

Flappers in Modernist Novels

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Dvopredmetni sveučilišni preddiplomski studij engleskog jezika i književnosti i
njemačkog jezika i književnosti

Dorotea Drnasin

Šiparice u modernističkim romanima

Završni rad

Mentorica: izv. prof. dr. sc. Biljana Oklopčić

Osijek, 2020.

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Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor: Dr. Biljana Oklopčić, Associate Professor

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Abstract

A flapper was a new type of woman in the early twentieth century in the United States. Sexually freer than the previous generations of American women, they were driven by the need to challenge social norms of the time set for women. Their courage and persistence in changing the woman's status inspired many authors, including the most famous representatives of American modernist literature – F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner. All three authors have incorporated the flapper characters in their novels. Fitzgerald creates the most famous flapper Daisy Buchanan in his *The Great Gatsby* while Hemingway's Lady Brett Ashley is a determined leader of lost men in *The Sun Also Rises*. Faulkner imagined Caddy Compson as the main character in *The Sound and The Fury*, building the story around her flapperism.

Keywords: flapper, societal norms, American Modernism, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner

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Introduction

American modernist literature is the first independent literature period in the United States of America, describing the first decades of the twentieth century. The end of World War I brought radical changes, which were slowly entering American society. One of the novelties was an introduction of flappers – women who embraced their feminine and sexual independence and freedom, refusing to accept the domestic role of a housewife. The flapper character was one of the dominant characters in the novels written by the leaders of American Modernism – F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner – who have become worldwide famous because of their works and the influence on the generations to come. Although the society criticised flappers and their relentless behaviour, the above mentioned writers incorporated them in the structure of their works, introducing Daisy Buchanan, Lady Brett Ashley, and Caddy Compson as the embodiment of the flapper. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to analyse and discuss Daisy Buchanan, Lady Brett Ashley, and Caddy Compson as the representatives of flappers in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, and William Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury*.

The paper is divided into three chapters: (1) Into the 1920s, (2) The Flapper with two subchapters and (3) The Analysis, which has three subchapters. The first chapter briefly discusses historical and societal circumstances in the USA before and during the 1920s. The second chapter focuses on the term “flapper”: its background and the flapper herself. The third chapter analyses the flapper character in the selected works of Modernist literature: F. Scott Fitzgerald's Daisy Buchanan, Ernest Hemingway's Lady Brett Ashley, and William Faulkner's Caddy Compson.

1. Into the 1920s

The decade preceding the 1920s was one of the most infamous in the human history. The First World War ended in 1918 with over 37 million civilian and military casualties, both deaths and injuries. Although casualties-speaking it was less damaging than the Second World War, it kept its title of the bloodiest war because of the way of fighting (trench and gas warfare). With their entrance in 1917, the Americans lost 117 000 people and to the continent returned 204 000 people suffering from wounds. Furthermore, towards the end of the war, the 1918 flu pandemic occurred, also known as the Spanish flu. The pandemic infected 500 million people by the 1920, taking up to 100 million deaths with it. Not only in America, but people all around the world were living in fear. The start of 1920 bought “a collective sigh of relief and a sense of optimism for the future” (Sagert 2).

The feminine ideal in the United States during the 1910s was the Gibson Girl. This ideal was created by illustrator Charles Dana Gibson in the late nineteenth century and appeared in all at-the-time fashion magazines. The Gibson Girl, “although slender, boasted a curvy, hourglass figure, thanks to a swan-bill corset beneath her bustled dress. Her neck was graceful, her hair piled upon her head with wisps and curls tumbling out, and her facial features were attractive and youthful, her beauty fresh-faced” (Sagert 2). This fashion remained until the beginning of the war when women chose to wear more practical shirtwaist-style dresses. The return of the Gibson style was expected after the war, however, it vanished from the fashion industry. Women in America were ready for a dramatic change.

2. The Flapper

2.1. The Background

While men were leaving the United States to fulfil their duty in the First World War, women took their place in the industry and factories, receiving higher wages than before and more social acknowledgment. According to Kelly Boyer Sagert in *Flappers: A Guide to an American Subculture*, they worked in offices, factories, stores and governmental agencies, as well participated in Red Cross and other humanitarian efforts. 23.6 percent of workforce was female by the 1920. Meanwhile, urbanism and consumerism infiltrated American society, implementing cities, advertising, and mass production as a new way of life. In fact, Henry Ford's mass production of cars, which reduced the prices in the automobile industry, allowed the possibility of owning a car to a larger population, which now could visit cities and urban areas ("Flappers"). Cities represented endless possibilities for workplaces and entertainment and consequently attracted people from rural areas, resulting in the fact that the first time in history more people (54.3 million in cities, 51.3 million in towns) lived in urban areas. The lifestyle changed in general, the women could work in restaurants, offices or factories (far) away from home. Looking at the whole, that kind of environment secured women more personal and social freedom and better income (Sagert 15).

The Nineteenth Amendment was ratified on August 26, 1920, allowing women to vote. It did not lead to major changes during this period, but it affected women to seek out greater rights, one of them being women's contraception introduced by Margaret Sanders. The contraception marked the beginning of the greater sexual freedom for women. Their new-discovered freedom redefined the concept of marriage and family. The housework was not anymore entirely a woman's domain: the chores could be done easier and with less time-consuming effort because almost every household had electricity and household appliances such as washing machine, vacuum cleaner, and a refrigerator. The afore-mentioned contraception "limit[ed] family size and allowed women the freedom to explore their sexuality without facing the consequences of unwanted pregnancies" (Pruitt). Nevertheless, the marriage preserved its status of a desired aim in woman's life. Yet, with newly acquired self-awareness, women favoured marriages that would bring them greater financial secureness, i.e. they favoured wealthy and respectable men so that they could be able to continue to spend money and have fun.

The Charleston was the new popular “provocative” (Sagert 2) dance, “perfected by the black community in Harlem and then performed by young women around the nation“ (Sagert 2). Harlem was a place of the rebellion at “the period when the Negro was in vogue” (Hughes qtd. in Sagert 6), known as the Harlem Renaissance. The Harlem Renaissance or the New Negro Movement of the 1920s was “an outpouring of Afro-American writing, music, and social criticism that includes some of the earliest attempts by Afro-American artists and intellectuals” (Baker 89). It occurred in New York, where the segregation was prohibited. The whites started visiting African-American clubs and bars in large numbers, with the Cotton Club as one of the most famous bars. Their culture of jazz music and Charleston dance would soon domineer the American society.

2.2. The Definition

“No cultural symbol of the 1920s is more recognizable than the flapper” (Pruitt). The origin of the term “flapper” remained unknown; it became a part of everyday language after the First World War, describing “young women, especially those from late teenage years to 30, who engaged in a score of scandalous activities and flouted the conventions of the previous generations” (Carlisle 5) and who “bobbed their hair above their ears, wore skirts that skimmed their knees, smoked cigarettes and drank alcohol while dancing in jazz clubs, always surrounded by admiring male suitors” (Pruitt). They were intelligent and willing to risk to get their inner and outer freedom (“Flappers”). In the 1920s, it was assumed that the term was influenced by the “flapper dress,” which young women preferred over long or ankle-length dresses and skirts worn by older generations. The term gained negative connotations, resulting in Florida State’s discussion to officially forbid the word itself (Sagert 11). Being the first generation of women in the United States to vote, they knew that they had more privilege than any generation before them.

Flappers wore high heels shoes with short dresses and/or skirts, to show their ankles and calves, but also to facilitate their dance, as they mainly practised the Charleston – it involved a lot of arms and legs movements. Unexpectedly, the knee became a desired part of a body: “the knee—emblematic of those shorter skirts and sights previously unseen in public—became a sexualized body part, to the point that magazine articles reported young women rousing their knees to draw attention to them” (Carlisle 5-6). In addition, they refused to wear

corsets, another traditional feminine mark, embracing simpler undergarments and lingerie. Some indeed wore corsets and bras but to reduce their curves as much as possible, as some preferred modern fashion and clothing that would present their appearance as boyish. Carlisle even states that flappers' fashion was the one of the children – they were allowed to be less covered up and they did not have to do their hair – they adjusted it to the adult version (6). They were also the first generation that dared to use makeup: the lipstick, mostly red and often “kiss-proof,” rouge, eyeliner, and mascara (Carlisle 5). Together with a short bob hairstyle and a cigarette, the makeup was a trademark of a Flapper.

Aside from their at the time provocative dressing, the society also criticised their behaviour. Flappers were “fast-moving, fast-talking, reckless and unfazed by previous social conventions or taboos” (Pruitt) and defined their social freedom by drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes in public, dancing at jazz clubs (often presumed to be only for black people), and interacting with a lot of different men. They were not rebels because they mostly did not defy the society; they were making a trend, a new society in a way that “they openly and proudly disdained authority, presumably in response to the obvious ubiquity of drinking despite Prohibition, and the signal therefore that authority was limited in its real power” (Carlisle 5). Moreover, they developed their own slang or vocabulary, “you knew it or you didn't, and if you had to ask, you would never know” (Carlisle 6). For example, if a flapper said that she is to “see a man about a dog,” she was going to buy whiskey, which was illegal by a Prohibition law; “barney-mugging” implied illicit sex. Something marvelous was suggested by “the bee's knees,” “the cat's pajamas,” and “That's so Jake” (Sagert 11-12). Boys were “sheikhs”; to refer to money three terms were used: “berries” or “clams” or “voot,” while attractive girls were “tomatoes” (Carlisle 6). Flappers were, again, the first generation to openly acknowledge that dating is no longer practised in order to seek marriage: “A couple might enjoy one another's company for a few months, or a few weeks, without any designs on marriage. Dating was an end unto itself, not simply a means to find a husband or wife” (Carlisle 8).

3. The Analysis

Modernism symbolises a “break with the past and search for new forms of expression” (Kuiper), occurring in the fields of art, literature, architecture, design, music etc. It appeared in the late nineteenth century and lasted until the middle of the twentieth century, with its peak in the years following the First World War. The society was changing – aside from the war, the industrialisation disempowered the individualists; and global communication enabled sharing thoughts and ideas quicker and easier. These changes were acknowledged in modernist literature, with its emphasis on individualism, experimentation, absurdity, symbolism and formalism (Patrick). According to Patrick, modernist authors focused on the individualists who were trying to adapt to the new society and who at the same time were struggling to maintain their existence under new circumstances. The authors were now experimenting with the traditional forms and techniques of writing, which eventually resulted in *stream of consciousness* – a narration form specific for some of the most famous authors of modernist literature (James Joyce’s *Ulysses* or Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*). Furthermore, for “many writers, the world was becoming a more absurd place every day. The mysteriousness of life was being lost in the rush of daily life. The senseless violence of WWII was yet one more evidence that humanity had lost its way” (Patrick). Symbolism was not a new approach in literature, but the authors of this period challenged the originality of reader, cleverly incorporating places, objects, and people to achieve a particular meaning. Modernist formalism illustrates modernist authors’ understanding of literature – it is a craft rather than a “flowering” (Patrick) of creativity. They “believed that poems and novels were constructed from smaller parts instead of the organic, internal process that earlier generations had described” (Patrick). They would often use invented words and foreign languages. Aside from James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, the famous writers of modernist literature are also F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner.

Together with his wife Zelda, Francis Scott Fitzgerald is the most famous person of the Jazz Age, which the term he himself coined (another term for the flapper period). His life was marked by alcohol, parties, financial problem and his famous wife (a true flapper, often an inspiration for his characters), but also by his great stories and his modernist way of writing. His writing is described as “intensely poetic to the point of rhapsodic, elevating his laments into veritable threnodies for the sureties and stable values that he felt modernity superannuated” (“F. Scott Fitzgerald”), while Hemingway’s is considered to be sparse and Faulkner’s toward

psychological abstraction. The main themes in Fitzgerald's works are money and class, discipline vs. self-indulgence, ambition and loss, and love and romance ("F. Scott Fitzgerald"). He lived in Paris back when other significant modernists lived there – Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, Pablo Picasso, and Ezra Pound. They and many more created a group of intellectuals, known as "The Lost Generation." The term was coined by Gertrude Stein, an American author who is best known for her modernist work, and for the ownership of a literary salon at 27 Rue de Fleurus in Paris – the gathering point of the Lost Generation. Encyclopædia Britannica describes this literary group in the following way:

The generation was "lost" in the sense that its inherited values were no longer relevant in the postwar world and because of its spiritual alienation from the United States that, basking under Pres. Warren G. Harding's "back to normalcy" policy, seemed to its members to be hopelessly provincial, materialistic, and emotionally barren.

Ernest Hemingway is one of the greatest American authors of the twentieth century, best known for his *Old Man and the Sea*, for which he won the Pulitzer Prize in 1953. He served in the First World War and worked as a journalist before publishing his works. While living in Paris, as almost all greater modernists at the time, he became a part of the Lost Generation, together with Fitzgerald. Although winning the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954 "for his mastery of the art of narrative . . . and for the influence that he has exerted on contemporary style ("The Nobel Prize in Literature 1954"), he committed suicide on July 2, 1961. In his writings, he uses the "iceberg principle," as he "always tr[ies] to write on the principle of the iceberg. There is seven-eighths of it underwater for every part that shows" (Hemingway qtd. in Roullier). He promoted the idea of writing only the essential, leaving the rest to the imagination of the reader. The reader should focus and discover "the underwater" lines and the story behind the written. Another modernistic characteristic of his is the verbal exchange between the characters. Influenced by Mark Twain, Hemingway writes dialogues with typical American idioms and vernacular language. Roullier thus asserts that

Hemingway is breaking away from the more formal, ornate English of much nineteenth-century American literature, adopting a more journalistic style. Like Twain, Hemingway creates dialogue that reproduces everyday speech, but his style is more "minimalist" than that of Twain, and this is what makes his style distinctively modernist.

He avoids abstractions and irrelevant adjectives, as well as superfluous words. His writing is simple, precise and concrete – fresh. Influenced by Gertrude Stein, Hemingway becomes aware of the importance of repetition of “valid and valuable” words, the need for clarity” of intrusive punctuation, the use of present tense, short sentences, and the importance “of communicating ‘the emotion of reality’” (Waldhorn qtd. in Roullier).

Born in Mississippi, William Faulkner is the most acknowledged author of Southern American literature and American literature in general. He was awarded with the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. His literary work consists of novels, screenplays, short stories, poetry, and essays. In contrast to Hemingway’s simple or minimalist writing, Faulkner was an experimenter, trying to change and expand limitations of time, space and consciousness, beyond Proust’s and Joyce’s literary styles (“William Faulkner: An Introduction”). Together with James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, he introduced stream of consciousness – one of the revolutionary modernist writing styles. The term was created by psychologist William James in his *The Principles of Psychology* where he states: “it is nothing joined; it flows. A ‘river’ or a ‘stream’ is the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let’s call it the stream of thought, consciousness, or subjective life” (James qtd. in “Stream of Consciousness”). In literature, it is “a method of narration that describes happenings in the flow of thoughts in the minds of the characters” (“Stream of Consciousness”). Aside from his experimentations with narrative structures, temporal frameworks, narrative voices and symbols, Faulkner explored inner consciousness, and adapted the abstract methods of modern painting to literature (“William Faulkner: An Introduction”). The above named characteristics can also be found in *The Sound and the Fury*. Faulkner did not intend to write the novel but rather a short story, which later became, by adding three more parts, a novel. Faulkner manipulates time by switching years and blending the past and the future. The dialogue participants are to be recognized from the dialogues, without the announcement of their names. The dialogues are written from the perspective of the narrator, the way he or she sees or feels that conversation.

3.1. Daisy Buchanan

Daisy Fay Buchanan is one of the main characters in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* and one of the first flappers in American literature. She is considered flapper *par*

excellence because of her attitude towards the idea of marriage and motherhood, sexuality, and her characteristic flapper behaviour. Firstly, Daisy questions the concept of marriage as such, namely, she did not marry Tom because she loved him but she married him because of his money. All the more, she stays married to him after he cheated on her, and even despite his harsh and brutal behavior. When the narrator describes her voice as “full of money” (Fitzgerald 65), readers and the narrator himself understand that Daisy and Tom share a similar system of values and beliefs and that they both have had certain benefits in their marriage. The narrator, Nick Carraway, realises the proportions of her ambition and desire for a luxurious life: “That was it. I’d never understood before. It was full of money that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals’ song of it” (Fitzgerald 65). She was raised in “a white palace” (Fitzgerald 66), she was “the king’s daughter, the golden girl” (Fitzgerald 66), and it was the part of a tradition to marry a man of the same class or even upper class. Therefore, she married Tom,

with more pomp and circumstance than Louisville ever knew before. He came down with a hundred people in four private cars, and hired a whole floor of the Seelbach Hotel, and the day before the wedding he gave her a string of pearls valued at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. (Fitzgerald 40)

Moreover, she did not accept the role of a housewife, or even of a mother, having money and opportunity not to be bothered by an upbringing of a child: “the well-disciplined child held to her nurse’s hand and was pulled out the door” (Fitzgerald 63). Her child is the only proof that she contributed to their marriage, and that she did her part in creating of an image of a strong and stable marriage, as she “show[s] [the child] off to the others” (Fitzgerald 62). The child is always nicely dressed and Daisy always emphasizes how lovely the child is or how much she loves her, in front of other people (Fitzgerald 62). In addition, Daisy’s love for money is visible in the scene when Gatsby is showing her through the house: while on the house tour, she finds a golden hairbrush and instantly brushes her hair; moving on to the wardrobe, he shows her expensive shirts from England and she starts crying, saying that she is sad because she has never seen so beautiful shirts. This scene poses a question whether Daisy wants life with more money than Tom has. The well-known fact is that Gatsby became rich in order to be with Daisy, he knew that she would not accept anything less. The house, the wardrobe, and almost everything else was bought for her – not to admire or to wear but for her to know that he is wealthy now. Gatsby falsely interprets her love for money for her love for him: Daisy is to Gatsby “as his enchanted Dulcinea is to Don Quixote: a vision of the ideal” (Bloom 6).

Secondly, Daisy has been a sexually free woman since her teenage years. As Jordan is describing Daisy's life to Nick, she mentions that "wild rumo[u]rs were circulating" (Fitzgerald 40) about Daisy – she was visited by many officers in her house. In fact, Gatsby himself was excited by the fact that "many men had already loved Daisy" (Fitzgerald 82). Furthermore, Daisy had an intercourse with Gatsby before her marriage. He was not sure of his chances in the war, so "he took Daisy one still October night, took her" (Fitzgerald 82), and there was no objection from her side. Moreover, Korenman connects Daisy with other dark-haired sexually active heroines in literature, saying that "the dark woman exudes sexuality" (577), finding support for her argument in Daisy's own words: "And I know. I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything" (Fitzgerald 10), which could refer to Daisy's sexual experience. Apart from being "sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth" (Fitzgerald 5), Daisy has an attractive, "low, thrilling" voice in which "there was an excitement . . . that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion" (Fitzgerald 5). She has her ways in manipulating men, even her cousin Nick (Hochman 19). Strangely, Daisy wears white dresses. Although her dresses were the dresses worn by flappers, "rippling and fluttering" (Fitzgerald 4), they were white. As the white colour signifies innocence and virginity, it might be said that Fitzgerald was attempting to mask her sexuality. In addition, she would often go to the house parties; Gatsby himself held parties very often just to get her attention or hopeful that one day she would come to his house.

3.2. Lady Brett Ashley

Lady Brett Ashley in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* is another important flapper character in American modernist literature. Firstly, her outer appearance is decidedly flapperish. At the beginning of the novel, Jake describes her body shape as curvy, saying that she was "built with curves like the hull of a racing yacht" (Hemingway 12). Brett emphasises her curves by wearing "a slipover jersey sweater and a tweed skirt (Hemingway 12). Her hair was "brushed back like a boy's" (Hemingway 12), she does not wear stockings, likes hats, and smokes cigarettes (Hemingway 41). In fact, Jake considers her a leader and a role model to other flapper girls as she "started all that" (Hemingway 12), referring to her clothes, hair style, and behaviour. Later in the novel, during the supper, she again wears challenging clothes, dressing herself in "a black, sleeveless evening dress" (Hemingway 77). The men around her

are thrilled by her charms and long to meet her, one of them being Robert Cohn: “‘You’ve made a new one there,’ [he] said to her. ‘Don’t talk about it. Poor chap. I never knew it till just now’” (Hemingway 12).

Secondly, her inner flapper is demonstrated in her behaviour and her character. Hemingway portrays Lady Brett as a masculine woman: “She was smoking a cigarette and flicking the ashes on the rug” (Hemingway 30), thus reversing the gender role. Aside from her “damn good-looking” (Hemingway 12) appearance, i.e. aside from her woman-born natural features, she “radiates independence [and] intelligence” (Baskett 47) and is often the subject of talk and admiration: “You got the most class of anybody I ever seen. You got it. That’s all” (Hemingway 31). She uses her intelligence as a weapon to get what she wants, such as manipulating Jake to introduce her to Romero so that she could have a sexual intercourse with him (Daiker 168). The independence is one of the strongest features that she possesses: she “[has] always done just what [she] wanted” (Hemingway 96); the feature that is also acknowledged by the others: “I know” [said Jake]” (Hemingway 96). Her frequent outgoings are always accompanied by various men as she was “very much with them” (Hemingway 11), alcohol as she is “always drinking” (Hemingway 31), and, of course, jazz-dancing: “Brett and I danced. It was so crowded we could barely move. The nigger drummer waved at Brett. We were caught in the jam, dancing in one place in front of him” (Hemingway 33).

Brett’s views on marriage and money could be described as the same – one conditions the other. Through marriage she can secure herself money and a house to return to from her drinking and parties. After her true love died in war, Lady Brett married Lord Ashley to get the title and the status. Yet, after the abuse she experienced from her husband, she is now waiting for a divorce, already finding a new fiancée, Mike Campbell, again someone with money in his hands. Although engaged, she spends time with a lot of men, both casually and romantically/sexually involved. Furthermore, Lady Brett exercises her sexual freedom liberally, “engag[ing] sexually with at least two men in addition to her fiancé” (Baskett 48). In fact, Jake sometimes subtly reminds her that she cannot be faithful to her fiancé or actually to any man at all (Daiker 174). Overall, her divine image and complicated personality are utmost depicted through Jake’s words: “And that lady, that lady there is some one. An eccentric, perhaps, but *quelqu’une, quelqu’une!*” (Hemingway 28).

3.3. Caddy Compson

Caddy Compson in William Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury* represents a flapper in the broadest sense of the word. Her flapperism is illustrated through her rejection of the conservative Southern social norms. She "choose[s] to live according to . . . [her] own value systems rather than . . . [her] families' hypocritical codes of hono[u]r and morality" (Bauer 1). More precisely, her rejection is depicted through her sexuality and divorce from Herbert Head. Firstly, Caddy discovers her sexuality very early in her life. Benjy is the first who notices the change in her, stating that Caddy no longer "smells like trees" (Faulkner 38). Similarly, Quentin does not approve of her unrestrained sexual desire: "Why must you do like nigger women do in the pasture the ditches the dark woods hot hidden furious in the dark woods" (Faulkner 79). Caddy, however, does not care about her brothers' opinions and social codes of behaviour and exercises her sexual desire freely:

she looked at me then everything emptied out of her eyes

and they looked like the eyes in statues blank and unseeing and serene

put your hand against my throat

she took my hand and held it flat against her throat

now say his name

Dalton Ames

I felt the first surge of blood there it surged in strong accelerating beats

say it again

her face looked off into the trees where the sun slanted and where the bird

say it again

Dalton Ames

her blood surged steadily beating and beating against my hand. (Faulkner 134)

Secondly, Caddy's view on marriage is similar to those of Daisy Buchanan and Lady Brett: a financial transaction aimed at securing her future, so much so as she was pregnant with Dalton Ames' child and needed Herbert Head, the rich banker, to provide her (family) with an honourable name and financial security. Eventually, after learning that she is pregnant,

“Herbert threw her out” (Faulkner 176) and Caddy becomes the disgrace to the family. Because she is not financially secured, she leaves her daughter Quentin with her family. She chose her own freedom, even under her family’s condition to never see Quentin again. Yet again, Caddy returns after improving her financial status, knowing that her daughter cannot be happy or satisfied in that house, obeying the rules of the hypocritical Compson family.

Some of Caddy’s flapper traits are her independence and stubbornness. Her stubbornness and independence are displayed every time when Quentin challenges her:

“I’ll take it off.” she said. “Then it’ll dry.”

“I bet you wont.” Quentin said.

“I bet I will.” Caddy said.

”I bet you better not.” Quentin said. . . . Caddy took her dress off and threw it on the bank. (Faulkner 20)

Aside from challenging Quentin, Caddy also challenges the motherhood of her own mother. Mrs. Compson is a selfish, whining neurotic woman. She is often narcissistic and does not care about Benjy. She complains about Dilsey’s cake for Benjy’s birthday, but does nothing to provide one, or anything else, for him. Whenever she corrects Benjy, he starts crying. Caddy has to replace her own mother from the early age in order to take care of Benjy. As she comes of age, Caddy rejects her mother’s world of false pride by experimenting with her sexuality – she believes that there is a curse on the Compson family, and her promiscuity is her way of escaping their destiny. Through her mother, she also challenges the Southern social codes – she rejects the false aristocracy, pride and honour, as much as everything that comes with it.

Conclusion

To conclude, flappers rejected the prescribed gender roles of wives, mothers, and housewives of their time. They had courage and will to change the *status quo*. Searching and demanding their social and sexual rights, freedom and independence, flappers relied on their intelligence and persistence. Although their intelligence would often be expressed in an act of manipulation, which has strong negative connotations, it would help them in achieving their aim, as the manipulation was one of the few weapons they could count on. They openly expressed their interest in money in order to enjoy the life in its fullest, as many women were still trapped in conservative lives and norms, or simply to secure their well-being. Small wages and the housewife role were not any more acceptable for them, as well as the concept of dating and marriage. Dating was no longer seen exclusively as a search for a spouse, which was further supported by the introduction of contraception, allowing casual relationships. Moreover, women could better and easily express themselves with short(er) dresses and makeup. In American literature, these (in)famous women have been exemplified by Fitzgerald's Daisy Buchanan, Hemingway's Lady Brett Ashley, and Faulkner's Caddy Compson. Lady Brett Ashley is considered to be the exact representation of the flapper while Caddy Compson marginally describes this type of women. Daisy Buchanan remains in the middle, not completely expressing flapper traits but certainly standing within the boundaries to be recognized as such. It is to be hoped that they managed to encourage women around the world to express themselves in a way beyond the constraints of societal norms.

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