

What Do Girls Do When Boys Are Away? The Domain of Women in “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” by F. Scott Fitzgerald

SAGE Open
July-September 2013: 1–7
© The Author(s) 2013
DOI: 10.1177/2158244013498243
sagepub.com


Jamal Ali Assadi¹

Abstract

Rand's triadic model is particularly germane to understanding Fitzgerald's *Bernice Bobs Her Hair*. I will discuss Fitzgerald's characters, their worlds, and beliefs in terms of the conflicts between the three types of people: “Being,” “Having,” and “Doing.” I will also explain why Fitzgerald presents his characters the way he does and examine how Rand's theory influences his narrative point of view.

Keywords

area studies, humanities, language studies, humanities, literature, psychology, social sciences, sociology

Introduction

Among the countless current attempts to cope with the human personality, Erich Fromm's psychological theory is worth studying. In his fascinating book, *To Have or To Be?* Fromm presents two modes of existence: “Having” and “Being,” which generate two diverse positions toward the self and the world—positions that dictate the manner in which one thinks, feels, and acts.

The “Having” mode of existence, as Fromm (1978, pp. 57-70) describes it, refers to the individual's tendency to relate to his whole world, occupation, activities, practices, and relations with people in a manner characterized by acquisitiveness and control. Rather than focusing on the material world, this tendency contains within its folds the abstract and spiritual world. People with a “Having” mode of existence generally endorse a clear system of conduct aimed at dominating people, property, and even knowledge. These people channel their power in a way that satisfies the need to govern external elements and possess them. Thus, people under the influence of “Having” mode are what they consume or what they possess and dominate.

In the mode of “Being,” Fromm (pp. 71-88) refers to the individual's inclination to develop, love, and proceed toward self-actualization. Some people with this tendency can find a meaningful existence in their own interactive qualities by developing options for self-expression, or in the choice of profession or occupation. Others, however, adopt specific modes of interaction with other people in relation to everyday events and so on. In Fromm's opinion, for an individual to attain the phase of self-actualization, he is obliged to perceive himself as a person with psychological self-rule

capable of activating mechanisms of power relying on logic and on methods of adjustment with regard to one's own conduct.

Based on Fromm's dual model, Yaakov Rand (1993) adds a third mode of existence that he calls “Doing.” Rand confirms that people with this mode obtain satisfaction from the actual process of doing. These people are motivated by their entrenched need to change their surroundings, the people, or the world of stimuli incongruent with them to align it with their own goals, needs, and ambitions. To do so, “Doing” people divert a massive amount of inner energy into the act of doing and into the nurturing of the ability to attain goals defined by them as indispensable and creative. An individual characterized as a “Doing” type achieves his identity by the deeds he performs and by the formation of circumstances that are crucial to the attainment of his own ends.

People with a strong “Doing” inclination function as catalysts for people working with them or under their direct supervision. Thus, they play a crucial role in actualizing the wishes and aspirations of numerous people. Hence, this mode of existence can be advantageous to the individual with “Doing” inclinations as well as to his surroundings.

In establishing the “Doing” mode of existence, Rand does not claim that it exists in seclusion from other types. Rather, his triadic model asserts that all three modes exist

¹Sakhnin College, Israel

Corresponding Author:

Jamal Ali Assadi, Sakhnin College, Sakhnin, Galilee Israel, Sakhnin, 30810, Israel.
Email: jamal-a@windowslive.com

concurrently in each individual, but one mode is generally dominant. The existence of these modes and the supremacy of one mode transcend the mode's restriction to the individual. Rather, it constitutes an array of universal forces that have governed the progress of human society and typified a variety of different religions, philosophies, doctrines, perspectives, and worldviews throughout the human history (Rand & Tannenbaum, 1998).

Yet, Rand's definition does not relate to the moral attitudes of the individuals functioning under the impact of the three modes of existence. In addition, despite Rand's affirmation of the inseparability of the three modes of existence, his thesis affirms the clear dominance of a single mode. This entails that man basically possesses a master situation, a situation of situations according to which reality is fixed and objective rather than plastic and subjective and that society presumes a common accepted goal that requires an ad hoc social cohesion.

Rand's triadic model is particularly germane to understanding Fitzgerald's *Bernice Bobs Her Hair*, a story commonly regarded as belonging to the period of Fitzgerald's early success (Cowley, 1951). I will discuss Fitzgerald's characters, their worlds, and beliefs in terms of the conflicts between the three types of people: "Being," "Having," and "Doing." I will also explain why Fitzgerald presents his characters the way he does and examine how Rand's theory influences his narrative point of view. In fact, I will claim that Fitzgerald's treatment of the concepts of "Being," "Having," and "Doing" provides new insights into the dynamic potential of the trope as presented by Rand and a new critical approach.

The surface action of the story emerges as a series of contests and conflicts between feminine characters who, functioning under different modes of existence on the "stage" of the world, strive to define Fitzgerald's notion of the role of rich young females. The country club where most events of this story take place is depicted as a theater. The balcony where the audience sit is "largely feminine; a great babel of middle-aged ladies with sharp eyes and icy hearts behind lorgnettes and large bosoms" (Fitzgerald, 1951, p. 39). The function of the balcony is "critical" (p. 39) of the crowd of actors, although these women spectators are "not close enough to the stage to see the actors' faces" (p. 30). The actors are mostly girls; "the clatter of young feminine voices soars over the burst of clapping" (p. 40). Bernice, the protagonist, thinks that Marjorie Harvey, her cousin, has no "feminine qualities" in her (p. 47). She believes that "the female was beloved because of certain mysterious womanly qualities, always mentioned but never displayed" (p. 43). Warren McIntyre, who adores Marjorie, notices on her desk a heap of letters "in various masculine handwritings" (p. 41), while the narrator says she "had no female intimates—she considered girls stupid" (p. 43). Marjorie, however, thinks that "men don't like" Bernice and that Bernice is a "womanly woman" (p. 48) who is vehemently criticized by "girls" like

Marjorie. She, therefore, advises Bernice to be "nice to men who are sad birds" (p. 49).

The characters of this short story, mostly young girls, are engaged in defining the meaning of femininity among the rich and, in consequence, the meaning of humanness. To investigate this theme more deeply, Fitzgerald's characters are presented under four categories: first, Bernice from Eau Claire; second, Marjorie Harvey, Bernice's cousin; third, the girls, namely, Genevieve Ormonde, Roberta Dillon, and Marth Carey and the men represented by Warren McIntyre, Otis Ormonde, and G. Greece Stoddard; the fourth category is represented by Mrs. Harvey, Bernice's aunt and Bernice's mother. In each category, Fitzgerald sets up the most radical problems in a way that clearly defines Rand's thesis and demonstrates its coherence.

The Wealthy Girl from Eau Claire

Bernice, to start with, affirms the dialectic potential of Rand's thesis. She is a wealthy girl from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, who goes to visit her cousin Marjorie in August to gain more popularity by means of her wealth. She is portrayed as a figure who keeps to the rigid boundary of the purposes, values, terms, and constraints of her primary, socially created role: that of the rich, educated, polished, and successful heroine functioning under the influence of the "Having" mode of existence. Yet, at the same time, she, with and without her knowledge, takes up one mode of existence and abandons another and makes swift and surprising exchanges; she reconciles them and mingles them as and when need dictates.

To be more specific, Bernice has been raised all her life to believe that her sense of identity is "group-based," to use Dittmar's (1992) words. This means that her notion of identity is "ascribed on the basis of one's inherited position" (Dittmar, 1992, p. 12). So, being a member of the wealthy class, she believes that she is entitled to numerous privileges but is obliged to abide by a number of duties. During her visit to her cousin, however, Bernice's convictions are confused. She notices that her social status does not provide her with enough popularity—a right she ought to have by capacity of her birth, that is, what she has does not define who she is. So the omniscient narrator who sees things from her perspective says,

As Bernice busied herself with tooth-brush and paste this night she wondered for the hundredth time why she never had any attention when she was away from home. That her family was the wealthiest in Eau Claire; that her mother entertained tremendously, gave little dinners for her daughter before all dances and bought her a car of her own to drive round in, never occurred to her as factors in her home-town social success. Like most girls she had been brought up on the warm milk prepared by Annie Fellows Johnson and on novels in which the female was beloved because of certain mysterious womanly qualities, always mentioned but never displayed. (p. 43)

The passage certainly presents Bernice's concept of femininity. She depicts the life of the rich as a dramatic script where language is transparent, people are sincere, roles are well defined, and reality is real. Interestingly, these codes of conduct reflect the social atmosphere that dominated the American life in the 1920s when the "consumption ethic" replaced the "production" one. Then, "people were being instructed to buy, enjoy, use once, and throw away to buy a later and more expensive model" (Cowley, X; see also Curnutt, 2004, p. 15). The "more expensive model" in this story is love. In return for their mothers' entertaining people, these girls are expected to gain popularity and to be loved. In other words, the rich inherit status, value, and place in society and, therefore, demand that others submit to their definitions or interpretation of their concepts of reality. Though the rich, those represented by Bernice, seek to impose a dominance-submission relations on others, to play a power game, they are not motivated by hysterical egotism or inflated self-confidence under a veil of elaborate good conduct and glittering appearances, not even when their actions are challenged or confronted. Nor do they use violence energized by hatred as well as malice. To the contrary, they rely on the power of rules and laws to maintain their roles in life. So when the girls with lower rank get more attention than Bernice, she ascribes "this to something unscrupulous in those girls," and she assures herself that they "cheaped themselves and that men really respected girls like her" (p. 43). Bernice's justification indicates that the rich see their life or script as the appropriate moral standard by which people measure their conduct. Any deviation is held as "unscrupulous" or self-cheapening. Deviation from moral standards that typify femininity is measured in monetary terms, and femininity is therefore categorized under the "Having" mode of existence. Yet, Bernice's nonstop worry over her popularity and self-image, despite her claims to the contrary, portrays her as a "Having" figure who also functions under the "Being" mode of existence. In fact, her entire visit to her cousin Marjorie for a month in summer is meant to promote her character. Thus, she becomes a character functioning under the impact of the "Being" mode within the context of her other major role as a "Having" type. Perhaps this is exactly what Fromm (1978) means when he asks, "*To Have or To Be?*" He says, "In a culture in which the supreme goal is to have—and to have more and more— . . . how can there be an alternate between having and being? On the contrary, it would seem that the very essence of being is having; that if one *has* nothing, one *is* nothing" (p. 25).

During her stay, Bernice overhears Marjorie complaining to her mother that Bernice is an obstacle to her social life and that she is not popular with boys. As a result, Bernice's concept of her own role is shattered. What she has is no longer conceived of as a factor capable of reinforcing her self-concept. In other words, Dittmar's (1992) notion that possessions "keep people from feeling disoriented, counteract a sense of *fragmentation* of self and provide historical continuity" (p. 93) is challenged. The next day she threatens to go

away. She also attacks Marjorie, "I think you're hard and selfish, and you haven't a feminine quality in you" (p. 47). Her implication is that Marjorie is a masculine girl who has submitted her soul and body to man's authority and commits herself to the conviction that she belongs to him. In other words, Marjorie has complied with male texts and joined man's endeavor to defy and deny her own gender. This is exactly what Patrocínio Schweickart (1998) means when she claims that the male texts take the woman reader through three phases. In the first, she is controlled by the text and, as a result, she "is immasculated; she gives in to the structures of the male text and reads like a man. Subsequently, the female reader moves to the second moment where she functions as "the agent of her own immasculatation" (p. 210). However, in the third phase, the woman reader is supposed to transfigure into a feminist who "embarks on a critical analysis of the reading process" and who "recognizes that the text has the power to structure her experience" (p. 210). Instead, Marjorie volunteers to serve the male text. But Bernice's attack fails to hold up in front of Marjorie's malicious indifference. So Bernice gives up and lets Marjorie teach her the magic rules that Marjorie thinks make a girl popular among men, or help a girl ascend the scale of "Being." These include how to construct interesting conversation, how to flirt with unattractive boys, how to dance, and how to tease boys with the idea that she will soon bob her hair.

Bernice's immediate embrace of Marjorie's proposal can be understood within the context of "Having" as "Being." This means that she has not given up her primary role, the "Having" mode, where she is a master, a superior figure observing the rules clearly defined by her origin and status and defining the boundaries that confine those inferior to her. Conversely, it is likely that Bernice is responding to the type of life that was prevalent when the story was written: The young generation no longer cared for status, class, or morals that confined their behavior. Instead, they welcomed adventure and exhilaration. Commenting on the changes that took place in that period, Cowley says, for the new generation "absolutely anything seemed excusable . . . They like to say yes to every proposal that promised excitement" (XI). So, in so presenting the new generation, Fitzgerald manages to chronicle the manners of that period very faithfully.

It can also be said that Bernice's endorsement of Marjorie's tips is more than a form of excitement. She has only downplayed or frozen her "Having" mode and allowed the "Being" to overcome a difficult phase in her life where she temporarily has to fight for her identity. Therefore, she adopts a new script and role where she is a mere student dominated by a malicious master and employing a vague, debased concept of the "Being" mode.

In almost no time, she excels at the new mode. She manages to conduct exciting conversations, flirt with unattractive boys, and dance with them. Above all, she "had gotta holda Miss Marjorie's best fella," Warren McIntyre, considered as "Marjorie's property," to use the narrator's term (p. 54). In short, Bernice succeeds radiantly as a "Being" figure and

becomes the unmatched star of her own group. Nevertheless, she is still a “Having” character who, as the previous two quotations indicate, makes her friends act under her guidance and dictations. With her new attitude adopted by “the most wholesome and innocent intentions in the world” (p. 54) Bernice incurs the displeasure of her teacher. “She had offended Marjorie, the sphinx of sphinxes,” the narrator says (p. 54). Consequently, Marjorie functions rapidly to maintain the superiority of her role. She schemes to humiliate Bernice, to crush her once and for all by making her bob her hair, the symbol of her femininity and the “Having” mode.

In response, Bernice is confused. On one hand, she is made to believe that, as Rand’s conception of “Doing” implies, she will achieve her identity by turning her declaration into a deed. In addition, she can then function as a catalyst for her friends operating under her supervision. On the other, propelled by her innocent instincts, she plays her role against her will. She is not content with the decision to actualize her hollow utterance, to quote J. L. Austin (1975, p. 22). Nor does she feel protected against Marjorie’s threat. The readers are told that “under her cousin’s suddenly frigid eyes she was completely incapacitated” (p. 55), that Marjorie moved “with serpent-like intensity” (p. 57), that the world was “hostile” (p. 56), that she “had all the sensations of Marie Antoinette bound for the guillotine in a tumbrel” (p. 56), that “the hangman was the first barber” (p. 56), and that cutting the hair was a “sin” (p. 57). The facts recorded in the first two quotations are responsible for the responses noted in the last three. Bernice’s hostile environment makes her play her role sullenly. The last three quotations indicate that although Bernice has not yet rejected the role imposed on her, she plays it without inner conviction or with cynicism. This is exactly what Berger and Goffman meant by their proposal that actors on the stage of the world do have options if they do not like the roles dictated to them. According to them, these actors can refuse to play, play with insincerity or with cynicism, or play their parts sullenly or enthusiastically (Berger, 1963; Goffman, 1959).

Only after Bernice meets her aunt Josephine does she realize “the outrageous trap” set for her. Her aunt reveals to her that she should have waited until after Deyo’s dance scheduled for her and Marjorie and that Mrs. Deyo is against bobbed hair. It seems that Bernice has interpreted her role, which is at one with the “Having” mode, as a comic performance allowing no room for sudden twists and unexpected developments. To her disappointment, she finds out that she has been an actress in a different type of play—one that was written by a wicked playwright and has a tragic ending.

Reaching this conclusion, Bernice decides to design a new act, a moral drama in which she is in full control of her own role, and which leads to rewards and punishments. This is Bernice’s greatest achievement. She packs her luggage, sneaks into Marjorie’s room and cuts her cousin’s two pig-tails, which she throws onto Warren’s porch on her way to the train station.

Bernice does take revenge, but her act is not fuelled by vengeful desires or a personal agenda. Rather, it may be seen within the framework of moral drama, or the war against the powers of darkness, deceit, evil, and crime represented by Marjorie and her group. So, she makes sure that the good people are properly rewarded and that the bad ones get their corresponding comeuppance. In bobbing Marjorie’s hair, she emerges as a figure inspired by the “Doing” mode of existence—a figure who fights for the cause of justice, righteousness, honesty, and truth. In this way, she actualizes the wishes of the wide audience of readers, the narrator and Fitzgerald included—ingredients that go into the structure of the “Doing” mode of existence.

The Socially Savvy Young Girl

Through the character of Marjorie Harvey, the representative of the second type of character, Fitzgerald indicates the dialectic potential of Rand’s thesis and sets up the most radical problems for any attempt to clearly define the boundaries of each mode of existence. Yet, through his editorial third-person narrator, Fitzgerald makes it his duty to judge the moral attitude of the blurred modes he presents. To be more specific, Marjorie is portrayed as a relentlessly trendy and socially savvy young girl who revolts against the fixed and inherited female values her mother raised her to believe in and becomes the stunning chief of careless, corrupted youth. For her, her sense of identity as a girl is not based on her social belonging, that is, as a member of the rich class. Rather, it is acquired through her personal awareness and individual achievements, or through the promotion of the “Being” mode of existence. In fact, she is a negative version of the “Having” mode, pretending to function under the impact of the “Being” mode to achieve her egoistic goals and desires. Like Daisy Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby* and the Warren sisters in *Tender is the Night*, Marjorie is a mere opportunist, a self-centered egoist and a vicious monster. She is even more selfish, more vicious, less committed to communal values, more indifferent to everything and everyone but herself than they are, and more immasculated or more hostile to women’s womanly traits. This explains why Fitzgerald floods her with harsher criticism and makes sure that she is punished in accordance with the Code of Hammurabi: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

Marjorie’s presence in the story, which is always associated with extensive references to gender and her conduct that corresponds neatly to Fromm’s modes of existence frequently trigger tension between the sexes and leave them with a sense of bitterness and disappointment. When she appears for the first time, she is portrayed exactly in the light. She is a playwright who is in full mastery of the scene. She wants Warren McIntyre, who worships her, to dance with Bernice, who is desperate for affection, to release Otis Ormonde, who finds himself caught dancing with Bernice for a long time. Nonetheless, Marjorie distances herself from too much

engagement with them while keeping them attached to her. Worse, she lets them down and gives them less than they desire. She daunts Warren, who desires to play the major role with her, makes fun of Bernice, and takes no notice of Otis.

In the second part of the story, which takes place at Marjorie's house, the narrator depicts Bernice and Marjorie as two opposed feminine types functioning under the same mode of existence: the "Having" mode. "Though cousins, they were not intimates" (p. 43), the narrator says preparing the readers for their polar attitudes. One is defined as a womanly woman, the other as a manly woman. Bernice regards Marjorie as an immasculated type, an agent of masculinity who is at odds with her own gender, whereas Marjorie sees Bernice as the "other" or the "inferior." Marjorie's attitude is in harmony with Nancy Armstrong (1990) who proposes that the colonial Other and the working-class woman offered negative standards against which middle-class-British society could label itself. In other words, they made up the "Oriental," in opposition to which the "Occidental" could exist (Armstrong, 1990, p. 537). In the process of defining what she means by "Occidentalism" ("the effects of the practices of Orientalism"), she notices that the "best accounts of cultural imperialism assume that power flows only one way—from the European ruling classes to the lower classes and out into colonies" (p. 538).

Bernice's feminine identity is accomplished on the basis of her inherited position, and so she cherishes the values defined by her class, especially the ones that go into the definition of femininity. She has female intimates and follows the tips given by her mother. Her visit to Marjorie is only one example. Through this "parent-arranged visit" (p. 43), she expects to exchange feminine "confidences flavored with giggles and tears that she considered an indispensable factor in all feminine intercourse" (p. 43). She insists on these "mysterious womanly qualities" and considers them "blessedly feminine" (p. 43). In contrast, Marjorie, rejects this inherited notion of "the womanly woman" (p. 48), has no female intimates, is more attracted to masculinity and conceives of the feminine identity as something to be achieved by the individual herself: "These days it's every girl for herself" (p. 44). Marjorie's central notion of femininity is clearest when she gives Bernice tips claiming that she wants to promote her. These center on how to conduct attention-grabbing discussions, flirt with unappealing young men, and tease girls and boys with the idea that she will soon bob her hair. The tips find reflection in Fitzgerald's letter to his sister Annabel. Like Bernice, she was unattractive and found it difficult to gain popularity among boys, in contrast to his reputation as a fair and handsome figure. So he wrote her a letter advising her that a successful debutante's attractiveness depends on a rigorous appeal to male selfishness (Brucoli & Duggan, 1980, pp. 15-18). Notably, the tips of both are in harmony with Fromm's notion of the "Being" mode of existence because they are meant to advance the image or position of Bernice and Annabel.

In fact, the story appears to be "virtually a handbook of advice on how to become a successful flapper," as Barbara Solomon (1980, p. 21) writes. However, her notion of the role of girls earns severe criticism from Fitzgerald. Whereas Rand and Fromm do not deal deeply with the moral standpoint of each mode, Fitzgerald regards Marjorie's rules for assuring a girl's popularity as the negative aspect of the figure operating under the impact of the "Being." This mode is sewn with negative characteristics such as those that typify the rhetorical man as defined by Stanly Fish. These deficiencies are "epistemological (sundered from truth and fact)," "moral (sundered from true knowledge and sincerity)," and "social" because the rhetorical man "panders to the worst in people and moves them to base actions" (Fish, 1990, p. 204).

In the third part of the story, the clash between the opponents is reignited. Marjorie's masks are stripped off and she is revealed as "one who is privately engaged in a difficult, treacherous task," to quote Goffman (1959, p. 235). We see "the sphinx of sphinxes" defeated in her own territory. Soon she gathers her powers and launches a severe attack to regain her stolen "property" (p. 54), Warren McIntyre, which indicates that her notion of "Being" is derived from the notion of "Having." Failing to defeat Bernice, she plans to deprive her of her most valuable feminine symbol: her hair. Marjorie is fuelled by the strength of her character, experience, fine words, malice, and hatred, characteristics that typify the "confidence man" defined by Karen Halttunen (1982) as "a skilled actor" who can easily "deceive others through false appearances" (p. 2). Moreover, she makes use of Bernice's innocence, lack of experience, and moral attitudes. She knows that Bernice has been raised as a "Having" figure who believes in the existence of a world where people's utterances and external behaviors are an "acting out" of inner feelings and are therefore genuine and authentic. Thus, Marjorie's plan is to blur the line between the world of reality and the sphere of falsity. She knows that the suggestion that Bernice bob her hair is supposed to be an utterance emptied of real significance, that is, a statement made by an actor on a stage. This is exactly what J. L. Austin (1975) proposes in the process of discussing serious and nonserious utterances. According to him, "a performative utterance," becomes "hollow and void if said by an actor on the stage," because language in certain circumstances is used "in ways parasitic upon its normal use" (p. 22). Yet, Marjorie wants her to take responsibility for her utterance. In so claiming, Marjorie nullifies Austin's proposal that meaning is independent of a speaker's intention, or his negation of the genuineness of the actor's utterance. Instead, Marjorie affirms that man, as J. Culler (1986) maintains, does mean what he utters, that his consciousness is the source of meaning, even when he does not want to perform what he intends. In other words, Marjorie asserts the performativity of "constative utterances," which describe some state of affairs and cannot actually perform the action to which they refer" (Austin, 1975, p. 1). This implies that man is committed to "performing,"

regardless of consequences. This notion of “performing” meets with Rand’s concept of “Doing” and Fitzgerald’s notion of responsibility, which the rich class should possess. In Fitzgerald’s (1971) opinion, richness entails more responsibilities and duties than additional rights: “. . . the American ‘leisure class’ . . . has frequently no consciousness that leisure is a privilege, not a right, and that a privilege always implies a responsibility” (p. 188).

Although she succeeds in making Bernice bob her hair, she fails to shatter Bernice’s notion of femininity and ethical codes. Better, in forcing Bernice to go to the barber and cut her hair, Marjorie ironically helps turn Bernice, “the womanly woman,” into a character acting under the influence of the “Doing” mode, thus combining once again the “Having” and “Doing” modes of existence. As such, she takes the initiative not only to defend herself and the feminine values as her class defines them but also to fight corruption and wickedness. She, thus, bobs Marjorie’s hair.

Obviously, the conflict between Bernice and Marjorie concerning the role of girls reflects the girls’ struggle for freedom at the time when the story was written. These girls were generally fuelled by a driving desire to escape the world of their parents that constricted their every move. Initially, Fitzgerald supported the girls’ drive for freedom but soon noticed that in the process, some girls promoted the moral ethics they inherited from their Victorian parents and remained glued to their spirit, whereas others were so immersed in their selfishness that they were left with nothing. Through his omniscient third-person narrator, the moralist Fitzgerald praised the first type, who were no longer passive or defenseless against the attacks of the wicked powers of the second type. After a bitter struggle, they moved to the phase of doing, whereas the second type were made to pay for their wrongdoings.

The Extra Scenery Characters

As for the last two categories, it appears that they affirm that Rand’s three modes of existence are not the only types capable of exploring the human personality. The third set of characters, that is, the group of girls and guys surrounding Marjorie, challenge Rand’s triadic model. Instead of functioning under the influence of one of the three modes of existence presented by Rand, they are satisfied to be dominated by Marjorie, who represents the “Having” mode. In other words, they are well-heeled, generic, and searing, mostly extra scenery, glad to be given roles by her or join the audience and watch her play, or both. In all cases, they are asked to enjoy their imposed roles without having to be bothered by moral attitudes. Oddly enough, it can be claimed that by accepting Marjorie’s dominance, they are members of Marjorie’s camp and, in consequence, they can be practicing the “Having” mode.

The fourth set of characters consist of Bernice’s mother, and her sister, Mrs. Harvey, two old-fashioned, rich ladies

detached from the real events of the story. They are reduced to the position of bewildered observers not bothering to play a role. All they can do is comment on the roles of the young.

Fitzgerald does not look with favor on the modes of behavior that typify members of these last two categories. On the contrary, by maintaining their place among the audience and confining themselves to minor roles, they provide a cheap and false image of femininity and the essence of what it means to be a human being.

Conclusion

The question to be answered is, “how did Rand’s thesis affect Fitzgerald’s portrayal of the character, handling of theme, and control of the narrative point of view?” We see that Rand’s model is ancillary to our understanding of Fitzgerald’s *Bernice Bobs Her Hair*. It helps us draw a clear, comprehensive image of the different types of characters in the story. Yet, owing to its descriptive, deterministic, and nonjudgmental approach, the model presented by Rand and Fromm fails to account for all the possible range of characters and does not define the moral and psychological truths that underlie human behavior. In his story, Fitzgerald not only manages to combine all these elements together but also provides novel perceptions into the vibrant potential of the trope transformed a few decades after his death into a critical approach. The realism of his narrative is achieved by his ability to pay meticulous attention to a host of factual details and physical descriptions. He portrays the development of young inexperienced girls as they are exposed to society and become trained in the ways of the world. His story, therefore, represents the social history of the 1920s. In fact, he claims he has created this age, defined its boundaries, and given its life, thereby supporting the idea that he functioned under the influence of the “Having” mode of existence. But Fitzgerald also explores the inner lives of his characters as they grapple with difficult ethical choices in trying situations. “I am too much a moralist at heart,” Fitzgerald remarked, “and really want to preach at people in some acceptable form, rather than entertain them” (Fitzgerald, 1963, p. 79). He investigates the enigmas of sin and redemption and good and evil. Evil occurs when one character, male or female, attempts to dominate the destiny of another. That is a negative image of the “Having” mode of existence. Good is attained through the ability to achieve personal integrity, commitment, and responsibility. This is a form of the “Doing” mode of existence.

Fitzgerald’s brilliance perhaps lies in his control of the point of view. He uses an impersonal and discreet third-person narrator, a commenting author who performs a variety of functions. The narrator reveals the characters’ emotions with subtle psychological analysis, provides an external realism of physical detail and an internal realism of emotional description that can give him control over his art (“Having” mode), assumes a didactic role in which he promotes the values of a better world (“Doing” mode), and, through their

conflation, guaranteed himself a prestigious place among our finest novelists (“Being” mode).

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article.

References

- Armstrong, N. (1990). The Occidental Alice. In R. Con Davis & R. Schleifer (Eds.), *Contemporary literary criticism: Literary and cultural studies* (pp. 536-565). Norman: University of Oklahoma.
- Austin, J. L. (1975). *How to do things with words*. Cambridge, MA: Clarendon Press.
- Berger, P. (1963). *Invitation to sociology: A humanistic perspective*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books.
- Brucoli, M. J., & Duggan, M. M. (With the assistance of Susan Walker). (1980). *Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Cowley, M. (1951). *The stories of Scott Fitzgerald*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons.
- Culler, J. (1986). Convention and meaning: Derrida and Austin. In R. Con Davis (Ed.), *Contemporary literary criticism: Modernism through post-modernism* (pp. 215-228). New York, NY: University of Oklahoma.
- Curnutt, K. (Ed.). (2004). *A historical guide to F. Scott Fitzgerald*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Dittmar, H. (1992). *The social psychology of material possessions*. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.
- Fish, S. (1990). Rhetoric. In F. Lentricchia & T. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Critical terms for literary study* (pp. 203-222). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
- Fitzgerald, F. S. (1951). Bernice bobs her hair. In M. Cowley (Ed.), *The stories of Scott Fitzgerald*. New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons.
- Fitzgerald, F. S. (1963). *The letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Edited and with Introduction by Andrew Turnbull). New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons.
- Fromm, E. (1978). *To have or to be?* Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books.
- Halttunen, K. (1982). *Confidence men and painted women: A study of middle-class culture in America, 1830-1870*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Rand, Y. (1993). *Modes of existence (MoE): To be, to have, to do—Cognitive and motivational aspects*. Paper presented at the International Association for Cognitive Education, Nof Ginosar, Israel.
- Rand, Y., & Tannenbaum, A. J. (1998). *To be, to have, to do: An integration and expansion of existing concepts*. Jerusalem, Israel: C.E.L.P.
- Schweickart, P. (1998). Reading ourselves: Towards a feminist theory of reading. In R. Con Davis & R. Schleifer (Eds.), *Contemporary literary criticism: Literary and cultural studies* (pp. 197-219). Norman: University of Oklahoma.
- Solomon, B. H. (Ed.). (1980). *Ain’t we got fun? Essays, lyrics, and stories of the twenties*. New York, NY: New American Library.

Author Biography

Jamal Ali Assadi chairs the Department of English at The College of Sakhnin and is a lecturer at An-Najah National University, Nablus. In addition to numerous articles in professional journals, Dr. Assadi is the author of many books particularly: *Acting, Rhetoric and Interpretation in Selected Novels by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Saul Bellow* (2006) and *A Distant Drummer: Foreign Perspectives on F. Scott Fitzgerald* (2007).