

フィッツジェラルド研究

「冬の夢」におけるデクスターの夢の崩壊

兼 定 和 義

A STUDY OF FITZGERALD

The Collapse of Dexter's Dream in "Winter Dreams"

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Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born on September 24, 1896 in St. Paul, Minnesota. He had no brothers and sisters. In a word, the life of his childhood was not so good. When he was a year-and a half, his father Edward failed in his business unfortunately, and his family was compelled to go east to Buffalo where Edward Fitzgerald worked as a salesman. The Fitzgeralds stayed in St. Paul until 1898 when they moved to Buffalo again. In September 1905, when Fitzgerald was nine, his family moved to 71 Highland Avenue. The first year after their return to St. Paul the Fitzgeralds lived with Grandmother McQuillan, who had sold her house on Summit and moved to lesser quarters on nearby Laurel. Thus Fitzgerald was propelled into the Summit Avenue community which, at the time, meant fashionable, residential St. Paul.

The sad lack of the settlement in his boyhood affected his own life and the lives of his fictional protagonists. In 1911, Aunt Annabel McQuillan provided school expenses to send Fitzgerald to the Newman School which was founded by Catholic laypeople, Dr. and Mrs. Jesse A. Locke, a select Roman Catholic academy. Consequently, Fitzgerald was an Irish Catholic, in fact. In 1913, when he was seventeen, he was admitted into Princeton University which was founded in 1746 as a Presbyterian college and is now one of the most desired and desirable places in America in

which students study through four years of their youth.

At that time Fitzgerald fell in love with Ginevra King, who was a very rich girl like Judy Jones in "Winter Dreams". Ginevra King with a startling brunette beauty was, as a matter of course, to become the prototype of the elusive "golden girl" who was to fire the imagination of so many of Fitzgerald's male propagonists. It seemed to Fitzgerald that Ginevra was looking beyond him while all his desires were centered on her. Therefore, in the long run, his love with her broke sadly because of his poverty, and for this reason he felt that he lived in another world different from the rich class which she belonged to. In reality, Ginevra had been the princess for whom he had sought fame and honours at Princeton in the spirit of a knight errant. She belonged to the moneyed aristocracy of Chicago and as such was far beyond his grasp. To her he seemed a weak reed to lean upon. Naturally, his longing for Ginevra turned into Dexter Green's timeless and untouchable love for Judy Jones.

"Winter Dreams" was written in 1922 and was published in The Metropolitan Magazine in December 1922, and after that it was collected in All the Sad Young Men. "Winter Dreams" begins with the experiences of a fourteen-year-old boy named Dexter Green. The 'green' color of Dexter Green is the symbolic color in Fitzgerald literature and we can associate the color of 'hope' with 'green' color and its color leads to 'dream'. Dexter is not as poor as James, Gatz will be at the beginning of his life, for his father owns the second-best grocery business in Black Bear, Minnesota.

Dexter's chance encounter with the 11-year-old daughter of the immensely rich Mr. Mortimer Jones (while Dexter is a caddy at the exclusive Sherry Island golf club) so exacerbates his sense of class differences and so wounds his pride (Judy Jones peremptorily demands his services as caddy) that he begins his rise to riches. The young boy resigns his job at the golf club, passes up a chance to take a business course at his State university, and attends an Ivy League college, even though that means being an outsider there because he is relatively poor.

Dexter Green is a fourteen-year-old boy, and is a caddy in the golf club on the lake, Minnesota. He is a dreamy boy and from fall to winter

the golf club is closed and the ground is covered with snow and he dreams about himself in the future, skiing around:

. . . October filled him with hope which November raised to a sort of ecstatic triumph, and in this mood the fleeting brilliant impressions of the summer at Sherry Island were ready grist to his mill. He became a golf champion and defeated Mr. T. A. Hedrick in a marvelous match played a hundred times over the fairways of his imagination, a match each detail of which he changed about untiringly ---sometimes he won with almost laughable ease, sometimes he came up magnificently from behind. Again, stepping from a Pierce-Arrow automobile, like Mr. Mortimer Jones, he strolled frigidly into the lounge of the Sherry Island Golf Club---or perhaps, surrounded by an admiring crowd, he gave an exhibition of fancy diving from the spring-board of the club raft. . . . 1

Dexter Green lives in the world of his romantic dreams, and then at fourteen, he falls in love with an eleven-year-old girl named Judy Jones and from that moment strives hard to make a fortune to get her. He brings the same intensity of purpose to winning Judy Jones, his summer love. He casts away his caddying job abruptly, "unconsciously dictated to by his winter dreams" which take the tangible form of a beautiful girl of incomparable worth. What he creates in place of his past is an image of self which he thinks is worthy of Judy and her wealth. In reality, Dexter makes a fortune, and on the other hand Judy becomes a woman who "simply made men conscious to the highest degree of her physical loveliness."

Dexter's ability to earn money dramatically transforms his relationship with the wealthy Judy Jones. She is as beautiful as Dexter's memory of her, but also she is very selfish and wilful, and therefore his fleeting love with her brings him "ecstatic happiness and intolerable agony of spirit." In a word, "Winter Dreams" is an abridged and compressed story of the Middle Western boy from the middle class rising in fabulous wealth and power to win the beautiful rich girl of his dreams. But on the little girl, Judy Jones are depicted as follows:

The little girl who had done this was eleven---beautifully ugly as little girls are apt to be who are destined after a few years to be inexpressibly lovely and bring no end of misery to a great number of men. The spark, however, was perceptible. There was a general ungodliness in the way her lips twisted down at the corners when she smiled, and in the---Heaven help us!---in the almost passionate quality of her eyes. Vitality is born early in such women. It was utterly in evidence now, shining through her thin frame in a sort of glow. 2

In effect, it was, as Fitzgerald said, a short version of The Great Gatsby, and its main character interests the young not only for his early success but also for the romantic illusions that prompt him to splendid success.

Dexter yearned for the world of the rich to which Judy belonged and also he yearned for the rich, and yet he was by no means a vulgar person. He wanted not association with glittering things and glittering people--he wanted the glittering things themselves. Dexter makes up his mind to get, by himself, into the gorgeous and splendid world which is offered by wealth, and accordingly he was enamored of something graceful that might be obtained by the influence of big money. In this connection, Fitzgerald depicts very well Dexter's longing for wealth of the rich as follows:

Now, of course, the quality and the seasonability of these winter dreams varied, but the stuff of them remained. They persuaded Dexter several years later to pass up a business course at the State university---his father, prospering now, would have paid his way---for the precarious advantage of where he was bothered by his scanty funds. But do not get the impression, because his winter dreams happened to be concerned at first with musings on the rich, that there was anything merely snobbish in the boy. He wanted not association with glittering things and glittering people---he wanted the glittering things themselves. Often he reached out for the best without knowing why he wanted it---and sometimes he ran up against the mysterious denials and prohibitions in which life indulged. It is with one of those denials and not with his career as a whole that this story deals. 3

Judy Jones is selfish and wilful, and yet this beautiful girl is the greatest figure in the world of Dexter's romantic dreams. More than a minimum daily dosage of irony is supplied by the story. Some is conscious, as when the glamorous creature, the object and symbol of all Dexter's craving for "the glittering things themselves" is given the sublimely prosaic name of Judy Jones. And some is unconscious, as when Fitzgerald protests for Dexter that there is nothing "merely snobbish" in him.⁴ After all, that unattainable, illusory, miserable and fleeting American dream, chased by Fitzgerald's great heroes Dexter in "Winter Dreams" and Gatsby in The Great Gatsby and Diver in Tender is the Night, is perhaps nothing so much as the attainment of an elitist stature that can support an ultimate snobbism.

Fitzgerald idealizes, in excess, Judy and the graceful world of the

rich which she represents perfectly, and then he pins his lifelong dream on getting these into his hand. A sort of the vitality of life lurks in Dexter's 'winter dreams', and then this vitality of life comes to be a support for him throughout the whole course of his life. But in the end, as in The Great Gatsby, he cannot get her, and his romantic dream is, sad to say, shattered to pieces when he learns casually that Judy's beauty has already faded away:

He had thought that having nothing else to lose he was invulnerable at last---but he knew that he had just lost something more, as surely as if he had married Judy Jones and seen her fade away before his eyes. 5

Therefore, it seemed to Dexter that he lost a mark in the path of his life. At the end of "Winter Dreams" Fitzgerald concludes with the sad words as follows:

The dream was gone. Something had been taken from him. . . . And her mouth damp to his kisses and her eyes plaintive with melancholy and her freshness like new fine linen in the morning. Why, these things were no longer in the world! They had existed and they existed no longer. 6

When he knew that Judy Jones had faded away, Dexter Green felt the bitterness of disillusion as follows:

. . . For he had gone away and he could never go back any more. The Gates were closed, the sun was gone done, and there was no beauty but the gray beauty of steel that withstands all time. Even the grief he could have borne was left behind in the country of illusion, of youth, of the richness of life, where his winter dreams had flourished. 7

It is not merely the loss of Judy Jones, but rather the collapse of his romantic illusion that Dexter moans. Unhappily, Dexter does not win the golden girl after all. That is to say, "Winter Dreams" is very important for the sad light it flashes on Gatsby's illusion and disillusionment:

"Long ago," he said, "long ago, there was something in me, but now that thing is gone. Now that thing is gone, that thing is gone. I cannot cry. I cannot care. That thing will come back no more." 8

Dexter Green of "Winter Dreams" brings the same intensity of purpose to

winning Judy Jones, his summer love. What he creates in place of his past is evidently an image of self which he thinks is worthy of Judy and her wealth.

The Great Gatsby was a summer novel, moving from the first weeks of June, 1922, to the first weeks of September. Dexter's was a summer love. In both instances death follows the summer---and it is the death of self, the product of winter dreams. The allusions also harmonize with the thematic burden of the story, in which Fitzgerald's notion of the American dream and Dexter's winter dreams cluster around the dialectic of illusion and reality so dear to the hearts of both structuralist and interpretive critics. Fitzgerald's use of imagery in this story is so painstaking and striking as to command the attention of any reader with half an eye open to colors. There are the brilliant, the gray, the shining, the gleaming, the colors of summer, the dreams, the illusion, love, the richness of life, youth.⁹ There are the dreary, the icy, the white and black and mostly gray, the winter, the reality, the loss beyond grief; and in maturity, "the gray beauty of steel that withstands all time". That is to say, it is true that the world of wealth as Dexter's lifelong dream and the disillusion which he felt when he had achieved the dream really are hidden behind his hopelessness.

NOTES

- 1 "Winter Dreams" pp.54-55. (Charles Scribner's Sons)
- 2 Ibid., p.55.
- 3 Ibid., p.75.
- 4 Neil D. Isaacs, "Winter Dreams" and Summer Sports; The University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin, 1982, p.2.
- 5 "Winter Dreams" p.75.
- 6 Ibid., p.75.
- 7 Ibid., p.75.
- 8 Ibid., p.75.
- 9 Neil D. Isaacs, "Winter Dreams" and Summer Sports, p.2.

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