

Trabajo Fin de Grado

Freedom and Restraints, The Embodiment of the Flapper and the Idea of New Woman in Daisy Buchanan and Hazel Morse

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ABSTRACT

Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Dorothy Parker's "Big Blonde," are two works situated during the Roaring Twenties that capture the social, cultural, economic, and ideological panorama of the time. The Roaring Twenties was an age in which only the privileged ones found new opportunities, and women did not belong to this group. Daisy Buchanan and Hazel Morse, the main female characters of both narratives, represent how the idealized image of the 1920s was just a façade and how women of the time were still subject to the patriarchal norms of society. The purpose of this dissertation would be to conduct an analysis of the figure of the Flapper in the Roaring Twenties, discussing how women's roles as New Women implied new restrictions, thus preventing them from their complete liberation. This is done by comparing the representation of the Flapper figure through Daisy Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby* and Hazel Morse in "Big Blonde". This discussion is carried out considering the circumstances they have to deal with in the public and private realms, including their different behaviors, expectations, social classes, and personal relationships.

Keywords: Roaring Twenties; Flapper; New Woman; Scott Fitzgerald; Dorothy Parker

RESUMEN

El gran Gatsby escrito por Scott Fitzgerald y "Una rubia imponente" escrito por Dorothy Parker son dos obras situadas en la época de los felices años veinte que capturan el panorama social, cultural, económico e ideológico de la época. Los locos años veinte fue una época en la que solo los privilegiados encontraron nuevas oportunidades, y las mujeres no pertenecían a ese grupo. Daisy Buchanan y Hazel Morse, los principales personajes femeninos de ambas obras, representan cómo la imagen idealizada de la década de 1920 era solo una fachada, y como las mujeres de la época seguían sujetas a las normas patriarcales de la sociedad. El propósito de esta disertación es realizar un análisis de la figura de la Flapper en los felices años veinte, discutiendo cómo los roles de la Nueva mujer implicaron nuevas restricciones, impidiéndoles así su completa liberación. Esto se hace comparando la representación de la figura de la Flapper a través de Daisy Buchanan en *El gran Gatsby* y Hazel Morse en "Una rubia imponente". Este estudio se lleva a cabo considerando las circunstancias que tienen que enfrentar en el ámbito público y privado incluyendo sus diferentes comportamientos, expectativas, clases sociales y relaciones personales.

Palabras clave: Felices años veinte; Flapper; Nueva mujer; Scott Fitzgerald; Dorothy Parker

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INTRODUCTION

The Great Gatsby (1925) and “Big Blonde” (1929) are two works, historically situated in the time of the Roaring Twenties, that capture the social, cultural, economic, and ideological panorama of the time. Although both follow the story of characters belonging to this decade, they have some parallels and distinctions. *The Great Gatsby* narrates the story of a millionaire, Jay Gatsby, who owns a big mansion in the village of West Egg on Long Island. The story is narrated from the point of view of Nick Carraway, a recent Yale graduate coming from the Midwest that relocates to New York. His cousin Daisy lives on the other side of the deck with her wealthy husband, Tom Buchanan. Gatsby’s obsession with Daisy becomes the object of interest for Nick, and he starts entering this glamorous environment that describes the Jazz Age. On the other hand, “Big Blonde,” although situated during the same decade, is more focused on the negative and dark side of this decade. The protagonist Hazel Morse is a model struggling to survive in a decade full of problems. As she starts aging, she loses her appeal as a party girl, and she soon realizes that appearance is relevant to survive as a woman in that society. From the beginning, we can see both similarities and differences between Daisy Buchanan and Hazel Morse, yet both can be viewed as a new type of woman, a Flapper who embraces their newfound freedom; they both have conflicting characteristics.

The purpose of this dissertation would be to conduct an analysis of the figure of the Flapper in the Roaring Twenties, discussing how women’s roles as a New Women implied new restrictions, thus preventing them from their complete liberation. This will be done by comparing the representation of the Flapper figure through Daisy Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby* and Hazel Morse in “Big Blonde”. This discussion will be carried out considering the circumstances they had to deal with in the public and private realms

including their different behaviors, expectations, social classes, and personal relationships.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

Born Francis Scott Fitzgerald was born in 1896 in St. Paul (Minnesota); he is an American short-story writer and novelist very well known for depicting in his work the panorama of the “Roaring Twenties,” or The Jazz Age, a term to define this era, coined by himself in the title of his 1922 collection of short stories, “Tales of the Jazz Age.” He came from a Catholic and bourgeois family and received a religious education until he went to study at Princeton University. He joined the Triangle Club, a dramatic society, and gained social acceptance at the university. During his university years, he met Ginevra King, and they began a romance for two years. After they broke up, he left Princeton to serve as a soldier in the First World War (Byrer 21-26). In the aftermath of the war, a group of young writers, artists, musicians, and intellectuals emerged and received the name of the “Lost Generation.” They witnessed the terrible effects of the war, which impacted them. They lost faith in traditional values and ideas, becoming aimless writers. Some years later, after coming back from the front, Fitzgerald developed a close relationship with other American expatriates, and became a member of the “Lost Generation”.

In 1919 in Montgomery, he met and fell in love with Zelda Sayre, and they started a passionate relationship. As Byrer argues, she was a beautiful dancer, “independent, socially secure (although not wealthy), and responsive to his ambitions...” (28). She was known as “The First Flapper of America,” a name Fitzgerald gave her. Fitzgerald’s first novel, *The Side of Paradise* (1920), made him famous and gave him a certain reputation as a writer, which he had tried hard to get. Some years later, he wrote *The Great Gatsby* (1925), considered his most famous and brilliant novel, in which he depicted a pessimistic

view of the American Dream, a consumerist and materialistic dream that untimely does not guarantee happiness. The last years of the Fitzgeralds were quite dark and characterized by the couple's unhappiness. Fitzgerald began to drink, and Zelda suffered a mental breakdown from which she never recovered (Mizener).

Regarding his literary style, topics, and themes, it can be said that his own social aspiration to move up the social ladder is a recurrent topic reflected in his work. He used a documentary and traditional style to write about the problems of life, specifically about modern life and its changes during the 1920s. As Keshmiri and Madikhani argue, Fitzgerald experimented with the techniques of modernist literature "connected to American traditions" (79) but combined with naturalistic and realist techniques. He was a storyteller and, as a modernist writer, employed symbolism to convey deeper meanings and gave much importance to color imagery to portray abstract and controversial things. He also played with narratological techniques regarding focalization and structures, relegating thematic aspects to his characters and their different point of view (Keshmiri and Mahdikhani 80).

Dorothy Parker

Dorothy Rothschild was born on 22 August in West End near Long Beach, New Jersey. She was an American short-story writer, poet, screenwriter, and the daughter of a Jewish father and a Scottish mother. She was educated at Miss Dana's School in Morristown (*Britannica* n.p). As James Ward Lee states, she founded the "Round Table" Algonquin Round Table, a literary club with a group of journalist editors and writers; Dorothy stood out because of her witty and bitter humorous style (271-272).

She married Edwin Pond Parker, but although they divorced sometime later, she decided to keep his surname, and became known as Dorothy Parker from there onwards. In 1929 she won the O. Henry Award—an annual American award given to short stories of exceptional merit—for "Big Blonde," in which she depicted a woman's life as tragic but with hints of humor as well. In 1933 she married her second husband, Alan Campbell, and they collaborated as film scriptwriters; their most famous film script was William A. Wellman's *A Star is Born* (1937) (*Britannica* n.p). As happened with Scott Fitzgerald, her literary work was also set during the time of Prohibition and the Jazz Age, in which people were both wild and disillusioned because of World War I horrible events. On a personal level, she had a life experience marked by significant adversity and distress; in 1929, she tried suicide and had an abortion; all this tragedy is portrayed in her short stories with a dark view of life with a funny tone (*Britannica* n.p).

In her writing, she adopts a sentimental tone mixed with humor to talk about tragedies and life problems regarding the situation of many women during the 1920s. As Hahn states, "she examined the cultural institutions that subordinated women by gender, class, and race" (6). These themes are predominant in her work, and Parker employs them to denounce and analyze women's situations with a realist interpretation. She also gave voice to the issues and changes of the Jaz Age era, as Fitzgerald did. Parker used a mixture

of modernist and realist techniques to depict the tragic life of her characters with a bitter and funny tone. It can be said that Parker's writing tends to be autobiographical at some point; for instance, this can be seen in the fact that the age of her characters increased as she was aging (López 95) and because she utilizes as a source of inspiration the tragic events of her own life.

Context

The Great Gatsby, written by Scott Fitzgerald in 1925 and "Big Blonde," written by Dorothy Parker in 1929, are both situated in the decade of the 20s, a decade of freedom and joy following the terrible tragedies that the nation had to endure the previous years. As Mortlock claims, "not every period in United States history is special enough to have a nickname. But the 1920s has more than one" (1). This particular period in history has been known by multiple names, such as the "Roaring Twenties", "the Jazz Age," or "the New Era" (Mortlock 1). While all these labels attempted to capture the decade's ideological, political, and cultural changes, the excess that defined this decade was more significant.

August 18 of 1920, was a significant moment for women in the United States, the 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote. After a long fight and political struggle, the first wave of feminism had finally come to an end. The era of the 20s was more focused on social and cultural changes, in which women advocated changes regarding the established Victorian paradigm and behaviors. Since men were still affected and disillusioned by the events of World War I, women dominated the public sphere during this decade. More women began working outside home when the US entered World War I. They could now find jobs in places besides teaching and domestic work, like in offices, stores, and factories. The new roles that women took in times of war served to weaken

the restrictive norms of earlier generations (Streissguth 43). Women started doing “manly” jobs and activities, drinking, smoking, or driving, and it was clear that a “New Woman” had appeared.

The symbol of the Flapper was a new standard of beauty and fashion after the figure of the Gibson Girl, which dominated the 1910s. The figure of the Gibson Girl had long hair and a voluminous figure, she wore floor-length skirts and was an excellent wife and mother. The flapper was “a new type of woman who defied the conventions” (Rubio and García 3), which shocked previous generations. These women enjoyed their newfound freedom and felt empowered to experiment with new activities and styles. They were characterized by their bob haircuts, straight dresses, knee-length, or makeup. These changes in style were more relevant than it may seem since they allowed women to move more easily, providing them with the liberty to do new activities and sports. Unlike the Gibson Girl, who dressed in a modest style and constantly focused on being an ideal mother and wife, the Flapper had chosen to live and express herself. Even though more and more single women were working outside the home, once they were married, they gave up their jobs and focused on working on household chores. Besides, the New Women found discrimination in the job market and had to overcome some boundaries established by society. However, the Roaring Twenties were more complex for women than it may seem at first sight. As Rubio and García claim, “For the poor, being a New Woman meant new burdens, not opportunities” (2).

Prohibition was another important characteristic of these ages. It started after the ratification of the 18th Amendment in 1919, which established the prohibition of alcohol in the United States. Nevertheless, it did not stop people from illegally buying and trading alcohol, and it led to the apparition of speakeasies (illegal bars) and bootlegging. As a result of Prohibition, drinking and partying were seen as something exciting and popular.

Women started attending with their husbands gatherings and events in private jazz clubs, where dancing also became a form of self-expression for the flappers. New dancing styles, like the Charleston, became fashionable and very significant regarding the figure of the flapper. Unfortunately, all those changes were not well seen by the conservative public, which saw these innovations as scandalous and demanded their ideal previous “prototype” of women to return. Besides, the new emergent mass culture took a significant role in how consumerist and materialistic attitudes were represented in films, magazines, and advertisements. This gave this new way of living the appearance of freedom and happiness, and it was believed that happiness could be bought with money. The Roaring Twenties, a decade characterized by strong materialism, witnessed a consumerist upbringing of the public as people sought to display their financial status.

Literary background

A new literary movement, called modernism, emerged as a result of all these social, cultural, and technological developments, which were also brought by fast industrialization. Modernism aims to deviate from the previously established writing standards. Modernism, as a literary trend, is typically linked to the post-World War I era when writers expressed a sense of loss and disillusionment. Artists looked for new ways to express themselves and aspired to defy convention through experimentation. They believed that the old writing style was outdated and unable to represent accurately the current generation and society.

Modernist writers wanted to challenge traditional literary conventions by experimenting with new forms, incorporating symbolism, absurdity, and formalism into their Works. New advances in technology and science also drove them to this way of thinking. They “felt a growing alienation incompatible with Victorian morality,

optimism, and convention” (Kathleen Kuiper n.p.). They no longer felt identified with previous paradigms and decided to rediscover themselves with new forms. Regarding narratological techniques, modernist writers thought that the best device for capturing reality was through a limited narrator contrasted with the idea of an ‘omniscient’ narrator (who has access to all information about the story.). The omniscient narrator was no longer used since it could not offer the subjectivity they hoped readers would discover.

Another significant literary movement during the 20th century was realism. It was born in France in 1845 and was the predominant literary approach in the United States after the Civil War, along with naturalism and regionalism. It is a transition between romanticism and modernism in which writers tried to understand the changes that were affecting society. Realist writers, as modernist writers, thought that new images were needed to represent the new reality as is lived.

One of the important themes was that of the self-made man, the hero of American literature. This idea is related to the individualistic approach; this concept embodies the deeply rooted American individualist values of self-improvement and perseverance to achieve higher social status. This is also connected with the notion of the American Dream, reflected in literature. The American Dream is a myth that claims that everyone can aspire to a better version of themselves, in which success and high status in society are possible.

ANALYSIS

NARRATOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

The differences between Hazel and Daisy in terms of the narratological devices employed are one of the key elements when analyzing both characters. In “Big Blonde” Hazel is described through an omniscient third-person narrator, while in *The Great Gatsby*, Daisy is described through a homodiegetic narrator, Nick Carraway. The narrator in “Big Blonde” adheres to the characteristics of classical omniscient narrators, rather than displaying the experimental tendencies associated with modernist literature, the type of narrator common during the Victorian Age. The narrator’s internal focalization enables the reader to understand Hazel’s feelings, motivations, desires and intentions as we have access to her thoughts. With this narrator, we learn a lot about her personality and about the decline of her personal relationships “She was always pleased to have him come and never sorry to see him go.” (Parker 10). There are many cases in which the narrator even has more knowledge of Hazel’s thoughts than herself. This means that the narrator can provide insight, context and information that go beyond Hazel’s awareness contributing to represent the imposition that society has on Hazel to be just a “party girl” with an empty mind. On the other hand, in *The Great Gatsby*, although we have access to the thoughts of the narrator, they are Nick’s thoughts and not Daisy’s. As a result, all we know about Daisy is conditioned by Nick’s perception of her, resulting in a subjective image of her. “There was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget...” (Fitzgerald 15). Daisy is described in an objectified way, as attractive and dangerous, as a mythical figure. The result is that this causes fear in men and the only way to feel in control is to objectify her, reducing her to something simpler. This difference is really relevant since, having more information than Hazel, the narrator can

create dramatic irony, where the reader becomes aware of information that Hazel herself is unaware of. This can deepen the reader's engagement with the story. It is the reason why we tend to empathize more with Hazel, because we have access to her thoughts, and we are able to understand her behavior.

Even if the difference between Hazel and Daisy's description regarding narratological strategies employed by the authors first appears to be extremely different, in the end it is not, because what they have in common is that none of them have a voice of their own. By not having their own voices, the narration contributes to support the idea of them, as the embodiment of the Flapper, being still entrapped in a male-dominated society in which they had more restrictions than possibilities. In addition, something that needs to be considered when analyzing them from a narratological perspective is the fact that while Hazel is the main character, Daisy is just a subordinate character, she is only there to accompany and help the main character accomplish his objective. Therefore, as a main character, we have much more information about Hazel since the flow of the plot relays on her.

Narrative Voices

The Great Gatsby's homodiegetic narrator, Nick Carraway, is not the main character but rather a spectator that narrates the events. The distance that exists between the action and the narration offers two different theories: either it helps the narrator to be more objective or it can serve to construct an unreliable narrator since the mind can be tricky with the passing of time. Daisy's depiction is always shaped by a man's perspective and judgment, who will be influenced by the ideas of the patriarchal society in which he lives. On the other side, "Big Blonde" is narrated through an omniscient third-person narrator that

makes Hazel “at the mercy of her narrator” (Cella 52), creating a distance between the reader and the character.

Nick from the very beginning is depicted as assuming “the role of confidant with great success” that “establishes his role as a moral guide” (Preston qtd. in Haarsma 15). As a result, from the very beginning the reader is dependent on his judgments as Fitzgerald created him to serve as a guide. The patriarchal tone of the narration is clear when he claims, “Dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply — I was casually sorry, and then I forgot” (Fitzgerald 59). Nick’s traditional values regarding women are relevant since they help the reader to understand the representation of the New Woman in the story. It allows us to comprehend how conventional men like Nick felt about the emergence of the New Woman.

The omniscient third-person narrator in “Big Blonde” provides us with access to Hazel’s thoughts but not through her own voice. This is the main difference between Daisy and Hazel since we do not have access to Daisy’s consciousness. Although being aware of Hazel’s thoughts allows us to empathize with her, the fact that the reader is mediated by the narrator and has no direct access to Hazel’s point of view prevents us from completely identifying with her. There is also another fact that provides distance, and that is the difference that exists between what she thinks and how other people see her. While people’s conception of her is that she is “The best sport in the world” (Parker 11), she wants to stop fulfilling that role since, in reality, she is depressed “It would be nice, nice and restful, to be dead “(Parker 10). Another difference between Hazel and Daisy is that while Big Blonde’s narrator “is aware of how women are viewed in a male-dominated society” (Cella 52), Nick Carraway is not. The reader feels less sympathetic toward the female characters in *The Great Gatsby* since the narrator does not consider women’s circumstances or restrictions. This could be because while Big Blonde’s author

is a woman, even a “flapper” herself, the author of this narrative is a man, and Nick Carraway’s voice may reflect Scott Fitzgerald’s ideas.

CHARACTERIZATION: FLAPPER AND NEW WOMAN

The term Flapper was new, but it can be seen as a redefinition and “softer version of the ‘dangerous’ prototype of the femme fatale that became broadly spread over the United States of America and other Western territories in the 1920s” (López 96). Despite sharing some certain traits with the femme fatale archetype, the Flapper woman is far more delicate and livelier than the former. The Flapper lady is more passive and innocent when it comes to action, yet she is still an ambiguous figure. Daisy Buchanan is a character that embraces both new ideas and old ideas. Although she could be considered a New Woman, she is still dependent on a patriarchal society: she is constantly defined by her relationship with men. Hazel Morse fulfills the ideas of the New Woman too, but she also has some contradictions that do not enable her to fulfill a completely feminist view. Both women present ambivalent characteristics that make them very complex and deep characters. Daisy and Hazel are judged by society (although they belong to different social classes) because sometimes they do not comply with the roles imposed by it. Although the 1920s decade represents progress for women and society in general, women continue to have ties that do not allow them to free themselves completely. These characters portray the ambivalence and contradictions of the figure of the Flapper, a new woman who is often still attached to previous traditions.

Appearance and beauty

The redefinition of female beauty standards demands a change in attitude. If there is something that defines the Flapper woman is her appearance and beauty. Because of this,

their look is far more significant than it may initially appear. Although this change in beauty standards was an important step for women's redefinition, it was ultimately just another attempt to make women fit in new beauty standards. As Isabel López Cirugeda argues "This eventually led to more fragility due the need to fit into the new beauty conventions" (102). This fragility is another quality that contributes to the Flapper's ambiguous personality, characterizing her as a deep and complex figure since she hides behind her façade. The Roaring Twenties also brought about the widespread use of cosmetics, and this implied a never-ending fight in the search for beauty (López 102), only that in this time consumerism was involved too.

Daisy Buchanan is introduced from the beginning as a joyful and vibrant woman, embracing the style characteristics of the flapper woman. She is described as enjoying this new freedom and liberty that the New Woman found in that age. Nick Carraway's description of Daisy portrays her as a young girl full of life and energy "They were both in white, and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house" (Fitzgerald 13). The narration shows this change that characterized the shift of the women of that age, with Jordan and Daisy being presented as fun and acting childish or even immature, traits that were characteristics of the Flappers. The color white of the dress is significant as it supports Daisy's ambiguous personality; although she is described as a Flapper, the white color evokes old traits of the previous tradition. As Joan S. Korenman claims, "white has traditionally suggested purity and innocence, qualities that romantic convention has long attributed to fair rather than dark women" (576). Although she embraces the flapper-style, Daisy still retains some characteristics from the previous era, such as her femininity, which is much more common in the preceding tradition.

Hazel's appearance and beauty from the very beginning are presented as much more negative and sexualized; her body is completely described since the first chapter reducing her just to her appearance. "Hazel Morse was a large, fair woman of the type that incites some men when they use the word "blonde" to click their tongues and wag their heads roguishly" (Parker 3). This description is based on how the male gaze sexualizes her, turning her into a commodified object. Hazel gets the opportunity to work as a model since she is a Flapper woman enjoying her new freedom and ability to express herself. However, the narration implicitly states that she works for the adoration and attention of males, which contributes to the ambivalence of her characterization. She feels compelled in some manner to use her sexuality and appearance to survive as a single woman in a patriarchal society. The narration continues to focus on her physical appearance "she had been employed as a model in a wholesale dress establishment—it was still the day of the big woman, and she was then prettily colored and erect and high-breasted" (Parker 3).

This quote illustrates how fashion changes to meet the requirements of each society, that is why the Flapper is another model launched by the patriarchy in order to impose and dictate how women should look to fit in the beauty standards of the time. Moreover, right from the start, the only thing mentioned is her attractiveness, leading us to conclude that her intellect is irrelevant. As Lynne Hahn claims, "If there was ever a woman built for the male gaze it was Hazel, the tragic heroine of "Big Blonde" (8). Moreover, it is this burden imposed by society that will untimely cause her a sad and tragic ending.

Both, Daisy and Hazel demonstrate how, in some way, they embrace the Flapper appearance and style and how their beauty shapes the narrative's progression as they attempt to survive in a patriarchal world. Both women in a manner, exploit their sexuality and their attractiveness to survive in a patriarchal society where things are not as advanced

as they would seem. While Daisy is described in softer terms in some way embracing the archetype of the fair lady, Hazel's descriptions are rougher and without filter, primarily focused on her body from a male gaze.,

Women's Roles and Expectations in Society

The New Woman was unquestionably the dominant figure in the public realm during the Roaring Twenties. They began engaging in male jobs and activities, implying a change in social roles. This new shift was not well received by many conventional men and women because they felt it was too innovative and revolutionary. Despite having great independence and freedom, women's roles in society reflected the dualism and ambivalence of this decade in which they were still subject to the patriarchal norms of the society of the 1920s. Hazel and Daisy demonstrate how this new society still imposed women to fit into determined roles.

From the start, Hazel is described as being imposed to always have a positive attitude when she is among masculine figures; her only role is to serve as a distraction and accessory to men. "Men liked you because you were fun, and when they liked you, they took you out, and there you were. So, and successfully, she was fun. She was a good sport. Men like a good sport" (Parker 3). The new role imposed on Hazel is that of being "a good sport", a full-time job that requires her to be always joyful, upbeat, and vibrant; there is no place for melancholia or sadness. Hazel is the epitome of this new role imposed in society, demonstrating how women were still subject to patriarchal restrictions.

In addition, Daisy is depicted as completely distant from her daughter, indicating that she is not fulfilling her motherly duties. This is a negative description that accompanied the figure of the Flapper during the 20s. "I suppose she talks, and — eats,

and everything.” (Fitzgerald 22). This portrays the Flapper as dangerous and careless, only focused on enjoying their freedom in a childish way, thus being another strategy to demonstrate that women “have” certain obligations to fulfill, including being a good mother.

This same issue is also depicted in “Big Blonde,” which portrays mothers as disregarding their children: “Several were mothers, each of an only child—a boy at school somewhere, or a girl being cared for by a grandmother” (Parker 9). Both books present women of the 1920s as being completely detached from the babies, a harmful depiction of the figure of the Flapper.

However, Daisy’s description is once again ambivalent when she explains that she prefers her baby to be a daughter “I’m glad it’s a girl. And I hope she’ll be a fool — that’s the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool” (Fitzgerald 22). Daisy’s melancholia and pessimism regarding being a woman are shown, she believes that the best thing her daughter can do to survive in society is to be beautiful and fool. This wish depicts Daisy as being smart enough to understand what expectations a woman can have in her time and that if you are pretty and a bit foolish, you may find happiness.

This ambivalence is in some way also portrayed in Hazel as she, in some moments, wishes to return to the domestic sphere that characterized the prior tradition. “She wanted a sober, tender husband, prompt at dinner, punctual at work. She wanted sweet, comforting evenings” (Parker 5). This represents Hazel’s wish to have a normative life in which she can fulfill her traditional role as a domestic woman. Both characters show contradictory ideas about fulfilling their roles in this new society in which being a flapper not only implies new impositions but also upholding the same expectations that a traditional woman had in the previous decades. These women were “embedded into mass consumption, crazy celebrations and a profound change in habits implying new rules in

the relationship between men and women yet to be assumed” (López 102). They found these new changes so overwhelming and somehow frightening that, in many cases, they made them wish to return to the domestic sphere. Daisy’s characterization supports this idea of her as an ambivalent character, sometimes she shares traits of the New Woman but sometimes she is described as a “damsel in distress and object of desire in men” (Samkanashvili 47). In the same way, Hazel’s characterization also provides a sense of ambivalence, although she is portrayed as the embodiment of the New Woman, sometimes she is described in negative terms, as an empty minded woman: “she was not a woman given to recollections” (Parker 3).

Although, for an external observer, it may appear that both characters are happy and joyful, this is a façade, both characters show ambivalent characteristics. Daisy lives in despair, and as Nick narrates, “Her face was sad and lovely” (Fitzgerald 15), she was oppressed by her husband and the society in which she lived. Similarly, Hazel is described as “tired so much of the time. Tired and blue. Almost everything could give her the blues” (Parker 10). Their characterization and double personality reflect the reality of their society, although it seems to be progressive, in the end, women were not much freer than in previous decades, it was just a façade. This dissatisfaction and repression will lead to their eventual downfall, Hazel’s inability to escape will provoke her to start drinking, while Daisy’s fear of losing her social status and being with her supposed true love, Gatsby, will bring her misery.

Money and American Dream

The Roaring Twenties are known for their opulence, which is typically associated with wealth and, by extension, with the notion of the American Dream. The American Dream is the concept that embodies the individualist values of improvement and perseverance to achieve higher social status. Hazel and Daisy reflect on the issue of wealth and money from different perspectives. Since their socioeconomic position shapes their roles in society, it is necessary to comprehend both Daisy and Hazel's backgrounds to compare them. Daisy belongs to an old rich family that lives in the East Egg on Long Island with her wealthy husband, Tom Buchanan. Hazel's status is much lower, she works as a model, and she maintains multiple sexual relationships throughout her life in an effort to survive financially. Both narratives depict the differences between wealthy and poor women and how those inequalities impacted their quality of life—in the end, being a New Woman brought new challenges for the unprivileged rather than possibilities (Rubio and García 2).

Daisy's description regarding money and social status portrays her as a materialistic woman with the only purpose of maintaining a high status in society. "There is considerable evidence that Daisy is more concerned with money and material goods than emotions like love" (Houck 2), as she was born in a wealthy environment, she wants to keep that in her life and that is what she will search in men. Her voice, way of speaking and vocabulary reflect her wealthy upbringing but also her economic aspirations, being those aspirations her true objective: "her voice is full of money" (Fitzgerald 116). The description of Daisy's voice points to her as a manipulative and active character, supporting the idea of the Flapper woman as a new archetype of the femme fatale. Daisy's use of her voice makes her able to control men, depicting her as a manipulative woman "but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult

to forget” (Fitzgerald 15). As Persson argues, “It is Daisy’s enchanting voice and the promises of a better life that spurs Gatsby on in his transformation of himself into a man of economical wealth and power”. (14) Gatsby realizes that to be with Daisy he will need to be someone in society, making her the embodiment of the American Dream. Gatsby’s pursuit of the American Dream ends up being a never-ending fight to win Daisy’s heart.

In contrast, Hazel also needs to make use of her sexuality as a woman to preserve financial stability, she does not come from a wealthy family. Once she is by herself, she will need to do whatever is on her hands to survive, even if that implies letting go of her own feelings. “He was good to her; he gave her frequent presents and a regular allowance” (Parker 8). She didn’t have time to think if she was happy with her different lovers, for her, it was only her full-time job as a good sport, she did not have any other option.

The relevance of money is significant when analyzing both characters because it demonstrates that, despite the fact that they broke with the old stereotypes and apparently acquired new freedom, they remain attached to male figures and, consequently, to a patriarchal society. Once again, although it seems that these characters enjoy their new supposed freedom, they continued trapped in a patriarchy in which they need a man to survive, in this case, financially.

Love and relationships

Hazel’s and Daisy’s relationships and bounds to men also portray them as ambivalent in their own acceptance and representation of the values that are supposedly associated with the figure of the Flapper. Although modernity provided the New Woman with new opportunities, it also brought “situations from which there is no viable line of escape” (Ortolano 231). Those situations affected them in different ways, while Hazel was afflicted by melancholy, Daisy was hounded by fear. The dissatisfaction with their

relationships with their husbands and their awareness of not being capable to escape from the role of submissive wife in their marriages resulted in them responding with “ugly feelings“ what Sianne Ngais describes as “negative emotions that register and express frustration with intractable circumstances” (qtd. in Ortolano 231). Hazel and Daisy’s dissatisfaction and entrapment with their relationships will lead to their downfall.

Hazel’s relationships with men impose her to be “a good sport” all the time and that implies being joyful, there is no space for grief, even if her sadness is an integral part of her identity. Men expect her to be cheerful and happy, accepting their demands as a pleasure object “you got to be a sport and forget it. See? Well, slip us a little smile, then. That’s my girl” (Parker 9). She doesn’t have many options, which indicates that this new freedom for her only meant new burdens. As Ortolano argues, “Hazel’s freedom has proven to be not a flowering of independence but simply a new manifestation of dependence” (241). Hazel’s imposition of being a “party girl” represents why many feminist critics considered the flapper as a weak archetype regarding women’s changes in society, at the end, they were still adhering to patriarchal norms (Ortolano 241).

Hazel has no option but to accept her relationships, empty of feelings, to survive economically. In contrast, Daisy can decide between Tom and Gatsby, yet she nevertheless chooses the security provided by her cheater and violent husband, Tom Buchanan. Gatsby expects Daisy to finally pick him after he reveals everything about his relationship with Daisy, but she does not. “Her frightened eyes told that whatever intentions, whatever courage, she had had, were definitely gone.” (Fitzgerald 130). Daisy does not want to take the risk of choosing Gatsby over Tom since it would suppose breaking with society and losing her acceptance in it. She is a woman married to someone important, and Gatsby is just a new rich, he is “Mr. Nobody from Nowhere” (Fitzgerald 125). This decision depicts her as a traditional woman, she is not yet prepared for a

significant change. Although not in the same situation as Hazel she is also entrapped in the roles of society. According to Houck, “it would be too much of a scandal for her to do anything like actually leaving her husband and child to be with Gatsby, whom she supposedly loves” (9). Both characters are ambivalent regarding their relationships with men, although at first it might seem they have some freedom in their unconventional models of relationships, in reality, they are still attached to a patriarchal society where they cannot escape from their relationships.

CONCLUSION

The figure of the Flapper in the 1920s was a wild and fun young woman that began to embrace some newfound freedom, implying a change of attitude different from the traditional model of the Gibson Girl. Nevertheless, when analyzing it from a deeper perspective, it can be seen that this apparent progress was a façade, women found in the Roaring Twenties more restraints than freedoms. In reality, women’s possibilities to find a decent and well-paid job were unquestionably difficult, making it hard for them to achieve economic independence. The public response among traditional men and women prevented the Flappers from fully liberating themselves as new roles and expectations appeared in an attempt to control them. The figure of the Flapper was, in fact, an image that contributed to the creation of an idealized image of the Roaring Twenties as an age of possibilities and changes. While traditional men were afraid of women getting certain opportunities, women were both willing to change things and worried about how some men could react to these changes.

Both Hazel’s and Daisy’s characterizations have deep meanings and significance, that represent the ideas of the time, and, allegedly the ideas of the authors. Scott Fitzgerald

gave more importance to Daisy than that expected for a subordinate character. However, all the women in *The Great Gatsby* are portrayed negatively and are always defined by a man. After having a closer look at Daisy's behavior and possible motivations, this could be interpreted as a strategy that suggests that his real objective was to demonstrate how "modern" he was rather than to give real visibility to the figure of the New Woman. Fitzgerald's ideas about the New Woman seem to be still the ideas of a traditional man. He still appears to cling to certain conventional notions and demonstrates a degree of judgment towards women who enjoy their recently acquired freedom. "Fitzgerald's traditional values thus shaped the 'flapper' in *The Great Gatsby* into a patriarchal image of a woman as an "object of exchange" (Preston qtd. in Haarsma 11). It seems that not only Nick's ideas, but also the author construct Daisy as an object that Gatsby can use to achieve the American Dream.

Dorothy Parker's representation of Hazel Morse is hard and frivolous sometimes, but as López explains, this is a "discourse of ambivalent feminism denouncing how women actively contribute to their own oppression in a world where only the rich and insensitive can feel safe"(103). Although as a passive character Hazel in some way contributes to that restriction, she does not have any other option than succumb to men's subordination in order to survive. Dorothy Parker's ideas reflect a woman trying to warn other women about the kind of bonds they build with men as "her main characters are often disdained by men as either too fast or too boring, which leads them to jealousy, depression and unhealthy pressure on their appearance." (López 102). It is by Hazel's dependence on men that she ends up almost killing herself in an attempt to free herself from the social restraints that entrap her in this patriarchal society.

According to López, “Women feel invariably trapped in their love life as they are desperate when single and alienated when married.” (103). This quote perfectly summarizes the situation of the Flapper at the time, where society either saw them as immature and childish when they were single or forced them to be entrapped when married. In reality, none of these figures had any real option; in the end they were conditioned by society. Both characters’ roles are defined by their relation to men, Hazel would be nothing if she was not a good sport with men, and Daisy would be nothing if she were not Tom’s wife or Gatsby’s beloved. Men are the ones who still impose role models in society for the New Woman. As Simone de Beauvoir explains: “Shut up in her flesh, her home, she sees herself as passive before these gods with human faces who set goals and establish values” (qtd. in Bozorgimoghaddam and Moeen 518). That is, women realize their submissive role in society in which men are the ones that dominate everything, including them. During the Roaring Twenties, men continued to prevent women from freely liberating themselves, turning the figure of the Flapper into just a façade and an illusion. In the end, the opportunities promised by The Jazz Age were only accessible to the privileged one, and once again, women did not belong to that group.

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