</sup>Volpe, p. 63.

<sup>142</sup>John T. Irwin, Doubling and Incest/Repetition and Revenge, p. 160.

Although Talliaferro is initially attracted to Patricia Robyn through her physical characteristics, "the sweet young curve of her shanks straight and brittle as the legs of a bird" (p. 19) and the "clean young odor of her, like that of trees" (p. 21), he also recognizes her as a "young female devil" (p. 18) and "a bodiless evil" (p. 31).

Her inability to fulfill Gordon's dreams, as well as her inability to comply with David's physical desires, make her into a destroyer. Her characterization, as well as all the others in this novel, contribute to Faulkner's theme of frustration and futility in a sterile wasteland.

## II. Belle Mitchell

The bitch-goddess in Sartoris (1929) is Belle Mitchell who, like most of the other bitch-goddesses of the 1920s and 1930s with her bobbed hair ("Hers was the first bobbed head" in Jefferson),<sup>143</sup> represents the new, emancipated woman. Although the novel does not center around her, Belle's character and actions underline the theme of the novel which deals with the "juxtaposition of the play and reality."<sup>144</sup>

<sup>143</sup>William Faulkner, Sartoris, p. 186. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

<sup>144</sup>Vickery, p. 24.

Belle, much like Faye Greener in West's The Day of the Locust, uses her feminine charms and "the magic of imagination" to entice and entrap Horace, who, although he recognizes "her pettiness, selfishness, and crudity" will respond.<sup>145</sup>

They sat thus for some time while the light faded, Belle in another temporary vacuum of discontent, building for herself a world in which she moved romantically, finely, and a little tragically, with Horace sitting beside her and watching both Belle in her self-imposed and tragic role, and himself performing his part like the old actor whose hair is thin and whose profile is escaping him via his chin, but who can play to any cue at a moment's notice while the younger men chew their bitter thumbs in the wings. ( p. 194)

Belle's selfishness and lack of consideration for her husband Harry is shown when she invites young people over to play tennis on their court when she knows that Harry enjoys a game of tennis when he gets home from work. Another incident which reveals more of Belle's self-centered attitude occurs at a ladies' social given by Belle. When Miss Jenny announces that it is time to leave because Harry would not appreciate coming home from work to a house full of women and women's chatter, Belle responds sharply, "Then he can sit in the car in the garage" (p. 30).

Belle, obviously the dominant figure in the marriage, commands and demands. Everyone, including her husband, knows what Belle is, but that does not diminish her power.

<sup>145</sup>Vickery, p. 24.

Rachel, the Negro servant, thinks Belle is "some kind of a wild animal. A damned tiger or something" (p. 191). Narcissa, Horace's sister, says that Belle is "dirty" (p. 199) and "has a backstairs nature" (p. 256). Harry makes "allowances" for Belle because he feels women are "different from men. Born contrary; complain when you don't please 'em and complain when you do" (p. 191). Harry recognizes that he cannot control Belle so he tries to threaten the man who would "wreck his home" (p. 191).

The threat is useless since Horace is not so much a pursuer as he is a victim--a victim of Belle's Circe-like charms. Even when she is not pressing her body close to Horace's, he feels that she "envelope[s] him with rich and smoldering promise" (p. 190). It is Belle who decides to divorce Harry and marry Horace Benbow after she has ascertained that Horace has "plenty of money" (p. 257). Although Horace realizes the kind of woman Belle is, he is not only powerless before her, but a willing victim to her charms. One of his last thoughts before he falls asleep accurately reveals his archetypal position before the bitch-goddess: "And then Belle again, enveloping him like a rich and fatal drug, like a motionless and cloying sea in which he watched himself drown" (p. 257).

### III. Caddy Compson

Caddy Compson in The Sound and the Fury (1929) may be viewed as another Faulknerian bitch-goddess because she is "the controlling figure of destruction."<sup>146</sup> The entire novel revolves around Caddy and the effect she has on those around her revealed through four points of view. To Benjy, she is a comforter, a protector, a mother. To Quentin, she is representative of honor. To Jason, she is a source of money. To Faulkner, she is the "heart's darling."<sup>147</sup>

As were Patricia and Cecily, Caddy is associated with trees and the odor of trees. When Caddy wears perfume and no longer smells like trees, Benjy, who is sensitive to any changes in Caddy and expresses his dislike of them by crying, bellows until she washes off the perfume. Also, Benjy notices when Caddy kisses a man, and she has to wash out her mouth. Benjy is aware of the change in Caddy after her first sexual encounter. The odor of trees then represents virginity, purity, and innocence.

Other images associated with Caddy indicate a parallel between her and Eve. Just as Eve could not resist temptation and ate the "forbidden fruit" from the tree of knowledge and

<sup>146</sup>Dean, p. 167.

<sup>147</sup>Catherine Baum, "'The Beautiful One': Caddy Compson as Heroine of The Sound and the Fury," Modern Fiction Studies, XIII (Spring 1967), 35.

thereby "brought misfortune, sickness, and death by her misdeed,"<sup>148</sup> so, too, Caddy is associated with evil.

Caddy in her muddied drawers (symbolizing man's "natural fallen state")<sup>149</sup> climbs a tree to gain "forbidden knowledge."<sup>150</sup> When Dilsey sees Caddy in the tree and her three brothers looking up at her from the ground, she commands Caddy to come down from the tree by calling her Satan.<sup>151</sup>

Quentin, who wants to save Caddy's honor by admitting to incest he did not commit, also associates evil with women:

Women are like that they dont acquire knowledge of people we are for that they are just born with a practical fertility of suspicion that makes a crop every so often and usually right they have an affinity for evil for supplying whatever the evil lacks in itself for drawing it about them instinctively as you do bedclothing in slumber fertilising the mind for it until the evil has served its purpose whether it ever existed or no. (p. 74)

During her adolescence, Caddy scorns the Southern concept of woman and her virginity as the emblem of a family's honor. She is promiscuous and indulges in affairs

<sup>148</sup>Rosemary Radford Ruether, ed., Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in Jewish and Christian Traditions, p. 95.

<sup>149</sup>Walter Brylowski, Faulkner's Olympian Laugh: Myth in the Novels, p. 63.

<sup>150</sup>Brylowski, p. 62.

<sup>151</sup>William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury and As I Lay Dying, p. 64. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

with several men--and not because she loves them. When Quentin asks Caddy if she loves Dalton Ames, she responds by having Quentin feel her racing pulse. Later, when Caddy discovers she is pregnant, she marries a man she does not love and who is not the father of her child.

Caddy is a betrayer. She betrays Benjy and leaves him in the care of a sterile, unloving household. She betrays Quentin who commits suicide because he feels that if he can kill his memory of her sin, he will free her from it. Jason feels that she betrays him because Caddy's husband's promise to offer Jason a position in his bank is never fulfilled after Herbert divorces Caddy when he discovers she was pregnant when he married her. Caddy finally betrays her own child, Quentin, by leaving her with the Compsons to raise. The only thing that Caddy does for her child is send money that she has earned as a prostitute. Finally, "ageless and beautiful, cold serene and damned" (p. 12), she becomes the mistress of a Nazi general. As Catherine Baum suggests, this final image of Caddy with "a rich scarf and a seal coat" (p. 12) standing with the Nazi before "an open powerful expensive chromiumtrimmed sports car" (p. 12) represents not only "spiritual damnation" but, ironically, "worldly success" also.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>152</sup>Baum, p. 44.

## IV. Cecily

Cecily in Soldiers' Pay (1926), like almost all of Fitzgerald's bitch-goddesses is a flapper,<sup>153</sup> "the prototype of the modern freedom of the sexes."<sup>154</sup> Like Patricia Robyn of Mosquitoes and Temple Drake of Sanctuary, Cecily's physical beauty and allure and potential for creativity creates the image of goddess; however, her shallow and selfish nature makes her a bitch. Patricia, Temple, and Cecily play "with sex and men as with a toy,"<sup>155</sup> rather than fulfill their image of the ideal. Consequently, the images of life and death, love and sex are associated with their characters.

Cecily, Patricia, and Temple are compared to trees and the odor of trees, a symbol not only of life and death, but, as used by Faulkner, a symbol of virginity.<sup>156</sup> Specifically, they are compared to poplars which are symbols of courage and immortality.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>153</sup>Dorothy Tuck, Apollo Handbook of Faulkner, p. 127.

<sup>154</sup>Geismar, p. 147.

<sup>155</sup>Kenneth E. Richardson, Force and Faith in the Novels of William Faulkner, p. 77.

<sup>156</sup>Brylowski, p. 60.

<sup>157</sup>Gertrude Jobes, Dictionary of Mythology Folklore and Symbols, p. 1286. It may be significant to note that the black poplar is "a funeral tree . . . and stands for loss of hope," while the white poplar is the "female principle, resurrection, time, waters" (p. 1286).

Faulkner also uses animal imagery to describe Cecily. She is at times compared to a tiger, a cat, a bird, and, like Patricia, a hamadryad, the latter being the most apt comparison to depict a beautiful but dangerous creature.

The most frequently-mentioned part of Faulkner's bitch-goddesses' anatomy is her legs. The legs are long and slender, and graceful as are the poplars. The legs, in all of their symbolic significance, are alluring to men because of the promise they can hold. However, because she is a bitch-goddess rather than earth-mother, she is pleasure-seeker rather than life-giver. Cecily's "long subtle legs" remind Jones of Atalanta's, only "reft of running."<sup>158</sup> Another aspect of the myth surrounding Atalanta is that she "typifies one who cannot resist temptation" because she will pause in her flight to pick up three golden apples dropped by Hippomenes.<sup>159</sup>

Not only can Cecily not resist temptation, men cannot resist her temptation. "Her outward beauty, her freshness and seeming innocence, her youth and femininity stimulate their belief in her ability to renew life."<sup>160</sup> They feel that if she will but marry Donald Mahon, the returned and

<sup>158</sup>William Faulkner, Soldiers' Pay, p. 78. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

<sup>159</sup>Jobes, p. 148.

<sup>160</sup>Page, p. 17.

severely wounded soldier, his condition would improve.

Cecily is incapable of fulfilling their hope for renewed life because she cannot even accept her moral responsibilities. She is selfish and "artificial."<sup>161</sup> On the outside she presents the image of "physical purity," but on the inside she is morally impure<sup>162</sup> as can be seen in the narrator's description of Cecily's father: "Here was Cecily in the masculine and gone to flesh: the same slightly shallow good looks and somewhere an indicated laxness of moral fiber" (p. 96).

Although she is engaged to Donald before he leaves for the war, after he is gone, she becomes romantically involved with another. When Donald's unexpected return is announced, Cecily, who can only think of herself, latches onto the chance to become a heroine. Mrs. Powers jealously explains: "It's quite romantic being reft of your love and then having him return unexpectedly to your arms. And an aviator, too. What luck that girl has playing her parts . . ." (p. 83). Cecily, however, cannot carry off the welcome-home-lover scene. The sight of Donald's scarred face impedes her performance and she faints. When she recovers, her thoughts are not for Donald and his feelings, but for herself. She tells her mother, "If I have to see

<sup>161</sup>page, p. xv.

<sup>162</sup>page, p. 14.

him again I'll--I'll just die. I can't bear it, I can't bear it" (p. 96). What she does do is to throw herself "into a purely carnal affair with the town lover deserting her wounded fiancé."<sup>163</sup> Symbolically, she "reflect[s] the moral vacuum in society itself" by her selfish and carnal behavior.<sup>164</sup>

Because she possesses the traits of selfishness and carnality, she is used by Faulkner "to display the destructive power of sexual irresponsibility."<sup>165</sup> It is through Jones' thoughts and Cecily's behavior around Jones that the reader receives most of the information concerning Cecily's nature. Jones, like all other men, is attracted by her beauty, which "suggests that she is the call of nature to a satisfying physical life,"<sup>166</sup> but he also notes readily her vicious nature which causes him to compare her to a tiger and an hamadryad.<sup>167</sup> Even though he recognizes her character as selfish and shallow, he cannot resist the challenge to conquer her, because he, too, seeks sensations. As Jones' ideal, Cecily becomes his "papier-mâché Virgin" (p. 225),

<sup>163</sup>Richardson, p. 77.

<sup>164</sup>Richardson, p. 66.

<sup>165</sup>Richardson, p. 65.

<sup>166</sup>Page, p. 20.

<sup>167</sup>Page, p. 19.

shallow and epicene.

As other bitch-goddesses, Cecily also expresses scorn for society and its morality. To shock and defy her father she flippantly declares that maybe she is not "a nice girl" (p. 130) and spitefully gives herself to George whom her father has forbidden her to see. She only gives herself to George physically, however. When he says that now they will have to get married, she reveals that she does not hold the same moral values because her reply is, "You've got it backward. Now we don't have to get married" (p. 214). By using sex she spites her father and captures George. She makes him miserable afterwards by ignoring him. Even though she ultimately marries George, he "receives nothing; he cannot possess her love,"<sup>168</sup> primarily because as bitch-goddess she does not offer love, only sex, and sex for Faulkner is intimately related to death: "Sex and death; the front door and the back door of the world. How indissolubly are they associated in us!" (p. 295).

#### V. Temple Drake

In America a symbol for man's potency has become his measure of occupational success and a woman's measure of "sex appeal" becomes indicative of "her prestige and

<sup>168</sup>Volpe, p. 54.

worth."<sup>169</sup> With such standards paradise can only be depicted as a moral wasteland, Adam as the victim, and Eve as the bitch-goddess. In dealing with this theme, Faulkner created Sanctuary (1931).

Temple Drake, the bitch-goddess, wields her power over men in a manner similar to Circe. Her physical appearance is sexually enticing. Her long, blonde legs, curled red hair, and boldly painted lips attract men to her. She is young, beautiful, and wealthy. Her physical charms cannot hide her eyes, however, which are "cool, predatory and discreet."<sup>170</sup> As Sally Page has indicated, "Temple Drake is the young virgin whose beauty and sexuality suggest life's potential for creativity and fulfillment. However, . . . the virgin is . . . aligned with the forces of evil and destruction."<sup>171</sup>

Parallels can be drawn between Fitzgerald's Daisy and Faulkner's Temple. Both are Popular Daughters of Wealth who in their youth appear innocent and pure, but whose selfishness and moral irresponsibility reveal their corrupt natures. Like Patricia Robyn of Mosquitoes in her boyish appearance and childish behavior, Temple is also "bored with

<sup>169</sup>Page, p. 77.

<sup>170</sup>William Faulkner, Sanctuary, p. 29. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

<sup>171</sup>Page, p. 72.

the uneventfulness of her life" and is only seeking "the next, new sensation."<sup>172</sup> Temple's concern for her outward appearance is also reminiscent of Fitzgerald's flappers. Temple's oft-repeated actions center around "dressing and applying make-up."<sup>173</sup> Her scorn for society is expressed through her activities. Her activities have been described as a flurry of "frantic motion."<sup>174</sup> She seeks the wild and reckless when she sneaks from the dormitory to go riding with the city boys. Because she spurns her role as representative of traditional Southern womanhood, her name appears on the lavatory walls. In her relationships with men, she is not seeking love and creative fulfillment, but only lust and sexual gratification. She has managed at Ole Miss to maintain her virginity, "a false measure of purity,"<sup>175</sup> by using her castrating remark, "My father's a judge" (p. 30), rendering the male impotent through fear.

Ruby Goodwin, a woman who sacrificed for love, recognizes the type of woman Temple is, one who will "take all [she] can get, and give nothing" (p. 55), and tries to get her to leave the Old Frenchman Place. Temple, although apparently frightened by this underworld environment,

<sup>172</sup>James E. Miller, Jr., "Sanctuary: Yoknapatawpha's Waste Land," in The Twenties: Fiction, Poetry, Drama, ed. Warren French, p. 267.

<sup>173</sup>Page, p. 77.

<sup>174</sup>Page, p. 76.

<sup>175</sup>Page, p. 78.

anxiously anticipates the danger. Shortly before her "rape," an act of sexual violence, she "reveals her eagerness to experience evil by primping:"<sup>176</sup> she "fluffed her hair . . . and powdered her face" (p. 69) before the mirror in her compact, an accessory of a vain woman and one with which Temple never seems to be without. Popeye, an incarnation of evil, perversely rapes Temple with a corncob. The archetypal plot used here by Faulkner stems from "the Persephone myth in which the princess of the upper world is also ravished by the ruler of the underworld."<sup>177</sup> After the "rape," Popeye takes her to Miss Reba's brothel, perhaps a fitting sanctuary for Temple. Temple belongs in the world of the "cathouse, . . . a world in which money and self-interest preclude or destroy affection or love, and a world in which sexwrithees like 'cold smoke.'"<sup>178</sup>

Later Horace Benbow finds Temple at the brothel and persuades her to tell him what really happened that day at the Old Frenchman Place. The manner in which she tells Horace of her experience there--"with actual pride, a sort of naive and impersonal vanity" (p. 209)--is not indicative of the attitude of a victim. Temple's debauched nature will

<sup>176</sup>Richardson, p. 78.

<sup>177</sup>D. Streatfeild, A Study of Two Worlds: Persephone, p. 108.

<sup>178</sup>William Van O'Connor, The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner, p. 64.

even show itself in her manner of dress--a "Chinese robe splotted with gold dragons and jade and scarlet flowers" (p. 223) and a black hat with "a rhinestone ornament," "platinum bag," and "slippers with their glittering buckles" (p. 277). Even though the clothes may be expensive, their appearance is "tinny, cheap . . . and vulgar."<sup>179</sup> One critic even advances the theory that the clothes Temple wears "signify the progressive inner decay of her soul," and that her "outward appearance . . . indicates her betrayal of the normal feminine role and her compact with evil."<sup>180</sup>

Temple's "total corruption" will allow her to become a "destructive force,"<sup>181</sup> and without any pangs of conscience, she will cause the death of two more men. She incites Popeye's jealousy when she indicates she wants to leave him for Red, the stud Popeye had hired. Popeye's solution is to kill Red. Later when Temple takes the stand at Leo Goodwin's trial, she will lie and Goodwin will die for a murder he did not commit. These men are her victims--Red, a victim of her selfish need for carnal gratification, and Goodwin, a sacrifice burned at the altar of respectability so that Temple may continue to present to the world the illusion of herself as victim.

<sup>179</sup>O'Connor, p. 62.

<sup>180</sup>Page, p. 80.

<sup>181</sup>Richardson, p. 79.

As woman, Temple could "be a sanctuary to man;" as bitch-goddess, however, she "brings death instead of life because she chooses sex instead of love."<sup>182</sup>

There seems to be a marked similarity between Fitzgerald's women and those of Faulkner, but it is also apparent that Faulkner's women are more lusty, adventuresome, and somewhat more earthy than the bitch-goddesses of Fitzgerald. Faulkner's bitch-goddesses are more sexually prone, using their physical attributes to destroy their victims while debauching themselves. There is a believability about Faulkner's bitch-goddesses that make their characters more real and closer to life's experiences.

<sup>182</sup>Richardson, p. 80.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### WEST'S AND MITCHELL'S BITCH-GODDESSES

Fitzgerald's society bitch-goddesses with their wealth and East coast mansions, Hemingway's boyish bitch-goddesses in the cafes of Paris and Madrid, Faulkner's lusty bitch-goddesses of the Southern sharecroppers and whorehouses, and West's bitch-goddess of Tinsel-town, U. S. A. seem to lend credence to Jung's thesis that the bitch-goddess is universal. However, while West parades his bitch-goddess Faye Greener through the glamour and back streets of Hollywood, Margaret Mitchell is transforming the bitch-goddess into the prototype of what will emerge as the pure bitch of the sixties and seventies. The transformation of the bitch-goddess is taking place at about the same time her characterization is reaching its zenith. As West is epitomizing the bitch-goddess, Faye Greener, Margaret Mitchell is transforming her into the survivor of Scarlett O'Hara.

#### I. Faye Greener

West places his American-myth-of-success story with

the bitch-goddess Faye Greener in Hollywood, America's dream-making capital, which is not unlike Fitzgerald's East-West Egg and Faulkner's South, a decadent, perverse, moral wasteland.

Faye Greener, the bitch-goddess in The Day of the Locust, is a product of Hollywood. She, in her life, constantly plays the part of the cinema's sex-goddess. Her physical properties--platinum hair, gestures and poses--are duplications of the cinema's recreation of the feminine ideal. The perversion of that ideal, as Faulkner has likewise noted in Sanctuary, lies in the replacement of love by lust.

Only two types of men, the handsome and the wealthy, can "succeed" with Faye. While one satisfies her sensual desires and the other her materialistic needs, both help reveal her truly selfish nature. Faye's ideas and values stem from an illusion of happiness and success promoted by the Hollywood media which have created the ideal man in Faye's dream world. She can only love a "Tarzan," a man of the physical world, or allow herself to be loved by a man-of-means, who can cater to the whims of her dream world and support her indulgence in fantasies.

Everything about Faye "she has learned from the screen."<sup>183</sup> Her physical appearance reflects the image of a

<sup>183</sup>James F. Light, Nathanael West: An Interpretative Study, p. 160.

Lolita or a baby vamp. "Although she was seventeen, she was dressed like a child of twelve in a white cotton dress with a blue sailor collar."<sup>184</sup> Other affectations in her are her mannerisms consisting of meaningless elaborate gestures and her artificial voice (p. 304). She uses one gesture in particular, "running her tongue over her lips," which as the narrator reports is "one of her most characteristic gestures and very effective. It seemed to promise all sorts of undefined intimacies, yet it was as simple and automatic as the word thanks" (p. 385).

Faye Greener, then, like Temple Drake is a product of a society which allows her to be both victim and victimizer.<sup>185</sup> She, herself, has fallen prey to the Hollywood dream-myth, and, in turn, the men who respond to the promise of her physical charms and sensual poses are awarded only frustration, not satisfaction.<sup>186</sup> She is a cheater and her victims are the cheated.

As bitch-goddess her power promotes violence and destruction upon others, while she remains "impervious."<sup>187</sup>

<sup>184</sup>Nathanael West, The Day of the Locust, p. 304. Subsequent references to this edition are given in parenthesis within the text.

<sup>185</sup>Victor Comerchero, Nathanael West: The Ironic Prophet, p. 140.

<sup>186</sup>Light, p. 161.

<sup>187</sup>Randall Reid, The Fiction of Nathanael West: No Redeemer, No Promised Land, p. 131.

West conveys Faye's image of imperviousness through comparison. He compares her to a cork and an egg, and her beauty to a tree. No matter what she does or what life holds for her--whether she goes with Miguel or returns to Mrs. Jennings's brothel--"nothing could hurt her. She was like a cork. No matter how rough the sea got, she would go dancing over the same waves that sank iron ships and tore away piers of reinforced concrete" (p. 406). When Tod compares Faye to an egg, he emphasizes "her completeness, her egglike self-sufficiency" (p. 320). Because her beauty is not from within, West compares it to a tree. "Raging at him, she was still beautiful. That was because her beauty was structural like a tree's, not a quality of her mind or heart. Perhaps even whoring couldn't damage it for that reason, only age or accident or disease" (p. 346).

Sex with this bitch-goddess is intimately linked with violence. While looking at the photographic still Tod has of Faye, he observes:

Her invitation wasn't to pleasure, but to struggle, hard and sharp, closer to murder than to love. If you threw yourself on her, it would be like throwing yourself from the parapet of a skyscraper. You would do it with a scream. You couldn't expect to rise again. Your teeth would be driven into your skull like nails into a pine board and your back would be broken. You wouldn't even have time to sweat or close your eyes. (p. 271)

Not only does Faye inspire thoughts of violence in others, she performs acts of cruelty on men, especially on

Homer Simpson. As she grew increasingly bored with life with Homer, "she began to persecute him. At first she did it unconsciously, later maliciously" (p. 366). She nags him; she forces him to drink alcohol when she knows it makes him sick; she even moves Earle, Miguel, and the chickens into Homer's garage, and when Homer considers means for getting rid of them, she threatens Homer. "If they go, I go" (p. 374).

A comparison can be made between Jujutala, the prize-winning cock, and Faye Greener. The cock is described as having a "heart-shaped tail" and "feathers . . . so tight and hard that they looked as though they had been varnished," and "long, bright legs . . . with their horn nails" (p. 377). Faye is similarly described as having "buttocks, which were like a heart upside down" (p. 385), "platinum hair," and "long, swordlike legs" (p. 270). Faye also lives like a fighting cock. Homer Simpson feeds her, houses her, and clothes her. The cock is symbolic of the male principle, and significantly Earle Shoop and Miguel are the "keepers of the cocks,"<sup>188</sup> and Earle is Faye's boyfriend and Miguel, symbolizing animal lust, manages to bed Faye.

Faye's masculine characteristics are revealed in her comparison to the cock, but her basic feminine nature is depicted through the description of her counterpart, the

<sup>188</sup>Comerchero, p. 141.

hen. In the campsite scene, Faye and Miguel, like hen and cock, perform a ritualistic mating dance. The dance does not end in consummation, rather the men get into a fight, and Faye flies. Later Homer reveals to Tod his feelings of disgust for the hen kept in his garage by Earle and Miguel. The hen, as described by Homer, is a symbolic representation of Faye's character:

You never saw such a disgusting thing, the way it squats and turns its head. The roosters have torn all the feathers off its neck and made its comb all bloody and it has scabby feet covered with warts and it cackles so nasty when they drop it into the pen. (p. 372)

After the cockfight in the garage the men enter Homer's living room where their animalistic natures induce them into a fight which parallels the one they have just witnessed. First, Faye, the hen, struts and preens her feathers for the men, the cocks. Whereas in nature the physical appeal lies with the male of the species, here West points up Faye's male-bird characteristics by having her "peacock for them all" (p. 385). Faye, not unlike the cock and peacock, struts and poses for her audience, enticing and luring them into her circle of influence. Part of Faye's ritualistic performance includes her rendition of the "Viper" song. The words allude to the delights of a "marihuana paradise" while her voice suggests "depravity and abandonment."<sup>189</sup> However, unlike the male species of the

<sup>189</sup>Reid, p. 127.

birds, she is not willing to consummate the ritual with the physical act of copulation. Rather, she frustrates and confuses her prey. The men, then, not only dance with her and rip her clothes from her body, but they also fight among themselves over her. Faye is the prize to be awarded to Miguel, the champion cock.

This scene, which takes place after the cockfight, reveals most clearly the ritualistic behavior of the males in the presence of the archetypal bitch-goddess. After Faye has peacocked for the men in her "green silk lounging pajamas" (p. 384) and given them her "secret smile and the tongue caress" (p. 386), she launches into a monologue of legends and advice from trade and fan magazines coupled with her meaningless, "almost pure" gestures. They are excited but helpless before her. The only thing the males can do is "to narrow their circle around her" (p. 387). They had just come from the garage where they had circled around the cocks to watch them fight, and now they circle around Faye in ritualistic adoration. In this scene, explains Randall Reid, through "the consummation of cruelty and sexuality," Faye becomes the apotheosis; she is transformed "into the dream figure she has always wanted to be. . . ." <sup>190</sup>

Faye Greener, not unlike Daisy Fay Buchanan, carries the name of a fairy figure, "appealing and elusive because

<sup>190</sup>Reid, p. 138.

ultimately illusory."<sup>191</sup> Her magic, and therefore, her power, stems from illusion: she "is all things to all men. . . ." <sup>192</sup> To Homer she is a child; to Tod she is both attractive and repellent siren; to Miguel she is the hen; to Earle, Claude, and Abe she is an object of sexual desire.

As bitch-goddess her destructive powers are devastating. She precipitates Homer's ruin and, thereby, the mob violence which almost literally fulfills Tod's vision of the Burning of Los Angeles. When Faye, the whore of everybody's dreams, succeeds in totally destroying Homer, the fury of all the cheated dreamers is unleashed. The mob riots, threatening to destroy everyone and everything except Faye herself.<sup>193</sup>

Randall Reid argues that "Faye is a debased Venus" with universal appeal who attracts all the men in the novel and is the naked girl fleeing the mob in Tod's Burning of Los Angeles painting. In the painting she is the "principal object of revenge for all those whose dreams have embittered and betrayed them. She is at once the natural object of sexual desire and the object of a desire hopelessly

<sup>191</sup>Jay Martin, Nathanael West: The Art of His Life, p. 325.

<sup>192</sup>Carter M. Cramer, "The World of Nathanael West: A Critical Interpretation," The Emporia State Research Studies, XIX, No. 4 (June 1971), 59.

<sup>193</sup>Reid, p. 139.

perverted by fantasies."<sup>194</sup> Faye is the embodiment of all illusions and as such, "inflaming and degrading desire without ever satisfying it," she is "fatal."<sup>195</sup> She is the bitch-goddess, a dream-betrayer.

## II. Scarlett O'Hara

The psychological and sociological factors which influenced the archetype's presence in literature also are contributing influences behind her alteration and possible disappearance from American literature. The decade of the twenties shows the bitch-goddess as a woman who has money, and, therefore, power. Usually she is well-born (of the aristocracy). She is worshipped by man for her physical charms, and she ultimately uses those charms to entrap the male. Her selfish desires, which often appear insatiable, compel her to destroy--using whatever means available--absolutely anyone.

During the decade of the thirties the bitch-goddess, although predominately the same, begins to undergo some alterations, alterations which will inevitably lead to her loss of the qualities and title "goddess" and leave her only the identifying tag of "bitch." Her charm will be replaced

<sup>194</sup>Reid, p. 135.

<sup>195</sup>Reid, p. 135.

by bluntness and total independence and no longer will men view her as a mysterious, spiritual link to the raptures of heaven and immortality, but rather as an evil adversary who can show him only the inner chambers of hell.

Two intermediary stages are identifiable in the transformation of the bitch-goddess of the twenties into the bitch of the fifties. The bitch-goddess of the twenties first develops into the survivor of the thirties with Scarlett O'Hara as one of the most exemplary models. From the survivor of the thirties develops the career-woman of the forties whose character was portrayed on the screen by Rosalind Russell, Katharine Hepburn, Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, and Barbara Stanwyck. Finally, from the career-woman of the forties comes the unmitigated bitch of the fifties and sixties as exemplified in the fiction of Mailer, Updike, Gold, and Roth.

Although scorned by most critics and still one of the most successful novels of the 30s,<sup>196</sup> Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind (1936) most clearly presents the transition of the bitch-goddess into survivor. That the archetypal bitch-goddess appears in this work of popular fiction significantly expresses "the social and cultural climate of

<sup>196</sup>Warren French, ed., The Thirties: Fiction, Poetry, Drama, p. 10.

that time."<sup>197</sup> Even though Mitchell places her story in the time slot around the Civil War, the attitudes expressed belong also to "the decade of the big D's . . . depression, disaster, distress, disillusion, despair, dislocation, dole"<sup>198</sup>--the 30s. Expressing an attitude prevalent during the 30s, Scarlett O'Hara feels that "security lay in possessions" and that power and strength came from resources.<sup>199</sup> In other words, "the solution of nearly every ill" is to be found in the worship of business.<sup>200</sup>

Scarlett O'Hara is the transitional figure possessing the selfishness and charm of the previously described bitch-goddess and the independence, stubbornness, and ruthlessness of the forthcoming career-woman. Like Fitzgerald's flappers, Scarlett scorns society and all of its moral codes except one. She will lie, cheat, steal, and allow inhuman treatment of convict employees to advance the profit margins of her sawmills. She openly displays her knowledge of mathematics and her ability to successfully manage and operate a business

<sup>197</sup>David Madden, "James M. Cain and the Tough Guy Novelists of the 30s," in The Thirties: Fiction, Poetry, Drama, ed. Warren French, p. 66.

<sup>198</sup>Halford E. Luccock, American Mirror: Social, Ethical and Religious Aspects of American Literature 1930-1940, pp. 1-2.

<sup>199</sup>"Why Gone with the Wind" The Library Journal, LXII (September 15, 1937), 690.

<sup>200</sup>Luccock, p. 7.

(both at that time were considered things only a man could or should do). She dances while she is still supposedly in mourning, and she walks the streets of Atlanta unaccompanied. And like Fitzgerald's flappers she does not want children. Her attitude toward children is most clearly revealed when she learns she is to have Rhett's child. She tells Rhett that she has never wanted any children, that they ruin her figure, and that they are an unpleasant intrusion in her life. She even indicates that she is contemplating abortion. With the exception of defying sexual conventions, Scarlett O'Hara is the thirties' embellishment of the "flapper."<sup>201</sup>

Like Faulkner's belles, Scarlett, too, is a Southern aristocrat, who, as described by Molly Haskell, is a "super-female." Men treat her like a goddess worthy of respect and adoration, and she does not wish to lose her venerable position in society even though she is uncomfortable there. She is uncomfortable there because she is "too ambitious and intelligent for the docile role society has decreed she play."<sup>202</sup> She will use her assets--physical charms and flirtatious, feminine manners--"to gain power over men." She attracts men through an unspoken promise of fulfillment; however, her inability to do anything more than entice makes

<sup>201</sup>Molly Haskell, From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies, p. 125.

<sup>202</sup>Haskell, p. 214.

her a "tease or castrator."<sup>203</sup>

The bitch-goddess's power over men subsequently leads to her destruction of them. As dominant destroyer, Scarlett O'Hara's character parallels that of Hemingway's women; however, instead of being responsible for only one man's destruction, Scarlett ruins the lives of several men.<sup>204</sup> By relying on the guilt that Ashley feels because of his physical attraction to Scarlett and the friendship that Melanie has for her, Scarlett places Ashley in a position he is incapable of handling well and, likewise, incapable of refusing. She destroys his manhood. By lying about her sister's forthcoming marriage and then turning on her feminine charms, Scarlett persuades Frank Kennedy to marry her. Her manipulation of Frank Kennedy advances even further when she proceeds to take over not only his business but to own and operate her own sawmills.

Even though Scarlett defies tradition and social customs through her actions, men will lose their lives to preserve her honor. Big Sam, Frank Kennedy, and Ashley Wilkes are killed because Scarlett defies social custom and the advice of those closest to her and travels by herself through a questionable area of Atlanta. She is attacked and her

<sup>203</sup>Haskell, p. 126.

<sup>204</sup>C. Legman, Love and Death: A Study in Censorship, p. 61.

menfolks in the KKK garb subsequently are killed when they seek to avenge her honor.

None of the tragedies in Scarlett's life defeats her, because above all else she is a survivor--a survivor whose "security [lies] in possessions, not in pride."<sup>205</sup> Early in the novel Rhett perceives Scarlett's selfish nature. He knows of her "selfishness" of her "shrewd practicality," of her "elasticity of conscience," and of her preference for men she "can always bully."<sup>206</sup> He is also aware later that Scarlett does not marry him for love, but only for the money and the possessions. Although Rhett is a "real man" and the only kind of man she could ever truly love, she never will commit herself to a meaningful relationship with him since she fears that to do so would result in "the loss of her strength and selfhood."<sup>207</sup>

Scarlett O'Hara is American fiction's transitional figure. Her initial character parallels that of all bitch-goddesses. During the opening chapters Scarlett's compelling desire is to acquire beaux. In the remainder of the chapters which take place during the Civil War and after, her attention and energies are directed toward amassing wealth. She tells herself that she needs money so that she

<sup>205</sup>"Why Gone with the Wind," p. 690.

<sup>206</sup>Margaret Mitchell, Gone with the Wind, p. 313.

<sup>207</sup>Haskell, p. 167.

will never be hungry again. Her motivation for acquiring lucre goes beyond her expressed survival instincts, however. She, like other bitch-goddesses, worships at the altar of success. Anything and anybody will be sacrificed by Scarlett at that altar. In essence, she is the apotheosis of success. As such she has ambivalent traits. She is charming and desirable, selfish and destructive.

The effects of the Civil War, however, cause this bitch-goddess to descend from her pedestal and place her feet firmly into the earth to become "a forerunner of the career woman, with her profession-obsession (the land), her business acumen, her energy that accumulated steam from sexual repression."<sup>208</sup>

The effects of the Civil War on Scarlett's life bring to the foreground her overwhelming drive for survival. Her air of independence which men had once found attractive now becomes stubbornness and ruthlessness. Her selfishness generates the even more negative qualities of a vindictive and predatory female.

Instead of remaining the archetypal bitch-goddess and a static character, Scarlett, as heroine, displays the characteristics of the American Bitch who will prevail in the fiction of the 1940s-1970s. She has become man's equal, and

<sup>208</sup>Haskell, p. 125.

consequently, his primary adversary. Man will no longer fear and revere her; he will only hate and seek to conquer her.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSIONS

In classifying archetypes, one is analyzing the projected form that the archetype takes.<sup>209</sup> The depiction then of the archetypal bitch-goddess, although originating in the collective unconscious, is colored by the experiences, the fears, and the desires of the writer who is projecting the archetypal image.

As archetype, the bitch-goddess is a direct descendant of the femme fatale or Fatal Woman, an anima projection in which "the power and authority of the Fatal Woman are conferred upon her by the victim himself, who nevertheless feels powerless to act otherwise."<sup>210</sup> The bitch-goddess possesses virtually the same characteristics as her progenitor, the Fatal Woman; however, the connotations surrounding her title as bitch-goddess provide the basis for interpretation of her character. As goddess, she is omnipotent and omniscient. She is magnificently beautiful and adored because of her beauty. Although her appearance allures and entices her

<sup>209</sup>Oliver Evans and Harry Finestone, eds., The World of the Short Story: Archetypes in Action, p. 14.

<sup>210</sup>Evans and Finestone, p. 20.

worshippers, the effects of an alliance with her are not benevolent. After having used her charms to captivate the male--she does not have female idolizers--her character changes to bitch. As goddess her form promises fulfillment; however, she never satisfies: her worshippers become victims and the goddess herself becomes a bitch. She is hard, cold, and selfish--an emasculator. The reasons why the bitch-goddess, an uniquely American archetypal figure, emerged and flourished during the decades of the 1920s and 1930s, can be made through an analysis of the several changes that the social structure, behavior patterns, and attitudes were undergoing during that time. When the social order was changing around them, the writers producing during those two decades found images which would reflect their attitudes toward those changes.<sup>211</sup> The image of the bitch-goddess reflects the changes in women's roles. Although she retains an aura of feminine mystique, she becomes a challenger, a dominator, a destroyer. However, her symbolic significance is far greater than depicting women's changing roles in society. She represents the whole of society which is shallow and devoid of meaning. She reigns then not over a plush, green Garden of Eden paradise or American land of

<sup>211</sup>Betty E. Chamj, "Some Paradox! Some Irony! Changing Images of American Women, 1930-74," in The Study of American Culture and Contemporary Conflicts, ed. Luther S. Luedtke, p. 168.

opportunity, but over a morally decadent wasteland. The dream-image of her and all that she is has become nightmare.

The failure of the American Dream is most clearly delineated through Fitzgerald's Daisy Fay and Nathanael West's Faye Greener. Though these two female characters have diametrically opposed backgrounds, their attitudes toward men, their love of the cinema (world of appearances), and their effect upon men are identical. Like fairies, they magically cast a spell over men, but as bitch-goddesses both of the women are betrayers.

Between the fairy princess Daisy Fay and the tawdry imitation of a sex-goddess Faye Greener, the bitch-goddess assumes a more masculine appearance in Hemingway's Lady Brett Ashley and Faulkner's Temple Drake. Both Brett and Temple possess money and power and are seeking sexual gratification, not love. In the pursuit of their selfish pleasures, these promiscuous women offer men only destruction and death. The males who encounter Daisy Fay and Faye Greener wish to possess them--both as female and as symbol. Instead the female possesses them. On the other hand, the males who encounter Lady Brett Ashley and Temple Drake wish to conquer and control them. However, the female remains victorious and dominant. The power to possess and dominate in each case leads to conflicts and violence; and though the bitch-goddess is the source of violence, she remains

impervious to that which surrounds her.

Continuous changes in America's social order cause an alteration in the projected archetype of the bitch-goddess. She first becomes the survivor and career-woman whose pre-dominant characteristic is independence. Later she becomes man's primary adversary, the bitch with no redeeming qualities. "She is to blame for marital unhappiness, infidelity, divorce, alienation. . . . Refusing to be soft and passive, she has made it impossible for her mate to be rough and aggressive. Casting off her femininity, she destroys his masculinity, and then scorns his weakness."<sup>212</sup> Whether she be bitch-goddess or bitch, her character remains the creation and expression of the threatened male's fears and wishes.<sup>213</sup>

<sup>212</sup>Dolores Barracano Schmidt, "The Great American Bitch," College English, XXXII (May 1971), 904.

<sup>213</sup>Schmidt, p. 905.

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