A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE NOVELS OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	INTRODUCTION	
I	THE PROBLEM	1
II	LIFE AND ART.	12
	1920 THROUGH 1924	
III	THE EARLY NOVELS: ORGANIZATION.	40
IV	THE EARLY NOVELS: EXPRESSION.	123
	1925 THROUGH 1934	
V	ACHIEVED ART: THE GREAT GATSBY (ORGANIZATION)	167
VI	ACHIEVED ART: THE GREAT GATSBY (EXPRESSION)	205
VII	LAST COMPLETED NOVEL: TENDER IS THE NIGHT (ORGANIZATION)	240
VIII	LAST COMPLETED NOVEL: TENDER IS THE NIGHT (EXPRESSION)	280
	1935 THROUGH 1940	
IX	LIFE AND ART: THE LAST YEARS.	303
X	FINAL FRAGMENT: THE LAST TYCOON	319

Table of Contents, continued.

Chapter Page

CONCLUSION

XI ACCOMPLISHMENT. 346

BIBLIOGRAPHY. 357

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

The dictum, most cogently stated in our time by T. S. Eliot, that the "greatness of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards" seems to me almost a self-evident one. Its corollary, however, that "whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards" is a necessary caution and might well be used as a motto by any literary critic who has positive metaphysical convictions of his own. Accordingly, in studying the novels of Scott Fitzgerald I began by attempting to discover what is in the work; then I applied the relevant literary standards; and after that I tried to make an ultimate evaluation. In the critical study that follows, these three processes are designedly not kept separate, since I think that the functions of the critic to describe and to make particular and final judgments are inseparable. I am aware that some of my particular judgments are made purely on the basis of such uncharitables as taste and opinion. In defense I may say that I have read all the available worthwhile criticism of Fitzgerald and that, in addition, my reading of Fitzgerald has been a careful and sympathetic one. Even in matters of taste

and opinion I have made my judgment only after thoughtful consideration of the principles suggested by these criteria:

1. the integrity of the work,
2. the function of the part in the whole, and
3. the esthetic consequence of the whole.[1]

By the first of these principles I mean of course that the work exists only as a whole, although for economy we may speak of it in parts. The converse of this is the second principle, that the parts exist only in and for the whole. (Characters, for instance, while they must conform to certain "realistic" expectations in order to be convincing, are really qualities resident in the work. As an aid to explication the critic must at times discuss them as though they had independent existence, but he should not himself forget that they do not exist outside the work of art.) The third of the principles is a reminder that after the work of exegesis and criticism has been done, the parts must be put back together and the work viewed and judged as a whole. (Here the critic may find, for example, that individual faults are not necessarily fatal to the whole.)

As implied in these somewhat baldly stated principles,

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[1] These roughly parallel the three conditions St. Thomas assigns to beauty: integritas, consonantia, and claritas.

as a matter of procedure I use Fitzgerald's life in this study only as it illuminates his individual works. At times I have found it necessary to discuss (to cite an instance) the intentional as well as the existent in certain of Fitzgerald's novels. I do it, I hope, without actually violating the principle of the integrity of the work. I am concerned with Fitzgerald's development as well as his accomplishment, and sometimes a knowledge of what he reached for in one novel is necessary for an understanding of what he grasped in another novel. I do not intend to spurn the rôle of biographer either, when the biographical is germane to my critical judgments; e.g., in Chapter II I discuss an approach to Fitzgerald which has surrounded Fitzgerald's work with a romantic glow for some readers and erected a barrier to his work for others.

More specifically, my principal concerns throughout this study of Fitzgerald's novels are the formal ones which I arbitrarily designate as 1) organization (with its primary appeal to the intellect) and 2) expression (with its primary appeal to the emotions). Under the first I have singled out structure, theme, and point of view for discussion, and under the second, diction, imagery, and style. In my discussion of expression, more than in any other one part of this study, I have

had to be guided by taste. I have eschewed classifying comparisons on various pseudo-scientific bases such as the type of figures used or the way objects are compared (whether inanimate objects are compared to animate, or vice versa, etc.) in favor of a qualitative analysis of the images used. I have tried to show that, although Fitzgerald's use of figures was always relatively fresh and original, the imagery of his early work was significantly inferior to that in The Great Gatsby and in his best succeeding work. In evaluating Fitzgerald's prose style, while I have been guided by technical studies on the subject of prose style in general, I have been even more arbitrary, relying in the last analysis on my own ear. Although a wide area of agreement exists as to what constitutes a good style (e.g., a bad style is usually detected without great difficulty), how good a good style is, is more debatable. As a consequence I have found it necessary to advance further specific bases for judgment on occasion.

Other things being equal, a critic is inclined to concern himself with a writer whom he likes, and hence my choice of Scott Fitzgerald as the subject of a study suggests something about my opinion of him. The prepossession I have in Fitzgerald's favor is not such, I hope, as to cause me to grant him virtues

which he does not have. I do not believe that Fitzgerald is incapable of literary wrong. He actually produced only one artistically perfect work, The Great Gatsby, but that is at least (not to go to extravagant lengths) one of the best achievements in twentieth-century American literature. The isolated grandeur of this novel in Fitzgerald's work is certainly explicable, though, and were I writing a biography of Fitzgerald I would examine this problem in some detail. As it is, I shall try to show that Fitzgerald's failures and his one artistic success are inextricably wound up together.

Further, what a writer thinks undoubtedly has consequence in his art. (Fitzgerald himself was conscious of this, saying once that it was "a puzzle" to him "How anyone could take up the responsibility of being a novelist without a sharp and concise attitude about life. . . . .") Given such artistic necessities as talent and imagination, an artist is probably fortunate in having some religious and philosophical orientation. One cannot, however, so far as I can see, establish any exact correlation between right thinking and artistic accomplishment. The latter depends on personality, experience, and the artistic ability of the writer, and

there is a sense in which quite literally the work of art cannot be other than it is; or, to state the obvious, the artist never has more material than exactly what he has. In the case of a writer such as Scott Fitzgerald, while one can only regret that he was unable to surmount his difficulties in order to produce more Gatsby's, at the same time one must recognize that it is those very personal difficulties which are the raw material of what he did produce and what might have been without them is not for man to know.

Exactly what Fitzgerald's own "sharp and concise attitude about life" is and what evaluation one is to put on it, we shall see more later. It is perhaps sufficient to counter here the attempts which have been made to devaluate Fitzgerald on the grounds that he was timely and no more. In 1934 Leo and Miriam Gurko, for instance, rated Fitzgerald as a novelist inferior to Lewis, Hemingway, and Dos Passos -- because he was merely the chronicler of his times and because he reminded "his readers of no one but himself." Probably few critics today would echo this judgment. Fitzgerald was the historian of his time, the Jazz Age, certainly; but he was no more a historian than most writers -- and never solely a historian. Any writer who writes about his own era, if he is any good at all, cannot escape

being timely. Only by being in time does a work of art become real enough to transcend time. Joseph Wood Krutch believes that Aeneas' boast "All of it I saw and much of it I was" could be applied to Fitzgerald, and that Fitzgerald's time could well be called "the Scott Fitzgerald Age." It is Fitzgerald's ability to represent as well as to reflect his age which permits him to escape that age. For what ultimately concerns him is man caught in time but under the species of eternity; man as he is but conscious of what he might have been, of what he may even yet be.

Fitzgerald met head-on, then, the crucial problem of his age and of all ages: the tragedy of the human condition. He saw no solution to the problem and that must necessarily put somewhat of a limitation on his value. But he did attempt to face the problem honestly. He struggled with it valiantly and made no fatigued evasions. An important part of any total view of Fitzgerald must be an assessment of his handling of this problem. I attempt to make this assessment in my discussion of Fitzgerald's life and art in Chapter II; but the question of a moral evaluation of his work is recurred to and developed further in other chapters as well.

The following study, indeed, is designed to be one continuous essay, Chapter II being the beginning

of the essay; Chapters III through X illustrations of the points made in Chapter II (with the exception of Chapter IX, which is an amplification of Chapter II); and Chapter XI a brief recapitulation. The chapters themselves of course are intended to be units, but units dependent for their full significance on the whole design. Fitzgerald's career has been divided into three chronological periods, indicative of his development: the years 1920 through 1924, first writings and experimentation; 1925 through 1934, achievement in his major works; 1935 through 1940, movie writing and the final concentrated effort of The Last Tycoon.

I have confined my study to the novels, for Fitzgerald was primarily a novelist, even though his production in the genre of the short story was considerable. He wrote some eight score short stories altogether, but even the kindliest estimate (Arthur Mizener's) rescues no more than fifty of them as "serious and successful stories" and perhaps twenty-five as "superb." I would personally put the count much lower than that. All too many of Fitzgerald's short stories give the impression that they were written with an eye for effect rather than on what was being said.

The question of why Fitzgerald wrote so many short stories when he thought of himself as a novelist and

functioned best in the novel or quasi-novel form is one easy of answer. Some writers work as reporters or magazine editors or bank clerks; Fitzgerald wrote short stories. In 1929 alone, $27,000 of his $32,450 income was from his short stories. In his last years Fitzgerald himself thought that he had asked a great many short stories of himself. "The price was high," he added, thinking of the toll on himself, "right up with Kipling" -- for he had put something of the "extra" he had into each of his stories. Since he was mainly a novelist, though, most of these stories are worthy of only slightly more consideration in a critical study than his movie scripts or another writer's newspaper dispatches. He did write a few very fine short stories such as "The Rich Boy" and "Babylon Revisited," but a great many of his stories are mere inflated sketches and one can almost see them, cut down to size, taking their places as episodes in a novel.

Subsequently I do recur to the short stories for points of style or characterization or plot. My interest, however, is principally the novels, which it seems to me give the essential Fitzgerald. In examining the purpose and artistic value of them I hope to be able to disengage Fitzgerald's qualities from the embraces of legend and life and make a measured judgment of his

art. A considerable number of reviews and articles already exist containing the many and varied insights of the critics who have written, whether or no at extended length, on Fitzgerald. Some criticism does exist dealing with influences on Fitzgerald's method or style, some with certain aspects of his symbolism, and some with explication of individual novels. Fitzgerald's life is such, though, that the genuinely critical approach to his work is seldom adopted. The fact that he produced so few novels, relatively, leads to speculation as to the cause; or the work is read mainly for what it tells us of his life and attitudes. The author of the one extended work on Fitzgerald, Arthur Mizener, for instance, says, "Just as his life illuminates his work, so his work does his life." Mizener of course is writing a biography, not a critical study; still this use of the work (as Mizener is tactfully aware) leads to a documentary attitude toward that work and a consequent denigration of it. Any critic of Fitzgerald must find himself ceaselessly indebted to Mizener's pioneer work. Mizener's explications of the novels are, however, necessarily cursory ones; in addition, since they are biographically-centered, qualifications of his interpretations need continually to be made. This study is an attempt to write a critical study on Fitzgerald's

novels as an entity, not as an appendage to biography; a study showing their uniqueness, significance, and value in order to help the student and the general reader to a more complete enjoyment of the individual novels, by analysis, explication, and discussion.

CHAPTER II

LIFE AND ART

That the steadily rising tide of interest in his work has done much to carry Scott Fitzgerald to an unwonted eminence is undeniable. And it would be less than honest not to admit, too, that more than a little of his current popularity must be due to extra-literary impulses. There is, for instance, what Michel Mohrt has called the "Romantisme des Années Vingt," the glamorization of that past era, and there is the strong appeal of the Fitzgerald personality itself. Fitzgerald's life, as Lionel Trilling has said, with the "golden success" of his youth,

> his period of crisis, the restoration of his creative power, his deep intelligent effort to comprehend his life, and then the early death itself. . . . together with his personal attractiveness and his preoccupation with virtue, quite naturally make of Fitzgerald an heroic and legendary figure.

Fitzgerald was an artist as well as an heroic and legendary figure, however: and since he was, what he accomplished, not what he failed to accomplish, is the subject of criticism. While the question of whether he did or did not waste his talent is a compelling one, it is, nevertheless, artistically peripheral.

Fitzgerald, with Coleridge, could say that "For what I have effected, am I to be judged by my fellow men; what I could have done, is a question for my own conscience." What he did effect is a solid achievement. He was no more a genuine "failure" than was Keats, or Coleridge himself, or Stephen Crane. For the fact that his finished production was not as great as it might have been we have only his own word. (It is well to remember that Fitzgerald, like Coleridge whom he so much resembles in this respect, was habitually self-depreciatory.) The physics of the creative process are such that the question is whether he would have accomplished even what he did without the period of "horror and waste" in his life. It is out of his own life, out of his past, Arthur Mizener has reminded us, that a romantic writer of Fitzgerald's type builds his fables. After all, Fitzgerald wrote only one novel about a college boy (although many of his short stories concerned tortured adolescents and prom-trotters). His other novels were about adults and moved along in setting and characterization and wisdom with Fitzgerald's own varied and unhappy experience.

Since Fitzgerald did use not only the facts but also the very frame of his life in his art, in examining the novels the critic dare not, should he so desire,

disregard the artist's life. The three themes that are recurrent in Fitzgerald's life and art -- Catholicism, the Midwest, and the past -- are, for instance, present even in the beginning of his life. Born in 1896 into an Irish-Catholic family in St. Paul, Minnesota, Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was descended on the paternal side from the Scott and Key families of Maryland. His Catholicism and the Midwest the young Fitzgerald hastened to discard. He went east to the Newman School in New Jersey in 1911. He never really lived in the Midwest again. His apostasy, which occurred when he was in his early twenties, began to an extent with this release from family discipline. The past, represented in Fitzgerald's early life by the once great days of his father's family, was already abandoned; at least it was necessarily behind him, although he continued to think of himself as naturally a Southern aristocrat. As time went on, youth and love and happiness as well as Catholicism and the Midwest were encompassed in his personal past, Fitzgerald felt, to add to the ambivalent attraction the past always held for him. The past thus contained both good and evil, both innocence and temptation.

After two years at Newman, Fitzgerald went on to Princeton; he left there in his fourth year to go into the Army. After his discharge in early 1919, he worked as an advertising writer in New York for a brief time.

While he was in the Army he had fallen in love with Zelda Sayre, the daughter of an Alabama judge, and when she broke their engagement because of the uncertainty of his future, he gave up his advertising job and returned to St. Paul to rewrite the book that became This Side of Paradise. Three months later his novel was accepted by Scribner's (September, 1919); it was published March 26, 1920, when Fitzgerald was only twenty-three. A week later he and Zelda Sayre were married in the rectory of St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. "You be a good episcopalian, Zelda," the priest who performed the ceremony said, "and, Scott you be a good catholic, and you'll get along fine." Fitzgerald liked to say wryly that this was the last advice he ever got from a priest. Zelda and Scott did not "get along fine," but, then, they did not follow the priest's advice either, which is not as fatuous as it is sometimes made to sound.

The year of his marriage, 1920, Fitzgerald also brought out his first collection of short stories, Flappers and Philosophers; two years later his second novel, The Beautiful and Damned, and his second volume of short stories, Tales of the Jazz Age, appeared. A play, The Vegetable, followed in 1923; The Great Gatsby two years later in 1925; and another volume of short stories, All the Sad Young Men, the following

year (1926).

In the six years 1920-1926, over sixty of Fitzgerald's stories and articles were accepted by magazines. But the period of early success, as Fitzgerald was later to see, is "a short and precious time." The "delicious mist" that the "first wild wind of success" brings with it "rises in a few weeks, or a few months, [and] one finds that the very best is over." This transience of the "best" in one's life, confirmed by his experience, is an important part of the fable that Fitzgerald constructed out of his own life. In his works taps sound at reveille; there are no second acts in American lives. One is already "cracked" when he seems most whole. Hence in Fitzgerald's stories and novels, "diamond mountains. . . . [blow] up. . . . millionaires [are] as beautiful and damned as Thomas Hardy's peasants." The talented man of promise inevitably deteriorates.

In examining his own life, Fitzgerald called this first block of years the period of "Early Success"; for himself there had been marriage and his burst of creativity (three novels, three volumes of short stories, a play, a number of other stories and articles -- in six years). The period that succeeded the time of "Early Success" was one of "horror and waste." The precise details of the disaster and dissipation of those years is sympathetically

set down in Arthur Mizener's biography of Fitzgerald. ("To dissipate," thinks the hero of a story Fitzgerald wrote in December, 1930, "[is] to make nothing out of something.") What is important so far as Fitzgerald's novels are concerned is that during the years between 1926 and 1934 Fitzgerald struggled with the body of material that was to become Tender Is the Night, wrote and published over fifty stories and articles, but produced no novel or volume of short stories. And he changed more than once his conception of the novel that he was working on. Both before and after the Fitzgeralds' return to the United States in 1932, Fitzgerald was burdened with debt, his own drinking, and his wife's personal tragedy.

Fitzgerald's fourth novel, Tender Is the Night (1934), a story of deterioration, confirmed for many critics the rumors of Fitzgerald's own deterioration. Another collection of short stories, Taps at Reveille (1935), while it contains some of Fitzgerald's best stories, was not thought to be much of a gleaning from nine years of production. As a consequence, Fitzgerald's own announcement of his "crack-up" in his three Esquire articles the first part of the following year (1936) was not regarded with any surprise; "not a few [people]," Fitzgerald noted, thought that "it was a terrific mistake to have written any" of the articles after the first one. Almost everyone

agreed that his public examen de conscience established his widely-rumored deterioration. It was generally accepted that, as he said, "Ten years this side of forty-nine," he had "cracked up." The years of horror and waste had taken their toll.

"I had been only a mediocre caretaker. . . . of my talent," he said in "The Crack-up." And to a friend he wrote, "I hope you'll be a better judge than I've been a man of letters." Fitzgerald, though, was one of his own severest critics. In publicly accusing himself of indolence and misuse of his talent, he set the tone for the general cry of "failure" that went up at his death in 1940. The New York Times, in an obituary typical of many on Fitzgerald, said that "The promise of his brilliant career was never fulfilled" and then went on to quote from Fitzgerald's own 1936 description of himself as a "cracked plate." The elegiac tone of his friends defending him in the pages of the New Republic against the sneers of the anonymous obituary writers and of Westbrook Pegler helped perpetuate the romantic legend of Fitzgerald the failure. His friends made a distinction between what they considered to be the tragic life and the worthwhile accomplishment, but the life necessarily got most of the attention. And, despite denials, these defenders of his took Fitzgerald's "Crack-up" articles of five years before as illustrations of his final spiritual

condition. These articles are still so largely thought to reflect Fitzgerald's final state of mind that any consideration of Fitzgerald's whole career must take them into account.

The articles, three in number,[1] all together present a rather grim picture of what Fitzgerald conceived his state to be, and, since they are ostensibly autobiographical, one might well fear for the future of their author. They are certainly, as Mizener notes, "serious" attempts at analyzing the moral crisis Fitzgerald faced at the end of 1935. But, while they are as "sincere" and "truthful" as one could wish, at the same time they do exaggerate Fitzgerald's state -- or at least the permanence of that state. As the Baltimore Sun generously editorialized at the time of Fitzgerald's death five years later: In a moment of depression and uncertainty such as

> dogged so many of the people in his stories . . . . . he described himself as "a cracked plate" not to be brought out for company but useful "to hold crackers late at night or to go into the icebox over the leftovers." Perhaps that was a sound diagnosis of his

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[1] All to be subsumed under the general title of "The Crack-up," the title proper of the February, 1936, article, which called forth the explanatory "Handle with Care," March, 1936, and "Pasting it Together," April, 1936. The content of these articles is to be discussed in more detail in Chapter IX below, "Life and Art: The Last Years."

> physical infirmities, but whenever Fitzgerald got round to writing things down his sensitiveness and sympathetic apprehension of the mood of a time or a situation showed themselves.

It is precisely his sensitiveness and sympathetic apprehension of the mood of a time and a particular situation that make his "Crack-up" articles of interest as literature as well as autobiography. It is scarcely strong enough to say that one is tired, discouraged, feeling old; to say that he had "prematurely cracked" gives the reader an exact emotive image. Fitzgerald's elaboration of the image -- "[I] cracked like an old plate as soon as I heard the news"; "I could walk from her door, holding myself very carefully like cracked crockery"; "Sometimes, though, the cracked plate has to be retained in the pantry. . . . . [etc.]" -- suggests how much he embroidered on his real enough but still imaginatively exploited state.

The "Crack-up" articles show that Fitzgerald had, as Lionel Trilling has noted, "the heroic awareness" necessary to the tragic hero:

> Like Milton's Samson [Trilling writes], he had the consciousness of having misused the power with which he had been endowed. . . . . And the parallel carries further, to the sojourn among the Philistines and even to the maimed hero exhibited and mocked for the amusement of the crowd -- on the afternoon of September 25, 1936, the New York Evening Post carried on its front page a feature story in which the triumphant reporter tells how he managed to make his way into the Southern nursing home where the sick and

> distracted Fitzgerald was being cared for and there "interviewed" him, taking all due note of the contrast between the present humiliation and the past glory. It was a particularly gratuitous horror, and yet in retrospect it serves to augment the moral force of the poise and fortitude which marked Fitzgerald's mind in the few recovered years that were left to him.

The choice of residence among Hollywood Philistines during the few (four) years that were left Fitzgerald after 1936, perhaps, had not been completely voluntary. Hollywood is one of the few places where a writer can make money. But the literary facts do not support the sentimentalizing of the Fitzgerald of the last years into a pathetic and ruined figure who was completely forgotten by his contemporaries.

If some of his best work was hard to sell and his figure in the carpet was not seen -- well, that is the fate of those who live by the pen. For the record, Fitzgerald's work was frequently misread by contemporary critics. When he was writing Tender Is the Night he told Maxwell Perkins that "the whole motif was taken from Ludendorf's memoirs. They were moving up the guns for the great Spring offensive in 1918, and Ludendorf said, 'The song of the frogs on the river drowned the rumble of our artillery.'" It is the surface singing of Fitzgerald's work that drowns even now the rumble of his artillery.[2] Still, even in his lifetime

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[2]Thus a recent (1951) standard literary history calls Fitzgerald a "romantic hedonist."

Fitzgerald was regarded as an important American writer, and his last two books, the novel Tender Is the Night (1934) and the volume of short stories Taps at Reveille (1935), were more widely reviewed than any of his other books. The Great Gatsby, with an Introduction by Fitzgerald, came out in a Modern Library reprint in 1934, the same year as Tender Is the Night. Two years later Gatsby was translated into Italian.

Further, as Fitzgerald's contemporary James Thurber has said, Fitzgerald's name all his last years "remained bright and constant in the writings and conversations of American writers who can forget a man quickly enough when his time has come." Fitzgerald's 1936 "Crack-up" articles, though they embarrassed, as Fitzgerald noted, "those to whom all self-revelation is contemptible, unless it ends with a thanks to the gods for the Unconquerable Soul," were widely read and discussed. Eight pages in the New Republic at the time of his death "In Memory of Scott Fitzgerald" is alone suggestive of the esteem in which he was held in 1940.

> As for all the talk about Fitzgerald's books having been out of print when he died in 1940 [Thurber adds], it should be remembered that this was a good six years after the publication of his last novel. Even the most popular books do not have a way of staying in print very long in a country of fickle and restless tastes that goes in for the Book of the Month, the Man of the Year, and the Song of the Week.

After his death Fitzgerald's reputation steadily grew. Within a year, in November, 1941, Scribner's brought out a 476-page volume containing Fitzgerald's unfinished novel, The Last Tycoon, edited by Edmund Wilson, together with The Great Gatsby, and five selected short stories. The Last Tycoon was variously estimated by critics according to their individual predilections, but in general they were probably overgenerous. Ten months later, in August, 1942, Scribner's made a third printing of Gatsby (the first two printings had both been in 1925). In the same year Alfred Kazin in On Native Grounds, devoted several pages to Fitzgerald and was intermittently indebted to Fitzgerald for phrase and insight in his general interpretation of the twenties.

Two extended critical articles on Fitzgerald appeared in the same month two years later.[3] Both made essentially unfavorable judgments of Fitzgerald, but [illegible] took him seriously as a writer. In 1945 when The Portable Fitzgerald and The Crack-up were issued, both were widely reviewed, The Portable appeared in the Viking series, which also contained, as Thurber has said, some

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[3]Charles Weir, Jr., "An Invite with Gilded Edges," Virginia Quarterly Review, 20 (April, 1944), 100-113. Leo and Miriam Gurko, "The Essence of F. Scott Fitzgerald," College English, 5 (April, 1944), 372-376.

of Fitzgerald's "living contemporaries, and no. . . . resurrected ghosts. . . ." and had the services[4] of both Dorothy Parker and John O'Hara. The Crack-up, issued by New Directions and made up by Edmund Wilson, contained a few of Fitzgerald's essays, portions from his Notebooks, and a few scattered letters to and from Fitzgerald; its publication elicited more reviews confident of Fitzgerald's ultimate high place in American literature than any of his previous publications.

The Great Gatsby was issued twice again late in 1945: by New Directions with an introduction by Lionel Trilling; and by Bantam Books in the twenty-five-cent "pocket" edition. The Bantam reprint had two more printings in January and March, 1945. Besides being translated into Italian this same year, 1946, Gatsby was also translated into Swedish, and the French edition of it was reissued. In the collection edited by William Phillips, Great American Short Novels, Gatsby was one along with novels by Melville, James, Crane, and others. In February, 1946, this same year, Fitzgerald's short story "The Rich Boy" was translated into French and with a preface by Philippe Soupalt was printed in the Paris journal Renaissances. Soupalt thought that

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[4]Or disservices as some would have it. Mrs. Parker appears to have made her choices hastily and John O'Hara contributed what has been called "vacant gossip" by way of an introduction.

"l'influence de Scott Fitzgerald ne fait que commencer et qu'elle va peser très fort sur l'évolution du roman Américain." The Kenyon Review devoted ten pages of its Winter, 1946, issue to an excellent critical article on Fitzgerald by John Berryman. And Arthur Mizener published two long articles on Fitzgerald in 1946 also -- one in Willard Thorp's The Lives of Eighteen from Princeton and the other in the Sewanee Review. The boom, one might say, was really on in 1946. (Mizener's biography of Fitzgerald and Budd Schulberg's novel partially based on Fitzgerald's life did not appear until five and four years later, respectively.)

It should be clear, then, that in the pre-Mizener-Schulberg years, Fitzgerald was by no means neglected, or, as Thurber puts it, "Fitzgerald never disappeared into a lonely literary limbo." Since 1946 the boom has resulted in the translation of Gatsby into Dutch (1948) and Danish (1948) and again into Italian (1950); Tender into Italian (1949) and French (1951); and in the reprinting of Fitzgerald's novels both in America and in England: This Side of Paradise and The Last Tycoon at the standard new book price in hard covers; The Beautiful and Damned in the thirty-five-cent pocket edition; Gatsby and Tender in both the hard-cover and

pocket editions.[5] Mizener's full-length biography of Fitzgerald and Budd Schulberg's novel suggested by his experiences with Fitzgerald were both very popular. And in the same year as Mizener's biography, 1951, Alfred Kazin issued a collection of reprinted views and reviews on Fitzgerald; and Malcolm Cowley collected and issued twenty-eight of Fitzgerald's short stories. By late 1951 when Cowley also edited the "revised" Tender Is the Night for Scribner's, Fitzgerald could be said to be quite thoroughly "revived."

It is interesting that ten years after his death there should be more interest in Fitzgerald than during the twenty years of his literary life; but certainly it is understandable. Not until a man is dead can his work be seen in its entirety. So long as an artist lives he may produce a work which might well cause us to revise our previous estimate of him. Gatsby could scarcely have been predicted from the author of This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned. Or Tender Is the Night from the author of The Great Gatsby. Or The Last Tycoon from the author of

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[5]The Bantam thirty-five-cent edition of Tender Is the Night, published on January 10, 1951, three weeks before Mizener's biography of Fitzgerald, sold out, according to Publisher's Weekly, a first printing of 240,000 copies within the month, with sixty-two per cent of the sale in the first ten days.

Tender Is the Night. With what he was capable of doing and did not do, we are not concerned. What he was capable of doing and did is here, and with the evidence before us we can judge it for what it is as art.

We can say, as some have said, that Fitzgerald's finished production was small, even "limited." At forty-four, the age at which Fitzgerald died, we can add, Henry James had produced Roderick Hudson, The American, The Portrait of a Lady, The Bostonians, The Princess Casamassima -- to say nothing of volumes of short stories, travel sketches and literary criticism. But James was always a prolific producer and an artist for whom life was not the expense of spirit that it was for Fitzgerald. James weeded out his life and maintained a priestly devotion to his art; Fitzgerald ran to meet experience, chose greatness rather than goodness, recklessly took life rather than art as his vocation. As a consequence, Fitzgerald's life has some of the symbolic quality of the lives with which he endowed his heroes. "Fitzgerald lacked prudence," Lionel Trilling has said, "as his heroes did, lacked that blind instinct of self-protection which the writer needs and the American writer needs in double measure. But that is all he lacked -- and it is the generous fault, even the heroic fault." The fault had its results in his art; James's scope and discipline and production were never Fitzgerald's.

Every artist so far as he is an artist, though, is incomparable. That James's achievement is far greater in quantity and quality (which no one would deny) than Fitzgerald's does not make Fitzgerald's inconsiderable. James himself remarked in another connection that

> It is of course for my reader to say whether or no what I have done has meant defeat; yet even if this should be his judgment I fall back on the interest, at the worst, of certain sorts of failure.

Fitzgerald's sort of failure, if failure it be, has genuine interest as any complete bibliography of recent Fitzgerald criticism attests. It is a failure which has victory at its center; for in his twenty years he did produce four novels, part of a fifth, a hundred and sixty short stories and a great many personal essays. As we see it now, out of that production, one novel, part of another, a fragment of a third, half a dozen short stories, and three or four essays rate in quality among the best of their kind.

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Fitzgerald's "Crack-up" essays, together with "Early Success" and "My Lost City," are important as a group not only as imaginative writing but also as a version of his experience. To say that they are not

strictly "true" -- as they are not -- is not to accuse him of deliberate falsification. They are a version of the truth, the truth imaginatively represented; not so clearly the "transmuted biography" which Arthur Mizener says Fitzgerald's best work is, they are transmuted biography all the same. Much of Fitzgerald's life is not in these essays. He was not writing his autobiography after all. But the main outlines of what he considered his story are all there.

In "My Lost City" (July, 1932) Fitzgerald presents three symbols -- the ferry boat, the girl, his friend's apartment -- which stand for triumph (money), romance, and asceticism. In his own life, as he perceived, he had used these symbols as points of reference. Money and romance, the modern equivalents of the medieval virtue of magnificence, were his choice when he chose "greatness"; asceticism what he rejected when he rejected "goodness." This dichotomy is far from being a modern one. It is one aspect of the eternal human predicament: life or art, renunciation or "fulfillment," God or the world. Timeless, it is phrased in the question "How is a man to live?" or in the statement "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it."

Fitzgerald gave his first hero, Amory Blaine, the problem of making a choice between being "good" and being "great." Amory chooses goodness and thinks that he is

thereby giving up his opportunity of being a certain kind of artist. The choice of "goodness" in terms of "My Lost City" and the symbols in that essay is the choice of "asceticism," the dedicated life; the choice of "greatness" is the choice of "triumph" and "romance." In his own life, Fitzgerald wrote and published his first novel, This Side of Paradise, in order that he might make a choice opposite from Amory's.[6] And his heroes after Amory are always making Fitzgerald's choice, not Amory's, "greatness" rather than "goodness." The pattern in their lives, as Fitzgerald saw it, was that they like Fitzgerald himself have their "moment of promise," when they are faced with the problem of making this choice. Then when they have chosen greatness, early success follows. An inner damaging blow occurred at the moment of promise, however; and although its effects are not noticeable for a time, eventually

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[6]Shortly after writing This Side of Paradise, in a somewhat jocular fashion Fitzgerald outlined an earlier choice of "greatness." In his own life, Fitzgerald wrote, going to boarding school "took my mind off my writing. I decided to play football, to smoke, to go to college, to do all sorts of irrelevant things that had nothing to do with the real business of life, which, of course, was the proper mixture of description and dialogue in the short story." (My italics. Unless otherwise noted all subsequent italics in quoted passages are mine also.)

deterioration is a result of the blow. The pattern is the classic one of good fortune succeeded by satiety, then by blind folly, and, finally, by nemesis.

Awareness of some sort is necessary, though, and so ultimately the concern in Fitzgerald's fable is as in all literature the question of reality: That I may see! is the cry of Fitzgerald and his heroes; recognition, their quest. They search back over their lives for the point where they "chose Ophelia, chose the sweet poison and drank it." Even in his first novel, although Fitzgerald's own experience was not then complete, Fitzgerald placed man "this side of paradise." And after his own wrong choice in 1920 he recognized the residence of innocence in the past. Anthony Patch, the hero of Fitzgerald's second novel, with his wife's "arms. . . . sweet and strangling. . . . around him" sees that "he had made all. . . . choices" when he had chosen Gloria. Both Dexter Green (in "Winter Dreams," 1922) and George O'Kelly (in "'The Sensible Thing,'" 1924) find themselves at last outside paradise. Dexter realizes that

> he had gone away and he could never go back any more. The gates were closed, the sun was gone down, 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.

In the final version of Fitzgerald's fable, once Fitzgerald and his heroes see their wrong choice, they withdraw in order to rescue something out of the wreckage: dignity, a modicum of self-respect, sanity, salvation. The fable which Fitzgerald told, then, is a symbolic account of man's tragic destiny, man who, after his moment on the heights, falls. In the Christian scheme he sins, recognizes that he has done so, and, aware, may finally be saved.

It is precisely this way in which (in Lionel Trilling's words) "Fitzgerald conceives of the self that is to be tried on the field of society [that] links him with. . . . the great romantics." He has other connections with the great romantics, too, in style, sensibility, and method, which I will return to in subsequent chapters; but what is important to note here is that Fitzgerald's vision is a romantic one of the most complete type.[7] He has resemblances in life and in art to all the great English romantics, with the exception of Wordsworth, and an affinity of

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[7]Except for a bit of heavy-breathing nature-romanticism in his early work, though, there is no concern for nature in Fitzgerald. In his last years he said that not until he read Thoreau after he was grown did he realize what he had missed in not being interested in nature.

temperament and sensibility to most of them.[8] His "dominant literary mood," as Lionel Trilling has said (and his theme too, we might add), "is that of 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' and 'Lamia.'"

The pattern of Fitzgerald's fable, indeed, has more than a casual resemblance to the pattern Morse Peckham has outlined as present in such crucial romantic works as The Prelude, The Ancient Mariner, and Sartor Resartus.[9] The arch-romantic theme, Peckham says, is that of

> spiritual death and rebirth, or secular conversion. In its baldest form, such an experience amounts to this: A man moves from a trust in the universe to a period of doubt and despair of any meaning in the universe, and then to a re-affirmation of faith in cosmic meaning and goodness, or at least meaning. The transition from the first stage to the second, we may call spiritual death; that from the second to the third, we may call spiritual rebirth.

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[8] "Indeed, between Fitzgerald and the Keats of the great letters [Lionel Trilling notes] there is an affinity of temperament that is almost startling -- there is the same greediness for pleasure, and the intelligences that work on the greediness are remarkably alike, and they yield a similar moral quality; the Fitzgerald who said that his marriage had become less a romance than a categorical imperative is not very far from the Keats who wrote the amazing letter about the world being 'the vale of Soul-making.'"

[9] "Toward a Theory of Romanticism," PMLA, 66 (March, 1951), 5-23. R. P. Adams points out the same theme in Moby-Dick, Walden, and "Song of Myself," in "Romanticism and the American Renaissance," American Literature, 23 (January, 1952), 419-432.

Fitzgerald's fable encompasses, roughly, the first and second stages, spiritual death (or, in classic terms, hubris, até and nemesis). Spiritual rebirth in Fitzgerald's work is extremely conjectural. He has a Waste Land in his life and in his work but no penitential Ash Wednesday and hence no illuminated Four Quartets. His story remains a classic romantic one (although not completely that of Peckham's "positive Romanticism") -- a story of revolt. Fitzgerald left the Midwest to go to prep school and never returned home. He rejected Catholicism some time during his early twenties. What anguish, if any, the rejection cost him is matter for speculation. His despair, self-disgust, sense of damnation, though, suggest that his apostasy was not easy. Whether men admit it or not, as someone has said, when a man's religion fails him, so does everything else, and he must strike out for something new to live upon. Most of his life Fitzgerald seems to have been searching for that something new to live upon. That he never found it confines his own life and his fable, as already noted, to only the first part of the archetypal motif of resurrection through death. The spiritual death certainly occurs. In 1934 Fitzgerald wrote that in his insomniac periods "the horror" would come "like a storm," when he would think:

> what if this night prefigured the night after death -- what if all thereafter was an eternal quivering on the edge of an abyss, with everything base and vicious in oneself urging one forward and the baseness and viciousness of the world just ahead. No choice, no road, no hope -- only the endless repetition of the sordid and the semi-tragic.

And at his moral crisis in 1935 he had "a feeling (he wrote) that I was standing at twilight on a deserted range, with an empty rifle in my hands and the targets down. No problem set -- simply a silence with only the sound of my own breathing." This is the final image of Fitzgerald and his heroes -- mute, stoic, isolated.

Thus Fitzgerald comes under the classification Peckham has usefully designated as <u>negative</u> romanticism, in which the first steps of guilt and despair and spiritual death are not followed by spiritual rebirth.

> The typical symbols of negative romanticism [Peckham writes] are individuals who are filled with guilt, despair, and cosmic and social alienation. They are often presented, for instance, as having committed some horrible and unmentionable and unmentioned crime in the past. They are often outcasts from men and God, and they are almost always wanderers over the face of the earth.

Positive romanticism, Peckham feels, cannot explain Byron, as "negative romanticism" can. "Byron spent his life [Peckham adds] in the situation of Wordsworth after the rejection of Godwin and before his move to Racedown and Nether Stowey, of the Mariner alone on the wide, wide sea, of Teufelsdröckh subject to the Everlasting No and wandering through the Centre of

Indifference." Fitzgerald spent his life in this situation, too, and so his heroes die, go west, withdraw into upstate New York. They "fail" time after time; without sustenance, they hold on; emotionally and morally bankrupt, they have nowhere to turn for additional funds.

While Fitzgerald's failure to attain something now to live upon must ultimately be a limitation, one cannot help applauding his refusal to commit himself to some of the objects of belief possible in his time. The resolution of his problem by belief in political or social panaceas, for instance, was possible and intellectually respectable. Amory Blaine, his first hero, does impulsively preach a vague socialistic faith in the last chapter of This Side of Paradise, and during the twenties and early thirties Fitzgerald designated himself a socialist in Who's Who. In the early thirties he was transitorily interested in Communism, noting that "it may be necessary to work inside the communist party" in order to bring on the revolution. But in his 1936 "Crack-up" articles he confessed that his "political conscience had scarcely existed for ten years save as an element of irony in my stuff."

Despite his "Fitzboomski"[10] periods and his recognition

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[10]"Who called me," he questioned himself in his Notebooks, "Fitzboomski during Russo-Jap war?"

of the religious quality of Communism,[11] Communism could not be a religion for him. With Stephen Dedalus he might have asked, "What kind of liberation would that be to forsake an absurdity which is logical and coherent and to embrace one which is illogical and incoherent?" As a college student Fitzgerald was ironic about such homemade theology as that offered, say, by H. G. Wells. In reviewing Wells's God, the Invisible King, he commented:

> If there is anything older than the old story it is the new twist. Mr. Wells supplies this by neatly dividing God into a creator and a Redeemer. On the whole we should welcome God, the Invisible King, as an entertaining addition to our supply of fiction for light summer reading.

"Religion," for Fitzgerald's first hero, Amory Blaine,[12] "meant the Church of Rome. . . . . Yet any acceptance was, for the present, impossible." Joyce and Stephen Dedalus rejected Catholicism with an articulate non serviam. Fitzgerald's rejection was quiet. Mizener, indeed, feels that Fitzgerald was never very devout, "though like most people he had moments as he was growing up when his imagination was appealed to by

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[11] Communism had become, he wrote his daughter in 1940, "an intensely dogmatic and almost mystical religion, and whatever you say, they have ways of twisting it into shapes which put you in some lower category of mankind ('Fascist,' 'Liberal,' 'Trotskyist'), and disparage you both intellectually and personally in the process."

[12] He was, interestingly enough, first named Stephen Dalius.

religion ('Became desperately Holy,' he noted of himself at fourteen), and occasionally he was attracted by a colorful piece of Catholic history and the sense of a great and socially impressive tradition which it gave him." Still, as Mizener goes on to say, Fitzgerald "had been brought up a Catholic, with all that means in the way of habitual convictions." And while, as one critic has remarked, "This Side of Paradise is far from being a 'Catholic novel,' yet who else but one who had at least been a Catholic would have, in the self-conscious twenties, made a monsignor a central figure in a novel?" In addition, Amory, the hero of that novel, born a Catholic but not brought up one, fashionably has Catholicism as his point of reference. The "gaudy, ritualistic, paradoxical Catholicism whose prophet was Chesterton, whose claqueurs were such reformed rakes of literature as Huysmans and Bourget" is "the only ghost of a code" that Amory has. Lois, the heroine of one of Fitzgerald's early short stories,[13] tries to tell her Jesuit brother

> "how inconvenient being a Catholic is. It really doesn't seem to apply any more. As far as morals go, some of the wildest boys I know are Catholics. And the brightest

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[13]"Benediction," a revision of a story he wrote in college, was published in The Smart Set, February, 1920, and reprinted in Flappers and Philosophers (1920).

> boys -- I mean the ones who think and read a lot, don't seem to believe in much of anything any more." [The italics are Fitzgerald's.]

A shabby intellectual snobbery not unlike Lois's could be partly responsible for Fitzgerald's own move away from his faith. For it is clear, as Riley Hughes has noted, that Fitzgerald had "begun reading contemporary philosophers early and immersing himself in contemporary manners out of a deliberate search for a secular integration." In Amory Blaine's life, his reading of Wells and Shaw is balanced on the side of orthodoxy by the influence of Monsignor Darcy and Clara and his reading of Chesterton, Huysmans, Bourget, Compton Mackenzie, and Robert Hugh Benson. Fitzgerald himself was deeply influenced by his friend, Monsignor Sigourney Fay, the prototype of Monsignor Darcy; but Monsignor Fay died in January, 1919, while Fitzgerald was still in the Army.

In 1920, a few months after the publication of <u>This Side of Paradise</u> and his marriage, Fitzgerald wrote his friend the Catholic writer, Shane Leslie, to whose literary care Monsignor Fay had confided Fitzgerald, that his

> reaction a year ago last June to apparent failure in every direction [the reference is to June, 1919, when Zelda Sayre broke their engagement] did carry me rather away from the church. My ideas now are in such a wild riot that I could flatter myself did

I claim even the clarity of agnosticism.[14]

About the same time, he was "ashamed to say," he wrote Edmund Wilson, "that my Catholicism is scarcely more than a memory"; but he added, "no that's wrong it's more than that; at any rate I go not to church nor mumble stray nothings over crystalline beads."

> If you know [he cried in the letter to Shane Leslie just quoted] the absolute dearth of Catholic intelligentsia in this country! One Catholic magazine "America" had only one prim comment on my book [he added bitterly] "a fair example of our non-Catholic college's output." My Lord! Compared to the average Georgetown alumnus Amory is an uncanonized saint.

The march in the twenties was toward the East and away from the past, and Fitzgerald with all the complicated motives that his Irish, Catholic, Southern aristocratic inheritance could give him, moved East and forward. Yet, although, as Riley Hughes says, Fitzgerald was essentially rootless, his deepest loyalties were still to Catholicism, to the past, and to the Midwestern virtues, whatever the seeming irrelevance of the three in the 1920's. Fitzgerald tells us in "Echoes of the Jazz Age"(November, 1931) that in the 1920's

> Charm, notoriety, mere good manners, weighed more than money as a social asset. This was

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[14]Since my purpose is the elucidation of Fitzgerald's art, not the reflection of his personality, I have not retained his unique spelling in my quotations from his letters and Notebooks. The less obtrusive inadequate punctuation I have not tampered with.

> rather splendid [he adds], but things were getting thinner and thinner as the eternal necessary human values tried to spread over all that expansion.

And the point for Fitzgerald of course was that "human values" were "eternal" and "necessary." In the world of his novels his central characters are genuine heroes, splendid moral men in a moral universe. They face great deteriorative forces with courage, continuing to hold up the pillars of the world. Like Nick Carraway they judge the selfish, self-deceived Tom Buchanans with considerable harshness, have their "provincial squeamishness." Or like Charlie Wales they want "to jump back a whole generation and trust in character again as the eternally valuable element." Everything else, Charlie thinks, wears out. Or, if, like Dick Diver, they create a new world, they "believe" in it -- "with an effort."

Fitzgerald's loyalty to the "eternal necessary human values" accounts for the division of his life into two worlds similar to those in James Joyce's: Joyce's were those of religious belief and religious unbelief; Fitzgerald's, what he called an "older time" (Catholicism, the past, the Midwestern virtues) and "today." Fitzgerald's first hero, Amory Blaine, has alternatives similar to Stephen Dedalus' in <u>A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</u> -- but Amory reverses Stephen's choice and chooses religion (or what he

calls "being good") rather than art. While Joyce's books, as one critic has remarked,[15] "are supersaturated with the religion in which he disbelieves," Fitzgerald's are supersaturated with a code of ethics in which he believes. Thus, while the decision to be "good" in This Side of Paradise is a facile, wishful resolution of Amory's problem, it is not one Fitzgerald could recur to again. For Amory,

> The problem of evil had solidified. . . . into the problem of sex. . . . . Inseparably linked with evil was beauty. . . . . every time he had reached toward it longingly it had leered out at him with the grotesque face of evil.

Only the spiritually "unmarried" man (that is, one not caught by evil), Amory thinks, aids progress (that is, does good).

Fitzgerald's experience after writing and publishing This Side of Paradise was such as to convince him of the impossibility for him and for his heroes of remaining "spiritually unmarried." (Fitzgerald married his girl, and, as Horace Gregory has pointed out, that "was as though Lord Byron had made the mistake of marrying the Byronic heroine, Caroline Lamb.") Dignity and the chance of salvation for Fitzgerald and his heroes lie in their recognition of their error, in their sense of

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[15] Echoing, it will be recognized, Cranly, who tells Stephen that it is curious "how your mind is supersaturated with the religion in which you disbelieve."

sin. So, Rudolph in "Absolution," having sinned mortally, can hear the tap of his cloven hoof as he comes down the church aisle, and Basil Duke Lee feels that a childish lie which results in his getting what he wants is the "worst thing he has ever done." Dick Diver pays some "tribute to things unforgotten, unshriven, unexpurgated." Nothing is finally forgotten, shriven, expurgated, and no rebirth is possible.

The duality of goodness and greatness, of God and the world is omnipresent in Fitzgerald's life and in his art. In "The Ordeal," a story which he wrote while in college, he set up an opposition between his hero's "world-sense" and his "God-sense." "The eternity and infinity of all good seemed crushed [Fitzgerald wrote], washed away in an eternity and infinity of evil."[16] Years later Fitzgerald noted,

> As I grow older I become increasingly a devotee of the "Manichean Heresy" which was to regard humanity as a two-faced creation -- and to give God and the Devil opposite if not equal attributes. That is to say to give good and evil. . . . a proportionate sway in every man.

And in a late entry in his Notebooks he rang this change on the theme: "You can take your choice between God and Sex. If you choose both, you're a smug hypocrite;

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[16]The story was published in the Nassau Literary Magazine in June, 1915. Fitzgerald later rewrote part of it into the more complex story, "Benediction," mentioned above.

if neither, you get nothing."

While Fitzgerald's identification of evil with sex is not absolute (despite Amory's bald equating of the two) it is fairly consistent. Sex is the attractive force which, once encountered, prevents the hero from following his dream, from being ever "as good a man again." Recognition of sex as the destructive element comes too late, though, must always come too late, simply because sex comes so attractively as Eve, as the eternal Helen. It is not too much to say that in his own life Fitzgerald chose sex, not God. (In terms of the symbols he set up in his essay "My Lost City" -- asceticism, triumph, and romance -- he certainly did.) And it is true that that is the wrong choice that all his heroes after Amory Blaine make. Gatsby turns out "all right" at the end; but there is still the "foul dust" that floats in the wake of his dreams. "News of Paris -- Fifteen Years After," an undeveloped sketch that Fitzgerald apparently wrote in 1940, also seems to lay bare the same situation -- the hero in this short piece has relationships with three women (an obliquely mentioned but probable fourth relationship is suggested) and is as desperate and damned as any Fitzgerald hero, feeling himself "become a contemptible drone."

Still, as Lionel Trilling has noted, Fitzgerald's

description of love is remarkably "innocent of mere 'sex,' [is] charged with sentiment. . . . ." The song of the frogs drowns the rumble of the artillery. Fitzgerald's power of love (which Trilling considers the root of the novelist's heroism) gives tragic stature to him and to his heroes. For they are ruined by a fault which is not without its grandeur. Having loved much they can be forgiven much. Having freely chosen their course they can accept their individual responsibility with dignity and look on the fate of others with compassion. They know that for them what one "might have been and done. . . . is [always] lost, spent, gone, dissipated, unrecapturable"; that an adult has "the desire to be finer in grain" than he is. That is, that the man was never really as "good" or strong a man as he had felt that he was. His weakness, his destruction was in his very make-up as man all the time. Concupiscence is inescapable. Hence the Fitzgerald hero is actually doomed from the first, almost predestinated, truly unable to make the right choice at the moment of promise: for there is possibility for him of no more than a token resisting of the all-pervasive, all-overwhelming evil of sex.

That does not, however, excuse him from responsibility. What Fitzgerald called the "spoiled priest" aspect of

himself brings in a harsh judgment on himself and his characters. "I am lost. But you are lover!" Fitzgerald cries in "sad self-loathing" in John Peale Bishop's memorial poem. "And you had that right [Bishop adds]. / The damned do not so own their damnation." Though they may thus escape damnation they are "lost."[17] They are lost precisely because they have mistaken their vocation. They are "spoiled priests." Fitzgerald's last two heroes, Dick Diver and Monroe Stahr, indeed, are essentially priestly in function. Dick is a doctor, a psychiatrist, and we see him working in a fatherly, counselling way. Stahr, considered a "Wine Street Jesus" by some of his associates, is a paternalistic employer, who cares for his people. Although Dick and Stahr and the other Fitzgerald heroes mistake their vocation, the "spoiled priest" is in them and finally asserts himself in their efforts to be "better" than they really are. They have made a wrong choice; mistaking the love object, they chose the world (symbolized in their choice of God's creature, a woman) instead of God (symbolized by their talents), and they necessarily suffer the tragic results.

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[17] Dante placed those who loved evil things instead of God (as the Fitzgerald hero does) in the lowest division of his purgatorial mount. Their way is long but they are not finally excluded from the Earthly Paradise and the beatific vision.

Trial ground for Fitzgerald's theme is his first two novels, This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned, with their respective college boy and dilettante heroes. Neither book is wholly successful as art, but the moral seriousness of both tells something of what Fitzgerald's accomplishment is to consist. With Fitzgerald's theme and fable outlined, we can turn to those two apprentice pieces. For economy I discuss them together; for convenience I break the discussion into the parts "Organization" in Chapter III and "Expression" in Chapter IV.

1920 THROUGH 1924

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY NOVELS: ORGANIZATION

It is difficult to imagine now the state of literary affairs which made Fitzgerald's first novel, This Side of Paradise, an iconoclastic book. But, it has been pointed out, in a literary scene which was decorated with the novels of Peter B. Kyne, Kathleen Norris, James Oliver Curwood, Ethel M. Dell, Harold Bell Wright, and Zane Grey, Fitzgerald's first novel was a "hot, bright comet" across the 1920 sky. It mentioned Freud on page six, was Nietzschean-flavored, "championed youth as against the old, the rebels against the conformists."

As a result, it sold widely to the applause of the critics. The year after its publication Sidney Howard wrote:

> To us the novel [This Side of Paradise] seems the clearest treatment of American youth in any fiction of recent years. We like the flagrant disregard of formula which throws the book from conventional narrative to short story, drama in dialogue, and even to extremely interesting passages in verse. . . . . He is possessed of a fine sense of the significant beauty of things. . . . . His novel would have been better had he written it later in his life, but it would have been less true.

Although it is this quality of being "true" which gives

Fitzgerald's first novel the modest amount of literary value it still has, it was not its "truth" that made it popular. While not one of the "golden multitudes" of the 1920's -- it sold only 50,000 copies as compared, for instance, to the million each of The Great Impersonation and The Sheik -- it sold well for a "good," serious book. Fitzgerald certainly had more talent than such a one of his immediate followers as Dorothy Speare: but that the popularity of This Side of Paradise was due to its attitudes and to what it "revealed" about its subject matter, youth, is suggested by the fact that Miss Speare's similar books sold widely too.

This Side of Paradise was, in Fitzgerald's words, "a somewhat edited history of me and my imagination," and as such it was for the conservative Scribner publishing house "the most original manuscript" received in years. To Fitzgerald's literary mentor Shane Leslie, who introduced the young author to Scribner's, even in its unfinished state it gave "a vivid picture of the American generation that is hastening to war. . . . ." Both crude and clever, as Leslie remarked, it still gave the impression that it was "written by an American Rupert Brooke." This Side of Paradise is actually a plotless, almost incoherent novel about a sensitive,

good-looking boy, Amory Blaine, who goes to prep school, to Princeton, and to war; falls in love several times, once very seriously, and is jilted. The book ends with him disillusioned and almost penniless, nostalgically looking down on the "dreaming spires" of Princeton.

Altogether the experiences of Amory Blaine are not unlike Fitzgerald's own up to the time he wrote the novel. Of course there are differences: Amory Blaine goes overseas; Fitzgerald remained in the States. Amory's great love is a New York City flapper; Fitzgerald's was the daughter of an Alabama judge. Actually, though, as Arthur Mizener has said, This Side depends only "indirectly" on Fitzgerald's personal experience: "we would. . . . be wrong to conclude [Mizener adds] that what [Amory] felt about his experience was what Fitzgerald felt about his." Rather than being autobiographical, This Side is the semi-autobiographical novel that seems almost inevitable for a young writer. The autobiographical impulse itself is at least as old as St. Augustine's Confessions; the semi-autobiographical has produced such works as Pendennis and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

Granted that the material of the novel is from Fitzgerald's personal experience, one still must see that the shape it takes is a matter of art, not life.

Fitzgerald "eagerly confessed. . . . to [Owen] Johnson the first time they met," Arthur Mizener says, that the "idea of a book about a young man's college experience and his coming of age was suggested to him by books like. . . . Johnson's Stover at Yale. . . . ." Fitzgerald's conception of his subject, though, as Mizener adds, "was very different from Johnson's." And it was also different from Compton Mackenzie's in Sinister Street, much as is made of that "influence" by many from Edmund Wilson and John Peale Bishop in 1919 and 1920 to Arthur Mizener in 1951. One has only to read over Sinister Street and This Side of Paradise in succession, going from the turgidity and long-windedness of the first to the lightness and elliptic swiftness of the second to reaffirm his conviction that "influence" is one of the most untraceable of phenomena.[1] Fitzgerald

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[1] In an acid review of This Side of Paradise, Frances Newman said that Fitzgerald's "memory" seemed "much more highly developed than his imagination" and, noting a parallelism of characters in the two books, This Side and Sinister Street, as well as (absurdly) the fact that Michael's and Amory's last names (Pane and Blaine) rhymed, all but charged Fitzgerald with plagiarism. Amory's mother, for instance, Miss Newman thought a caricature of Michael's mother; Monsignor Darcy was in Fitzgerald's book, she said, only because a good priest figured in Sinister Street.

Certainly there are resemblances between the two books. One volume of Sinister Street, "Youth's Encounter," was for Fitzgerald's then "unformed" literary taste, he said, "a perfect book." But the influence of Mackenzie's novel on This Side of Paradise, Fitzgerald felt, was

himself as readily admitted Mackenzie's "influence" as Johnson's, and added Wells's and Tarkington's for good measure. All four, along with Rupert Brooke, Chesterton, and a host of others, have some hand in This Side of Paradise. But theirs is a ghostly hand and what Fitzgerald does with all his influences is

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[1](cont'd.) "much more in intention than in literal fact." It had occurred to him, Fitzgerald said,

> to write an American version of the history of that sort [Michael Fane] of young man -- in which, no doubt, I was hindered by lack of perspective as well as by congenital short-comings.
> But I was also hindered by a series of resemblances between my life and that of Michael Fane which, had I been a more conscientious man, might have precluded my ever attempting an autobiographical novel.

These resemblances in experience and the fact that, as Fitzgerald noted, he and Mackenzie "may have drunk at the same springs" -- Dorian Grey and Some Other Gods -- account for a good many of the suggestions of "plagiarism," overt or otherwise. Still, even Fitzgerald's savage denial of the dependence of Mrs. Blaine on Mrs. Fane does not stand Mrs. Blaine on her own two feet: she is a lot like Mrs. Fane. And both Amory and Michael do have their "Henty biasses"; the phrase, however, is Fitzgerald's own and surely the reading of American prep school and English public school boys could be enough alike so that Fitzgerald is not necessarily in debt to Mackenzie for the idea of a Henty "bias." The phenomenon is probably fairly common. Mutual use of Arnold's phrase "dreaming spires" to denote the impression a group of Gothic buildings gives is scarcely conclusive evidence of plagiarism either.

More important than any resemblances between the two novels is the young Fitzgerald's ability to make a widely different use of materials similar to Mackenzie's. Both This Side and Sinister Street are stories of a young man's education: Mackenzie's, though, is a "novel of saturation" in the manner of Arnold Bennett; Fitzgerald's, a poetic novel in the manner of James Joyce.

pure Fitzgerald.

This Side of Paradise itself is what its hero dubs a "quest" book. It is not always clear what Amory is in quest of, but that he is on a quest is implicit throughout the book: that he finds "himself" is explicit at the end. The story itself is the journey through life (youth) that the young man must make in order to achieve self-knowledge. In terms of the psychological machinery that Fitzgerald utilizes in this novel, This Side might well be subtitled "Amory Blaine, From Egotist to Personage." I cannot help thinking, much as this machinery may delight some readers, that it is one of the crucial faults in the novel. The terms themselves may owe more to glib 1920 psychology than to George Meredith, but they still have some of the same drawbacks as the Bunyanesque "Pilgrim's Scrip," or "Book of Egoism." Fitzgerald integrates his terms slightly more than Meredith does either the "Pilgrim's Scrip" (in The Ordeal of Richard Feverel) or the "Book of Egoism" (in The Egoist); or at least they appear in dialogue, not in undigested lumps of exposition. Still, they do thrust the reader away from the scene of the action, and the discussion of them is not witty enough to be enjoyed for itself as, perhaps, Meredith's elaborations on his similar machinery can be.

The terms "egotist" and "personage" do serve to give This Side a certain shape. The young man concerned solely with self "comes of age" when, toward the end of his quest, in a psychic moment he finds "something that he wanted, had always wanted and always would want -- not to be admired, as he had feared; not to be loved, as he had made himself believe; but to be necessary to people. . . . ." This statement of his final discovery gives the design of the book: Book I is concerned with what he had feared he really wanted, "to be admired"; Book II with what he had made himself believe he wanted, "to be loved." Although the design of Amory's spiritual progress from wanting to be admired and from wanting to be loved, to wanting to be necessary is certainly the intentional design of This Side, it is a design with blurred outlines. The reason I would suggest for the blurring is that Fitzgerald's intentions were changed when he was in the process of writing the novel.

Admittedly most comment on author's intentions is speculative and usually a little beside the point. Some times, though, when an author has failed, not in subject matter or intention but in communication, such speculation can be relevant. In regard to this novel we are fortunate in knowing, through the good offices

of Mizener and others, how many times the book was written. Fitzgerald had finished one version of the manuscript that was to become This Side of Paradise before he left Princeton; he completed another version in March, 1918, having written it, romantically, in army camps late at night. Fitzgerald submitted this manuscript to Scribner's; suggested changes were made a little later and the manuscript was again sent to Scribner's. It was still rejected, though, in October, 1918. A third version was completed between July, 1919, when Fitzgerald returned to St. Paul upon Zelda's breaking of their engagement, and September, 1919. The whole manuscript was revised during these few months, but the limited time in which it was done makes it seem unlikely that what had already been written was changed materially: "the chapters about Princeton and the Isabelle [in Book I] and Eleanor [in Book II] episodes. . . . [were] carried over into [the final version]," Arthur Mizener says, "with only minor revisions from [the earlier versions]." Almost all of Book II was added in the this third writing of the novel; even this addition, however, was not written in those two months; instead it was a utilization of already published sketches.

It is predictable that this sort of hasty writing and rewriting should result in a work in which conflicting

impulses are clearly visible. The whole of Book I, compounded of satire, sociological comment and adolescent posturings, logically culminates in the "End of Many Things" section with which it concludes. The first six pages of this book, for instance, contains a satire on a certain class of rich drifters of which Amory and his mother, Beatrice O'Hara Blaine, are examples. Amory is treated kindly enough, but Beatrice is mercilessly (and what seems, eventually, pointlessly) ridiculed. It may be, as Fitzgerald said, that Beatrice is Fitzgerald's attempt to present an actual person, "the mother of a friend of mine, whose name I cannot mention," but the fact remains that she is an almost unbearably literary creation. Certain modern references excised, she could easily have stepped out of Sinister Street, or out of a novel by Meredith, Thackeray, or even Edith Wharton. While granting her a possible actual existence, one is still churlishly compelled to protest that she is seen through the spectacles of literature, not life. Fitzgerald himself realized later that one could get from books only "rhythm" and "technique"; it would seem that in his first novel he was trying to get much more.

Beatrice not only fails as a character but also seems a vestigial remain in the novel. She enters at certain appointed times to send Amory off to school and

to introduce him to Monsignor Darcy; to go through Myra and Amory's fortunes; and to write an amusingly "practical" letter. Despite the beginning emphasis on heredity[2] and the stylized psychological analyses of "the fundamental Amory plus Beatrice," really very little is made of Beatrice or of what Amory inherits from her. Certainly Amory at St. Regis and Princeton does not live in the style or have the attitudes of the heir of the O'Hara and Blaine fortunes. Also, Beatrice dies offstage, a little as though her creator had grown tired of her.

Immediately following the generalized narrative and social satire which present Amory's background, is an incident dramatising the author's real subject, the young Amory. Myra St. Claire's invitation to a bobbing party which opens this section, Amory's reply, Myra herself, their conversation in general, are in the world of Booth Tarkington. The characterization of Amory, however, is connected neither with Tarkington nor with Beatrice O'Hara Blaine. Here, in his stage of wanting to be admired, Amory is compelled by the idea of having to make a "horrible public descent [from Myra's car]. . . . before sixty reproachful eyes" because

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[2]"Amory Blaine inherited from his mother," This Side of Paradise begins, "every trait except the stray inexpressible few that made him worth while."

of his initial false step, into a desperate stratagem. In Parkingtonian accents he manages to arouse Myra's interest in him and to persuade her to go to the club rather than belatedly and shamefully joining the bobbing party.

At the club he kisses her, the first time he has kissed a girl, and she responds. It is at this moment that Amory is seized with "revulsion. . . . disgust, loathing for the whole incident. He desired frantically to be away, never to see Myra again, never to kiss anyone; he became conscious of his face and hers, of their clinging hands, and he wanted to creep out of his body and hide somewhere safe out of sight, up in the corner of his mind." In this way a later dominant Fitzgerald theme of sex as evil is introduced. The unwonted seriousness lasts, though, only a page beyond Amory's revulsion. Succeeding sections do little to capitalize on Amory's reaction to his first kiss, and, indeed, the theme of sex as evil does not recur in this novel for a hundred pages.

The remainder of Chapter I is made up of a generalized narration with five briefly dramatized incidents taking Amory to and through St. Regis and placing him on the threshold of Princeton. In general, the first chapter is light in tone. The "Incident of the Well-Meaning Professor" section seems almost as out of

place as the final sombre line of the chapter:

> Years afterward [the chapter concludes], when he went back to St. Regis, he seemed to have forgotten the successes of sixth-form year, and to be able to picture himself only as the unadjustable boy who had hurried down corridors, jeered at by his rabid contemporaries mad with common sense.

The rest of Book I (Chapters II, III, and IV) is concerned with Amory's years at Princeton, his further efforts "to be admired." The primary intention here seems to be to reflect college life faithfully and a little nostalgically; at times in Chapters II and III the narrative even becomes sociological in emphasis (the social system at Princeton, the Triangle show, "Petting"). At other times in these chapters and in Chapter IV as well, the narrative is required to carry a burden of seriousness that does not harmonize with the general facetiousness of most of the incidents.

The events which concern Amory's classmate Dick Humbird might serve as an example. Since Amory's freshman year Dick has seemed to him "a perfect type of aristocrat." When he remarks on this idealization of Dick to Alec, however, he is told that Dick's father was a grocery clerk who made money in Tacoma real estate and then came East to lead a life among the rich. Amory's disillusionment in Dick is probably a key one in his development. His discovery about Dick's background is quickly passed over, though, and when, a

few pages later, Dick dies "like an animal" in an automobile accident, the reader is not prepared for the importance the author apparently means to attach to the incident. In addition, Dick's death is so quickly succeeded by a continuation of Amory's adolescent affair with Isabelle that later allusion to the accident is consequently meaningless. One suspects that the evil face the devil wears in the next chapter turns out to be "the face of Dick Humbird" because of some symbolical importance Amory gave to his discovery that appearance is not reality. But that is not evident in context.

The devil episode itself is the other almost incongruously serious incident in Book I (at the end of Chapter III). While Amory and one of his friends are in a night club with two chorus girls, Amory first sights the devil. Later, in the girls' apartment, when one of them gives Amory a "sidelong, suggestive smile," the devil appears again:

> At the second that [Amory's] decision [not to resist temptation] came, he looked up and saw, ten yards from him, the man who had been in the café. . . . .

The "man" is the devil, an ordinary-looking chap, except for his feet. They are

> all wrong. . . with a sort of wrongness that he felt rather than knew. . . . It was like weakness in a good woman, or blood on satin; one of those

> terrible incongruities that shake little things in the back of the brain. He wore no shoes, but, instead, a sort of half moccasin, pointed, though, like the shoes they wore in the fourteenth century, and with the little ends curling up. [The suspension points are Fitzgerald's.]

The clearly symbolical feet make up the horror of Amory's vision. "Those feet. . . . those feet," he thinks as he descends in the elevator to the lower floor. During the rest of his psychic experience, he is pursued by "soft shoes," "footsteps," "footfalls," or "two feet," in a way remarkably reminiscent of Francis Thompson's flight from the Hound of Heaven. At the climax of the vision after he has "sunk through the thin surface" of horror, Amory moves "in a region where the feet. . . . were real, living things, things he must accept." It is his final fear that he will become one of the "footfalls."

The assumption by this hound of hell of Dick Humbird's face ("a face pale and distorted with a sort of infinite evil"), as already noted, should be more meaningful than it is. As given, it seems an arbitrary transposition of the face of evil as Amory saw it in Princeton to the face of evil in New York. It is likely that Amory's vision of evil in the city, which spoils for him the romance of Broadway, was meant to be a stage in his education. Possibly Amory had illusions about sex heretofore. Now, painted faces,

suggestive smiles, the underside of horror creates in him a revulsion against all that they imply.

This devil episode, a return to the theme introduced when Amory first kissed a girl, has considerable importance so far as Fitzgerald's total intention in This Side of Paradise is concerned. But the attachment of the episode to a chapter which includes, among other things, the ridiculous ending of the Amory-Isabelle affair, Amory's removal from the Princetonian board, the death of Amory's father with accompanying financial details, "the appearance of the term 'Personage,'" and Amory's satire "In a Lecture-Room," all these events, suggests that the author failed to see exactly what incidents were important and dramatically related to one another.

Chapter IV, the last chapter in Book I, is less diffuse than Chapter III: Burne Holiday, Clara, the coming of war to Princeton are its principal subjects. The chapter is still not uniform in motive -- one-half is concerned with Amory's admiration of his fellow student, the idealistic reformer, Burne; one-fourth with Clara; and one-fourth with the coming of war -- but the tone is so much more even in this chapter than in the preceding three that the chapter seems almost a unit.

The confusion of structure in This Side, as

suggested earlier, may be due to its muddled motive; the muddled motive itself may be due to the many rewritings. Although it is not a long book (305 pages), it seems as though its young author had tried to get everything in. Precisely "everything" is a requirement of what Henry James called the novel of "saturation," a term which Wagner has applied to This Side. But how unlike a novel of saturation Fitzgerald's first novel is one can see by re-examining the novels (Wells's and Bennett's) that come for James under

> our so convenient measure of value by saturation. This is the greatest value, to our sense, in either of them [Wells or Bennett], their other values, even when at the highest, not being quite in proportion to it; and as to be saturated is to be documented, to be able even on occasion to prove quite enviably and potently so, they are alike in the authority that creates emulation. [Italics are James's.]

The deficiency in these writers and in Mackenzie, James thought, was in their lack of a center of interest, a sense of the whole.

> "Yes, yes -- but is this all? [one asks.] These are the circumstances of the interest -- we see, we see; but where is the interest itself, where and what is its centre, and how are we to measure it in relation to that?" [Italics are James's.]

Only in Mackenzie of these "saturation" novelists, and specifically in Sinister Street, were there "betrayals," James felt, of a controlling idea and a pointed intention.

Even more in This Side of Paradise are there betrayals of a controlling idea and a pointed intention. The overall design "From Egotist to Personage" is obviously there as the subheads, if nothing else, make clear. But the saturation of Wells, Bennett, and Mackenzie is simply not there -- Mizener to the contrary notwithstanding. Indeed, although This Side is of the chronicle or biographical type of novel covering a long lapse of years so much favored by Wells and developed at such length by Mackenzie in Sinister Street (1132 pages), it really has less resemblance to either Wells or Mackenzie than to the James Joyce of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

Both Joyce's and Fitzgerald's novels take a young man from boyhood through his school years to college and slightly beyond. Both turn on a final choice, Stephen's between religion and art, Amory's[3] between goodness and greatness. In addition, the sudden shifts in time without transition and the elliptic underdevelopment of episodes in Fitzgerald's first novel are more like what one gets in Joyce than anything in the other, more traditional novelists.

The creative impulse in This Side, though, is not

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[3]Amory's early names were Stephen Dalius and Stephen Palms.

as controlled as that in A Portrait. Fitzgerald's novel actually "breaks" at the Interlude between Books I and II; and Book II has little necessary relation to Book I. In essence, we have fragments of two novels in This Side: one satirical, sociological, semi-realistic, and light-hearted; the other individual, highly emotional, depressed and sombre in tone. Thus in his first novel we see Fitzgerald trying to utilize both principal kinds of the novel, the one concerned with inner life, the morally intensive novel, concentrating on the quality of experience; and the other with social "reality," the socially extensive novel, concentrating on the quantity of experience.[4]

Both the morally intensive and the socially extensive impulses are present in Book I, "The Romantic Egotist"; the impulse in Book II, "The Education of a Personage," is primarily that of the morally intensive novel. In the Interlude (made up of two letters and a poem) between the two books, the war and the death of Amory's mother are passed over, and then Amory's post-Princeton, post-war career is taken up in Book II, with emphasis placed

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[4]In the sense that Mackenzie alone of the "saturation" novelists tried to bring these two kinds of novels together, Fitzgerald is closer in This Side to Mackenzie than to any other novelist. And of course there is Fitzgerald's well-known admiration for Mackenzie at this stage of his career. See note 1 on pages 51-52, above.

on extremely personal events rather than on social customs or social scenes. Partly as a consequence of this, the chapters in Book II are more unified than those in Book I; they might be briefly outlined somewhat as follows:

Chapter I. Rosalind and Amory;

Chapter II. Reaction to broken engagement;

Chapter III. Eleanor and Amory;

Chapter IV. Amory's gesture;

Chapter V. Amory's coming of age.

Facetiousness and sentimentality in both content and form weaken the first, the Rosalind and Amory chapter. Written primarily in dialogue with the characters' names placed before their speeches and with "stage directions" to indicate the action, it is trite and wooden. These lines of dialogue and stage directions from the climactic scene of farewell between Rosalind and Amory are typical:

> ROSALIND: . . . . I can't marry you and ruin both our lives.
> AMORY: We've got to take our chance for happiness.
> ROSALIND: Dawson says I'd learn to love him.
> (AMORY with his head sunk in his hands does not move. The life seems suddenly gone out of him.)
> . . . . . .
> AMORY: . . . . It's just that we're both high-strung, and this week —
> (His voice is curiously old. She crosses to him and taking his face in her hands, kisses him.)

ROSALIND: I can't, Amory. I can't be shut away from the trees and flowers, cooped up in a little flat, waiting for you. You'd hate me in a narrow atmosphere. I'd make you hate me.

(Again she is blinded by sudden uncontrolled tears.)

AMORY: Rosalind -----

ROSALIND: Oh, darling, go -- Don't make it harder! I can't stand it -----

AMORY (His face drawn, his voice strained) Do you know what you're saying? Do you mean forever?

(There is a difference somehow in the quality of their suffering.)

. . . . . .

AMORY: (A little hysterically) I can't give you up! I can't, that's all! I've got to have you!

ROSALIND: (A hard note in her voice) You're being a baby now.

AMORY: (Wildly) I don't care! You're spoiling our lives!

ROSALIND: I'm doing the wise thing, the only thing.

[Italics are Fitzgerald's.]

Since this Rosalind-Amory chapter (along with the Dick Rumbird, the Burne Holiday, and the encounter with the devil sections) is supposed to be influential in transforming Amory from an egotist into a personage, this falsetto quality is a major weakness in presentation. Admittedly Rosalind is a version of Zelda Sayre, and the whole episode is based on the real life Zelda-Scott broken romance. It may be that the actual events were too close to Fitzgerald when he wrote the latter part of this chapter (a portion of which has just been transcribed). For, though it may be true as an artistic principle (as Fitzgerald believed) that a

young writer has only his emotions to sell,[5] the fact remains that the young Fitzgerald's selling of his emotions here in Chapter I of Book II of This Side is not at all successful.

Chapter II of Book II, dealing in part with Amory's reaction to his broken engagement, has some diffusive faults similar to those in Book I. Almost half the chapter concerns Amory's three-week drinking-to-forget holiday. He is pulled up short by the advent of prohibition and the rest of the chapter contains bits and snatches of his conversation, literary and otherwise, intended evidently to show his intellectual restlessness. A letter of advice and analysis from Monsignor Darey and two hasty transitional paragraphs conclude the chapter.

Both the next two chapters, in contrast, are closely unified, Chapter III developing the Eleanor-Amory episode at some length and Chapter IV briefly presenting Amory's "supercilious sacrifice." Obviously the Swinburnian Eleanor is the dark heroine, the opposite number of the light heroines, Rosalind and, earlier (in Amory's Princeton days), Clara. We are

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[5] Years later Fitzgerald was to tell a young aspirant to his craft that when one began to write he had "only [his] emotions to sell." "In 'This Side of Paradise' [Fitzgerald said] I wrote about a love affair that was still bleeding as fresh as the skin on a haemophile." (Italics are Fitzgerald's.)

baldly told that "Eleanor was, say, the last time that evil crept close to Amory under the mask of beauty" and also that "neither of them [Eleanor or Amory] could care as he had cared once before [for Rosalind]." But in the total design of the novel the Eleanor-Amory affair seems an interpolation, if not, indeed, mere padding. The Amory of this chapter, despite -- or even because of -- his attitudinizing about his ill-fated love for Rosalind is an earlier, superficially ironic Amory, not the thoughtful, restrained, sacrificing Amory of the next chapter. Chapter III (the Eleanor-Amory chapter) actually can be omitted from Book II without necessitating any fundamental changes in the whole book. For succeeding Amory's reaction to his broken engagement as it does, and preceding his sacrifice of himself at Atlantic City, it serves only to halt the narrative.

Chapter IV opens with Amory returned North from Maryland and revisiting Atlantic City in October. By chance Rosalind's brother is at Atlantic City also, in rather disreputable female company; before the night is over, Amory takes Alec's place in a compromising situation with the young woman. In a psychic moment before he chooses to take Alec's place, he realizes

> that there were other things in the room besides people . . . over and around the figure [the girl] crouched on the bed there hung an aura, gossamer as a moonbeam, tainted as stale, weak wine, yet a

> horror, diffusively brooding already over the three of them [the girl, Alec, and Amory] . . . and over by the window among the stirring curtains stood something else, featureless and indistinguishable, yet strangely familiar. . . . [Suspension periods are Fitzgerald's.]

He sees "the great impersonality of sacrifice" and that "sacrifice was no purchase of freedom."

> It was like a great elective office, it was like an inheritance of power. . . . . . Amory knew that afterward Alec would secretly hate him for having done so much for him. . . .
> . . . . . .
> Sacrifice by its very nature was arrogant and impersonal; sacrifice should be eternally supercilious. [Suspension periods after "him" and before "Amory" are Fitzgerald's.]

Apparently this experience is meant to be a second important stage (his encounter with the devil in Book I was the initial one) in his education. It is so underdeveloped, however, that its full significance is not clear. (Amory's musings on the nature of sacrifice are stated as come-to-realise <u>conclusions</u>.) In addition, the outcome of the sacrifice along with three other events important in Amory's life is all too quickly given in six paragraphs in the section entitled "The Collapse of Several Pillars" at the end of the chapter.

First, Amory reads the "dozen lines" in the paper detailing his Atlantic City sacrifice. Second, directly above it in blatant and unlikely coincidence is the announcement of Rosalind's engagement to Dawson. Third, a day later Amory is informed that he will receive no

more money from his stocks. Fourth, a short while after all this he learns of Monsignor Darcy's death. The chapter concludes: "He knew then what it was that he had perceived among the curtains of the room in Atlantic City."

What, exactly, had he perceived? death? disaster? evil? I do not have the answer, but I suspect that it was Fitzgerald's purpose to place Amory in a position where he faces "failure in every direction" so that a self-examination is necessary.[6] In a sense, with the gratuitous, impersonally assumed humiliation in Atlantic City he grows up; for this gallant gesture is not undertaken for either of the unworthy motives ("to be admired. . . . to be loved") which have dictated his actions heretofore. Hence it serves as a transitional action between his "egotist" and his "personage" days.

The chapter which succeeds Amory's realization of what "he had perceived among the curtains of the room in Atlantic City," is, indeed, entitled "The Egotist Becomes a Personage." Clearly Fitzgerald tried in this chapter to bring all the threads of the preceding eight chapters together. The three main blocks in the chapter -- Amory's self-examination, culminating in his

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[6]"Of Amory's attempted sacrifice [we are told in the next chapter] had been born merely the full realization of his disillusion. . . . ."

realization at Monsignor's funeral; his use of "The Big Man with Cop-Eyes" as a sounding-board for his socialistic opinions; and his final analysis of the problem of evil -- are intended, probably, to reveal the Amory who has become a "personage."

The self-examination opens with Amory's vision of the city, not unlike that in T. S. Eliot's 1917 poems, and proceeds through better than a third of the chapter. Just prior to Monsignor's funeral Amory is said to have escaped "from a small enclosure [his egotism] into a great labyrinth." He is, we are told, "where Goethe was when he began 'Faust' . . . . where Conrad was when he wrote 'Almayer's Folly.'" The grandiosity of the comparison aside for a moment, I think it should be clear that what Fitzgerald meant was that Amory was about to begin his real work: Goethe began *Faust* when he was about Amory's age; *Almayer's Folly* is Conrad's first novel. And between the Amory-like Fitzgerald and Goethe, Lionel Trilling has noted,

> there is not really so entire a difference as piety and textbooks might make us think: both the young men so handsome, both winning immediate and notorious success, both rather more interested in life than in art, each the spokesman and symbol of his own restless generation.

Amory's success, though, is not to be encompassed in this novel. Instead, after his escape from an enclosure

into a labyrinth, Amory attends Monsignor Darcy's funeral. The section is all too short (one and a third pages), especially since it is meant to be the culmination of the egotist-personage progress of This Side of Paradise. Here Amory sees that what "he wanted, had always wanted and always would want [is] to be necessary to people. . . . ."

After Monsignor's funeral, Amory starts out to walk to Princeton and is given a lift by "two middle-aged men, one of them small and anxious looking, apparently an artificial growth on the other who was large and begoggled and imposing": the big man with goggles and his chauffeur. This Wellsian section seems an interpolation in this final chapter, if not, more seriously, intellectual padding. Amory carries on a glib discussion about socialism, dealing in paradoxes, irony, and satire at the expense of a great many people. Undoubtedly Amory's discussing socialism with the industrialist who has given him a ride is intended to show something of Amory's intellectual precocity and daring; but what it suggests more than the author intended is Amory's callowness. Amory gets a lot of bitterness out of his system, and the episode ends inconclusively with the big man turning out to be the father of one of Amory's classmates at Princeton. They part on good terms.

On the whole, this episode has more connections with the pictures of social reality in Book I than with the parts that surround it here in Book II. It is concerned with Amory as a member of "his" generation rather than Amory as an individual. The last section of This Side, Amory's final examination of the problem of evil, unlike the big man episode, is a continuation of the moral theme embryonically present throughout the novel. Book I has three incidents relating to this theme; Amory's "revulsion" after his first kiss; Dick Humbird's death; and Amory's strategically important encounter with the devil. The last, particularly, is emphasized as a definite "stage" in Amory's development; it is equal in significance to his later experiences in the Atlantic City hotel room and at Monsignor Darcy's funeral. But all three incidents in Book I are too surrounded by trivial and frivolous material to assume their rightful importance.

It is clearly Fitzgerald's intention to make Amory more conscious of evil than the average person. Monsignor Darcy, who, conveniently for the author, frequently analyzes Amory, says that the fear that keeps Amory from running "amuck" is "that half-miraculous sixth sense by which you detect evil, it's the half-realized fear of God in your heart." In the sophomoric

discussion of evil in the last section of Book I, Amory posits the war as "the great protest against the superman. . . ." and agrees with Alec that the superman is a "gifted man without a moral sense" and exclaims against the idolization of the superman: "If we could only learn to look on evil as evil, whether it's clothed in filth or monotony or magnificence." (Italics are Fitzgerald's.) But this discussion of the problem of evil and other references to evil are not central, and so the serious consideration in this last chapter of Book II (and the last chapter of the novel) of the choice Amory faces between being great and being good comes somewhat as a surprise. Of course Amory has had a certain amount of additional experience of evil in the world.

Still when earlier in the chapter, he sees being "good" as a discipline which could curb him into mediocrity, the important realization is merely stated; the same is true now when, with the "problem of evil . . . . solidified for [him] into the problem of sex" and inseparably linked with beauty,[7] he renounces beauty and as a consequence feels that he is "leaving

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[7]This is a curiously un-Wellsian echo of Wells. (Wells's characters are frequently concerned with what their society considers right and wrong but never with evil.) "I was afraid to think either of sex," Wells writes in The New Machiavelli, "Or (what I have always found inseparable from a kind of sexual emotion) beauty."

behind him his chance of being a certain type of artist. It seemed so much more important to be a certain sort of man." This serious moral theme, which appears only at isolated moments in This Side of Paradise, is actually the significance of the "From Egotist to Personage" design of the novel. So much intervenes that it is sometimes forgotten; it is there, however; and because it is there and because it is imaginatively realized at moments, This Side of Paradise is a more important first novel than it might otherwise have been.

2

While Fitzgerald is not the technical experimenter that, say, Faulkner is, his total work shows at least three or four different basic methods of handling his material. One method is that used in This Side of Paradise and Tender Is the Night, where thematic rather than narrative emphasis is the fundamental principle of organization; the material is episodic and the sense of passing time is all important for the total effect. Another is the method in The Beautiful and Damned and "Babylon Revisited" where a specific dramatic issue is presented and resolved, and there is the sense of its all being dramatically presented, with only a suggestion (in The Beautiful and Damned) of an author

peering around his characters. A third method is that in The Great Gatsby or "The Rich Boy" or The Last Tycoon, where a character presents the story in his own language or flow of bein before us; the author himself does not obtrude so that the method is dramatic, except that the subjective reference of the character is the medium of presentation.

Thus Fitzgerald's first two novels, This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned, are examples of two different methods of narration. The Beautiful and Damned, however, contains some of the same conflicting tendencies between the morally intensive and the socially extensive as outlined above in This Side. Even in the beginning of the novel form itself there is the question whether the novel is to emphasize the external social scene (Defoe) or the inner turmoil (Richardson), and both kinds have been written, sometimes meeting in a single author (George Eliot), down through literary history. When Fitzgerald began writing, it seemed (in Arthur Mizener's words) that H. G. Wells had satisfyingly brought the two kinds of novel together by making "the political novel personal." The other novelist who had a marked importance for the early Fitzgerald, Compton Mackenzie, as Arthur Mizener has pointed out further, wrote novels similar in kind to Wells's, with similar appeal. "Here, for a moment anyway, appeared to be a

solution to the problem of representing the intricate inner life of the individual and also doing a kind of social history of the times." A consequence of this seeming solution is that Fitzgerald in both his first two novels appears unable to make up his mind what kind of a novel he is writing.

Possibly the tendencies do not necessarily conflict; perhaps in time, as Arthur Mizener seems to think, some novelist will successfully combine the disparate tendential streams. In Fitzgerald's case, however, effectiveness is achieved in his later work only by letting his genuinely poetic gift for dealing with subjective reality drown out the social history. As pointed out above, several times the progress of one part of This Side simply stops when social history enters. But this first novel and Fitzgerald's first volume of short stories had been much praised for their "mirroring of reality," and had been valued as a revelation of the activities of the younger generation. (This Side of Paradise had even been advertised as the "wonderful story of the adolescent he-vamp.")

For this reason there is a great deal of social comment in The Beautiful and Damned; on the whole the comment is quite witty. But it is not related to the problem of why Anthony Patch is unable to live a life of significant endeavor, which really concerns Fitzgerald

in this novel. Fitzgerald had already found his theme and his principal subject (the fable made out of his own experience). Neither mesh well with his desire to "reflect his times." Fitzgerald is a moralist rather than a satirist, and the quality which he posits as Anthony's tragic flaw -- "understanding too well to blame" -- is his own also, a quality which satirists do not possess.

The obvious intention of making The Beautiful and Damned a satire succeeds in vitiating much of the force the novel might otherwise have had. What seems to be the initial idea of the novel is not a bad one: Anthony Patch, a younger Prufrock, with, in Fitzgerald's words, "the tastes and weaknesses of an artist but with no actual creative inspiration," was to be followed "between his 25th and 33rd years (1913-1921). How he and his beautiful young wife are wrecked on the shoals of dissipation is told in the story." Something happened to the conception, though, and The Beautiful and Damned, as we have it, while haunting is the most wooden and unpromising of Fitzgerald's novels.

After all that can be said against This Side of Paradise has been said the fact remains that it does not commit what Fitzgerald himself considered the

cardinal sin of fiction: it does not fail to live. Written hurriedly but with gusto and a hard determination to succeed, This Side is a good example of a book which succeeds despite a muddled conception, a confusing structure, and bad writing. Even the well-known fact that its Amory-like author wrote the novel in order that he might make a choice exactly the reverse of Amory's does not detract from the "sincerity" of the book or its hero. Amory's assertion of his desire to be "good" rather than "great" is, as it were, Fitzgerald's attempt to exorcise the shade of Rosalind. Given the nature of the man, that he is not successful is almost inevitable. How is a man to remain "spiritually unmarried"? Amory did not have the answer; neither did Fitzgerald. As soon as This Side of Paradise was published he married his own Rosalind after all, and, his experience then complete, he added the final element to the romantic fable that he had made out of his own knowledge of life: the inevitable degeneration of the "spiritually married" man.

In The Beautiful and Damned concrete evidence is substituted for the flat statement of This Side; the filling out of the theme of his first novel makes it appear that Fitzgerald had always intuitively sensed the implications of Amory's perception of evil. According to Fitzgerald's vision it is Amory who makes

the right choice; Anthony Patch who makes the wrong one. And The Beautiful and Damned is the story of this wrong choice and what results. In other words, it is not so much a story of a marriage (as it is sometimes said to be) as the effect of Anthony's attaining of what he thought he wanted: to be loved.

Anthony Patch is an Oscar Wildean dilettante, who lives a life of amusing idleness before he meets Gloria; he has been to Harvard and to Europe, and now, in a "reproachless apartment" on East Fifty-Second Street, he awaits the death of his multimillionaire grandfather, Adam Patch of Tarrytown. Anthony dallies platonically with Geraldine, a theater usherette, until he meets Gloria Gilbert, a society girl or, rather, as we are coyly informed, a "bogus aristocrat." "Coast-to-coast Gloria" she is called, a beautiful, glamorous flapper, originally of Kansas City, who trails a wake of broken hearts. Anthony succumbs to her self-absorbed charm, and after an interval of dangling him she returns his love and they marry. Their life of cultivated leisure together degenerates into one of excessive drinking and partying, climaxed by the appearance of the rabid prohibitionist, Anthony's grandfather, "Cross" Patch, at one of their brawls. He disinherits Anthony and dies shortly thereafter. Subsequently Anthony and Gloria's life is one long expectation of when they will get

their money.

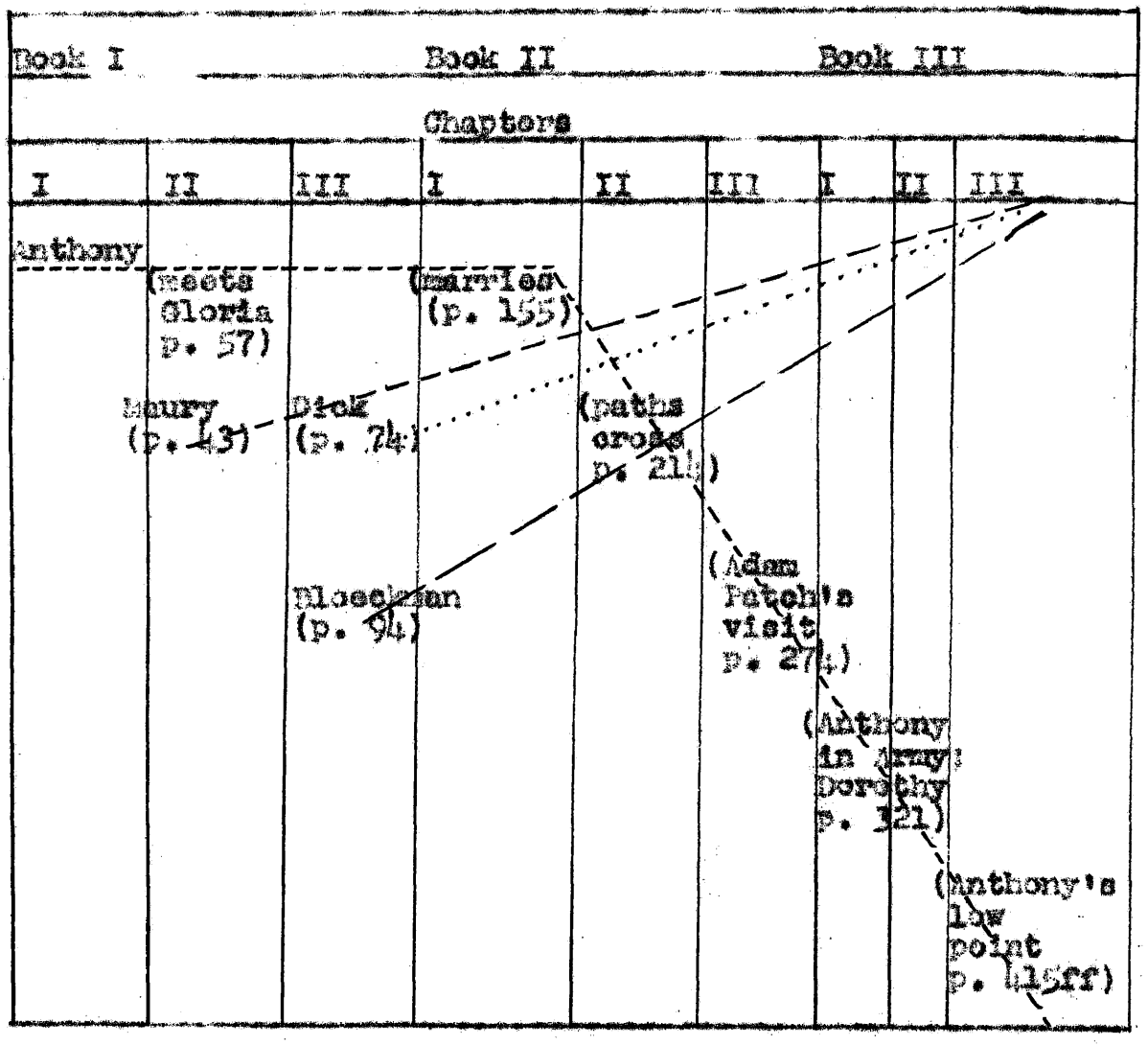
During Anthony's undistinguished career in the Army during the first World War, he drifts into an unplatonic affair with another Geraldine -- Dorothy Raycroft, a Southern girl of the lower classes. After the war, their income dwindling as a result of the inroads they make on their capital, Anthony and Gloria drift on, Anthony becoming steadily more alcoholic and Gloria less beautiful. At the end of the novel, just prior to the successful conclusion of their suit for "Cross" Gatch's money, Anthony's mind snaps; and so, wealthy, damned, Gloria no longer beautiful, Anthony no longer sane, they sail for Europe together. "It was a hard fight," Anthony says to himself with tears of self-pity in his eyes, "but I didn't give up and I came through!"

Thus the design of The Beautiful and Damned is clear from the beginning: once Anthony chooses to be loved by Gloria his journey is steadily downward. A weak, uncreative person, he proceeds along a fairly even, though idle, way without any great happiness or unhappiness until he meets Gloria (Chapter II, Book I, one-seventh of the way through the novel). All is anti-climax after that.

At least three other stories are meant to complement Anthony's: Dick's, Maury's, and Bloeckman's. Bloeckman's

movement through social space is exactly the reverse of Anthony's. While Anthony deteriorates physically and descends financially and socially, Bloeckman becomes more and more "refined" and ascends financially and socially. Maury's and Dick's movements are ascendant in the social sphere; descendent morally. The material progress of both of them is at the cost of their integrity. Anthony's decline, which is also a moral degeneration, is an atrophy of will. Ironically, while he scorns those who pursue money and success at a personal cost of loss of integrity and dignity, he is doing exactly that himself. While his grandfather lives, Anthony continually curries favor with him, even making an abased visit to Tarrytown in an attempt to wheedle his way back into favor just before Adam Patch's death. And in order to break the will Anthony and Gloria both testify falsely. The amoral Gloria, as much as The Beautiful and Damned is her story, too, declines physically. Since her soul is made up of vanity, when she loses her youth and "beauty" she loses almost everything. Dick is a warning of what Anthony might have been, and in the depths of his dissipation, even, Anthony is able to be contemptuous of his self-deceiving friend.

The various movements in the novel might be plotted in this way:



This visualization of the movements in the novel makes clear, I think, one of the major structural faults of The Beautiful and Damned: its slow beginning. This will be discussed in more detail below, but it might be noted here that Book I serves merely to introduce the characters. Action really begins in Book II. As a

consequence, Anthony's descent is precipitous. Indeed, the important incidents at his "low point" (pages 413ff), which are evidently supposed to balance the incidents in Book I, are given almost sketchily: on page 413 we meet Anthony's two new friends, the seedy Parker Allison and Pete Lytell, counterparts of Dick and Maury; on page 418 Anthony encounters Dick; on page 432 he meets Maury and is snubbed; on page 434, Bloeckman.

At first Anthony does not realize that getting Gloria is "bad" for him. He does have a foreboding that something is wrong. In an early scene, for instance, when he sees a girl in a red negligee on a roof of a house farther down the alley he feels that she must be beautiful; then he understands that it is "her distance" that makes her seem beautiful. She is sex incarnate and attractive precisely because

> The autumn air was between them, and the roofs and the blurred voices. Yet for a not altogether explained second, posing perversely in time, his emotion had been nearer to adoration than in the deepest kiss he had ever known.

She turns out to be "fat, full thirty-five, [and] utterly undistinguished." A good part of Gloria's attraction for him is that she does not seem like "other women." "Beside her," he thinks, "the two dozen schoolgirls and débutantes, young married women and waifs and strays whom he had known were so many <u>females</u>, in the

word's most contemptuous sense, breeders and bearers, exuding still that faintly odorous atmosphere of the cave and the nursery." (Italics are Fitzgerald's.) Her kisses are always "chaste" and "flowerlike" to him. And when he contemplates marriage it is as "the union of his soul with Gloria's. . . . ." It takes no expert on marriage relations to see that such sentiments are possibly not the most mature ones with which to approach marriage. Even Anthony himself senses it. The night before his wedding when he is repelled by the noise of a woman's laughter in a nearby apartment, he finds himself

> upset and shaken. Try as he might to strangle his reaction, some animal quality in that unrestrained laughter had grasped at his imagination, and for the first time in four months aroused his old aversion and horror toward all the business of life. The room had grown smothery. He wanted to be out in some cool and bitter breeze, miles above the cities, and to live serene and detached back in the corners of his mind. Life was that sound out there, that ghastly reiterated female sound.

He feels that he is being caught up in what he does not like, no longer "safe," as he was earlier, from "the threat of life."

After their marriage, Gloria "who [had] seemed of all women the wisest and the finest, [hangs] like a brilliant curtain across his doorways, shutting out the light of the sun." Later, when Anthony has a chance to

go abroad as a war correspondent, Gloria questions, "Do you want to go? Without me?" and he knows that it is "too late. Her arms, sweet and strangling, were around him, for he had made all such choices back in that room in the Plaza the year before [when he had chosen Gloria]." A little later when Anthony is beginning to think that he should do something, "How you've changed!" Gloria taunts him. "Once you told me you didn't see why an American couldn't loaf gracefully." And Anthony answers,

> "Well, damn it, I wasn't married. As a matter of fact I think that if I hadn't met you I would have done something." [Fitzgerald's italics.]

After three years of marriage Anthony has a sense of the wrongness of his choice: "life is so damned hard," he tells Dorothy Haycroft; "it just hurts people and hurts people, until finally it hurts them so that they can't be hurt ever any more. That's the last and worst thing it does." Then he adds,

> "Things are sweeter when they're lost. I know -- because once I wanted something and got it. It was the only thing I ever wanted badly, Dot. And when I got it it turned to dust in my hands.
>
> "I've often thought that if I hadn't got what I wanted things might have been different with me. I might have found something in my mind and enjoyed putting it in circulation. I might have been content with the work of it, and had some sweet vanity out of the success. I suppose that at one time I could have had anything I wanted, within reason, but that was the only thing I ever wanted with any fervor. . . . . And that taught me you can't have anything, you

> can't have anything at all. Because desire just creates you. It's like a sunbeam skipping here and there about a room. It stops and gilds some inconsequential object, and we poor fools try to grasp it -- but when we do the sunbeam moves on to something else, and you've got the inconsequential part, but the glitter that made you want it is gone. . . . ." [Fitzgerald's italics.]

Except that this statement of Anthony's of what it is like to be caught up in the business of life is exaggeratedly self-pitying, it is an explicit phrasing of what Amory Blaine was trying to convey with his phrase "the spiritual young married man." This Side of Paradise brought Amory just up to his coming of age, to his abstract realization of evil; The Beautiful and Damned begins with an Anthony of age and takes him through his concrete experience of evil. He is caught up by it, becomes committed to it, and, finally, succumbs to it. One might make, I think, a strong case against the likelihood of his succumbing to the extent that he does. He is not a strong character; in fact it is precisely because he is not, that the shattering of his mind at the end of the novel seems unlikely.

One suspects that Fitzgerald felt bound by some original intention to bring that ironic but still blissfully "romantic" (in James's sense) ending about. A Gloria no longer young and beautiful and an Anthony no longer sane, in possession of their money -- this was simply "too good" not to have. It is a beautifully

ironic ending to the story. At the same time, however, it goes against what James called "our general sense of 'the way things happen.'" It is perhaps likely enough that Gloria and Anthony might at last get their money. To have a Gloria, though, who, barely thirty, is thought by a "pretty girl in yellow" to be "sort of dyed and unclean" and an Anthony mentally returned to his childhood, together bound for Europe -- is highly improbable. (Fitzgerald's italics. Gloria always prided herself on being "clean.")

Still, this final failure is not typical of the book as a whole. Fitzgerald's second novel, as almost everyone agrees, is in many ways a decided step forward. Structure, characterization, development, and writing are all definitely improved. So far as the organization of books and chapters (three books and three chapters each) is concerned, for instance, there is none of the confusion of This Side of Paradise. While I do not agree with Mizener that The Beautiful and Damned is a "much less effective" book than This Side and much less effective because it is "a painstakingly thought out book," I do think he is correct in his analysis of the muddled purpose (or purposes) of the novel. Its "real" purpose is, as Mizener says, "constantly being obscured by its 'literary' purpose, Fitzgerald's

conscious effort to be ironic and superior in the fashionable manner of George Jean Nathan. . . . ." But the purpose is muddled, I think, because Fitzgerald did not "think out" the book enough. He spent, as he said himself, much more care on the detail of the novel than on the general scheme. As a result, the detail is very good, but it is often not related to the real subject of the book.

An illustration is the social comment, which is frequently abstractly and abruptly interpolated. Arthur Mizener has already noted Fitzgerald's "haring off in any direction which promised a little smart satire or talk about the meaninglessness of it all."

> Gloria's entrance is delayed [Mizener continues] in order that he may do a satiric portrait of her parents, who never appear again; Gloria is made to evince a most implausible (and non-recurrent) fellow feeling for the lower-middle classes in order that the rabble who patronize second-rate cabarets may be looked down on at length; Anthony, the least likely of all people to do so, answers an ad for salesmen in order that go-getters may be satirized.

To Mizener's examples might be added this uncharacteristic observation of Anthony's when he and Gloria are going through the upper East Side on one of their returns to New York:

> "I like these streets. . . . . I always feel as though it's a performance being staged for me; as though the second I've passed they'll all stop leaping and laughing and, instead, grow very sad, remembering how poor they are,

> and retreat with bowed heads into their houses. You often get that effect abroad, but seldom in this country."

The tone is that of a worldly wise author rather than of the troubled Anthony, who is probably made to like the streets merely because the author had a comment to make on them. The same might be said of Anthony's extended satiric picture of Congress; it is good, but it is out of balance with the rest of his thought.

But the chapters and books themselves in The Beautiful and Damned are well-organized units. One book introduces the principal characters to the reader and to each other; another takes Anthony and Gloria's marriage up through their third anniversary; the third (and last) book begins with Anthony in the Army and tells the aftermath of all that the other books have given. Clearly, then, the books, although untitled, are Prelude, Event and Denouement. The chapters, too, are, in general, units, and the titles of the chapters, while sometimes not so good as they might be, are appropriate. In Book I, Chapter I, "Anthony Patch," except for the final transitional section "A Flash-back in Paradise," is entirely about Anthony; Chapter II, "Portrait of a Siren," introduces Gloria to Anthony; and Chapter III "The Connoisseur of Kisses," with some digressions, brings them up to a mutual acknowledgment of their love. In Chapter I of Book II

they marry, go on their honeymoon, settle in Marietta ("The Radiant Hour"). In Chapter II their life together hits one snag after another ("Symposium"). In Chapter III the climactic event of Adam Patch's intrusion into a wild party occurs; he dies and Anthony is cut out of his will ("The Broken Lute"). Book III (somewhat too smartly) has three "matters": Chapter I, "A Matter of Civilization," concerned with Anthony in the Army; Chapter II, "A Matter of Aesthetics," Gloria by herself, then Gloria and Anthony, and, finally, Gloria's loss of her beauty; Chapter III, "No Matter!" Anthony's steady deterioration, the ultimate winning of their suit to break Adam Patch's will, and their sailing to Europe.

Unlike the very much shorter chapters of This Side of Paradise, which ranged unevenly from twelve to fifty-eight pages with an average of thirty-four pages to a chapter, the chapters of The Beautiful and Damned range from twenty-eight to seventy pages and average between forty-five and fifty pages each with an inevitably evener effect. In addition each chapter is much better developed than any of the chapters in This Side. But, having said so much about the unified nature of the books and chapters of Fitzgerald's second novel, one has to add that the units seem superimposed on the material rather than growing out of it. In

other words, the subject does not naturally fall into three books and nine chapters. The author's apparent slavish adherence to a preconceived form as well as the confused nature of the motive can perhaps be shown by an examination of the first book.

In the manner of Booth Tarkington we and the author at first are faintly amused by Anthony. While there is a certain burlesque humor in the figure of irony, "the Holy Ghost of this later day," descending on Anthony in the opening sentence, at the same time there is not much point to it. What the author wants us to see is clearly the posturing sophistication of Anthony: he thinks of himself as "-- not a portrait of a man but a distinct and dynamic personality, opinionated, contemptuous, functioning from within outward -- a man who was aware that there could be no honor and yet had honor, who knew the sophistry of courage and yet was brave." The witty idea is a key to our understanding of Anthony, but the author himself (and with him the reader) apparently cannot take it or Anthony very seriously. This faintly ridiculing tone continues through the first chapter; nothing of any significance occurs here either. We are given Anthony's background, something of his habit of thought; we are introduced to Dick and Maury. We are even present at a conversation

between Beauty and the Voice seven years before, in which Gloria's beauty is preciously accounted for.

Chapter II opens with two paragraphs of satire ("Three dozen virtuous females of the first layer . . . . . Five dozen virtuous females of the second layer. . . . ."), gradually works around to Anthony's introduction to Gloria's parents, who are satirically characterized, and twenty pages later Gloria is finally brought onto the scene. She and Anthony have a few engagements together; his taking her to a cabaret results in our being given two pages of social history. The chapter ends with Anthony adoringly thinking about Gloria in abstract terms. ("She was a sun, radiant, growing, gathering light and storing it -- then after an eternity pouring it forth in a glance, the fragment of a sentence, to that part of him that cherished all beauty and all illusion.")

Chapter III gives us Dick Caramel's history, presents him in a conversation with Mrs. Gilbert so that we have their opinions of Gloria and Anthony, then introduces Gloria's friends Muriel and Rachael, who sit for elaborate satirical portraits. The scene between Geraldine and Anthony obliquely gives us something of Anthony's state of mind. ("No idea of getting married, by God!" he cries to himself after Geraldine's departure. [Fitzgerald's italics.])

The remainder of the chapter concerns the progress of Gloria and Anthony's affair and includes Gloria's dinner at the Biltmore, their disagreement, Anthony's reaction, the resumption of their affair -- ending on a moment when a significant change in their relationship has just occurred: Gloria returns Anthony's love.

The main criticism to be made of this first book is its lack of drama, intensity, and, essentially, accomplishment. It moves along leisurely, introducing characters and confirming our impression that The Beautiful and Damned is to be a big chronicle of the lives of the three young men, Anthony, Maury, and Dick, the representatives of, respectively, the intelligent, mildly talented idler; the bored cynic; and the energetic, unintelligent but talented writer. The additional formal sketches of the Gilberts and Muriel and Rachael lead us to expect a multivalent picture, on a surface level of social comedy, of New York and New York life as experienced by all these people.

The introduction of the symbolically more important Bloeckman alone is not misleading: he is first described in a sentence; his background is given in a dozen or so lines a few pages later. And it is Bloeckman, of the minor characters, that we know the

most thoroughly, too, even though we may not "see" him with the immediate vividness that we see the finger-snapping, up-to-the-minute Muriel Kane. The first description of Bloeckman, indeed, is the nearest Fitzgerald comes in his first two novels to the quick and precise ideographic characterization that was to be so important in the achieved art of his third novel, The Great Gatsby. ("He was a stoutening, ruddy Jew of about thirty-five, with an expressive face under smooth sandy hair. . . . .")

It is only in Book II of The Beautiful and Damned that the author gets to his real subject: the effect on Anthony of the life he leads after his marriage. Both Books II and III, unlike Book I, are about Anthony and incidentally about Gloria, with Dick, Maury, Rachael, and Muriel introduced only now and then to fill out the social fabric.

Despite the diffused purposes of the novel as a whole, though, it has its successes. In This Side only the absurd and posturing Amory really lives. In The Beautiful and Damned, besides Anthony, the principal character, Fitzgerald succeeds in making live Gloria, the stolid Bloeckman, and the lay figures, Adam Patch, Shuttleworth, Maury, Dick, Muriel, and Rachael, flat characters though they may be.

It is with Anthony, however, that the book convinces or not; much adverse criticism of him and of The Beautiful and Damned is based, I believe, on a mistaken view of him and of what he stands for. There is of course first one's uncertain conception of what sort of work the novel is to be. Kisener acutely points out that it is Fitzgerald "the fashionable satirist," who makes this remark on the first page of the novel: "As you first see him he wonders frequently whether he is not without honor and slightly mad. . . . these occasions being varied, of course, with those in which he thinks himself rather an exceptional young man, thoroughly sophisticated. . . . ." This "smart" standing apart from his character is supplanted later by Fitzgerald's attitude of sincere sympathy. At no time, however, it seems to me, is Anthony seen "tragically" or, further, is he meant to be seen tragically.

He is damned, but to be damned is not necessarily to be tragic. Some discipline, some struggle has to enter in for tragedy. So the criticism that he is pathetic rather than tragic has little authentic force. He is one of those many, Fitzgerald said of Anthony, "with the tastes and weaknesses of an artist but with no actual creative inspiration." He is sensitive and intelligent, but he is weak, very weak, and the author

never forgets that. The author's attitude, in fact, no matter how close he gets to Anthony, no matter how much of the story he lets us see through Anthony's eyes, is always supremely critical. The imagery alone tells us that: Anthony is "childishly frantic"; he lies awake and plays "with every minute of the day like a child playing in turn with each one of a pile of long-wanted Christmas toys." Adults as everyone, including Fitzgerald, knows are not children. Fitzgerald's emphasis on the childish quality in Anthony -- and even more the childishness of Gloria -- suggests that his criticism of them is severe: they are not responsible adults. They have a certain amount of charm; Fitzgerald tries to present that. The slightly comic though horrible fate that Fitzgerald reserved for Anthony (Anthony's reversion to childhood) assures us that the author did not see him as of tragic stature.

Rather he is the "weak, drifting. . . . self-pity[ing] young man" whom Mizener finds "fully realized." Anthony's failure to accomplish anything is due both to native indolence and to the failure of his world to make any demands of a man of his circumstances. His later complaint to Gloria that he might have done something had he not met her is not entirely untruthful; sheer dissatisfaction with his way of life, as he realizes

later, "had driven him almost to a positive stop." Love gave him new interests, new excuses. His telling Gloria on their first date that he does "nothing" is prompted by a desire

> to pose. He wanted to appear. . . . to her in novel and heroic colors.
> . . . . "I do nothing," [he says,] "for there's nothing I can do that's worth doing."
> "Well?" He had neither surprised her nor even held her, yet she had certainly understood him, if indeed he had said aught worth understanding.

She sees no reason why anyone should do anything: "it always astonishes me," she adds, "when anybody does anything." Clearly she is not the person to help the weak and wavering Anthony. Indeed, it is Anthony, not Gloria, however scornful she may be of him at times, who sees the waste in their life, who is "haunted by the suggestion that life might be, after all, significant."

But these perceptions have no particular force for Anthony, who is weak, and weak, we should not forget, precisely because he is not creative. Both the choices that Fitzgerald outlines for his heroes are alternatives that Arnold Toynbee assigns to the <u>creative</u> minorities: greatness, magnificence; goodness, asceticism. Anthony, though, has "the tastes and weaknesses of an artist" without the compensating force that actual creative ability would give him.

It is curious and at the same time meaningful, I think, that although Anthony is financially one of the

170663

"elite," he is in another sense (Ortega's) one of the "masses."

> [The] most radical division it is possible to make of humanity [Ortega maintains] is that which splits it into two classes of creatures: those who make great demands on themselves, piling up difficulties and duties; and those who demand nothing special of themselves, but for whom to live is to be every moment what they already are, without imposing on themselves any effort towards perfection; mere buoys on the waves.

The first class Ortega calls the "select minorities" and the second the "masses." This division, as he goes on to say, is "not a division into social classes, but into classes of men, and cannot coincide with the hierarchic separation of 'upper' and 'lower' classes." While both Anthony and Gloria, then, might be considered financially members of the moneyed upper middle class, creatively they are of the masses.

In the Beauty and the Voice sequence in Chapter I, as a matter of fact, Gloria is called a "bogus aristocrat." Anthony himself actually is Ortega's "petulant person who thinks himself superior to the rest" and is one of the masses and not a select man. But Anthony and Gloria are not select people entirely because they make no demands on themselves. Gloria, for instance, wants "to exist only as a conscious flower, prolonging and preserving itself." In other words, they retain the privileges of the select class even though they have

abandoned both the principles and the responsibilities that belong to that class.

They go even further than that: they have also abandoned the responsibilities of their humanity. Gloria's wanting to live like a flower is all very lovely sounding, but people are not flowers, even conscious ones. And Gloria, in her desire to remain "true" to herself, as she calls it, forgets that human beings, unlike plants, have obligations. They must make choices and those choices can change the whole course of life. In the section called the "Nietzschean Incident" (Chapter II, Book II), for instance, the decision that she makes (if she is pregnant she is going to do "something" about it) she regards as "being true to me. . . . ." Neither she nor Anthony give any further consideration to the significance of the matter. What is important to her is that after she has had a child she "might be pale, with all [her] freshness gone. . . . ." When her fears of pregnancy turn out to be baseless, both she and Anthony are "gay again with reborn irresponsibility."

The question of Gloria's being "true" to herself is perhaps worth stopping on a moment. It is no secret that Fitzgerald himself finds Gloria attractive; it is necessary that he do so if he is going to make Anthony's

submission to her credible. Even in the midst of his own attraction, however, he is able to view her critically and see that she is both vulgar and trivial, the words he later used to describe her. He emphasizes her cold unproductivity by comparing her kisses and Gloria herself to flowers and feathers. She is "like a single flower," "fresh as a flower," she is "blown fragrantly through many ballrooms," she could be a "bright flower in [a man's] buttonhole," and she wants to exist like a flower. And since her approach to life and to marriage, like Anthony's, is infantile, she is fittingly and consistently like a child: she talks about herself "as a very charming child might talk"; her hands are small "as a child's hands should be." Her facial expressions are compared to those of a "little girl's." She lies in "childlike sleep," runs like "a startled child"; or she takes "all the things of life for hers to choose from and apportion, as though she were continually picking out presents for herself from an inexhaustible counter." She is a child, still locked in self-adoration, even though she imagines that she "loves" Anthony.

Her beauty for her, as Anthony's leisure for him, is an end in itself. It too has privileges but no responsibilities. A few days before her marriage, for

example, she confides to her diary:

> I refuse to dedicate my life to posterity. Surely one owes as much to the current generation as to one's unwanted children. What a fate -- to grow rotund and unseemly, to lose my self-love, to think in terms of milk, oatmeal, nurse, diapers. . . . Dear dream children, how much more beautiful you are, dazzling little creatures who flutter (all dream children must flutter) on golden, golden wings -----
> [Suspension points and dash are Fitzgerald's.]

And later, looking back over her life, she doubts "whether there had been any moral issue involved in her way of life -- to walk unworried and unregretful along the gayest of all possible lanes and to keep her pride by being always herself and doing what it seemed beautiful that she should do." She knows that "she had never wanted children. . . . . her ironic soul whispered that motherhood was also the privilege of the female baboon. So her dreams were of ghostly children only -- the early, the perfect symbols of her early and perfect love for Anthony." Pride, independence, integrity, courage, then, are the qualities that Gloria is endowed with. While independence, integrity, and courage are virtues, they are not desirable per se. And the strength and intelligence that Gloria, like some of Fitzgerald's other heroines has, leads only to her being contemptuous of the very things which it is her responsibility as a human being and a woman to understand.

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Fitzgerald's third novel, The Great Gatsby, has all the specific mechanical features which Joseph Warren Beach singles out as characteristic of the dramatic method in the novel;[6] but his first novel has only one, the single center of interest, with its corollary, the limited point of view, to an extent only, and his second novel the same two with mere hints of the other three.

The conclusion is not, however, that Fitzgerald was not a "dramatic" author; his instinct was to dramatize. But his natural talent, original as it was, in the beginning was chameleon-like. The books which influenced him were those most recently read; the methods, those most recently encountered. And his admiration in 1919, 1920, and 1921, while he was writing his first two novels, was reserved for

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[6] In The Twentieth Century Novel, Beach lists five features, but (as he adds) he does not "attach any magical significance to that number which might readily be enlarged or decreased by some other method of classification." The five features are the following: 1) center of interest; 2) limited point of view; 3) limitation of place; 4) limited amount of time covered in the aggregate; 5) length of development of the events of a single day, or of suites of days following one another without interval.

Compton Mackenzie and H. G. Wells. Fitzgerald's naturally dramatic instinct kept him from adopting the loose barbarity of form that Wells' first person narrations fell into, but something of the expansive Wellsian attitude toward and something of the Wellsian tendency to comment on his material remain in This Side and in The Beautiful and Damned.[9]

In This Side of Paradise, particularly, Fitzgerald tends to throw away his priceless dramatic coin on worthless Wellsian scenes. The history of Fitzgerald's technical development as a novelist, indeed, can be summarized as a gradual understanding of the central feature of the dramatic method in the novel, the limited point of view. Gatsby is a triumph in the solving of the problem of authority. This Side, on the other hand, is written almost as though Fitzgerald did not know the problem existed. We are always, of course, accepting a story on someone's authority and an author, of all people, must be conscious of that. But he might well not be conscious that the tendency in the novel, under the influence of James, has been more and more to drop the author out of his work. In Percy Lubbock's

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[9]An early version of This Side, however, was in the first person and was changed to the third at Maxwell Perkins' suggestion.

words, the modern novelist tends to push "his responsibility further and further away from himself. The fiction that he devises is ultimately his; but it looks poor and thin if he openly claims it as his, or at any rate it becomes much more substantial as soon as he fathers it upon another." The evidence suggests that prior to Gatsby, Fitzgerald discounted the advantages of the strictly limited point of view and of staying outside his work. As a result, there is little consistency in the handling of the point of view in his first two novels.

The point of view in This Side of Paradise is primarily "omniscient" with access mainly to Amory's mind. At times Amory almost seems James's central intelligence but never for long. The author obviously feels himself free to shift the point of view or comment in his own person at any time. The Isabelle episode of Chapter II, Book I, is typical. The point of view is Isabelle's all through the first part of the episode; then a sudden shift is made in the middle of a paragraph and for no more than two sentences to Froggy's ("Froggy sighed -- he knew Amory, and the situations that Amory seemed born to handle.") Then the viewpoint becomes Amory's for half a page. After a break, the author analyzes Isabelle and Amory, interprets their action,

and then comments in his own person: "I have said they had reached a definite stage. . . . ." After that Isabelle's point of view is the primary one and remains so to the end of the episode.

There may be a dramatic justification for seeing the episode from Isabelle's point of view, but since this is the most extended shift to another point of view in the whole novel, it calls attention to itself and upon reflection seems part of the author's helplessness rather than his guile. To know that the episode was printed in the Nassau Literary Magazine while Fitzgerald was in college; later it appeared in The Smart Set, before the publication of the novel. Fitzgerald evidently did not feel that it was necessary to make the episode conform in any way to its new context in This Side of Paradise.[10] And while Sidney Howard and his contemporaries may have liked "the flagrant disregard of formula" that this sudden insertion of a short story into the narrative reveals, the reader today is apt to be distressed, puzzled, and a little resentful.

This holds true in a varying degree for the other authorial intrusions in This Side. After the devil

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[10]Except for a few additional, unimportant lines of dialogue, the only changes made from The Smart Set version are in names ("Stephon Falus" becomes "Amory," "Elaine" becomes "Sally") and occasional phrases.

incident in Book I, for instance, when the reader would appreciate a further explanation, the author merely says, "And he gave Tom the story," adding, "It was midnight when he finished, and after that, with all lights burning, two sleepy, shivering boys read to each other from 'The New Machiavelli,' until dawn came up out of Witherspoon Hall, and the Princetonian fell against the door, and the May birds hailed the sun on last night's rain." He gives us, that is, a picture rather than an experience.

At another time when he should be presenting the charm of Amory's lunch with Monsignor Darcy, he says,

> Their first luncheon was one of the memorable events of Amory's early life. He was quite radiant and gave off a peculiar brightness and charm. Monsignor called out the best that he had thought by question and suggestion, and Amory talked with an ingenious brilliance of a thousand impulses and desires and repulsions and faiths and fears. He and Monsignor held the floor, and the older man [Thornton Hancock], with his less receptive, less accepting, yet certainly not colder mentality, seemed content to listen and bask in the mellow sunshine that played between those two. Monsignor gave the effect of sunlight to many people; Amory gave it in his youth and, to some extent, when he was very much older, but never again was it quite so mutually spontaneous.

The general lassitude of phrasing -- "memorable," "radiant," "peculiar brightness and charm," etc. -- and the failure to be specific -- "Monsignor called out <u>the best</u>," "Amory talked. . . . ," etc. -- are results of Fitzgerald's failure to see the scene with any objectivity: he simply <u>tells</u> us that it was charming.

The succeeding abrupt and brief shift of point of view to Thornton Hancock for an infatuated observation[11] is a further telling, not a presenting.

At other times words fail the author and he comments unashamedly: "But Beatrice Blaine! There was a woman!" he exclaims on the first page. And later when he is describing Rosalind he breaks down into "Rosalind is -- just Rosalind." Sometimes he addresses the reader directly: "You will admit that if it was not life it was magnificent." This sort of comment is perhaps permissible in the beginning of a novel; but, later, when the author cries, "Don't misunderstand!" and goes on to explain the depth of Amory's "deep, undying affection for Rosalind," he clearly acknowledges that he has not succeeded in presenting Amory's feelings as completely as he might be expected to do.

In beginning the Eleanor episode he too baldly and confidently foreshadows: "Eleanor was [he writes] . . . . the last time that evil crept close to Amory under the mask of beauty. . . . ." A little later he comments, "She will have no other adventure like Amory. . . . ." While the disingenuousness of his saying, "I see I am starting wrong. Let me begin

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11 "'He's a radiant boy,' thought Thornton Hancock, who had seen the splendor of two continents and talked with Parnell and Gladstone and Bismarck. . . . ."

again," may cause much to be forgiven, its sound as of a comment on a rough draft is resented by the reader.

Frequently the authorial intrusions in This Side seem prompted by something akin to "smartness." In the early episode with Myra St. Claire, the author's comments that the butler "was unaware that his failure to be cockney was ruining his standing" and that Amory in saying "'lo Myra," had described "the state of his vitality," are gratuitous. The remark which succeeds Thornton Hancock's thought about Amory's radiance is in this category.[12] So is the author's early comment on Amory's self-examination: "Now a confession will have to be made. Amory had rather a Puritan conscience. Not that he yielded to it -- later in life he almost completely slew it -- but at fifteen it made him consider himself a great deal worse than other boys. . . . ." The succeeding lines of analysis except for the vocabulary are suited to Amory's own point of view:

> . . . unscrupulousness . . . the desire to influence people in almost every way, even for

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[12]After the luncheon Thornton Hancock says to Monsignor, "But his education ought not to be intrusted to a school or college." The author adds, "But for the next four years the best of Amory's intellect was concentrated on matters of popularity, the intricacies of a university social system and American Society as represented by Biltmore Teas and Hot Springs golf-links."

> evil . . . a certain coldness and lack of affection, amounting sometimes to cruelty . . . a shifting sense of honor . . . an unholy selfishness . . . a puzzled, furtive interest in everything concerning sex.
> [Suspension periods are Fitzgerald's.]

There are a few other authorial interpolations of one type or another in This Side, but two final examples may suffice. In this passage which skillfully evokes a young boy's dreams, for instance, the analysis in italics is clearly the author's; if the author has not already made the point clear, something is wrong with his presentation of Amory's dreams, and if that is so, a comment will help little:

> Always, after he was in bed, there were voices -- indefinite, fading, enchanting -- just outside his window, and before he fell asleep he would dream one of his favorite waking dreams, the one about becoming a great half-back, or the one about the Japanese invasion, when he was rewarded by being made the youngest general in the world. It was always the becoming he dreamed of, never the being. *This, too, was quite characteristic of Amory.* [My italics.]

The same fault occurs in the climactic scene with Isabelle: ". . . . on that half-minute," Fitzgerald writes, "as their lips touched, rested the high point of vanity, the crest of his young egotism." It is the cadence of this sentence, a good curtain line, that apparently causes the author to end the chapter here, thus losing much of the force and the humor of the anti-climax which opens the next chapter.

Another of the devices which constantly intrude the author into both This Side and The Beautiful and Damned is that of the titles for the subdivisions of the chapters. The titled sections themselves vary in length from a third of a page to eighteen pages, averaging three or four pages in Fitzgerald's first novel; no sections are quite as short as the shortest in This Side, in Fitzgerald's second novel; many are developed at quite extended length, and, with greater use of two spaces to separate episodes, the titled sections of The Beautiful and Damned average much longer than those in This Side of Paradise.

The use of titles for the sections in both these novels can perhaps be defended on the ground that the titles underline the significance of or comment ironically on the material of the section. "Amory, Son of Beatrice" is an apt title for the initial satiric section on Beatrice Blaine; "Babes in the Woods," for the adolescent Amory-Isabelle affair; "Carnival," for the trip of the Princeton boys to the beach. But whatever sharpness of point may be gained by the use of the titles is certainly sacrificed when the device becomes master to the extent that such non-contributive titles as "Historical," "Descriptive," and "Financial" have to be used.

An additional difficulty in This Side is that, although the chapter titles are typographically presented so that they appear to apply to the whole chapter, they are actually intended only for the first, otherwise untitled section in each chapter. Within the titled subdivisions themselves, additional subdivisions are sometimes made by the use of two spaces. This device (essentially one of punctuation in contrast to the more mechanical and external one of the titles) is a very good one, but not until Gatsby does Fitzgerald appear to understand its utility in the novel. In This Side he uses the two spaces irregularly -- twice in the longest section in the book ("Spires and Gargoyles," which presents Amory's introduction to Princeton); once in another longish section, "Carnival," the trip to the beach; and five times very erratically in the final chapter of the novel.

While there can be little doubt that "authority" in This Side is somewhat damaged by direct authorial comment and the intrusive titles, it is at the same time quite likely that these occur infrequently enough in the 305 pages of the novel so that the reader is conscious rather of quite consistently following Amory even when he does not use Amory's eyes. In his notes for The Last Tycoon, his last novel, Fitzgerald stated

that "in the true novel, you have to stay with the character all the time. . . . . [As a result] you acquire a sort of second wind about him, a depth of realization." We do stay with Amory pretty much all of the time. In all except one or two pages he is present, in most of them he is the principal actor, and in over two hundred and forty (out of 305) the action is mainly from his point of view.[13] In addition, as the novel progresses the action is more and more from his point of view. There are undoubtedly cogent reasons why the earlier sections of the narrative are not given from his point of view. Up until the occurrence of the first extended action given from his point of view (his arrival at Princeton in Chapter II, Book I), he is still a boy. However even after this point there are lapses into mere observing of Amory in both Chapters II and III of Book I. (A striking lapse is the one that closes Chapter III and already quoted above. [See page 108 above, top, beginning, "It was midnight. . . . ."]) Only in Chapter IV, the last chapter of Book I, is Amory's point of view markedly maintained.

But then, directly after that, Book II opens with

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[13]This is the main reason why the section from Isabelle's point of view (already discussed) calls attention to itself.

the playlet "The Débutante," which "cute" as it may be, is destructive of whatever dramatic tension may have been built up. The impulse toward the play form might well have been a good one. The author probably wanted to transport the reader directly into the scene itself. The "stage directions" of the first part are, however, so arch and facetious that the reader feels that he has been transported into the slick pages of The Smart Set (where part of it appeared) instead.

Actually nothing seems to be gained by the change in form and much is lost. The return to conventional narrative in the next chapter is welcome. The rest of Book II is almost entirely from Amory's point of view. As support for the thesis that Fitzgerald improved in novel-writing technique during the writing of This Side of Paradise, one might offer the fact that the other lapse from Amory's point of view in this book was written by Fitzgerald before he started the final rewriting of his first novel. (The lapse is the embarrassing beginning of the Eleanor episode: "I see I am starting wrong. Let me begin again.")

This question of the consistent point of view in Book II of This Side is closely bound up with the greater consistency of theme already pointed out as a difference between Book II and Book I. Fitzgerald seems to have found both his theme and his proper

center of consciousness at about the same time: when he was rewriting this novel. I say this with full realization that Book I of This Side of Paradise is frequently more highly valued than Book II. Readers and critics most frequently remember and write about Book I: This Side of Paradise, they say, is about a young man's days at Princeton. To regard the subject matter of the novel as that, though, is to distort the whole book. This Side of Paradise is, rather, by intention, about a young man's discovery of evil -- in college and after college. The theme is not as fully realized as great literary art demands, but it is in the novel and it is realized to a considerable extent. To overlook it or to discuss it as secondary is to misinterpret the novel.

The Beautiful and Damned is written with so much greater skill than This Side of Paradise that one is almost inclined to forgive such gaucheries of structure as there still are. The distracting sub-heads, for instance, remain, occurring from five to fourteen times in individual chapters. The chapter (Book II, Chapter I) with the most sub-heads is, as one might suspect, the choppiest in the book. What is wrong with it is simply that Fitzgerald was trying to crowd too many facets of a situation into a single chapter.

This chapter is the one in which Anthony and Gloria's reaction before and to their marriage; their first squabbles; their individual revelations of personality (Anthony's cowardice, Gloria's vanity and snobbery); even the death of Gloria's mother, which is related to practically nothing at all -- are given.

This particular chapter aside, though, the sub-sections in this novel, as already noted, are not only longer than the equivalent ones in Fitzgerald's first novel, but also much better handled. The titles have generally more unity within individual chapters and, incidentally, the titles of chapters are just that rather than merely titles of the first section in the chapter as they were in This Side. But the playlets still recur. In Chapter I alone there are two: one, a less formal playlet than those in This Side, and another, the Beauty and the Voice sequence of "A Flash-back in Paradise."

The first is a playlet apparently in order to present the conversation of the "Three Men" without the necessity of transitional lines. There are still "stage directions" and one extended description (of Dick), necessitated by the fact that he has not heretofore been introduced. However the whole introduction to the section, where Anthony and Maury are set in a scene and Maury is described, has the same tone as

the description of Dick and except for the author's failure to italicize it, it could be part of the playlet. The other playlet, the Beauty and the Voice one, as frequently noted by critics, is nothing if not "embarrassing." In addition, as the only "fantasy" in a realistic novel it is out of place.

Something about the play form itself seems consistently to lead Fitzgerald into improbabilities and artificial writing. The "Débutante" section in This Side, for instance, is wooden; the Beauty and the Voice episode, embarrassing. And the "Broken Lute" playlet in Book II of The Beautiful and Damned seems to be cast in drama form solely in order that a stranger might come on the scene before anyone else and answer Anthony and Gloria's telephone when Shuttleworth makes the crucial announcement of the advent of a visit from Anthony's grandfather. After Maramore has taken the call, the others, Maury, Anthony, Gloria, and their guests, swarm onto the scene. At the climax of the party that is launched, Adam Patch and Shuttleworth appear.

The playlet as a whole is written in a stilted fashion. The "stage directions" which close the scene are typical:

> SHUTTLEWORTH: (Passionately) Your grandfather thought he would motor over to see your

house. I phoned from Rye and left a message.

(A series of little gasps, seemingly, apparently, from nowhere, from no one, fall into the next pause. ANTHONY is the color of chalk. GLORIA'S lips are parted and her level eyes at the old man is tense and frightened. There is not one smile in the room. Not one? Or does CROSS PATCH'S strong mouth tremble slightly open, to expose the even rows of his white teeth? He speaks -- five mild and simple words.)

ADAM PATCH: We'll go back now, Shubtleworth ----

(And that is all. He turns, and assisted by his cane goes out through the hall, through the front door, and with hellish portentousness his underpaid footsteps crunch on the gravel path under the August moon.)

Since Anthony's and Gloria's actions during the rest of the novel are direct results of Cross Patch's intrusion into this party, the coincidence which begins the episode (Paramore's answering the telephone and failing to get the message) and the weak dramatic form constitute perhaps the most important single faulty spot in the novel as a whole.

The other difficulties that Fitzgerald has in solving the problem of authority in The Beautiful and Damned are probably less serious than this one concerning his evasion of what should have been his big scene. There are, of course, still the authorial intrusions. When Gloria discovers that she has lost her beauty, for instance, she slides toward the mirror and sprawls face downward upon the floor, sobbing. "It was," the author interpolates, "the first awkward movement she had ever made." Later,

he refers to her facial creams and cosmetics as her tragic unguents, verging, one would suggest, toward a sentimentalization of this girl who deserves very little pity, if any. In general throughout the novel the author is present in this way as he was in This Side. The point of view is "omniscient," with the freedom to go "behind" any of the characters. Most of the story, however, follows Anthony or is seen through his eyes, with Gloria's point of view recurring no more than a third of the time.

The transitions to other points of view are sometimes very awkward; at others they seem made for no good dramatic reason. One awkward transition occurs in the last chapter of Book I: Anthony's misery over Gloria's cold treatment of him has been sympathetically outlined for several pages. When he has left her this time, Gloria's mind becomes the stage for the following four lines:

> For over a moment Gloria made no sound. Her lips were still curled; her glance was straight, proud, remote. Then her eyes blurred a little, and she murmured three words half aloud to the death-bound fire:
> "Good-by, you ass!" she said.

Another time after Gloria's point of view has been followed for a dozen pages and the reader expects that a big scene is about to occur, Maury suddenly becomes the central figure and delivers a six-page monologue. The canker

of dissatisfaction in Maury is related to the futility motif in the novel as a whole, but his dissertation on his education is not to any dramatic point here. And it is certainly not related to the issue of Gloria's insane flight from her own house.

A later abrupt shift in point of view made, apparently, in order to score a rather obvious ironic point occurs during Gloria's illness. Here for a page and a third Miss McGovern's eyes and ears are used so that she may hear Gloria's delirious "Odi Profanum Vulgus" (the title of Miss McGovern's section) and hear not: "Millions of people," Gloria says. ". . . For one really exquisite palace. . . . . I'd sacrifice a hundred thousand of them, a million of them." She laughs scornfully and then falls off to sleep and Miss McGovern is rather improbably "bewildered." "She wondered what were the hundred thousand things that Mrs. Patch would sacrifice for her palace. Dollars, she supposed -- yet it had not sounded exactly like dollars."

The invasion of Richard Caramel's mind at the beginning of "The Connoisseur of Kisses" is a shift in point of view for no good fictional reason. His conversation with Mrs. Gilbert tells us a lot about himself, about her, and about Gloria; but the question is whether the information is necessary, and if it is,

whether it might not have been better conveyed some other way. For as it is this extensive dwelling on Dick and Mrs. Gilbert misleads the reader as much as anything in the novel.

CHAPTER IV

THE EARLY NOVELS: EXPRESSION

Although neither of Fitzgerald's first two novels is as well written as his third and fourth novels, This Side of Paradise is (in Edmund Wilson's words) "one of the most illiterate books of any merit ever to be published. . . ." and The Beautiful and Damned is a more than competently written book. Fitzgerald still misuses words in his second novel, but not to the extent that he did in his first novel (where they were used with "reckless abandon," Edmund Wilson thought). Misspellings and grammatical mistakes, too, are almost eliminated from The Beautiful and Damned.

Now, of course, in any serious work these mistakes should not occur at all. Misspelling, bad grammar, and misused words focus attention on the way of saying rather than on what is being said. And not only that -- while misspelling[1] in itself may be dismissed as purely

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[1]Although Fitzgerald himself was an abominable speller, the blame for the hundred or so misspellings of the first edition of This Side of Paradise is laid on the publishers by Roger Burlingame. "The difficulty with [the novel, Burlingame writes] was that Maxwell Perkins would never at any stage of its making, let it go out of his hands, and Perkins, but for the stern supervision of his secretary. . . . would probably be something of an orthographic phenomenon himself."

mechanical, indeed, almost typographical, the other two errors, bad grammar and the misuse of words, seriously affect style and content. At the close of Chapter I, Book I, of This Side, for instance, the sense of the cadenced sentence which gives the mature Amory's vision of his career at prep school is seriously affected by the loose attachment of the final phrase: "mad with common sense" syntactically does not modify "his rabid contemporaries" as the author evidently thought it did.

> Years afterward [the sentence reads], when he went back to St. Regis', he seemed to have forgotten the successes of sixth-form year, and to be able to picture himself only as the unadjustable boy who had hurried down corridors, jeered at by his rabid contemporaries mad with common sense.

Again, in describing Rosalind the author presents her qualities in this carelessly parallel fashion: "She danced exceptionally well, drew cleverly but hastily, and had a startling facility with words, which she used only in love-letters." One sentence should have ended at "hastily," and another begun: "She used her startling facility with words. . . . ." As it is, the reader is tempted to ask whether she talks, then, only in gestures and grunts. He is supposed to be taking her seriously.

These errors are clearly errors and also clearly unintentional. It is not enough to say, as Mizener does, that

> It was not, of course, simply that he [Fitzgerald] was impervious to the mechanics of the English language, though he was that; it was also that he wrote under the guidance of his delicate sense of the pitch and tone of English sentences. This sense is the secret of his marvelously evocative prose, and compared to it a deficiency in the textbook mechanics of the language is insignificant.

A "deficiency in the textbook mechanics of the language" is never insignificant, even comparatively. That Fitzgerald himself did not consider it insignificant is indicated by his gradual mastery of textbook mechanics in his published writings. He always wrote, indeed, very largely by ear, both as regards mechanics and the use of words. But once he was shown to be in the wrong he honestly tried to avoid making the same error again.

The grammatical and spelling errors of This Side, for instance, are not in The Beautiful and Damned. And they are not there, one suspects, simply because Fitzgerald took sincere criticism to heart. Much of the worthwhile criticism of the writing faults in Fitzgerald's first novel was sincere. To say, as Mizener does, that "because of the book's success and because people who disliked its account of the Younger Generation wanted to belittle it, its mechanical defects were made much of" is to explain a reaction a little too patly. After all, the book is illiterate. Fitzgerald himself, years later, wanted to compile "a glossary of absurdities and inaccuracies" for the book, should it be reissued. But

it is also a book of merit. What saves it is that clichés, misused words, spelling and grammar aside, it is vividly written.

Still the errors must be considered before a judgment can be rendered on the style of the novel. Such a consideration might begin with these two constructions:

> . . . . the girl sank to a crumpled butterfly on the stage. . . . .
>
> . . . . he knocked the dish of olives to a crash on the floor.
>
> . . . . by sweeping a seltzer bottle. . . . to noisy extinction on the floor. . . . .
>
> . . . . words gave way to silent cigarettes. . . . .
>
> . . . . dreaming spires. . . . .
>
> . . . . an occasional late-burning scholastic light . . . . .
>
> . . . . a girl's voice, a very spoiled voice. . . . .

An older Fitzgerald, convinced that "Vigorous use of verbs to do the trick of overworked adjectives is almost the sign of a true writing talent," would undoubtedly have made the first examples more vigorous and idiomatic: e.g., "the girl crumpled," "his touch crashed the dish of olives to the floor," etc. The impulse behind the second group, the ellipses, is a laudable one: Fitzgerald was using a device of the poets, that of compression, to present his material as succinctly as possible. That the effects do not

come off is a measure of the difference between the early Fitzgerald and the later. In his third, fourth, and fifth novels he does the same sort of thing -- successfully.

Before that, however, in his second novel he used ellipses similar to the second type cited above; he writes, for instance, of a "smiling voice." Or a figure is made obscure by the omission of words: "Her last words were [as] gentle as fine snow [falling] upon hard ground." Another time, "tanning her inevitable legs" undoubtedly should read "inevitably tanning." The following expressions, the first an unconnected modifier, could be improved also:

> Unlike the majority of his type, she found that he was not a bore.
>
> "Isn't he cute?" she required of Maury.
>
> . . . . his eyes trembling of tears, his voice shaking.

In This Side of Paradise, Fitzgerald's mistakes are probably a result of ignorance. In his second novel, having been self-taught and taught in public, he was not to make the same errors. One does find an occasional example of the unidiomatic expression in The Beautiful and Damned; but in general the idioms are standard -- except when Fitzgerald is trying to be "different." His "difference" consists, frequently, in using English words impudently,

without sufficient regard for their dictionary meanings.[2]

In This Side there are those odd uses of words:

> . . . . he attached a few friends. . . . .
>
> . . . . an unintelligible waiter.
>
> . . . . they had enormous conversations. . . . .
>
> [Rosalind has] gray eyes and an impeachable skin. . . . .[3]

In The Beautiful and Damned these:

> He had accomplished the globe... . . .
>
> She was dazzling -- alight; it was agony to comprehend her beauty in a glance.
>
> . . . . she became suddenly anaesthetic to it.[4]
>
> Bloeckman nodded comprehensively. [twice]
>
> . . . . the same indefinable but almost material taint that had impregnated the gray house in Marietta.

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[2]"Mr. Scott Fitzgerald [Joseph Warren Beach wrote in 1923], the year after the publication of The Beautiful and Damned] is often as affected as Mr. Hergesheimer, but the only 'difference' he achieves in such passages is that of posturing affectation." The passages cited by Beach as illustration are the "dazzling" and "anaesthetic" quotations listed in my text above, and these others from the same novel: "Anthony pulled her quickly to her feet and held her helpless, without breath, in a kiss that was neither a game nor a tribute," and, "He would drop his arm around her and find her kiss." Close criticism might have saved Fitzgerald at least from the anaesthetic solecism, since he had used it in one of his Saturday Evening Post stories, "The Popular Girl," earlier in the year that The Beautiful and Damned was published: "to whom, as to all of them, she was comfortably anaesthetic."

[3]"As distinguished," A. J. Liebling remarks, "no doubt, from the vulgar peach-blossom, or peachable, kind."

[4]See note 2, above.

> . . . . that unforgetable aroma that impregnates all permanent camps -- the odor of garbage.

> [Gloria was now] retrenched behind some impregnable inhibition born and coexistent with her beauty.

Related to this fault is what Beach has called the "easy freedom" of using certain words too frequently and without sufficient inquiry into their meaning. Every writer has favorite words or favorite parts of speech. In Henry James it is memorably, polysyllabic adverbs; in Conrad it is expansive words such as "infinite" and "infinitely" and "eternal" and "eternally," hyperbolically used to indicate little more than "great" or "considerable" and "enduringly." Beach cites Shakespeare's distinguished example: "Shakespeare in a certain year would be obsessed with a word or figure and return to it as much as twice within the same play . . . . ." But, as Beach goes on to say,

> In the current [1923] novelists this kind of obsession is more obstinate. It sometimes lasts through a considerable period of years: the favorite word appears in book after book, and sometimes as often as dozens or scores of times within a book; and it is much more suggestive of an easy freedom of language than anything in Shakespeare.

Fitzgerald in both This Side and The Beautiful and Damned is too easily free with "passionate" and

"passionately," among other words. These are perfectly good English words; correctly used they can convey a precise meaning. But Fitzgerald's use of them in his first two novels is so frequent that after awhile they seem meaninglessly to reappear by reflex action.

The following selected examples are ones in which the modifier might be dropped entirely; or "fervently," "eagerly," "intensely," "vehemently," "violently," "ardently," or some other more exact substitute might be employed. The first five are from This Side; the others from The Beautiful and Damned:

> Amory agreed silently, but passionately.
>
> The literary students read Rupert Brooke passionately. . . . .
>
> . . . . the heart-whole boy who had stepped off the transport, passionately desiring the adventure of life.
>
> Eleanor hated Maryland passionately.
>
> . . . . he hoped quite passionately that his grave would have about it an air of many, many years ago.
>
> . . . . and a trust, fierce and passionate, burning in her like a prayer. . . . .
>
> . . . . the grotesque . . . . incident is about to occur, one of those incidents in which life seems set upon the passionate imitation of the lowest forms of literature.
>
> And the other women passionately poured out the impression that though they were in the crowd they were not of it.
>
> He was in love — he cried it passionately to himself.

He held her passionately near. . . . .

"Oh, Anthony!" she cried passionately. . . . .

She wanted what most women want, but she wanted it much more fiercely and passionately.

. . . . and mostly to long passionately for security from the world and from himself.

Another word of which the Fitzgerald of This Side was almost excessively fond was "dream" along with its derivatives "dreamy" and "dreaming." There are reasons connected with the story of This Side why a great number of times no other word can be substituted. In The Beautiful and Damned where the story is concerned with two young people who live like the college boy of This Side on dreams, the word is used more carefully than it is in the phrase "the great dreaming spires of Holder and Cleveland towers," in Fitzgerald's first novel. I realize, of course, that the phrase "dreaming spires" itself is one which Matthew Arnold applied to Oxford, and Compton Mackenzie borrowed to use in Sinister Street; but the phrase still has a romantic looseness and an elliptic vagueness which contributed to the impression of careless writing which we are now examining. The following examples, however, are looser, even, than "dreaming spires":

A calm virility and a dreamy humor. . . . .

She was a witch, of perhaps nineteen, he judged, alert and dreamy. . . . .

There was a dusky, dreamy smell of flowers. . . . .

"Ghost" and "ghostly" become almost meaningless counters in This Side; in The Beautiful and Damned they enter only when something is ghostly: e.g., during the interval before Anthony and Gloria's marriage each is said to be "walking alone in a dispassionate garden with a ghost found in a dream," as an indication of the unreality of their love affair. Similarly, Fitzgerald decidedly improves in his use of "sudden" and "suddenly" between the two novels. These words, which, Joseph Warren Beach says, two of Fitzgerald's English contemporaries jab us with so often that "we grow hard skin over that sensitive spot," are attractive to the Fitzgerald of This Side. Within a couple of pages he writes:

> Then, suddenly, Amory perceived. . . . . After that he stopped suddenly. . . . . Suddenly he realized. . . . . then suddenly sank panting . . . . . [Pages 123-125.]

Fitzgerald added a number of new adverbs and other transitional words to his vocabulary between the writing of his first two novels; and in the 449 pages of The Beautiful and Damned, "sudden" and "suddenly" jab us less than a third as often as they do in the fewer (305 pages) pages of This Side of Paradise.

Two other favorite words "infinite" and "radiant" and their variants, however, still reappear frequently in The Beautiful and Damned. Fitzgerald's fondness for these words is at least partly explicable by their

prominence in Rupert Brooke and H. G. Wells; but since they and companion grandiose words such as "eternal" and "gorgeous" become meaningless on constant repetition, excessive use must be regarded as a fault of style.[5]

Another word which appears oftener in The Beautiful and Damned than in This Side is "poignant" or "poignancy." Beach considers this word "the most infallible diagnostic of the disease" which he has under observation:

> a disease which we may define as the mania for indicating emotion by means of adjectives. . . . . "poignant" is prized for suggesting emotion both strong and rare, so that the author feels himself to be writing in a manner at once vigorous and precious. It is not the word of the year, but the word of the decade, or perhaps, thus far, of the century.[6]

"Poignant" has become, Beach says, a "vague but fervid attributive" which one encounters in every sentimental novel.[7] "And the worst of it is," Beach continues, "that these emotional story-tellers, in their eagerness to be elegantly expressive, have neglected to inquire into the meaning of the word, and as often as not they use it in phrases that make

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[5]Each or its variant appears nine or ten times in The Beautiful and Damned, probably less than half as often as "passionate" and "passionately," but often enough to be remarked.

[6]For Fitzgerald it was rather surely the word of the year. He had used it two or three times in This Side, but scarcely at all in Gatsby.

[7]He is writing in 1923, the year after the publication of The Beautiful and Damned.

no sense." The word means "pungent," or "piercing," or "keen."

> Whatever poignancy there had been for her in that afternoon must have time to dull. [Whatever "keenness"? "pungency"?]
>
> . . . . the ensuing moments were so much more sweet and sharp and poignant. [Sweet and sharp and "piercing"? "keen"? "pungent"?]
>
> Always the most poignant moments were when some artificial barrier kept them apart. . . . . [The most "piercing" moments? the most "pungent"?]
>
> Gloria. . . . extracting poignancy from the memorable things of life and youth.
>
> . . . . the poignant expediency of her fears . . . was worn away.
>
> . . . . her animated face. . . . made. . . . a spot of poignant beauty on the room.

One other favorite word in The Beautiful and Damned, "immemorial," Edgar Allan Poe's contribution to the disease Beach diagnoses, and then we will consider other elements of style.[8] Fitzgerald uses the word only once in This Side of Paradise -- eight or nine times in The Beautiful and Damned. The word, according to the OED, is an adjective meaning "beyond memory or out of mind. . . . ancient beyond memory or record; extremely old." One of the "light" heroines, Clara, in This Side, is said to be "immemorial," and she is

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[8]The word "immemorial" (along with "passionate" and "poignant," among others) is a favorite one with the Compton Mackenzie of Sinister Street too. However Michael Fane, like Amory Blaine, walks along quoting "Ulalume," and so there is probably the common ancestry in Poe.

far from being "extremely old." In The Beautiful and Damned the word is used almost exclusively to indicate something that is hackneyed or inevitably repeated:

> The immemorial thesis that the days somewhere were warm but the nights very pleasant was successfully propounded. . . . .
>
> . . . . her partner happy as a petted puppy and mad as the immemorial hatter. . . . .
>
> . . . . they discovered the age-old, immemorial resemblances in tastes and ideas.
>
> [Gloria's diary] began with the immemorial "I am going to keep a diary for my children."
>
> . . . . the immemorial remark. . . . .
>
> . . . . its immemorial disguise as an innate idea.
>
> . . . . immemorial individual with a gnarled body and a gnarled cane.
>
> He had phrases about Socialism -- the immemorial ones. . . . .
>
> . . . . an immemorial phrase . . . . .

Thus Fitzgerald's second novel, written two years after his first, does not show a clear improvement in diction. There is, as already noted, a much higher incidence in The Beautiful and Damned of words with a vague romantic suggestiveness -- "passionate" and "poignant" are instances -- and all too many uses of "immemorial." In contrast to the relatively flat diction of This Side, however, the diction of The Beautiful and Damned is frequently very colorful at

least. Anthony punches himself into his overcoat, for example, and ruminations winter in Gloria's eyes. The question of the more exact and vivid diction in this later novel, though, inevitably brings us to the related questions of the metaphoric suggestion of verbs and of figures of speech in general. For Fitzgerald improved his diction in time (as we shall see particularly in his third novel) by the device of substituting metaphoric verbs and formal figures of speech for vague adjectives and adverbs. In his first two novels, as just noted, the adjectives and adverbs are required to do too much; but formal figures abound, too, making up for the reiterated use of "passionate" and "poignant" and "immemorial." But before discussing this important element in Fitzgerald's early style, we might well briefly consider some of the other characteristics of his early prose.

2

Fitzgerald always wrote excellent dialogue, and even in his cheapest stories, the rhythm and accent of the speeches are such as to elicit an admission that his talk sounds like real talk. This is true even in his first novel. Many of the undergraduate bull-session conversations in This Side seem included arbitrarily;

that they ring embarrassingly true, though, is undeniable. The random dialogue which indicates the passing of time and the increasingly alcoholic condition of Amory during his three-week spree is a good example of the talk in that novel. At one point Amory is awakened from a stupor by a woman clinging to him. "Take me home!" she cries.

> "Hello!" said Amory, blinking.
> "I like you," she announced tenderly.
> "I like you too."
> He noticed that there was a noisy man in the background and that one of his party was arguing with him.
> "Fella I was with's a damn fool," [the woman confided]. . . . . "I hate him. I want to go home with you."
> "You drunk?" queried Amory with intense wisdom.
> She nodded coyly.
> "Go home with him," he advised gravely. "He brought you."
> At this point the noisy man in the background broke away from his detainers and approached.
> "Say!" he said fiercely. "I brought this girl out here and you're butting in!"
> Amory regarded him coldly, while the girl clung to him closer.
> "You let go that girl!" cried the noisy man.
> Amory tried to make his eyes threatening.
> "You go to hell!" he directed finally, and turned his attention to the girl.
> "Love first sight," he suggested.
> "I love you," she breathed. . . . .
> Some one leaned over and spoke in Amory's ear.
> "That's just Margaret Diamond. She's drunk and this fellow here brought her. Better let her go."
> "Let him take care of her, then!" shouted Amory furiously. "I'm no Y. M. C. A. worker, am I? -- am I?"
> "Let her go!"
> "It's <u>her</u> hanging on, damn it! Let her hang!"

Fitzgerald's alcoholic scenes, incidentally, whatever their final meaning, are often the most amusing ones

in his novels. But the accuracy of his report of the irrational behavior and conversation of the drunk is only a type of his dialogue in general.

In the expository, narrative, and descriptive sections of his prose in his first two novels, though, Fitzgerald was not so successful. The comparatively simple and unsubtle rhythm of most of his sentences in This Side does give way, it is true, to more complex and subtle rhythms in The Beautiful and Damned, but not until Gatsby did Fitzgerald really learn how to write. Of course Frances Newman, one of his staunch foes, would not admit that Fitzgerald ever could write. Something of the invalidity of her judgment is suggested, though, by her grouping Dreiser, Ruth Suckow, Willa Cather, and Fitzgerald together, as people who "write novels without taking the trouble to learn how to write." Fitzgerald's early style, as we are in the process of seeing, was quite crude, but the linking of him and Willa Cather with Ruth Suckow and Dreiser cannot now, I believe, arouse anything except wonder. Willa Cather, even in 1928, the date at which Miss Newman is writing, was an extremely polished stylist. Further, Fitzgerald's crudest writing, his most ponderous sentences have a beauty, a grace, and a lightness that Dreiser never achieved.

Miss Newman's judgment is worth dwelling on for

a moment; for she was a writer and a critic of some ability herself. Her own promising career was cut short by death twelve years before Fitzgerald's; she was, though, only a few years older than Fitzgerald. The eight years difference in age between them, however, are enough to encompass the revolution in literary taste that was going on in the twenties. For those like Miss Newman whose criterion of excellence was the polished urbanity of the prose of James Branch Cabell,[9] the new literary ideal as represented in time (whatever their essential differences) not only by the prose of Fitzgerald but also by that of the older writers Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson, and Willa Cather, and by that of the younger writer Hemingway, could only be crude writing.

What I have called "the new literary ideal" was not of course really new at all. As is often remarked about Hemingway's style especially, the prose of these writers is rooted in the earlier tradition of American writing represented principally by the prose of Thoreau and Mark Twain and Stephen Crane. This "new" prose, like Twain's and Crane's, is characterized by such elements as a predominantly simple vocabulary, an uncomplicated sentence structure, the device of understatement, the absence of literary ornament and allusion, and the avoidance of both consciously beautiful writing and falsely poetic imagery.

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[9]Though he is no longer highly thought of, Cabell was the much-praised writer of the twenties.

But this new prose ideal is by no means made up entirely of negations; for these characteristics have their positive side, too, and as far as the simple vocabulary is concerned, for instance, Willa Cather to a degree and Fitzgerald even more, did not consciously delimit their vocabularies as Hemingway did. The rich, the beautiful, the latinate word has its rôle, often a very important one, in their prose. And Fitzgerald, though he could "strip" his style on occasion, never strove for a common style. Like Faulkner, who is scarcely of this tradition, Fitzgerald courted rhetoric when the time for rhetoric came. Indeed, of this group, Fitzgerald alone carries the banner of elegance -- to such an extent, it might be added, that Life magazine could editorialize in 1949 that "Fitzgerald was the one novelist of the twenties who believed in romance and the elegant flourish. . . . ."[10] But Fitzgerald's mature and characteristic prose, while it is romantic and elegant, is so in a line with that of this new school and not of Cabell's.[11]

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[10] Emphasis added. Where in this reckoning is the "elegant" Cabell?

[11] On the fringes of this school of simple prose in one direction is the prose of those naturalistic writers such as Dreiser and Farrell who give the effect of not caring about style; and in the other, the prose of those such as Steinbeck who are "elegant" in a manner quite different from Fitzgerald's. The list could be extended, but my purpose here is merely to place Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald's early prose, pushed though it was in uncharacteristic directions by his relatively bad models, has most of the elements of his later style. His vocabulary in his first two novels, for instance, ranges from the colloquial to the almost erudite.[12] Seldom in either novel is there any elaborate sentence construction. An occasional antithetical sentence or, infrequently, a balanced one occurs. Parallelism appears oftener; when it does it is usually faulty. Rhetorically, the sentences are primarily loose ones; grammatically, if they are not "simple" sentences, they are preponderantly sentences of one or the other of these two types: main clause plus subordinate clause; pairs of coordinate clauses joined by "and" or "but." The longer sentences of Fitzgerald's second novel, with their more complex rhythms, are quite consistently only combinations of these two types.

These two types of sentences can be used with considerable refinement, particularly the first, as the later Fitzgerald prose alone shows. Both these types in Fitzgerald's early prose, though, seem to be

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[12] Or at least on occasion the pretentious. One time when Tom digresses in a conversation with Amory, he is said to "tangent off." After Amory has fallen in love with Rosalind he is said to have had "a complete bouleversement" for the second time in his life.

merely what first occurred to the young author. When Fitzgerald attempts any variations from the norm, it tends to be in the direction of the easy use of "so" as a coordinate conjunction or of the dash instead of stronger punctuation. Almost any chapter in This Side yields illustrations, and perhaps a few lines from Chapter II, Book I, can suffice to show the general trend of Fitzgerald's early sentences.

> Burne, fair-haired, silent, and intent, appeared in the house only as a busy apparition, gliding in quietly at night and off again in the early morning to get up his work in the library -- he was out for the Princetonian, competing furiously against forty others for the coveted first place. In December he came down with diphtheria, and some one else won the competition, but, returning to college in February, he dauntlessly went after the prize again. Necessarily, Amory's acquaintance with him was in the way of three-minute chats, walking to and from lectures, so he failed to penetrate Burne's one absorbing interest and find what lay beneath it.
>
> Amory was far from contented. He missed the place he had won at St. Regis', the being known and admired, yet Princeton stimulated him, and there were many things ahead calculated to arouse the Machiavelli latent in him, could he but insert a wedge. The upper-class clubs, concerning which he had pumped a reluctant graduate during the previous summer, excited his curiosity. . . . .

This passage is of course a simple narrative one and not one of any climactic importance; but it should be noted that the sentences are strung together in an extremely loose fashion and that the lines as a unit are almost wholly lacking in rhythm. A dash is used

as a period for the first sentence; an "and" and a "but" string the next three independent clauses together; a "so" is used as a coordinate conjunction in the third sentence. After the beginning simple sentence in the second paragraph, three more independent clauses are loosely linked with a "yet" and an "and" -- and the clichéd phrase "could he but insert a wedge" is badly attached at the end. One mark of the difference between the Fitzgerald of <u>This Side</u> and the Fitzgerald of <u>The Beautiful and Damned</u> is that, whatever old faults remain and whatever new faults occur, in his second novel he does not so often use colorless verbs such as those which I have italicized in this passage. He does, though, still rely on the dash as a semi-colon or period:

> He was in love -- he cried it passionately to himself.
>
> He wondered, often but quite casually, about Bloecksman -- finally he forgot him entirely.
>
> She shared his company's idea that he was a sort of bank clerk -- she thought that he was respectable and poor.

The use of suspension periods in modified stream-of-consciousness narrative passages greatly diminishes, however, between the two novels. In <u>This Side</u>, the memorably bad passage about Clara -- "She was immemorial. . . ." -- is followed by four suspension periods, and in such climactic passages as those

involving Amory's encounter with the devil, his Atlantic City sacrifice, and his enclosure-labyrinth movement are dotted with periods. This paragraph from the Atlantic City episode can illustrate the weakness of this use of the periods:

> In the silence when this voice ceased Amory realized that there were other things in the room besides people . . . over and around the figure crouched on the bed there hung an aura, gossamer as a moonbeam, tainted as stale, weak wine, yet a horror, diffusively brooding already over the three of them . . . and over by the window among the stirring curtains stood something else, featureless and indistinguishable, yet strangely familiar, . . . Simultaneously two great eases presented themselves side by side to Amory. . . . .
>
> [The last five periods are mine.]

Although The Beautiful and Damned is by no means free from precious writing as the discussion of the diction (above) and the imagery (below) in that novel should make clear, there is far less "fine" or falsely poetic writing in Fitzgerald's second novel than in his first. A passage as pretentiously vague and meaningless as the following from This Side cannot, fortunately, be found in The Beautiful and Damned:

> The great tapestries of trees had darkened to ghosts back at the last edge of twilight. The early moon had drenched the arches with pale blue, and, weaving over the night, in and out of the gossamer rifts of moon, swept a song, a song with more than a hint of sadness, infinitely transient, infinitely regretful.

The fault of style illustrated by "tapestries of trees," incidentally, the jingle, occurs often enough in both Fitzgerald's first two novels to make one question the acuteness of his ear. In This Side, for instance, are these jingles: scratch of a match, diplomatic autocrat, deep sleep (and sleep deep), lift it swiftly. On the same page with the last example is this sentence: "the passing of the emotional wave that made it possible might leave the one who made it high and dry forever on an island of despair." And in the passage quoted on page 42 above are the jingles "fair-haired, silent, and intent. . . . ." In The Beautiful and Damned are such jingles as "secretly orderly," "low, below," "spring slant," and "porcine and obscene." The jingle in the last example, a description of women in the fashionable grey squirrel coats, may be deliberate, for comic effect. It should be noted, though, that the second adjective scarcely seems applicable.

3

Although he is usually considered one, in some respects Fitzgerald was not a "natural" writer at all; at least not in the sense that his talent was

fully developed in his first writings.[13] The sentences in his early prose tend to be inexpressive in form, with his loose punctuation helping little. Further, his early writings, as noted above, while not strictly imitative, are greatly influenced by his most recent readings. Wells and Mackenzie and Rupert Brooke; Tarkington, Owen Johnson, Robert Hugh Benson, and Chesterton -- all have some effect in word, idea, or form on This Side of Paradise. As Fitzgerald's talent matures, direct influences are less discernible; or what he took is better digested. The influences on The Beautiful and Damned, for instance, Oscar Wilde, Flaubert, and, possibly, T. S. Eliot, are more speculative than the influences on This Side. The novel which Fitzgerald wrote when he was in his late twenties, The Great Gatsby, is so separated from what "sources" it may have that it stands as a unique accomplishment.

Here it is not possible, or is it, I think, desirable to ascertain what Fitzgerald's creative

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[13] Arthur Mizener notes that Fitzgerald was "a natural writer if only in the sense that from his grade-school days until the end of his life nothing was ever quite real to him until he had written about it." That, of course, is a different sense from the one being considered here. Fitzgerald himself once told Maxwell Perkins that he was not a natural writer, a judgment with which I think we can agree.

processes were. We do know from Fitzgerald's own account of his struggles, though, that he had to work hard to produce his best writing, although the facile quality in and the polished surface of his work may give the opposite impression. The truth is that Fitzgerald had to learn how to write and to learn how in public with no reliable guide. Some critics -- John Berryman is one -- feel that Fitzgerald's dependence on the popular magazine market for an income

> cost him. . . . the criticism that might have saved him: by shaming him from his bad work, stiffening his conscience, protecting him against his abasements. . . . . Fitzgerald prostrated himself always, apparently, before Hemingway. . . . . The attitude hurt his work, and no body of responsible judgment was close to him to show him Hemingway's feet of clay. . . . or the superiority in certain ways of his own highest work.

This may well be true.[14] What should be underlined here, though, is that Fitzgerald's writing did improve.

He began with the analogy-seeking and -seeing mind and eye of a poet. (It is this that critics are probably thinking of when they say he could "always" write.) Fitzgerald himself thought that his talent

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[14] As far as the "abasement before Hemingway" is con[illegible] [14] As far as the "abasement before Hemin[illegible]ility in concerned, however -- mistaken it may be, th[illegible]nothing else in the arrogant world of art is refreshing, as inc[illegible]else. And in Tender Is the Night Fitzgerald and ind[illegible]incorporate Hemingway-ian touches with relat[illegible] individual success. See below, Chapter VIII

was a "poetic" one -- but a poetic one which found its medium in prose. (The verse he wrote does not at all approach his best -- or even his second-best -- prose in quality.) His best prose, while remaining prose and not at all "aspiring" to poetry, is very "poetic" in texture, abounding in imagery. In his early work these images are not always functional (as images are in genuine poetry), but they do present vivid pictures.

No one of Fitzgerald's novels has any consistent pattern of images. (In his later novels, though -- and more will be made of this later -- the images "work" in the texture as they do not in either This Side or The Beautiful and Damned.) There is of course the patterned comparison of the irresponsible Anthony and Gloria to children; and their view of other people is outlined by comparisons to animals or to inanimate objects. When Anthony tries to imagine himself in Congress, it is as "rooting around in the litter of that incredible pigsty with the narrow and porcine brows he saw pictured sometimes in the rotogravure. . . . ." Homegoing clerks are "ominous bees"; some men are "gray-thatched lumps in the back of limousines"; poor children swarm with "feverish activity like vivid ants in alleys of red sand"; their mothers are "like dark imperfect jewels. . . . like vegetables. . . . like

great bags of abominably dirty laundry." Gloria in her delirium thinks of "Millions of people. . . . swarming like rats, chattering like apes, smelling like all hell. . . . monkeys. . . . ." But no attempt is made to convey any genuine imagoic theme through The Beautiful and Damned. Rather, in this novel, as in This Side, images crop up, apparently, as they occur to the author.

Before considering the images in both novels in more detail, though, perhaps a notable fault in This Side should be commented on. In a prose less figurative than Fitzgerald's was even in his first novel, such a freight of clichés as he loaded his style with in that novel could be fatal. As it is, even "quick as a flash," three times repeated; "snowed under," twice; "burning eyes," twice; "fitted like a glove" and "black as pitch," once each -- annoying as they may be, do not sink his style. Fortunately, these clichés were called to Fitzgerald's attention, and, as a result, in his second novel, despite its many other faults of diction, few clichés appear.

But even in This Side Fitzgerald could refurbish an old figure: roads stretch away from the Minnehaha Club like "dark creases on the white blanket" of snow; or, less successfully, "The unwelcome November rain had perversely stolen the day's last hour and pawned

it with that ancient fence, the night." In general Fitzgerald's use of figures in This Side as well as in The Beautiful and Damned leaves the impression that the author is both original and daring without being esoteric. The bases of Fitzgerald's figures are always everyday activities and everyday things -- walking, eating, drinking; clothing, furniture, buildings, food, animals. In an early scene in This Side, for example, after kissing Myra, Amory tastes his lips "as if he had munched some new fruit." Since this is Amory's first encounter with sex, the image while simple and even obvious enough is very apropos, the shade of Eve's apple darkening the scene and preparing in a small way for the convulsion that is to follow.

Other images in Fitzgerald's first novel derive from sources accessible to everyone: one action is like that of a stage manager; another like that of a factory owner; another, a lawyer grilling a witness; and one, a musician or an actor. At one point Amory's mind turns a corner; at another he sees his life as a journey down a road. One metaphor used several times is that of a "wave of emotion." One time it is an "emotional wave"; at another, in a description of the Amory-Rosalind affair, the expression "wave of emotion" actually occurs. Amory's

and Rosalind's "critical" attitudes toward the opposite sex are said to be "dulled by the great wave of emotion that washed over them." At other times Amory thinks of himself as "being borne along a stream of love or fascination, or left in an eddy, and in the eddies he. . . . desired [only]. . . . to be picked up on a wave's top and swept along again." The image is not quite so hackneyed as the genuine clichés cited previously although it is nearly so. A more successful use of the wave metaphor is the traditional sounding one in which war comes to Princeton: "Slowly and inevitably, yet with a sudden surge at the last, while Amory talked and dreamed, war rolled swiftly up the beach and washed the sands where Princeton played." In the context, where the Princeton boys have their day of "Carnival" at the beach and Princeton itself has "its alluring reputation as the pleasantest country club in America," the image is quite suitable.

Some of the images in <u>This Side</u>, in contrast to the just-cited comparison, are quite strained, even self-consciously pretty and vaguely honorific, as is much of the imagery in the romantic poetry Fitzgerald was reading. A voice is said to be "musical as a waterfall." Or Amory and Eleanor feel that "they must bend tiny golden tentacles from his imagination to hers. . . . ." Another time, "Even his dreams" are

said to be "faint violins drifting like summer sounds upon the summer air." Obviously the author means that Amory's dreams are "faint violin music" drifting "like summer sounds"; but even t at inexactitude corrected, the image is not a comprehensible or visible one.

One time Amory is said to have "tireless passion, fierce jealousy, (a) longing to possess and (to) crush" left to him of his love for Rosalind; "these remained," the author continues, "to him as payment for the loss of his youth — bitter gallonel under the thin sugar of love's exaltation." The vague scientific base of the image I have italicized, although it may have been intended to strengthen the strained romanticism of the passage as a whole, is not, I think, successful. Another time, Amory's and Myra's lips are said to "brush. . . . like young wild flowers in the wind." The comparison itself is bad; the inappropriate adjective "young" is much worse. (Fitzgerald, however, never wholly lost his affection for this type of image, and in his later novels, as any reader notices, he repeatedly has glances meeting and tangling, or eyes brushing like birds' wings.) Sometimes the image in This Side is a little pretentious and not very exact; e.g., Monsignor Darcy "clad in his purple regalia. . . . resembled a Tumor sunset. . . . ," or, tragedy's "emerald eyes stare. . . . at Amory over the edge of June."

The enclosure-labyrinth comparison is also pretentious. Amory is alone, we are told; "he had escaped from a small enclosure into a great labyrinth." The labyrinth is not a bad figure for life itself, suggesting as it does the tortuous maze-like condition; but since the figure of the enclosure was not introduced earlier, the enclosure-labyrinth vision of youth and maturity seems merely stated. In addition it is not sufficiently connected with Fitzgerald's egotist-personage (youth-age) terms.

Fitzgerald himself may have been conscious of his failure with this comparison. At any rate the image of the labyrinth recurs in "The Ice Palace," a short story which he wrote shortly after This Side was accepted for publication. The labyrinth is not very much better handled in the short story than in the novel, but something of what was probably Fitzgerald's dissatisfaction with the image is suggested by his attempting to use an actual labyrinth in the actual ice palace, symbolically.

This pretentious inexactness is perhaps the most obvious difficulty with some of the images in The Beautiful and Damned. One time, for instance, Gloria and Anthony, after the disastrous visit of the elder Patch to their house, are said to be "like two goldfish in a bowl from which all the water had been

drawn; they could not even swim across to each other." The simile applies well enough at several points -- i.e., they are, in a sense, in a bowl (life) from which what they need for sustenance (money) has been withdrawn. But the comparison as a whole, intentional though the comic effect may be, possibly goes too far over the edge into the ludicrous. Again, for no apparent functional reason, in the first chapter, "The elevated, half a block away," is said to sound

> a rumble of drums -- and should he [Anthony] lean from his window he would see the train, like an angry eagle, breasting the dark curve at the corner. He was reminded of a fantastic romance he had lately read in which cities had been bombed from aerial trains, and for a moment he fancied that Washington Square had declared war on Central Park and that this was a north-bound menace loaded with battle and sudden death. But as it passed the illusion faded; it diminished to the faintest of drums -- then to a far-away droning eagle.

Another time in the same chapter from a door that Anthony passes comes "a smell that was hot, doughy, and pink. A drugstore next, exhaling medicines, spilt soda-water and a pleasant undertone from the cosmetic counter; then a Chinese laundry, still open, steamy and stifling, smellin folded and vaguely yellow." Again, an old lady is "borne along like a basket of eggs between two men who exclaimed to her of the wonders of Times Square -- explained them so quickly that the old lady, trying to be impartially interested,

waved her head here and there like a piece of wind-worried old orange-peel." The parts that I have italicized in these passages are clever, too clever in fact; for they are not really characteristic of Anthony's thought. They are incrustations, "atmosphere," and, essentially, padding. In the first chapters of The Beautiful and Damned, particularly, this type of precious imagery flourishes.

Sometimes in this novel, too, images are too pretty as when the "petals" are said to be "falling from the flowered afternoon. . . . ." More frequently, though, the brief, simple metaphors and similes in this second of Fitzgerald's novels are relatively successful. This is true, certainly, of the many comparisons of the principals to children; of Anthony's "Coming into Gloria's arms" meaning that he should "arrange himself as nearly as possible as a sort of three-sided crib for her luxurious ease"; of an incident running "like a lugubrious fugue through the first year of marriage . . . . ."; of Anthony and Gloria being like "stars on this stage, each playing to an audience of two: the passion of pretense created the actuality."

Almost all the images in about, say, half of This Side of Paradise are rather simple metaphors and similes. Images, not always very good ones, which could

easily and more effectively be developed, are let drop: Amory is said to "spread the table of . . . . future friendship with all his ideas. . . . ." Or, ridiculously, "the shifting search-light of Isabelle's mind flashe[s] on two ideas. . . . ." Again, Amory's mind works "slowly, trying to. . . . separate from the chaotic imagery that stacked his memory the bare shreds of truth."

Fitzgerald seems to discover the elaborated figure about midway in the novel. On pages 156 and 158, respectively, those elaborate figures occur:

> He felt like a factory-owner who after accusing a clerk of dishonesty finds that his own son, in the office, is changing the books once a week. His poor, mistreated will that he had been holding up to the scorn of himself and his friends, stood before him innocent, and his judgment walked off to prison with the uncomfirmble imp, imagination, dancing in mocking glee beside him.
>
> She seemed a daughter of light alone. His entity dropped out of her plane and he longed only to touch her dress with almost the realization that Joseph must have had of Mary's eternal significance.

The first figure, especially, suffers from too great an extension. As it turns out Fitzgerald does not develop in the direction of the extended figure of speech; but it is interesting to see him working those figures out in his first novel. Another time in <u>This Side</u>, a hundred pages later, one image apparently

suggests another -- journey, scrap-book, banquet -- with resultant confusion:

> There were days when Amory resented that life had changed from an even progress along a road stretching over in sight, with the scenery merging and blending, into a succession of quick, unrelated scenes -- two years of sweat and blood, that sudden absurd instinct for paternity that Rosalind had stirred; the half-sensual, half-neurotic quality of this autumn with Eleanor. He felt that it would take all time, more than he could ever spare, to glue these strange cumbersome pictures into the scrap-book of his life. It was all like a banquet where he sat for this half-hour of his youth and tried to enjoy brilliant epicurean courses.

Many images in The Beautiful and Damned are extensively developed[15] in a less confused fashion than this last image from This Side; in general Fitzgerald is able to make exact and extended comparisons such as these two about Adam Patch:

> The span of his seventy-five years had acted as a magic bellows -- the first quarter-century had blown him full with life, and the last had sucked it all back. It had sucked in the cheeks and the chest and the girth of arm and leg. It had tyrannously demanded his teeth, one by one, suspended his small eyes in dark-bluish sacks, tweaked out his hairs, changed him from gray to white in some places, from pink to yellow

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[15] Sometimes figures are developed in a facetious manner with a comic intent, as in the beginning image: "In 1913, when Anthony Patch was twenty-five, two years were already gone since irony, the Holy Ghost of this later day, had, theoretically at least, descended upon him. Irony was the final polish of the shoe, the ultimate dab of the clothes-brush, a sort of intellectual 'There!'"

> in others -- callously transposing his colors like a child trying over a paintbox. Then through his body and his soul it had attacked his brain. It had sent him night-sweats and tears and unfounded dreads. It had split his intense normality into credulity and suspicion. Out of the coarse material of his enthusiasms it had cut dozens of meek but petulant obsessions; his energy was shrunk to the bad temper of a spoiled child, and for his will to power was substituted a fatuous puerile desire for a land of harps and canticles on earth.
>
> Old Adam died on a midnight of late November with a pious compliment to his God on his thin lips. He, who had been flattered so much, faded out flattering the Omnipotent Abstraction which he fancied he might have angered in the more lascivious moments of his youth. It was announced that he had arranged some sort of an armistice with the deity, the terms of which were not made public, though they were thought to have included a large cash payment.

Another time in the stage directions of one of his playlets in The Beautiful and Damned, Fitzgerald wittily says of Muriel's bosom that it "is still a pavement that she offers to the hoofs of many passing stallions, hoping that their iron shoes may strike even a spark of romance in the darkness . . . . ."[16] But in the later Fitzgerald, as in the later James, images and descriptions are more integral than these -- at the cost, it is true, of clear-cut precision and humor. The increased density and depth,

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[16] As a "stage direction" this is italicised in the original. The suspension periods are Fitzgerald's.

though, more than make up for the loss in surface wit and charm.

The analogy-seeing character of Fitzgerald's eye led him to personify both abstractions and inanimate objects in his first two novels. Sometimes the personification seems almost carelessly accidental; e.g., in "Spires and Gargoyles," he has "the wealth of sunshine creeping" for reasons other than those of personification. Or very embarrassingly he will have Amory's and Rosalind's "senses of humor crawl. . . . into corners to sleep. . . . ." At other times, however, the faintly animistic quality of some of his images comes off remarkably well:

> . . . . the wet branches moved and clawed with their fingernails at the window-pane.
>
> . . . . seven or eight empty cardboard boxes, with tissue-paper tongues hanging panting from their mouths. . . . an assortment of street dresses mingled with their sisters of the evening, all upon the table. . . . a roll of tulle, which has lost its dignity and wound itself tortuously around everything in sight . . . . .[17]
>
> New York seemed not so much awakening as turning over in its bed.

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[17] Admittedly, this is part of a facetious description of Rosalind's boudoir; but it is still worth noting, since it shows Fitzgerald's ability to see even objects such as these in a new light.

> . . . . the car cards thrusting themselves at one, leering out like dull bores who grab your arm with another story. . . . .
>
> Another dawn flung itself across the river; a belated taxi hurried along the street, its lamps still shining like burning eyes in a face white from a night's carouse.

This same animistic tendency is continued in The Beautiful and Damned. An approaching train identifies itself by "a plaintive mooing like that of a gigantic cow," and sunshine loiters in the cross-streets. December is just up the street, and February has a mad heart. Anthony's day, "usually a jelly-like creature, a shapeless, spineless thing, had attained Mesozoic structure."

In This Side the closest Fitzgerald comes to any sort of symbolism with his imagery is in the devil episode; but the devil himself is real: only his "wrong" feet and the white apartment houses in the neighborhood are symbolical. Early in the episode Amory had seen the white-stone buildings, paradoxically "dotted with dark windows" and "flooded with a bright moonlight that gave them a calcium pallor." At the end of the scene Amory wonders if there are "any good people left in the world or [do] they all live in white apartment-houses now?" The suggestion of the apartment-houses as whited sepulchres is not, however, exploited.

The sentimental Anthony and Gloria in The Beautiful

and Damned make "the gray house" in Marietta a symbol almost from the beginning. They have gone into the country looking for "happiness." After they have rented the house they see it "dancing in phantom glory before their dazzled eyes." When they move out to the house, it "welcome[s] them with a rush of sentiment that falsified its cynical old age." They are happy there for a while, but they weary of it. Although they have no intention of returning to it, with characteristic irresponsibility they sign the new lease and immediately it seems "as though they hear. . . . the gray house, drably malevolent at last, licking its white chops and waiting to devour them."

In addition to his approach to symbolism in his treatment of "the gray house," Fitzgerald also explores other avenues of imagery in his second novel. Anthony once somewhat sophomorically remarks that poetry will be "absorbed into prose sooner or later. For instance, the beautiful word, the colored and glittering word, and the beautiful simile belong in prose now." The figurative texture of Fitzgerald's prose, as already noted, is often quite poetic. When Fitzgerald tried for a consciously poetic effect, he usually ended with one of his "dreamy" or "ghostly" passages, such as those cited above in the discussion of his diction. In This

Side there are many vaguely romantic pictures in which buildings are seen as "dreaming peaks" or trees are seen as "great tapestries of trees." Excesses such as these and a general want of tact and subtlety in the use of figures in both Fitzgerald's first two novels must weigh heavily against the early Fitzgerald with any reader who likes good prose.

In contrast, though, one must put Fitzgerald's adoption in some of his early writing -- though not at all consistently -- of aids from the contemporary poets. At one point in _This Side_, "human voices" fall faintly on Amory's ear (in the devil episode, just before Amory rushes out of the apartment building). In "The Ice Palace," a story Fitzgerald wrote between his first two novels, he uses another phrase of T. S. Eliot's to symbolize the Southern girl's feeling about Northerners: "On both sides of her along the walls she felt things creeping, _damp souls_ that haunted this palace, this town, this North." Of course this use of "damp souls" does not compare with Eliot's ("I am aware of the damp souls of housemaids / Sprouting despondently at area gates.") But it does show something of Fitzgerald's conscious attempt to expand the horizons of prose by using whatever was available in poetry.

Another time in the same story Fitzgerald uses an insight of Eliot's quite ineptly. In "Burbank with

a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar," Bleistein's "way" is "A saggy bending of the knees / And elbows, with the palms turned out. . . . ." In Fitzgerald's story, Sally Carrol and Harry see a man standing at the street corner ahead of them,

> his knees bent, his eyes gazing upward with a tense expression as though he were about to make a leap toward the chilly sky . . . . . coming closer, they discovered it had been a ludicrous momentary illusion produced by the extreme bagginess of the man's trousers.

In both cases the illusion is produced by the bagginess of the man's trousers. But in Eliot's poem the illusion is conveyed by the single phrase "A saggy bending of the knees. . . . ." In Fitzgerald's story the illusion is overstated and overstressed (since it is not important in the story). Eliot makes a poetic use of the "ludicrous": the bagginess is symbolical of the saggy foundations of the commercial world. Fitzgerald makes the illusion the occasion for a tirade on Harry's part against Southerners: "He must be a Southerner, judging by those trousers."

In another early story, "May Day," there is the detail of the light of dawn striking the Fifty-Ninth Street Childs' and turning the great plate-glass front to a deep, creamy blue. The exactitude of the detail -- not the way Fitzgerald writes about it, which is ostentatious -- makes the event memorable. In The

Beautiful and Damned Fitzgerald does not attempt this same sort of thing (although in Gatsby he is to achieve much more with similar material); but he does have Fifth and Sixth Avenues impressionistically seem to Anthony "the uprights of a gigantic ladder stretching from Washington Square to Central Park," and the streets of the upper East Side seem to him "the spokes of a gigantic wheel. . . . ." There too he sees "poor children swarming in feverish activity like vivid ants in alleys of red sand. From the tenement windows leaned rotund, moon-shaped mothers, as constellations of this sordid heaven; women like dark imperfect jewels, women like vegetables, women like great bags of abominably dirty laundry." The passage is pretentious, yes, and crude, but it is a seeing of objects in an unconventional way. One sharply observed reversal of the usual in the same novel is that of the cracked patent leather of the outmoded hansoms being "wrinkled like an old man's face." It is vivid and highly original, and more genuinely "poetic" than the soft, loose passages of "fine writing" in which Fitzgerald tried to see objects "poetically."

One criticism of the imagery in Fitzgerald's early writing has to be that the figures are used apparently on one level of communication only. The

best ones truly enrich the texture of Fitzgerald's prose; some, however, merely ornament it; and still others seem used for their own sake and are intrinsically extraneous to the matter at hand. Some are quite simply bad images. But there may be something in Coleridge's notion that "it would be a hopeless symptom, as regards genius, if. . . . a young man. . . . [had] anything like perfect taste." For the ground on which Fitzgerald succeeds eventually, as we shall see in the next chapter, is barely within the bounds of good literary taste. His errors in diction, his inexpressive style, and his daring imagery make the prose of his first two novels hover always on the edge; at times it goes over into the patently bad; but without the apprentice work of This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned, there quite likely could not have been the polished perfection of The Great Gatsby.

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The final estimate of both Fitzgerald's first two novels cannot be high. They are structurally deficient; the first, at least, is inarticulate in theme; both have unresolved problems in point of view. In diction, imagery, and style they are all but stifled by the incubi of bad models and youthful imperfect taste. Little in either novel foreshadows his third

novel. But it is encouraging to note that the short stories Fitzgerald was writing at the same time that he was producing his first three novels gradually improve in quality.

Of the few stories of any value that he published during this period, the one shakiest in eminence, "May Day," was written in May, 1920; "The Jelly-Bean," a better story, was written a few months later the same year; "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," late in 1921 or early in 1922; "Winter Dreams," a Gatsby-like story, in September, 1922; and "Absolution," the most accomplished story of this period, probably late in 1923. Fitzgerald's increasing control over his material, even in a form as relatively alien to him as the short story, was a good augury and one that was more than borne out as an examination of the achieved art of The Great Gatsby, his third novel, written in 1923-1924, should show.

1925 THROUGH 1934

CHAPTER VII

LAST COMPLETED NOVEL: TENDER IS THE NIGHT (ORGANIZATION)

Not so long since, Fitzgerald's fourth novel, Tender Is the Night, was considered of less importance than his third, The Great Gatsby. The novel came, for one thing, after nine years of no production and after years of rumors of Fitzgerald's deterioration. The year of its publication, 1934, was also a year, among other years of the thirties, of concerns other than the reflective ones of Fitzgerald's novel. Eyes were focused on social issues; cars were looked for social consciousness. Tender Is the Night showed a concern only for the rich, for the decadent, for European, not American, scenes.[1] Hence the novel was not very well received and for a long time not very highly regarded.

In recent years, though, it has received more and more praise. Arthur Mizener's estimate of it in his

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[1]A criticism of it for being "European" was made despite the fact that Fitzgerald's "American sense," as one critic has noted, was never stronger than in this novel. All the principal characters, with the exception of Tommy Barban, are American; the issues discussed are American; the tragedy, even, is peculiarly American.

biography of Fitzgerald has, in a measure, established Tender firmly in the canon of Fitzgerald's best work. On the continent, it and Gatsby are the two Fitzgerald novels translated and acclaimed. The pendulum has probably now swung a little too far the other way; one critic has called it Fitzgerald's "greatest" work. Although Tender is a rich and complex novel, as a novel it is not so good as Gatsby. A larger and more ambitious work, it still fails to come off in a fairly crucial way. It is extremely readable, however, and the characters are timelessly human, the issues significant ones, the tragedy, such as it is, a recurring one.

In Tender Is the Night, Fitzgerald returns once more to his basic fable, and on a larger scale, with greater subtlety and complexity, he outlines the fate of his representative man in the modern world. The representative man this time is a doctor of medicine, a psychiatrist, Richard Diver, one whose "accidental" choice of a profession, Fitzgerald says, ruins him. Dr. Diver marries a mental patient, Nicole Warren, and his choice of her, as Gatsby's choice of Daisy, Anthony's of Gloria, deflects him from his original course and contains within itself his ultimate deterioration. Against continental backgrounds (the Riviera, Paris, Rome, Switzerland), the novel examines this deterioration in some detail.

But the deterioration of a promising psychiatrist is not the only issue in the novel. The basic difficulty with Tender, as a matter of fact, is simply that it contains too many issues, too many in the sense that their relationship to each other and to the theme is not always clear, and, even, at times only doubtfully existant. Fitzgerald had intended that his fourth novel should be a panoramic "philosophical" novel of the type of Vanity Fair. He began, as Arthur Mizener has said, with a body of material first. One shaping of that material he called The World's Fair, using the term metaphorically in the modern sense and at the same time by an echo of the title "Vanity Fair" suggesting the Thackerayan type of novel that this book was to be. Fitzgerald adhered to his conception of this novel as a Thackerayan panorama even after the basic story changed and changed and changed again. Both Arthur Mizener and Malcolm Cowley have chronicled the evolution of this material and have thereby made clear some of the reasons why Tender is as confused a book as it is.

During his long struggle with his "body of material," he managed to tell the stories of at least five or six different people: 1) a young Hollywood person and her (or his) mother; 2) Abe North; 3) Tommy Barban; 4) Nicole; 5) Dick. These stories exist piecemeal in

three separate versions of the body of material which became Tender. The earliest version, for convenience called the "Melarkey" version, was to be the story of Francis Melarkey, a screen technician, who was to fall in love with a woman like Nicole Diver, to go on a great many parties, and finally to go berserk and kill his domineering mother. Another version, the "Rosemary" one, was to be about Rosemary's start in the film world through her contrived meeting on shipboard of a motion-picture director, Lowellen Kelly, who is taking his wife, Nicole Kelly, abroad. The third version, the "Dick Diver" one, was the one brought to a conclusion.

"Although the three versions differ widely from one another," Malcolm Cowley says, "we feel no doubt in reading them that they are stages in writing a single novel. The essential theme is the same in all three: an ambitious young American goes to Europe and is ruined by his contact with the leisure class." The three versions have similar settings -- Paris, Switzerland, the Riviera -- and episodes are repeated in one and another of the versions. Each of the characters has a fairly complete history in the total mass of manuscript. A result of this embarrassment of material is that episodes and characters and snatches of dialogue from one or the other of the three versions and from

other work of Fitzgerald's appear as vestigial remains in the final draft. The detail about Rosemary's relationship to her mother, so prominent in the finished version of Tender, for instance, is part of the "Rosemary" manuscript, not the "Dick Diver" one, in which it is essentially irrelevant. The visit Dick and Rosemary make to a party in section XVII of Book I is left over from the "Melarkey" version and is puzzling and intrusive in Tender.

In order to give the panoramic picture of the life of Americans in Europe that he had envisaged, Fitzgerald needed to detail the lives of a number of individual people -- Dick, Nicole, Rosemary, Abe, Tommy -- intertwining them as best he could; or else he needed to concentrate on only one or two lives with the others presented as background. Fitzgerald chose the latter course. "The file of manuscripts gives us the picture of a complete little world," according to Malcolm Cowley; and "the finished novel gives us only segments of that world, but they are chosen in such a fashion as to imply the rest of it." This choice was a good one for Fitzgerald; the false starts in The Beautiful and Damned must have shown him that he was not at his best when he tried for a large and varied social picture. That even this choice was not successfully carried out, however, is testified to by the novel itself. The story of Dick

Diver's deterioration is told, in harrowing detail; but disproportionate attention is given to Rosemary, who is merely a catalytic agent, and not enough to Abe North, whose fate is a ghastly foreshadowing of Dick's.

Feeling that something was wrong with the finished novel, Fitzgerald began to revise it after its publication. In 1938 he thought that "Its great fault is that the true beginning -- the young psychiatrist in Switzerland -- is tucked away in the middle of the book." He arranged the pages in his copy of the novel to conform to this idea, and wrote on the inside of the front cover, "This is the final version of the book as I would like it." (Italics in this quotation and the one in the last sentence are Fitzgerald's.) This version, with some additional changes by Malcolm Cowley, was published in 1951. Cowley's contention is that this 1951 edition provides "the permanent text" of Tender Is the Night. There are cogent reasons for giving serious consideration to this edition of the novel. As Cowley says, though, the words "'final version'. . . . have to be taken as a statement of intention rather than as an accomplished fact." Fitzgerald planned more changes than the mere rearrangement of the books. He wanted to eliminate some episodes, rewrite others; he also wanted to correct the text, revise the punctuation, and polish some phrases

and omit others. Since he made his "mark to say that I have made final corrections up to this point" on what became page 14 of the 1951 version (out of 334 pages) obviously all this was not done for much of the text. Malcolm Cowley has continued the work of correction, correcting the spelling, the French and the Italian, and the occasional misuse of words.[2]

Any future detailed criticism of Tender will have to take this 1951 edition into account. It is perhaps not pointless to say here, however, that the 1951 Tender is a different one from the 1934 one. And although it may be closer to Fitzgerald's intention, it is not entirely Fitzgerald's. He wanted to make a number of changes in the novel. He made some of them. That he did not make them all leaves a number of loose ends. He would have wanted to make many more changes. He might, even, in time, have decided that his first beginning was the better of the two. Hence it seems likely that the critic will for awhile have to be concerned with both texts. Because it is the earlier and the one

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[2]Cowley has even eliminated a few phrases, always with good reason; one wonders, though, if he does not exceed his editorial function here. Misspellings need not be perpetuated but actual changes in the text constitute a rewriting, certainly a creative, not an editorial, task.

Fitzgerald saw through the press and also because I think it the better of the two versions, I begin with and use as a standard text the 1934 edition of Tender Is the Night.

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The 1934 Tender is made up of three books: the first two are divided into, respectively, twenty-five and twenty-three numbered sections, and are not of unequal length (143 and 156 pages each); the third book is divided into thirteen numbered sections and is only two-thirds as long (99 pages) as the other two books. Since Fitzgerald was apparently seeing his novel in three fairly equal parts, this disproportion in the final book is representative of a crucial fault in the novel as a whole. The last book -- which might be designated "result," with the other two books being "appearance" and "history" -- reads almost like a draft of a book rather than the completed book itself.

Given more time and creative energy it is possible that Fitzgerald might have been able to rewrite this third book and re-cast the novel as a whole in such a way that each of these three books could have fallen into proper place. The design might then have been --

> Book I, Dick's marriage as seen by an outsider, Rosemary;
>
> Book II, Dick's marriage as seen by an insider, Dick;

Book III, Dick's marriage as seen by an insider who becomes an outsider, Nicole.

Only, as it is, Tender is not the story of Dick's marriage in the middle portion: Book II is almost a novel in itself, the story of an individual, Dick Diver, the story of his promise and of his failure.

But the design just sketched is, I think, the one that Fitzgerald had in mind. It is a good one for a complex novel; yet given the Tender Is the Night that we have, we can see that it is this very design which creates a number of Fitzgerald's writing problems. There is the question of the point of view for instance. The first book, set in the South of France and in the "present" (1925) is seen from the point of view of a lovely, eighteen-year-old motion-picture actress, Rosemary Hoyt. She meets "the Divers," as she thinks of Dick, his wife, and their friends, on a Riviera beach, and falls immediately in love with Dick. She accompanies "the Divers" to Paris, and once there she and Dick tentatively begin a love affair. The rumbling of the artillery of disaster becomes loud toward the last of this first book, however, eventuating in Nicole's breakdown in the last chapter; Rosemary begins to see a little way beneath the "appearance" of the Divers'

marriage.

The second book, set mostly in Switzerland and in part constituting a flashback from Book I, tells the story of Dick Diver, a young American psychiatrist, who has "accidentally" become involved in the cure of a schizophrenic American heiress, Nicole Warren, when she begins to writing letters to him while he is in the Army. When he returns to Zurich, he finds himself partly responsible for her cure. Despite certain withdrawing attempts on his part, they marry and a short timeless interior monologue from Nicole's point of view bridges the time (six years) between their marriage and Rosemary's appearance on the Riviera beach. The rest of Book II takes Dick's life from that point in the present through such signs of his collapse as his disastrous row in Rome after the end of his "dream" of Rosemary. The short third book, which Fitzgerald had intended to write primarily from Nicole's point of view, continues through Dick's deterioration, paralleling it now with Nicole's mental recovery. He has to withdraw from the clinic he had acquired in Book II; he drinks more and more; and, finally, he "releases" Nicole, and himself returns to America.

The three different points of view in these three books are not strictly adhered to. The novel is, in

fact, the panoramic Thackerayan novel with the author always present, lurking behind the scenes, or stepping out to comment on or to manipulate his actors. In this type of novel, the author's intrusions can give breadth and depth to the whole, but that breadth and depth, the modern reader feels, might better be achieved some other way.

In Book I of Tender, for example, Fitzgerald wants to put across Rosemary Hoyt's view of Nicole and Dick Diver. Rosemary sees Dick himself as "complete," which is important in view of our own later discoveries about him. But Rosemary is "immature," as the author tells us in several different ways, and does not see any more than the ease and surface gracefulness of the divers' life; as a consequence, Nicole's breakdown at the end of Book I is shocking and puzzling to Rosemary. It is to the reader also; he has been led, however, to distrust Rosemary's reactions so that uncertainty is mixed with his shock and puzzlement. In addition, since he has been spottily given Dick's point of view in Book I at crucial moments (instead of Rosemary's) he is not sure what Rosemary herself really thinks about anything. As a result, although the beginning of the novel with Rosemary's point of view is an excellent device for creating suspense -- it is not unlike our hearing all

about Gatsby before we see him -- much of the force of the device is lost by the author's going behind not only Rosemary but also Rosemary's thoughts as well as behind a number of other characters and their thoughts too. In other words our attention is constantly diffused in Book I.

The book begins well with an objective description of the French Riviera: "On the pleasant shore of the French Riviera, about half way between Marseilles and the Italian border, stands a large, proud, rose-colored hotel. . . . ." The scene is set and we await action. In the next paragraph a victoria brings Rosemary and her mother to the hotel. We meet them, come to understand their situation in a few words, and then follow Rosemary out onto the beach, gradually assuming her point of view and continuing with it for the rest of the numbered section I and for all of section II. In section III, however, we return to the omniscient point of view in order to learn something about what an "extraordinary" person Rosemary's mother, Mrs. Spoers, is. Perhaps it should be pointed out here that Mrs. Spoers is of no importance in Tender, and this material, which bulks large at this point, about her is essentially irrelevant. The conversation between Rosemary and her mother at lunch is brief, and after it Rosemary's point of view is

resumed and more or less maintained for the rest of section III and the first part of IV.

The descriptions of Nicole Diver and Tommy Barban are the author's, however, particularly the last lines on Tommy:

> . . . . there was a faint disgust always in his face which marred the full fierce luster of his brown eyes. Yet one remembered them afterward, when one had forgotten the inability of the mouth to endure boredom and the young forehead with its furrows of fretful and unprofitable pain.

Another paragraph giving Rosemary's impressions of the Divers ends with the author going behind her thoughts. "Even in their absolute immobility, complete as that of the morning," the paragraph begins, "she felt a purpose, a working over something, a direction, an act of creation different from any she had known." Then, "Her immature mind," the author adds, "made no speculation upon the nature of their relation to each other, she was only concerned with their attitude toward herself -- but she perceived the web of some pleasant interrelation, which she expressed with the thought that they seemed to have a very good time." That Rosemary's point of view is a device used only in order to get certain information across becomes obvious in the next sentence: "She looked in turn at the three

men, temporarily expropriating them." Tommy and Abe are dismissed in a few lines. Then Dick is described, mostly from Rosemary's point of view but with a few omniscient intrusions:

> But Dick Diver -- he was all complete there. Silently she admired him. His complexion was reddish and weather-burned, so was his short hair -- a light growth of it rolled down his arms and hands. His eyes were of a bright, hard blue. His nose was somewhat pointed and there was never any doubt at whom he was looking or talking -- and this is a flattering attention, for who looks at us? -- glances fall upon us, curious or disinterested, nothing more. His voice, with some faint Irish melody running through it, wooed the world, yet she felt the layer of hardness in him, of self-control and of self-discipline, her own virtues. Oh, she chose him, and Nicole, lifting her head saw her choose him, heard the little sigh at the fact that he was already possessed.

Similarly, a little later, spliced between Rosemary's thoughts in a single paragraph is the comment, "The Divers' day was spaced like the day of the older civilizations to yield the utmost from the materials at hand, and to give all the transitions their full value, and she did not know that there would be another transition presently from the utter absorption of the swim to the garrulity of the Provençal lunch hour." The comment is continued a few pages later:

> Her naïveté responded whole-heartedly to the expensive simplicity of the Divers, unaware of its complexity and its lack of innocence, unaware that it was also selection of quality

> rather than quantity from the run of the world's bazaar; and that the simplicity of behavior also, the nursery-like peace and good will, the emphasis on the simpler virtues, was part of a desperate bargain with the gods and had been attained through struggles she could not have guessed at. At that moment the Divers represented externally the exact furthermost evolution of a class, so that most people seemed awkward beside them -- in reality a qualitative change had already set in that was not at all apparent to Rosemary.

These examples from the first four numbered sections of Tender are typical of the wavering point of view which continues throughout the twenty-five numbered sections of Book I. Seldom do we really have Rosemary's point of view. Considering her general shallowness and "naïveté," it is perhaps as well. Her mind is merely a window out of which it convenient to look now and then in Book I, not one which compels attention. A certain amount of freshness results from the use of such a window, but in order to be successful the window would have to be used either a great deal more or a great deal less consistently than it is. As it is, Rosemary's viewpoint is used just often enough to make such omniscient comments as those just pointed out intrusive and to make the sudden transition to other points of view (e.g., Nicole's in section VI) altogether too abrupt.[3]

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[3]The author's phrase "To resume Rosemary's point of view" in that section seems a note for rather than an actual writing of the story. Cowley wisely but somewhat presumptuously excises this phrase in his edition of the Princeton copy of Tender Is the Night (1951).

The first readers of Tender were led astray by the attention to Rosemary in Book I and thought that she was to play a more important part than she does in the novel as a whole. A catalytic agent, she transforms existent forces into something else. If she had not been present, someone or something else would have performed her function. That being so, the details about her doings and reactions, her mother's careful "launching" of her, the early attention to her character and the minutiae of her thought, and her lack of perception -- all these details are misleading. I do not personally see that the rearrangement of the episodes into chronological sequence that Fitzgerald made in the Princeton copy of Tender solves this problem. Indeed, the placing of Book I after Book II makes the assumption of Rosemary's point of view at all completely meaningless. There is no longer any reason to see the Divers as they appear to be, since we know something of what is beneath the surface, and we want instead to go on with their story. The true chronological beginning of Fitzgerald's story is with Book II, certainly, but Fitzgerald's first impulse to create suspense and to show what the Divers' life looked like without sounding any depths was a good one. The song of the frogs quite pleasantly drowns the rumble of the artillery.

The fault is in the misleading effect the too great

attention to the detail of Rosemary's life gives. She is presented as an uncomplicated person. Simply letting her be a clear reflector of the life around her without going behind her thoughts might have solved the problem of authority in Book I. We would know that she was "immature" by the way she accepted and was charmed by appearances. And once her viewpoint was dropped, it would not have to be "resumed" again, since it has nothing in itself to contribute.

I have analyzed Rosemary's viewpoint to this length because it is often said that the first chapters of Tender are from her point of view and actually they are not. It might have been better had they been so. As it is, the point of view is omniscient with license to go into any mind at any time. Section VI, for instance, begins with Nicole's point of view, shifts for a moment to Dick's (". . . . Nicole swam into his field of vision. . . . ."), returns to hers, drifts into his ("He sometimes looked back with awe. . . . ."), becomes omniscient; and when Rosemary's point of view is "resumed," omniscience intrudes more than once in order for a bright remark to be included (". . . . she was in the movies but not at all At them"). The wavering continues with Rosemary's the principal point of view in sections VII through XI of Book I, the sections which cover the

remainder of the time on the Riviera. The succeeding sections, set principally in Paris, are mainly objective narrative, with Rosemary's point of view only intermittently being given. Sections XV and XVI, for instance, begin with her, shift to Dick, and end with her; section XVII and section XVIII are mostly hers, the last that she has until the end of Book I (section XXV). Section XIX begins with Abe North, shifts abruptly for a sentence of good but irrelevant observation to Nicole,[4] returns to Abe, shifts to Nicole, and is dispersed through the rest of the section. Sections XX and XXI use primarily Dick's viewpoint, designed apparently to suggest some of the undercurrents in his life; they contain, however, mostly irrelevant material, including the acute observation about the thin-faced American.[5] Section XXII is Nicole's

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[4] "She was frowning, thinking of her children, less gloating over them than merely animally counting them -- a cat checking her cubs with a paw." (Nicole has two children.)

[5] ". . . . a type that loafed about tobacco stores with one elbow on the counter and watched through heaven knew what small chink of the mind, the people who came in and out." Fitzgerald excised this portrait in the Princeton copy of Tender Is the Night. It appeared originally as a description of an important character in his 1927 short story "A Short Trip Home."

and Dick's; section XXIII is Abe's; section XXIV Dick's, ending with a sentence or two Abe's; section XXV is Rosemary's again, with snatches of Dick's.

Considering the complex picture of the life of the American expatriates on the Riviera and in Paris that Book I of Tender gives, it may seem pleayunish to complain of its relative lack of intensity or direction. But certainly the criticism is a just one. The reader simply does not know where he is going or what it all means, and he does not precisely because the dispersed point of view confuses rather than clarifies. He meets interesting people, but he wants to do more than that: he wants to go somewhere too. And it seems obvious that the author intended Book I not only to introduce and describe the principals of the novel but also to bring the lives of the Divers up to the critical point where the "qualitative change" shows: Nicole's breakdown.

In the impressionistic type of composition to which Tender belongs, many details are necessary in order to put a picture across, and at first glance a number of viewpoints may seem justified. The force of the individual impressions, however, would doubtless be greater and the significance of the crisis clearer if such remarks on manners and customs as the first three following and such comments as the fourth, all from

the latter sections of Book I, were omitted:

> He had hung up coat and vest and spread his shirt on another hanger -- a trick of his own. "You'll wear a shirt that's a little dirty when you won't wear a mussed shirt."
>
> Often people display a curious respect for a man drunk, rather like the respect of simple races for the insane. Respect rather than fear. There is something awe-inspiring in one who has lost all inhibitions, who will do anything. Of course we make him pay afterward for his moment of superiority, his moment of impressiveness.
>
> A little later, with the exquisite manners of the alcoholic that are like the manners of a prisoner or a family servant, he said good-by to an acquaintance. . . . .
>
> In an inhabited room there are refracting objects only half noticed: varnished wood, more or less polished brass, silver and ivory, and beyond these a thousand conveyors of light and shadow so mild that one scarcely thinks of them as that, the tops of picture-frames, the edges of pencils or ash-trays, of crystal or china ornaments; the totality of this refraction -- appealing to equally subtle reflexes of the vision as well as to those associational fragments in the subconscious that we seem to hang on to, as a glass-fitter keeps the irregularly shaped pieces that may do some time -- this fact might account for what Rosemary afterward mystically described as "realizing" that there was some one in the room, before she could determine it.

While these comments are wise and revealing, they are gratuitous in the climactic section of the first book of Tender, having the appearance of padding.

Book II is on the whole, I think, much more successfully executed than Book I. For one thing there is not, in general, the extensive use of a point of view other than Dick's. (Book II, it will be remembered, is

the "history" part of the total design of Tender, Dick's marriage as seen by an insider, Dick.) Sections I through X of Book II, the flashback from Book I, are mainly from Dick's point of view. Section I has "the ring of a biography" — that is, it is objective narrative. But sections II through IX and the first part of X are from Dick's point of view. Nicole's first-person summary in X takes the narrative from the flashback conclusion (the time of Nicole's and Dick's marriage) up to the time of Rosemary's appearance on the Riviera beach in 1925. Sections XI through XXII, except for two pages from McKisco's point of view, are almost entirely Dick's. Section XXIII, the last in Book II, is given over to Baby Warren's rescue of Dick and, with the exception of a small insert from Dick's point of view, is presented from her angle. While this section has considerable force and movement as well as humor, the point of view is a mistake since we are taken away from Dick at a critical moment of his deterioration. It is instructive to note that the section was originally written for Francis' mother in the "Delaney" version of this novel and hence is another vestigial remain.[6]

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[6] See the similar failure to modify the already-written Isabelle episode in This Side of Paradise discussed on pages 106-107 in my text above.

It could well be that Book II would profit by a viewpoint other than Dick's, but that is speculative. What is not speculative is that Book II is telling another story than that suggested in Book I. We find out, it is true, what is beneath the glittering surface of the Divers' life, but as soon as we do, we leave that subject behind in order to concentrate on Dick's deterioration. Now certainly his deterioration is related to the undercurrents in his marriage -- the undercurrents are causative -- but it is not clear what the significance of the Rosemary episodes in Book I is in relation to Dick's deterioration. Obviously within Book I the episodes are symbolically important: when Dick is waiting for Rosemary outside the studio in Nassy, he sees himself as "compelled to. . . . stand there. . . . just as another man once found it necessary to stand in front of a church in Ferrara, in sackcloth and ashes. Dick was paying some tribute to things unforgotten, unshriven, unexpurgated." In an earlier manuscript Fitzgerald explicitly says that in his relationship to Rosemary and her mother Dick has "found himself for the second time in his life drawn inadvertently into the circle of another plan of life, another pride as strong as his own. But this time his emotions of excitement and delight were even less

integrated with his sense of direction than they had been five years before (when he had become involved in Nicole's case)." So it is clear that his mixup about Rosemary is intended to be parallel to his earlier mixup about Nicole. Only that is not apparent in Book II: Rosemary reappears in this book -- four years after her initial appearance on the Riviera beach -- and Dick's disappointment in his "dream" of her results in his getting drunk and ending in jail.

Even if we did not know about Fitzgerald's struggle with the material that went into this novel, we could tell simply by contrasting Books I and II that he was not sure where he was going. In writing his third novel, The Great Gatsby, he had ruthlessly sacrificed everything which was not directly related to his theme. Even the episode which we now have as the short story "Absolution," originally written as a glimpse of Gatsby's early life, was eliminated. Fitzgerald did not exercise the same control over his material in Tender Is the Night. If he had, he probably would have cut out from one third to a half of Book I and would have recast the last section of Book II in order to maintain greater consistency in this part of the story.

And Book III, even though it is undeveloped, also

contains irrelevant material. It begins abruptly with a section on the Gregoroviouses which, while it serves to make credible Franz's later viewpoint, does not really function in the novel. The same is true of the Lausanne episode in section II, mostly from Dick's point of view. (In the total design, Book III is "result," Dick's marriage seen from the point of view of an insider who has become an outsider, Nicole.) Nicole's father is important in her history and through that, in Dick's; but since Tender has become by Book III the story of Dick's deterioration, it is not clear what Warren's appearance is supposed to show. He vanishes so quickly never to be seen in the novel again that one almost supposes that he appears and then leaves in order that Dick can say "the old boy took up his bed and walked. . . . ."

Of course the underdevelopment of the material in Book III may make much of it appear more irrelevant than it really is. Section III detailing the break between Franz and Dick, and section IV, the Divers' visit to the former Mary North, now a papal countess -- indeed all the Mary North episodes: the encounter on the beach; Dick's rescue of her and Lady Caroline, etc. -- are examples of episodes which may have more relevance than they now appear to have. Sections V through XI, principally from Nicole's point of view,

are important ones, detailing Dick's deterioration as well as her own recovery; and they are fine sections as far as they go. But the irony and the force of her and Dick's exchanging places in this book (she becomes the dominant one) are dulled by the haste with which the whole is told.

Within about fifty pages occur their visit to T. T. Golding's yacht; the return of Tommy into their lives; Nicole's betrayal of Dick by giving Tommy their last jar of camphor rub; her disgust with Dick's trying to show off on a surf-board for Rosemary; her affair with Tommy; her last struggle against Dick; and the showdown between her and Dick, staged by Tommy. This last scene itself is understated almost to the point of non-existence. Nicole and Dick have gone to the barber shop together (retaining one of the habits of their old, graceful life together, after the grace and the life have vanished), and Tommy breaks in on them there, demanding that things be settled in their triangle. They go out to an outdoor café, and with bicycle riders irrelevantly sprinting past, Tommy unsuccessfully tries to start an argument with Dick. Dick grants all his points and then walks away from Tommy and Nicole. The beginning and end of the scene are from Nicole's point of view; the middle apparently is omniscient, although the observation of the bicycle

riders is probably Dick's. (It is he who had asked the American when the Tour de France arrives. The American had tried to sell them copies of The Herald and The Times fresh from New York and is in the South of France for the bicycle riding.) Tommy just wants to get on with the row he has determined to start. The actual appearance of the racers, more precisely handled, could be such a brief, sharp image unrelated to but close by the major intense action which transfixes the important incident and brightens its outline. But as it is the riders seem left over from The Sun Also Rises. (In Hemingway's novel, it may be remembered, Jake's attention to the bicycle riders indirectly tells us what he is feeling.)

Tender Is the Night in many ways is so much less a planned novel than The Great Gatsby that it is almost impossible to talk about its formal structure. It is not a plot novel in the first place (as Gatsby is), although it begins with some suggestion of the old-fashioned novel of intrigue. (What are the relations of these people to one another? the reader wonders at the end of Book I. What is the significance of the duel? What brews beneath the surface? And where does Abe North's love for Nicole and Dick's love for Rosemary fit into it all?) What it often seems to be is a mere series of incidents strung together to give a certain impression

of life. As already noted, the outlines of a structure and a design (appearance, history, result), are there, but the body of the novel does not completely adhere to this framework. And when Fitzgerald came to go over this novel it was the structure and design that he primarily attacked. Underdevelopment, carelessness, haste in composition aside, the novel does fail in just this integral matter; and the new structure, it seems to me, not only lacks clarity but all semblance of design.

The revised (published 1951) Tender Is the Night differs from the first (published 1934) version in being chronological. The biography of the young American psychiatrist, which in 1934 opened Book II, now begins the novel and is succeeded by the story of Dick's relationship to Nicole up to his acceptance of her love. Book I ends with a good dying-fall sentence: ". . . . when he left her outside the sad door on the Zurichsee and she turned and looked at him he knew her problem was one they had together for good now."

The second book opens with a final chapter on the pre-Rosemary Dick and Nicole relationship which might well, one feels, be in Book I. (The chapter contains their marriage and Nicole's first-person summary up to Rosemary's appearance on Gausse's beach.) At any rate, with the absurd title which has been

attached to Book II of this 1951 version, "Rosemary's Angle,"[7] this material about Dick and Nicole's prior history is out of place. The rest of Book II is part of

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[7]Aside from the changes in structure and the minor revisions that Fitzgerald made himself, the 1951 Tender Is the Night contains corrections of Fitzgerald's spelling; the editor also omits words and phrases, changes them on occasion when he feels Fitzgerald is in error, and supplements the text with Notes and Book titles. The Notes are perhaps inevitable, but the reader can avoid reading them. The Book titles, though, taken by Cowley from one of Fitzgerald's notebook entries which "analysed" Tender for the purpose of rewriting, are a nuisance. The notebook entry reads:

Analysis of Tender:
I Case History 151-212 61 pps (change moon) p. 212
II Rosemary's Angle 3-104 101 pps. P. 3
III Casualties 104-148, 213-224 55 pps. (-2) (120 & 121)
IV Escape 225-306 82 pps.
V The Way Home 306-408 103 pps. (-8) (332-341)

This is obviously a rough outline meant for only the author's eyes, and not, I feel sure, one that he would have wanted perpetuated. What he was trying to do was to excise the irrelevant (as indicated in the omission of pages in III and V: the last numbers in parentheses are those to be omitted) and to make the various books more equal in length. The titles were undoubtedly intended only to remind him what each section was mainly about and should he have wanted to add Book titles in his revision these titles could have been only provisional. The outstandingly bad title is the one for Book II, "Rosemary's Angle," which besides being a lugubrious one is, as just pointed out in my text, an inexact one. Chapter I of the book is not part of Rosemary's angle at all and actually her angle extends over into Book III, "Casualties." A final addition that Cowley has made, that of the dates -- the title pages of the books read, for example,

Book I
Case History
1917-1919

-- is also blunt and intrusive.

the 1934 Book I, Rosemary on the Riviera and with the Divers in Paris, ending with her shopping tour with Nicole. Book III, "Casualties," contains Rosemary's trip with the Divers and the Norths to a World War I battlefield, the beginning of her affair with Dick, and the wild party -- all from Rosemary's angle -- and then continues (Chapter VII) with Abe's supposed departure, and the casualties of an acquaintance of the Divers' shooting her lover in the train station; Dick's letting himself fall in love with Rosemary; Abe's failing to leave Paris and getting into a mess; Nicole's breakdown; and the Divers' discouraging return to the Riviera. Ending magnificently with Dick "listening to time," it is probably the best book of the new five books in the arrangement of the material.

Book IV, "Escape," contains one chapter on Dick before he acquires a clinic with Franz, two chapters on him at the clinic, and eight more on such indications of his deterioration as his going away for a rest, his re-encounter with Rosemary, and his being beaten up in Rome. The fifth and last book, "The Way Home," is the same as the 1934 third and last book, containing Dick's separation from Franz and the clinic, Dick's and Nicole's life after that, their return to the Riviera, the re-entry of Tommy and Rosemary into their

lives, and so on.

With the material rearranged in this fashion, the 1951 version of Tender is of course an entirely different one from the original. And not necessarily a better one. For one thing, it is if anything even more broken-backed. The intrusion of Rosemary's "angle" in Book II makes what was the "appearance" part of the first design seem an irrelevant story. Also, the difficulties in the latter part of the novel remain. Fitzgerald himself noted that the novel became "less interesting toward the climax. . . . . " and attributed this lessening of interest to

> the absence of conversation. The eye flies for it and skips essential stuff for they don't want their characters resolved in dessication and analysis but like me in action that results from the previous. All the more reason [he added] for emotional planning. [Fitzgerald's italics.]

Neither the 1934 nor the 1951 Tender Is the Night is emotionally planned, and considerable rewriting would be required to perfect the novel.

3

One of the first reviewers of Tender protested that although he was tremendously moved by the novel, he felt that there was some "trick" involved. He did not know what it was, but he was certain that it was

there somewhere. While I do not propose to say that there is a trick, I do incline to agree with his impression. There does seem to be a trick. Part of this impression is due, I think, to the failure to explore the causes of Dick's decline. The total picture given in Tender Is the Night is such a beautifully written, such a moving, almost tragic, one that the reader fails to see how irrelevant some of the analysis is. Is it possible, for instance, that the situation the author credits with the ruin of Dr. Diver could really have ruined the fine person we are told that he is at the beginning of Book II? He was ruined by his "accidental" choice of a profession, Fitzgerald said of Dick. But was it accidental? It is dictated by his tragic flaw, the fatal weakness of all Fitzgerald's heroes. "I got to be a psychiatrist," he tells his colleague, Franz Gregorovious, "because there was a girl at St. Hilda's in Oxford that went to the same lectures."

Fitzgerald's insistence on the determining power of sex is not, however, founded on the Freudian view that the sexual instinct is the basic instinct of human life. Indeed, the Fitzgerald man like all men is a being of intelligence and will, with many aspirations beside the sexual. Among other things he wants to

accomplish what his talent equips him to accomplish. His choice of love at the moment of promise, though, permits love to displace his other aspirations. Dick's choice of a profession is thus an early instance of this. He becomes a psychiatrist because of a girl. He is, however, a brilliant student. When coal becomes difficult to find in wartime Vienna, he can burn

> for fuel almost a hundred textbooks that he had accumulated; but only, as he laid each one on the fire, with an assurance chuckling inside him that he was himself a digest of what was within the book, that he could brief it five years from now, if it deserved to be briefed. This went on at any odd hour, if necessary, with a floor rug over his shoulders, with the fine quiet of the scholar which is nearest of all things to heavenly peace. . . . [the peace] which. . . . had to end.

Still, it is during this "heroic" period in his life that he has his "first faint doubt as to the quality of his mental processes; he could not feel that they were profoundly different from the thinking of Franklin [his roommate] -- Franklin, who would name you all the quarterbacks in New Haven for thirty years." Dick feels that he is too "intact" and that

> the price of his intactness was incompleteness. "The best I can wish you, my child," so said the Fairy Blackstick in Thackeray's <u>The Rose and the Ring</u>, "is a little misfortune."

He must be less "intact," he thinks, than "one of those clever men; he must be. . . . even faintly destroyed.

If life won't do it for him it's not a substitute to get a disease, or a broken heart, or an inferiority complex, though it'd be nice to build out some broken side till it was better than the original structure."

He gets to Zurich with fewer 'Achilles' heels than would be required to equip a centipede, but with plenty -- the illusions of eternal strength and health, and of the essential goodness of people. . . . . " With these he is certain of his own success. After the war when he visits Franz and his bride in Zurich he is "vaguely oppressed," not "by Frau Gregorovious, who might have been prophesied, but by the sudden contracting of horizons to which Franz seemed reconciled. For him [Dick] the boundaries of asceticism (Pleasure) were differently marked -- he could see it as a means to an end, even as a carrying on with a glory it would itself supply, but it was hard to think of deliberately cutting life down to the scale of an inherited suit." He wants more out of life than Franz seems to have. Dick wants "to be good. . . . .to be kind. . . . to be brave and wise, but it was all pretty difficult. He want[s]. . . . to be loved, too, if he could fit it in." All cannot be "fitted in," and when his "moment" comes he chooses to love and to be loved, with the hope that goodness, bravery, wisdom can be "fitted in."

Just before he had gone to France, Dick had visited Franz at his clinic and leaving, he had caught up with a nurse and a young girl. "I didn't think the girl was a patient: I asked the nurse about train times and we walked along. The girl was about the prettiest thing I ever saw." He adds,

> "She'd never seen an American uniform and we talked, and I didn't think anything about it." He broke off, recognizing a familiar perspective, and then resumed: " -- except, Franz, I'm not a hard-boiled as you are yet; when I see a beautiful shell like that I can't help feeling a regret about what's inside it. That was absolutely all -- till the letters began to come."

He answers her letters. "It was the best thing that could have happened to her," Franz tells Dick, "transference of the most fortuitous kind. . . . . I'm intensely proud of this case, which I handled, with your accidental assistance."

Nicole's transference, thus accidentally brought about, is very good for her but very bad for Dick. In trying "to divorce her from any obsession that he had stitched her together," he falls in love with her. At a conference at which it is professionally decided that Dick should break off with Nicole, Dick confesses that he is "half in love with her -- the question of marrying her had passed through my mind."

> "What!" [Franz cries.] And devote half your life to being doctor and nurse and all -- never! I know what these cases are. One time in twenty it's finished in the first push -- better never see her again!"
> "What do you think?" Dohmler asked Dick.
> "Of course Franz is right."

"It's certainly a situation," Dick says. "But it is a professional situation," old Dr. Dohmler answers.

With difficulty, Dick quietly breaks off with Nicole; but, the damage already done to himself, when he meets her again, he is caught up once more, "possessed by a vast irrationality." What he had thought would be "nice" -- "to build out some broken side till it was better than the original structure" -- becomes necessary. Symbolically during their first embrace, his arm grows stronger to hold her. A short time later, he marries her. As he is to think anent a very minor occasion, his quality of "pleasingness. . . . swept back with its cry of 'Use me!'" And so "he would have to go fix this thing that he didn't care a damn about, because it had early become a habit to be loved. . . . . On an almost parallel occasion, back in Dohmler's clinic on the Zurichsee, realizing this power, he had made his choice, chosen Ophelia, chosen the sweet poison and drunk it. Wanting above all to be brave and kind, he had wanted, even more than that, to be loved." Before the moment of choice, though, he had thought that "he wanted to be good. . . . to be kind. . . . to be brave

and wise. . . . . [and] to be loved, too, if he could fit it in." Now he sees that he had not wanted merely to fit love in: more than anything else he had wanted "to be loved."

And he always had. Before he met Nicole Warren, he had had various trivial affairs, and five years after his marriage, he becomes infatuated with the beauty and youth of Rosemary Hoyt. As a result, he is no longer even sure of what he wants to do; he is "swayed and driven [like] an animal." When he is waiting outside the studio for Rosemary, he goes "briskly around the block with the fatuousness of one of Tarkington's adolescents. . . . ." Even though he realizes that what he is doing marks a "turning point" in his life, he feels that his behavior is necessary: he is "compelled" to walk there. He sees it as a self-indulgence and a dangerous self-indulgence, too; but his moral fiber is so weakened by his previous indulgence of his weakness that he can put up no more than a token resistance to it. One indulgence inevitably leads to another, and, when, a few months later, he is offered a good professional opportunity, he accepts it even at the cost of his nominal financial independence of Nicole. This acceptance is underlined as an indulgence of himself by being counterpointed by his transitory interest in a young girl, one to whom

he does not speak but one of whom he is continually conscious throughout his time of important decision.

After he has been in the clinic with Franz for a year and a half, Nicole has another breakdown indirectly precipitated by his sexual kissing of the fifteen-year-old daughter of a patient. The girl's mother writes Nicole accusing Dick of seducing the girl; and, although the mother's charge is fantastic, Dick has a sense of guilt. He did kiss the girl. After that he goes away "for his soul's sake" and begins thinking about that.

> He had lost himself -- he could not tell the hour when, or the day or the week, the month or the year. Once he had cut through things, solving the most complicated equations as the simplest problems of his simplest patients. Between the time he found Nicole flowering under a stone on the Zurichsee and the moment of his meeting with Rosemary the spear had been blunted.

He feels that "watching his father's struggles in poor parishes had wedded a desire for money to an essentially unacquisitive nature. It was not a healthy necessity for security -- he had never felt more sure of himself, more thoroughly his own man, than at the time of his marriage to Nicole.

Yet he had been swallowed up like a gigolo, and somehow permitted his arsenal (arsenal) to be locked up in the Warren safety-deposit vaults."

In other words, he does not see his being "swallowed up like a gigolo" as part of the larger issue of his commitment to Nicole. He still cherishes the illusion that his choice of her has not ruined him. "I've wasted eight years," he thinks, "teaching the rich the ABC's of human decency, but I'm not done. I've got too many unplayed trumps in my hand." Only of course he has not been teaching the rich the ABC's of human decency for eight years: he has been married to Nicole that long, and he has been trying to teach her. She is his wife still, not the rich. But he is beyond the point of seeing even that. At this time while he is away for his "soul's sake," he is "in love with every pretty woman he [sees]. . . . their forms at a distance, their shadows on a wall." A woman who passes him excites him; the old asceticism triumphs this time, though, and that very evening he learns that his father has died and he has to prepare to return to America. Waiting for his call to Nicole in Zurich, he remembers many things and wishes "he had always been as good as he had intended to be."

But back from his trip to America, he crosses the Mediterranean to see Rosemary, and they resume their old, abortive romance. He finds that it is less an infatuation than a romantic memory, but heartsick and self-indulgent he gets drunk and quarrelsome, is beaten

up and arrested, and rescued finally by Nicole's sister.

In Zurich once more, he averages a half-pint of alcohol a day and the smell of liquor on his breath leads first to the loss of a patient and then to the disruption of his partnership with Franz. The Divers return to the Riviera, Dick indulges himself in one way after another -- drinking, being rude, showing off for Rosemary -- and Nicole completes her cure by turning from Dick to Tommy Barban. She pits her new health and her beauty against Dick's deterioration, her unscrupulousness against his moralities, and succeeds in cutting the cord that holds them together. Dick leaves the Riviera to return to America. He practices general medicine in Batavia, New York, for awhile; then in Lockport. He becomes entangled with a girl, and leaves Lockport because of her, his childish sensuality remaining with him even after all his disaster.

As this recounting of the appearances of the theme in Tender Is the Night shows, this fourth novel of Fitzgerald's is a much more complex unravelling of his fable than any of his previous novels. It is a novel of disaster as The Beautiful and Damned is; but it is more than a mere rewriting of his second novel. The Beautiful and Damned is the story of the pathetic fate

of a single weak individual. Tender Is the Night is the story of the basos of all human tragedy.

The "tragic sense of life," Fitzgerald wrote a few years later, is "the sense that life is a cheat and its conditions are those of defeat, and that the redeeming things are not 'happiness and pleasure' but the deeper satisfactions that come out of the struggle." This tragic sense is amply present in Tender. Dick Diver has such equipment at the beginning as few people have: talent, intelligence, the Christian virtues, opportunity. But he also has his "Achilles' heels," his illusions of health and strength and of the essential goodness of people, illusions which lead to his own doom. Good fortune is succeeded by hubris (over-confidence); so he underestimates his own weakness: até and nemesis follow. "Some of the time I think it's my fault -- I've ruined you," Nicole says. "So I'm ruined, am I?" Dick inquires. "You ruined me, did you?" he asks pleasantly. For he knows that Nicole is not the one responsible. He himself chose Ophelia. He is himself responsible.

CHAPTER VIII

LAST COMPLETED NOVEL: TENDER IS THE NIGHT (EXPRESSION)

"La meilleure évocation que nous ayons de la vie menée en Europe," a French critic has written, "à Paris et sur la Riviera, par une certaine catégorie d'Américains, c'est Tender is the Night." The glamor and the charm of that life are given -- and as well the touch of excess. All this is achieved with a prose style which, while not necessarily "better" than that in Gatsby, is different, richer. The language of Gatsby, good as it is, remains dry, abstract, and intellectual, in comparison with that in Tender. For in his fourth novel Fitzgerald capitalized on what he had written and on what he had learned about writing in his dozen or so years of professional writing and in his lifetime of attention to the craft.

The principal criticism of Tender as a whole eventually is, in fact, that parts -- sentences, paragraphs, the narration of whole incidents -- have been so exquisitely polished by the artist that he has evidently neglected to make clear how they fit into the whole. The paragraphs of irrelevant social comment

quoted on page 259 above are, I think, examples of this. And the paragraphs and comparisons Fitzgerald carried over from early versions of this material or from earlier stories tend to be meaninglessly brilliant in the same way. Baby Warren's rescue of Dick at the end of Book II, for instance, originally written for Francis Melarkey's mother as it was, is unnecessarily detailed. It is an excellent and amusing episode (the American Woman who has broken the moral back of a continent and made a nursery out of a nation in action); but it is not adapted to its surroundings and it is away from the story line. The episode, though, is a good example of Fitzgerald's mature prose style, precisely adapted to his material.

Some of the passages carried over wholesale from earlier stories or earlier versions of this material are skillfully cemented into the texture of the novel. This is true especially of the whole early relationship between Dick and Rosemary which Fitzgerald took from his 1927 lost story "Jacob's Ladder," in which neither of the principals is very much like Dick or Rosemary; and yet phrases, paragraphs, and insights from the story fit remarkably well into Tender. Similarly, the passage in which Rosemary brushes her hair as an emotional outlet after the failure of her attempt to get Dick to "take" her, is incorporated without change

from a 1922 Post story "The Popular Girl," but is all the same suited to Rosemary's personality.

More important, however, than this use of old material (although there is certainly enough of that in the novel) is Fitzgerald's continued adaptation of passages of poetry to his prose and his concentration on the power of verbs in description. One adaptation is again the line from Keats which he so artfully buried in Gatsby in the Daisy-Gatsby reunion scene. In Tender the Keats line, "But here there is no light,/ Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown / Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways," becomes

> The veranda of the central building was illuminated from open French windows, save where the black shadows of stripling walls and the fantastic shadows of iron chairs slithered down into a gladiola bed.

Two other times Fitzgerald echoes Keats's line "a new planet swims into his ken," once not altogether successfully. Dick is looking through a telescope, and Nicole is said to swim into his field of vision; i.e., he adjusts the telescope so that he can see her. Another time, though, quite gracefully, the sun is said to swim out into a blue sea of sky.

Fitzgerald's echoes of Keats are not accidental. He greatly admired Keats's craftsmanship, and when he

came to discuss prose style he said, "all fine prose is based on the verbs carrying the sentences. They make sentences move," and gave a line from Keats as an illustration: "The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass." Such a line, he said, "is so alive that you race through it, scarcely noticing it, yet it has colored the whole poem with its movement -- the limping, trembling, and freezing is going on before your own eyes." What makes the prose of Tender Is the Night, as the prose of The Great Gatsby, vastly superior to that of Fitzgerald's first novels, is this attention to verbs. Another adaptation can perhaps illustrate this.

Dick's wife, Nicole Warren Diver, the heiress of a great Chicago fortune, is said to be "the product of much ingenuity and toil." She like the two brothers in Keats's Isabella, is "Enriched from ancestral merchandize" and for her, as for them, great activity goes on in all parts of the world. For the brothers, Keats wrote,

> . . . . many a weary hand did swelt
> In torched mines and noisy factories,
> And many once proud-quiver'd loins did melt
> In blood from stinging whip; -- with hollow eyes
> Many all day in dazzling river stood,
> To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.
> . . . . . .
> For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
> And went all naked to the hungry shark;
> For them his ears gush'd blood; for them in death

> The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark
> Lay full of darts; for them alone did seethe
> A thousand men in troubles wide and dark:
> Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
> That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.

For Nicole, Fitzgerald wrote, adapting Keats,

> For her sake trains began t eir run at Chicago and traversed the round belly of the continent to California; whole factories fumed and link belts grew link by link in factories; men mixed toothpaste in vats and drew mouthwash out of copper hogsheads; girls canned tomatoes quickly in August or worked rudely at the Five-and-Tens on Christmas Eve; half-breed Indians toiled on Brazilian coffee plantations and dreamers were muscled out of patent rights in new tractors -- these were some of the people who gave a tithe to Nicole. . . . .

The power of the verbs as well as the force of the parallelism and the echo of Keats gives the whole of this passage a ring and a rushing movement that no paragraph in any of Fitzgerald's first three novels has. The whole paragraph, in fact, has a complexity and a power unequaled in Fitzgerald; and the succeeding clause -- "and as the whole system swayed and thundered onward it lent a feverish bloom to such processes of hers as wholesale buying, like the flush of a fireman's face holding his post before a spreading blaze." -- precisely underlines, even down to the simile, the feverish quality already present in the description.[1]

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[1]The listing of Nicole's purchases (her wholesale buying) immediately preceding this description has the splendor of a prose Keats too: "Nicole bought from a great list that ran two pages, and bought the things in windows besides. Everything she liked that she couldn't

Fitzgerald's indebtedness to Keats is not exhausted, however, with these few examples of his adaptation of lines, his emphasis on verbs, or even with his Keatsian fondness for "up" combinations ("upled," "upstine"). It is of course Keats's Ode to a Nightingale which is the source of the title of the novel:

> Already with thee! tender is the night . . .
> . . . But here there is no light,
> Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
> Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

Fitzgerald printed only this much of Keats's fourth stanza on his title page, and even so sensitive a reader as Maxwell Perkins thought at first that the title "tender is the night" had no connection with the story. Actually, Fitzgerald did not think of the title until just two weeks before the magazine publication of the novel began; yet the title and its source have a precise connection with the story of the novel.

Fitzgerald knew the Ode to a Nightingale thoroughly,

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[1](cont'd.) possibly use herself, she bought as a present for a friend. She bought colored beads, folding beach cushions, artificial flowers, honey, a guest bed, bags, scarfs, love birds, miniatures for a doll's house and three yards of some new cloth the color of prawns. She bought a dozen bathing suits, a rubber alligator, a travelling chess set of gold and ivory, big linen handkerchiefs for Abe, two chamois leather jackets of kingfisher blue and burning bush from Hermes. . . . ."

as his selection of an epigraph from the poem suggests,[2] and thus the context of his epigraph has relevance to his novel. In the first stanzas of the Ode, it may be remembered, the poet longs for "a draught of vintage" so that he may fade away with the nightingale into the forest dim. Then the third stanza begins,

> Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
> What thou among the leaves has never known,
> The weariness, the fever, and the fret
> Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
> Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,
> Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
> Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
> And leaden-eyed despairs,
> Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
> Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

4

> Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
> Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
> But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
> Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:

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[2]He could never read it, he wrote in 1940, "without tears in my eyes. . . . ." "The Grecian Urn is unbearably beautiful, with every syllable as inevitable as the notes in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. . . . . I suppose I've read it a hundred times. About the tenth time I began to know what it was about, and caught the chime in it and the exquisite inner mechanics. Likewise with the Nightingale. . . . The Eve of Saint Agnes. . . . Bright Star and the other. . . . sonnets. . . . . In themselves those eight poems are a scale of workmanship for anybody who wants to know truly about words, their most utter value for evocation, persuasion or charm. For awhile after you quit Keats all other poetry seems to be only whistling or humming." (This quotation from Fitzgerald's letter is somewhat condensed.)

Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

In Fitzgerald's novel Keats's tender night is attained through madness; or, ironically, since Keats explicitly renounces "Bacchus and his pards," alcohol, and the "here" is the world of "casualties," the rumble of the artillery beneath the song of the frogs -- here where there is no light; where men sit and hear each other groan; where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs; wher youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies; where but to think is to be full of sorrow and leaden-eyed despairs (Abe North); where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes, or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Thus, although Tender is the Night is not as intimately connected to Keats as The Great Gatsby is to T. S. Eliot, it does correspond to the Ode at more than one point, and all, one might add, to the advantage of the novel, which needs more of the sort of discipline such use of a poem might give it.

Another suggestive use of a line of poetry occurs at the end of an important chapter in Book II. Dick, previously only faintly corrupted by Nicole's money, has decided to let Nicole and her sister "buy" a clinic

for him. He makes the decision sleighing to the Gstaad station with Franz.

> "We're beginning to turn in a circle," he admitted [to Franz]. "Living on this scale, there's an unavoidable series of strains, and Nicole doesn't survive them. The pastoral quality down on the summer Riviera is all changing anyhow -- next year they'll have a Season."
>
> They passed the crisp green rinks where Vienese waltzes blared and the colors of many mountain schools flashed against the pale-blue skies.
>
> "-- I hope we'll be able to do it, Franz. There's nobody I'd rather try it with than you ----"
>
> Good-by, Gstaad! Good-by, fresh faces, cold sweet flowers, flakes in the darkness. Good-by, Gstaad, good-by!

Nothing more is said, but the final lines echoing the rhythm of the lines at the end of the "A Game of Chess" section in The Waste Land -- "Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night." -- provide an ironic and self-conscious comment on exactly what the decision means in Dick's life.

There are other examples, though, of devices which do not contribute as directly to the tenor of the material as they are intended to do. Of this type is the fine image of Dick's being compelled to stand in front of the studio in Nessy "just as another man once found it necessary to stand in front of a church in Ferrara, in sackcloth and ashes." Dick is said to be paying "some tribute to things unforgotten, unshriven, unexpurgated." The rather unusual use of "unexpurgated"

calls attention to itself and suggests either a touch of wit (that a man's life too can have the objectionable parts left in) or that Fitzgerald was at a loss for a third word to continue his alliteration and rhythm. The reader supposes that there must be some specific guilty event in Dick's life for which he is now doing penance; but how it is "unexpurgated," he never finds out for sure.

2

The imagery in Fitzgerald's first two novels, as suggested in Chapter IV, is in general designed to make the reader see, and, as T. S. Eliot has said about Dante's similes, it is "explanatory." The most individual imagery in both Fitzgerald's third and fourth novels is still "explanatory," but with a controlled intensity. So on the first page of Tender Cousse's Hotel is seen as "large, proud, [and] rose-colored. . . . ." "Deferential palms" are said to "cool its flushed façade" and before it stretches a "bright tan prayer rug of a beach." The irony in the description is light, but it is never more firmly attached to the scene than at the end when Dick, swaying slightly, already a little "ahead" of the day, blesses with a papal cross this material paradise that he had

created on the Riviera.

In the first book of Tender, too, the whole "feel" of the "hot sweet South" of the Riviera is suggested in two phrases: "the soft-pawed night and the ghostly wash of the Mediterranean far below. . . . ." The notable instance, though, is the time when the whole quality of the charming, artificial, ultra-civilized world of the Divers is isolated with the "mechanical dancing platform" simile. Rosemary has

> a conviction of homecoming, of a return from the derisive and malacious improvisations of the frontier. There were fireflies riding on the dark air and a dog baying on some low and far-away ledge of the cliff. The table seemed to have risen a little toward the sky like a mechanical dancing platform, giving the people around it a sense of being alone with each other in the dark universe, nourished by its only food, warmed by its only lights. And, as if a curious hushed laugh from Mrs. McKisco were a signal that such a detachment from the world had been attained, the two Divers began suddenly to warm and glow and expand, as if to make up to their guests, already so subtly assured of their importance, so flattered with politeness, for anything they might still miss from that country well left behind. Just for a moment they seemed to speak to every one at the table, singly and together, assuring them of their friendliness, their affection. And for a moment the faces turned up toward them were like the faces of poor children at a Christmas tree. Then abruptly the table broke up -- the moment when the guests had been daringly lifted above conviviality into the rarer atmosphere of sentiment, was over before it could be irreverently breathed, before they had half realized it was there.

Before the conclusion of the passage the simile is dessicated in analysis -- "daringly lifted above

conviviality into the rarer atmosphere of sentiment" -- but the image itself is an intense visual one.

At all times in Tender there are keen visual perceptions such as the one about Dick's car ("a Renault so dwarfish that they all stuck out of it except the children, between whom Mademoiselle towered mast-like in the rear seat.") Or about Professor Dohmler's raising himself in his chair "like a legless man mounting a pair of crutches." Other images with more depth are those such as the description of "the white flag of a nurse waving beside a patient on a path" or of Abe's giving "a last desperate glance at Rosemary from the golden corners of his eyes. . . . ." Again, another time Nicole in her madness running from Dick is seen as "a yellow dress twisting through the crowd, an ochre stitch along the edge of reality and unreality."

Less successful images with a falsely poetic prettiness and a weak attempt at wit are those such as Dick's and Rosemary's eyes meeting and brushing "like birds' wings" or again Nicole "unfastening her eyes from his with difficulty, as though they had become entangled." Some images of this sort are precious almost beyond comprehension. Nicole's velvet gloves having a rough nap on them as she slaps Abe back is clear enough, although a little strained.

But Dick's seeing with his heels or the college boys stepping into the bar "gingerly lest they tear one another bag from bag" are images far from clear to at least one reader.

An image such as Nicole's face "lighting up like an angel's" is just saved from being excessively pretty by the succeeding clause — "when they came into the range of a roadside arc." One exact description of Nicole, which relates to the feverish, flushed quality of the whole tender night of the novel, is in the first book: "Her face, the face of a saint, a viking Madonna, shone through the faint notes that snowed across the candlelight, drew down its flush from the wine-colored lanterns in the pine." Much of the effect of this description, aside from the first comparisons ("the face of a saint, a viking Madonna"), derives from the verbs, which again are examples of Fitzgerald's attention to the impressions things make. Her face seems to shine, the faint notes of light seem to snow across the candlelight, her flushed face seems to draw down its flush from the wine-colored lanterns in the room.

This violation of convention in describing objects and movements is less present in Tender than in Gatsby; still unconventional views such as this one or such as Nicole's "brown back hanging from her pearls" occur. In

an early morning bar scene, great beams of light are seen "busy at pulling up the dust from smoky carpets and cushions." In each of the examples of the impressionistic image, it is again the verb or the verbal which gives power to the image. ("Into the dark, smoky restaurant. . . . slid Nicole's sky-blue suit. . . . . " Nicole's "brown back hanging . . . ."; "beams. . . . pulling. . . . .") At other times the dawn is crayoned red and yellow, or fishing boats are creaking out to sea in order to give the exact visual or auditory (more frequently the former) impression desired.

Although Tender Is the Night would benefit by a little weeding out of Fitzgerald's adverbial garden -- "passionately," "simultaneously," "poignantly," "suddenly," all reappear -- the diction is on the whole quite good. And of course these adverbs (and their adjectival counterparts) are not per se inadmissible. Probably better than half the time they are necessary and apropos; at least they are used less recklessly than in This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned. Fitzgerald's use of them generally suits well the diction of the novel, which ranges again from the colloquial to the erudite. There are, first of all, the loftily phrased, rather romantic descriptions such as "mad gallantry," "courageous grace," "perishable

beauty," and others, so characteristic of the Fitzgerald who does not strive for the common style. Unusual words also occur -- sometimes only once ("immaculacy," "mutating," "exteriorly"); at other times repetitively ("lesion" is used in a particularly Fitzgeraldine sense: lesions of enthusiasm, vitality, anxiety).[3]

But as compensation there is the precision of Dick's getting "a purchase" on Peterson's body in order to move it; or the colloquialism of Dick "griping" at his own reasoning, or of his getting up "to Zurich on less Achilles' heels than would be required to equip a centipede. . . . ." Throughout, in fact, almost as a relaxation from the general analytic content of the novel as a whole is the sprinkling of the non-analytic and non-visual adjectives "pleasant" and, more regularly, "fine." One suspects

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[3]This repetition of "lesion," Arthur Mizener notes, is only one of the signs of the haste with which the novel was put together. Other repetitions are those of an unusual phrase "buried under the compromises of how many years," given twice almost verbatim; and a notable construction, "She was still as still," and "she was pale as pale," within a few pages of each other.

something of the influence of Ernest Hemingway in the appearance of both words,[4] but both are suitable to the general American idiom of the novel as a whole. "Pleasant" occurs rarely, once on the first page, once on the last, and in his revision Fitzgerald omitted the first use: "On the pleasant shore of the French Riviera. . . . ." "[Geneva, New York, was] considered a pleasant place."

Fitzgerald's use of "fine" in Tender is more of a problem. The first appearances of the word are refreshing:

> At luncheon things were better -- it was always a fine meal. . . . .
>
> Baby was a tall, fine-looking woman. . . . .
>
> They had many fine times together, fine talks. . . . .
>
> It was a fine feeling once they were above the cowbells of the highest pastures. . . . . [ment climbing the Birkkarspitze.]

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[4]Indeed there is more than a little of Hemingway in Tender, as different as the novel is on the whole from the style of Fitzgerald's admired contemporary. Since it is a matter of tone and a manner of regarding people and relationships it is a little difficult to isolate. But in addition to the similarity of attitude suggested by Fitzgerald's adoption of the almost peculiarly Hemingwayian use of the unreflective adjective "fine," there are the relationships of the lovers and the general "type-psychology" of the Gertrude Stein variety.

> . . . . as fine-looking a couple as could be found in Paris. . . . .
>
> [Dick's] fine manners, his air of having the key to security. . . . .
>
> . . . . he was twenty-six years old, a fine age for a man. . . . .
>
> Even in war-time days, it was a fine age for Dick. . . . .
>
> . . . . the fine quiet of the scholar. . . . .

In the latter part of Tender, particularly in Book III, "fine" begins to occur almost as a reflex action (another indication of the haste with which the book was put together). On almost succeeding pages (pages 318, 330, 343, and 345), for instance, are these uses of "fine":

> [She] wondered how soon the fine, slim edifice [her body] would begin to sink. . . . .
>
> Again she struggled with it, fighting him with her small, fine eyes. . . . .
>
> . . . . he showed only a fine, considered, restrained interest in Mary.
>
> He was considered to have fine manners. . . . .

In contrast to these colloquial aspects of Fitzgerald's diction in Tender are his rather splendid uses of combinations of polysyllabic words, punctuated by shorter ones, as in this passage describing a movie set: "The bizarre débris of some recent picture, a decayed street scene in India, a great cardboard whale, a monstrous tree bearing cherries large as

basketballs, bloomed there by exotic dispensation, autochthonous as the pale amaranth, mimosa, cork oak or dwarfed pine." Or in this elaborate[5] description, on the next page, of Rosemary's progress through the studio:

> Here and there figures spotted the twilight, turning up ashen faces to her like souls in purgatory watching the progress of a mortal through. There were whispers and soft voices and, apparently from afar, the gentle tremolo of a small organ. Turning the corner made by some flats, they came upon the white crackling of a stage, where a French actor -- his shirt front, collar, and cuffs tinted a brilliant pink -- and an American actress stood motionless face to face. They stared at each other with dogged eyes, as though they had been in the same position for hours; and still for a long time nothing happened, no one moved. A bank of lights went off with a savage hiss, went on again; the plaintive tap of a hammer begged admission to nowhere in the distance; a blue face appeared among the blinding lights above, called something unintelligible into the upper blackness.

But perhaps a passage from the third book exemplifies better than any other both the virtues and the vices of "dessication and analysis" which Fitzgerald's over-elaboration of vocabulary -- and haste in writing -- led to:

> But she went to the beach with Dick next morning with a renewal of her apprehension that Dick was contriving at some desperate

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[5]Too elaborate. For the scene is of no importance in the novel. This is one of the passages I was referring to when, at the beginning of this chapter, I noted that parts were exquisitely polished but not made relevant.

> solution. Since the evening on Golding's yacht she had sensed what was going on. So delicately balanced was she between an old foothold that had always guaranteed her security, and the imminence of a leap from which she must alight changed in the very chemistry of blood and muscle, that she did not dare bring the matter into the true forefront of consciousness. The figures of Dick and herself, partaking, undefined, appeared as spooks caught up into a fantastic dance. For months every word had seemed to have an overtone of some other meaning, soon to be resolved under circumstances that Dick would determine. Though this state of mind was perhaps more hopeful, -- the long years of sheer being had an enlivening effect on the parts of her nature that early illness had killed, that Dick had not reached -- through no fault of his but simply because no one nature can extend entirely inside another -- it was still disquieting. The most unhappy aspect of their relations was Dick's growing indifference, at present personified by too much drink; Nicole did not know whether she was to be crushed or spared -- Dick's voice, throbbing with insincerity, confused the issue; she couldn't guess how he was going to behave next upon the torturously slow unrolling of the carpet, nor what would happen at the end, at the moment of the leap.

The eye tends to skip this, as Fitzgerald belatedly realised, such crushing phrases as "a renewal of her apprehension" immediately arresting apprehension in the reader. The analysis is important in the unravelling of the story of Tender too; the sheer quantity of the ideas in this passage, though, makes it indigestible. The rambling construction of some of the sentences also "confuses the issue." (Beginning with "Though this state of mind," the use of the dash characteristically leads to looseness.)

The better parts of Tender adhere to the general

principles of Fitzgerald's school of prose -- with understatement, simple sentences, few literary allusions, an easy rhythm, and an American idiom. What allusions as occur in Tender, for instance, are in general not recondite. There are "smart" ones such as the description of Rosemary as being "as dewy with belief as a child from one of Mrs. Burnett's vicious treats. . . . ," or the description of people at a party as being "fashioned by Louisa M. Alcott or Madame de Ségur. . . . ." But another time, the intrusive Collis Clay is said to be "unaware that he was without a wedding garment. . . . ." And departing boyagers seem to be "vicariously leaning a little over the ocean, already undergoing a sea-change, a shifting about of atoms to form the essential molecule of a new people." At the time he breaks off his affair with Nicole, Dick thinks that he "must absent himself from felicity a while . . . . ," and later he sees that in choosing her he has "chosen Ophelia."

Fitzgerald's style, the "light smooth earthenware style" of Glenway Wescott's description, is not at ease among literary or artistic allusions, on the whole, even non-esoteric ones. More integral and successful are his exact Keatsian uses of colors: Nicole's scarf which "even in the achromatic sunshine cast its color up to her face and down around her moving feet in a lilac

shadow"; the garden with its "kaleidoscopic peonies massed in pink clouds, black and brown tulips and fragile mauve-stemmed roses, transparent like sugar flowers in a confectioner's window"; the East of the dawn "crayoned red and yellow"; the green and cream twilight of Paris fading, and the fire-red, gas-blue, ghost-green signs shining.

But possibly the last two pages of the novel, tracing Dick's career after his return to America, are the best example of Fitzgerald's special felicitous employment of the simple style:

> Nicole kept in touch with Dick after her new marriage; there were letters on business matters, and about the children. When she said, as she often did, "I loved Dick and I'll never forget him," Tommy answered, "Of course not -- why should you?"
>
> Dick opened an office in Buffalo, but evidently without success. Nicole did not find what the trouble was, but she heard a few months later that he was in a little town named Batavia, N. Y., practising general medicine, and later that he was in Lockport, doing the same thing. By accident she heard more about his life there than anywhere: that he bicycled a lot, was much admired by the ladies, and always had a big stack of papers on his desk that were known to be an important treatise on some medical subject, almost in process of completion. He was considered to have fine manners and once made a good speech at a public health meeting on the subject of drugs; but he became entangled with a girl who worked in a grocery store, and he was also involved in a lawsuit about some medical questions; so he left Lockport.
>
> After that he didn't ask for the children to be sent to America and didn't answer when Nicole wrote asking him if he needed money. In the last letter she had from him he told her that he was

> practising in Geneva, New York, and she got the impression that he had settled down with some one to keep house for him. She looked up Geneva in an atlas and found it was in the heart of the Finger Lakes Section and considered a pleasant place. Perhaps, so she liked to think, his career was biding its time, again like Grant's in Galena; his latest note was post-marked from Hornell, New York, which is some distance from Geneva and a very small town; in any case he is almost certainly in that section of the country, in one town or another.

The full extent of Nicole's betrayal of Dick is conveyed in the little irony of the "again" in the phrase "again like Grant's in Galena"; the other time his career had been like Grant's was just before Dick had chosen Ophelia. "The foregoing has the ring of biography," we were told in Book II, at the conclusion of four pages of Dick's biography, "without the satisfaction of knowing that the hero, like Grant, lolling in his general store in Galena, is ready to be called to an intricate destiny." Dick's had been an intricate destiny, and no longer "fiery, wiry, eagle-eyed" he vanishes from our European scene, bearing off, one feels, more sins than his own,[6] his continuing existence

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[6] Maxwell Geismar finds in Dick's departure from Europe not only this sense of retribution but also one of "absolution." But it cannot be Dick who is absolved. True absolution brings alive those who are spiritually dead. It is really Dick who absolves the others -- forgives them when he blesses the Riviera beach -- while he himself returns to America, retires, or, in essence, dies.

and continuing penance assured.[7]

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[7]It is to the impression of Dick's continuing existence that Fitzgerald was referring when he wrote David Garnett: "Notice how neatly I stole and adapted your magnificent ending to Lady Into Fox. . . . ." Garnett's little tour de force ends, it may be remembered, "For a long while his life was despaired of, but at last he rallied, and in the end he recovered his reason and lived to be a great age, for that matter he is still alive."

1935 THROUGH 1940

CHAPTER IX

LIFE AND ART: THE LAST YEARS

With Tender Is the Night Fitzgerald's career as a novelist, in a very real sense, comes to a close. His six remaining years eventuate in the posthumous six chapters and notes of The Last Tycoon. But The Tycoon is, after all, a fragment, not a novel, and an examination of it takes us into the workshop, not into the realm of art itself. It still has to be considered in any study of Fitzgerald's novels, though: it is, for one thing, Fitzgerald's last attempt at a novel; also, it shows us the direction in which he was developing and provides a perspective for the novelist who went from This Side of Paradise in 1920 to Tender Is the Night in 1934; and, finally, it has provoked more extravagant estimates of Fitzgerald's final high stature than any of his other novels.

Because it is incomplete, even less than Fitzgerald's other novels can be it be considered without reference to the external circumstances of his life, both before and after the publication of Tender. Living mostly abroad after the publication of Gatsby in 1925, the Fitzgeralds had had a strenuous life, particularly

during the last years of the 1920's; and when Zelda had her first breakdown in 1930, even though Fitzgerald was assured by specialists that her illness was rooted farther back than their marriage, he remorsefully knew that their irregular life was not entirely without responsibility.

They returned to the United States in the fall of 1931, as soon as Zelda was better, lived for a while in Zelda's home city, Montgomery, Alabama; and then, for the second time, Fitzgerald went out to work in Hollywood. His stay there was short and, in a measure, a failure. Shortly after his return to Alabama in January, 1932, Zelda broke down again. When she was somewhat recovered, they settled at La Paix, a small house on the Turnbull estate near Baltimore, Maryland; and Fitzgerald, intermittently ill himself, pushed Tender Is the Night through to completion. Before the novel was published in book form, Zelda had her third breakdown (January, 1934), and had to be confined to a hospital, as she was to be for most of the next six years. "I left my capacity for hoping on the little roads that led to Zelda's sanitarium," Fitzgerald wrote. After she had first been stricken three and a half years before, he had read enough about her disease, schizophrenia, to know that with each

breakdown her chances of recovery decreased.

As soon as Tender was published Fitzgerald began an historical novel, The Kingdom in the Dark, which was intended to cover the years 880 to 950 and such historic events as the founding of France. Only four long installments of this novel were ever completed, and, as Arthur Mizener remarks, they are as bad as anything Fitzgerald ever wrote. At this time Fitzgerald was also discouraged about his writing, despairing about Zelda, and worried about his finances. (The disappointing reviews of Tender, the novel he valued highly, calling it his "Testament of Faith," had depressed him.)

When he had completed the proofs of his last book of short stories, Taps at Reveille, he withdrew (February, 1935) to Hendersonville, North Carolina, for a short time in an attempt to face his personal problems. When he returned, Zelda was worse and by the time she was better, he found that he had tuberculosis. It was after he had recovered, though, that he experienced the "crack" that he describes in his "Crack-up" articles, written at the end of this year (1935). He had been turning out nothing but mediocre work for over a year and his general moral, emotional, spiritual, physical, and creative exhaustion all seemed closely bound up with one another, confirming for him his theory of "emotional

bankruptcy."

This theory, which Mizener has explored at length in his biography of Fitzgerald, amounted to Fitzgerald's conviction that an individual has only a certain amount of emotion, vitality, morale, creative power, spiritual energy, and when he has used up that amount, further demand calls on resources that he does not have; result: bankruptcy.

"Even at the age of twenty-one," Mizener says, "he had the essentials of it [this theory] worked out." At the time of his "early success," the stories that "came" into Fitzgerald's head had "a touch of disaster" in them --

> the lovely young creatures in my novels went to ruin, the diamond mountains of my short stories blew up, my millionaires were as beautiful and damned as Thomas Hardy's peasants. In life these things hadn't happened yet, but I was pretty sure living wasn't the reckless, careless business these people thought. . . . .

Not only "these people," he might have added, but the romantic young man in himself too. The romantic young man with his early success and his happiness and his beautiful wife lived the hedonistic life of the twenties. But during this time, with only two novels behind him, and Gatsby immediately ahead of him Fitzgerald wrote, "I doubt if, after all, I'll ever

write anything again worth putting in print."

The actual idea of an "exhaustion of his emotional, his spiritual, energy, a final 'lesion of vitality,'" Mizener thinks, "may have been suggested to him by Zelda's tragedy, for his first use of it occurs in a story he wrote for the Josephine series just when he was beginning to grasp what had happened to Zelda; the story is called 'Emotional Bankruptcy.'" The occasion provided by the story, Mizener goes on to say, "for the definition of Fitzgerald's feeling is trivial; but the feeling is not." It is the feeling that increasingly dominates Fitzgerald's thought, that pervades his art, and that, at last, brings him to the abyss of despair.

Of the two aspects of Fitzgerald's divided nature, the romantic young man and the spoiled priest, it is the spoiled priest who evaluates the life of the fabulous Fitzgeralds to give the touch of disaster, before tragedy actually struck in his own life, to Fitzgerald's early stories. And, although it is scarcely the "central meaning" of the story, emotional bankruptcy is, as Mizener says, what happens to Dick Diver in Tender. Emotional bankruptcy is a result, occurring as a punishment. Dick is "paying some tribute to things unforgotten, unshriven, unexpurgated." He knew (as Fitzgerald in his own life knew) that he

was making a wrong choice when he chose Nicole, but he chose her anyway. Fitzgerald himself saw the choice as a categorical one: "You can take your choice between God and Sex. If you choose both, you're a smug hypocrite; if neither, you get nothing."

Once the choice was made, Fitzgerald's dissipation in the shapes of his drive to make money and of his drive to drink were concrete manifestations of the price the spoiled priest in him knew had to be paid as a consequence of the choice. Fitzgerald's choice of asceticism would have entailed a conserving of self; the choice of magnificence entails the reverse: not only a spending of money but also a spending of self -- and the exaction of even more in payment.

It is difficult to tell what part each of the various pressures of his life played in his crack-up. Besides his drinking, he had his debts, his discouragement about his writing, his increasing despair about Zelda's recovery, and his own ill health. All these combined disasters, though, seem to have bound themselves up with a resident guilt. The spoiled priest in him had forecast tragedy for the recklessly living, romantic young man as early as the writing of The Beautiful and Damned -- or, even, the writing of the 1920 short story "The Lees of Happiness." The very intensity of his ability to feel -- his happiness, his taking

things hard, his going "in a single morning. . . . through the emotions ascribable to Wellington at Waterloo" -- assured him that, other things being equal, he could not have that ability forever.

When he came to discuss his "emotional bankruptcy" in his quasi-autobiographical articles written late in 1935, he concentrated on his inability to care. As "a starting place out of the morass in which [he] floundered" he used his memory of caring: "I felt -- therefore I was." Although he describes his state with a curious mixture of religious and financial terms, his analysis in essence is as baldly romantic[1] as this quotation suggests. He did see, however, that his extreme happiness had been "unnatural." And the conclusion he came to, having been weaned from caring about things and people, was "that the natural state of the sentient adult is a qualified unhappiness. . . . . that in an adult the desire to be finer in grain than you are. . . . only adds to this unhappiness in the end. . . . ."

With his illustrative quotation from "Burnt Norton," Arthur Mizener has shrewdly indicated how Fitzgerald saw his spiritual dryness as a purgative

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[1] The Keatsian "proved upon our pulses" cast into a Cartesian structure.

dark night: ". . . . deprivation / And destitution of all property," Mizener writes, quoting Eliot,

> Dessication of the world of sense,
> Evacuation of the world of fancy,
> Inoperancy of the world of spirit. . . . .

The resemblance between Fitzgerald's despairing state and Eliot's and St. John of the Cross's dark night, however, is superficial. The religious and mystical dark night is one courted in order that one may proceed on the way to union. Fitzgerald's dark night is not a discipline self-imposed in order to ascend Mount Carmel. It is one forced on him by insomnia, by ill health, by guilt. It is one helplessly endured: ". . . . in a really dark night of the soul it is always three o'clock in the morning, day after day."

Fitzgerald wanted, actually, to continue to care for things and for people. He wanted to retain his identity, his affection for the world, not lose them. In the "Crack-up" essays, he is unable to accept his bankruptcy as a stage on the way to something — not even toward a conversion, secular or otherwise, although there is a decided similarity between his "dark night" and, say, Carlyle's Centre of Indifference.[2]

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[2]In view of the "purgative" nature of Fitzgerald's bankruptcy, perhaps it should be pointed out that St. John of the Cross's "purgative dark night of the soul" is an advanced stage in the mystical process. It should not be confused with the earlier stage of "purgation" or

In his analysis of this state in his final "crack-up" article, Fitzgerald said that with the loss of his identity all he was certain of was that he had once "had a heart": "I felt -- therefore I was." He went a thousand miles away for quiet in order "to think out why I had developed a sad attitude toward sadness, a melancholy attitude toward melancholy and a tragic attitude toward tragedy -- why I had become identified with the objects of my horror or compassion." (Fitzgerald italicizes the last clause.) This identification, he thought, spelt "the death of accomplishment." "When Wordsworth decided that 'there had passed away a glory from the earth,' he felt no compulsion to pass away with it. . . . ." Fitzgerald did feel that compulsion. His ability to care about things and people, which,

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[2](cont'd.) with the purgation (further atonement for sin) endured by the souls in Purgatory. The stages of the mystical journey are sometimes distinguished as conversion, purgation, illumination, Dark Night of the Soul, and union. Fitzgerald uses the term "dark night of the soul" to describe what is at most the first stage, conversion, quite a different state essentially from either true purgation or the true Dark Night of the Soul. (Or, even, the purification undergone by the souls in Purgatory. His dark night is, however, an earthly manifestation of purgatorial penance.) The "conversion" corresponds, incidentally, to the process Jung called "transformation," which is defined as occurring when an individual reaches a dead end in the field of conscious adaptation to external experience without experiencing any sense of fulfillment.

after his categorical choice, had served him in place of a religious faith, he no longer has. ("Taking things hard. . . . the stamp that goes into my books so that people can read it blind like Braille.") He is "emotionally" bankrupt. And his bankruptcy, which he presents in his "crack-up" articles, not entirely for purposes of drama, as a "self-immolation," a spiritual suicide, a self-inflicted loss of identity, can be discharged only by a "clean break."

The "clean break," Fitzgerald thought, enabled those who had passed through a stage akin to his bankruptcy to survive.

> [A clean break] is a big word and is no parallel to a jail-break when one is probably headed for a new jail or will be forced back to the old one. The famous "escape" or "run away from it all" is an excursion in a trap even if the trap includes the south seas. . . . . A clean break is something you cannot come back from; that is irretrievable because it makes the past cease to exist. So since I could no longer fulfill the obligations that life had set for me or that I had set for myself, why not slay the empty shell who had been posturing at it for four years? I must continue to be a writer because that was my only way of life, but I would cease any attempts to be a person -- to be kind, just or generous.

The "clean break" then, is another kind of suicide. Feeling that his obligations (set by life or by himself) cannot be fulfilled, he chooses his own death. As an end to the battle against the evil in the world (the battle in which no one is a non-combatant; "Non-combatant's shellshock," Dick

Diver had noted about one of his own war dreams), Fitzgerald throws down his weapons and offers himself up. Keeping in mind his romanticism with its incipient Manicheanism discussed in Chapter II above, we can see a certain similarity between this Fitzgerald and that other "exasperated Manichean," Ahab, about whom Geoffrey Stone has said:

> since he too is a part of creation, he too partakes of evil and ultimately he must sacrifice himself, laying down his life not for another but only because it is not what he demands it should be; in a world that is evil, he offers his life up out of hate.

Fitzgerald, "an exceptionally optimistic young man," as he describes himself in "Casting It Together," "experienced a crack-up of all values" precisely because "what he had before him was not the dish he had ordered for his forties." He had known the reckoning must come, but he had thought he had another ten years.

> "Up to forty-nine it'll be all right," I said. "I can count on that. For a man who's lived as I have, that's all you could ask."
> -- And then, ten years this side of forty-nine, I suddenly realized that I had prematurely cracked.

It is not a pleasant picture, this crack-up at thirty-nine. Nor is Fitzgerald's solution a pleasant one. But Fitzgerald arrives at his "solution" of his spiritual problem without actually facing the issues involved. As a result, the essays in which he describes

his "crack-up" are "less than honest" not only in his failure to admit the part alcoholic dissipation had played in his crack-up, but also in his failure to examine what the "crack-up of values" amounted to. He was putting, he said, "a lament" into his record, "without even the background of the Buganean Hills to give it color. There weren't any Buganean hills that I could see." But was he even looking for any Buganean Hills? The spoiled priest in him knew that although the dish he had for his forties was not the one he had ordered, it was one that he richly deserved.

It would not do, as Fitzgerald very soon found out, merely to kill the priest, whatever the inexorable Mosaic harshness in the penance that that priest inflicted. For the great happiness the romantic young man had had in his youth, the spoiled priest said, he must now pay for in great unhappiness; he had treasured his ability to feel, and so his payment is to care for nothing any more. The romantic young man's response is not a noble one: I can't have what I want? I'll have nothing then. A "constant striving" to be finer in grain only adds to unhappiness. I won't strive.

In life Fitzgerald wrote his "crack-up" confessions and published them in Esquire -- and went on, striving despite additional trouble. The next year (1936) he was

incapacitated by a serious injury to his shoulder; he began to drink again; he twice tried to commit suicide; and in September he was "interviewed" by a New York reporter and mocked by the multitude on the front page of the New York Post. He had been offered a job in Hollywood in August but because of his shoulder injury, he could not accept it. The next June (1937) he had another offer there at the usual fabulous salary,[3] and his third Hollywood venture started out well. He was out of his slough, fulfilling some, at least, of his obligations, with his health and morale again with him after three years.

But his second script was spoiled, and any hope he had of getting genuine satisfaction from his work in Hollywood vanished within a few months of his arrival there. After that his career in the movie capital was a series of misadventures. He was out of a job during much of 1939. Since 1936 his short stories had been selling almost exclusively to Esquire, at a considerable cut in price from his old Saturday Evening Post days. But during 1939 he did

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[3] $1000 a week for six months with an option for twelve more months at $1250. The option was picked up, but for Fitzgerald, who was in debt financially ($40,000) as well as emotionally, the salary paid his bills, but otherwise no more than kept him financially afloat.

get started on his novel and seriously worked on it. In the spring of 1940 he had a chance to revise "Babylon Revisited" for the screen. He enjoyed this work, calling it "more fun than I've ever had in pictures." The script was never used, however, although it is reportedly an excellent one. Despite ill health, he began drinking again after that in the late summer of this year (1940) But he also got to work on The Last Tycoon; and after a serious heart attack in November, he gave up drinking and devoted himself to his novel. Although he had said only two years before that he did not "write any more. Ernest has made all my writing unnecessary," he now wanted to "write scenes that are frightening and inimitable. I don't want to be as intelligible to my contemporaries as Ernest who as Gertrude Stein said, is bound for the Museums." He worked on The Last Tycoon right up to his death on December 21, 1940.

The penance and payment for the sins and the waste of his youth in these last years are not without their effect on Fitzgerald's production. Between the publication of Tender Is the Night in 1934 and his death in 1940, Fitzgerald described and went through his state of emotional bankruptcy; he wrote a few sketches and short stories; he worked hard (1937-1938)

and intermittently (1939-1940) on movies; he gave some time to thinking about his revision of Tender (1938); he began a novel. So far as quantity is concerned, they are years of a decided slump. But, contrary to the more usual opinion, Arthur Mizener feels that the work of Fitzgerald's last years is his finest.

Certainly there is a difference in attitude between the Fitzgerald of these years and the Fitzgerald of the earlier ones. He is older, and with all the seeming reluctance with which his "crack-up" articles suggest he accepted it, he is at last mature. But what was his finished production in these years? The four parts of the negligible historical novel The Kingdom in the Dark; three dozen or so short stories; the autobiographical sketches. The stories are no longer, it is true, stories of young love, of Fitzgerald's prom trotters, of his young Yale and Princeton and Harvard men, all those who so populated his commercial fiction of his middle period.

But of the short stories over a third of them (seventeen) are in the Pat Hobby series for Esquire. While the conception of Pat, the veteran screen writer who, as a sad Hollywood hack, has not been equaled and is only approached in Bemelmans' portrait of a similar

type in Dirty Eddie, is a good one and the stories themselves are excellent apprentice work for The Last Tycoon. The Pat Hobby stories are, though, in the last analysis, of no great significance. Sketches, they appeared once a month in Esquire, the last year of Fitzgerald's life and extended over into a few months of 1941. Of the remaining stories only a few quite short ones -- "An Alcoholic Case," "Financing Finnegan," possibly "The Lost Decade," and one or two others -- are of any value; and they, while freed from the mechanical contrivance of plot, somehow lack point and urgency. Which is not to dismiss them. They are finely written; but The Tycoon almost alone of the production of these last years gives us some indication of the stature Fitzgerald had by now attained. It, unfortunately, is incomplete. For what art it contains, despite Fitzgerald's spiritual suicide in the pages of Esquire in 1936, we might turn to it now.

CHAPTER X

FINAL FRAGMENT: THE LAST TYCOON

Fitzgerald's discovery of "objective correlatives" for his feelings about Hollywood, about people, and about life accounts for a good part of the astonishing clarity of conception and of the control of his material that Fitzgerald reveals in even the few pages of *The Last Tycoon* that we have. Here he is not "identified with the objects of his horror or compassion." Able to see his characters from a distance as well as close up, he takes full measure of their "jerky hopes and graceful roguaries and awkward sorrows" and not only their estimate of these.

Set in Hollywood, Fitzgerald's own last home, the newest part of the new world, the novel was to dissect the very cortex and nervous system of the film industry, concerning itself with the business and personal relationships of a producer, a key figure in the industry, Monroe Stahr. Another producer, Brady, a representative of the old, uncreative side of the industry which allies itself with the new uncreative corporate side (the New York

money men) was to be the antagonist of this "last tycoon," the sensitive, creative, individualistic, paternalistic employer.

In the six chapters that Fitzgerald completed, the conflict is suggested, the characters are developed, and certain personal relationships are sketched in. Stahr while still a young man (middle thirties), by a combination of intelligence and luck, has managed to attain a position of considerable power and prominence in the great film industry of the thirties. Cecilia, Brady's daughter, a Bennington junior, though whose eyes we see the story, loves Stahr and through her interest in him sees his story develop. While she is home in Hollywood on vacation, Stahr meets a beautiful young Englishwoman who resembles his dead wife, the screen star Minna Davis. Stahr, a man with a drive toward death, deeply engrossed in his work, finds time and energy to be in an affair with her, Kathleen Moore. She is committed to another man who wants to marry her, and, although she apparently loves Stahr, she is not ready to give up her "American" for whom she has come to America, without some chance of security with Stahr. He passes up his chance to ask her to marry him, and she marries her American and Stahr plunges back into his work.

As a paternalistic employer who cares for all his

employees himself and hence is opposed to the unions, which he considers purposeless, and union organizers, whom he sees as enemies, he has Cecilia arrange a meeting with a Communist organizer. After this meeting between Stahr and the Communist Brimmer, the fragment ends, and for the additional complications involving Stahr, Brady, Kathleen, Cecilia, and the others in the union troubles and the fight for control of the industry, we have only Fitzgerald's extensive notes.

What we have of The Tycoon shows Fitzgerald's almost perfect control of his material. The absurdity of the hysteria of the rich in Hollywood at the thought of the revolution, for example, is quietly pinpointed in Cecilia's recalling the plans of "the lawyer and the director who told their plans to Father one night in those brave days."

> If the bonus army conquered Washington [Cecilia continues], the lawyer had a boat hidden in the Sacramento River, and he was going to row up stream for a few months and then come back "because they always needed lawyers after a revolution to straighten out the legal side."
>
> The director had tended more toward defeatism. He had an old suit, shirt and shoes in waiting -- he never did say whether they were his own or whether he got them from the prop department -- and he was going to disappear into the crowd. I remember Father saying: "But they'll look at your hands! They'll know you haven't done manual work for years. And they'll ask for your union card." And I remember how the director's face fell, and how gloomy he was while he ate his dessert, and how funny and puny they sounded to me.

Then, the other side of the genuine terror is given in her line, "since 1933 the rich could only be happy alone together." The conversation also continually evokes the peculiarity of Hollywood:

> "What do you do, Celia." [Wylie asks.] "Go to school?"
> "I go to Pennington. I'm a junior."
> "Oh, I beg your pardon. I should have known, but I never had the advantage of college training. But a junior -- why I read in Esquire that juniors have nothing to learn, Cecilia."
> "Why do people think that college girls ----"
> "Don't apologize -- knowledge is power."
> "You'd know from the way you talk that we were on our way to Hollywood," I said. "It's always years and years behind the times." [Fitzgerald's italics.]

Fitzgerald's always keen perception of social stratification is nowhere keener than in his analysis of the Hollywood writer's position. There is, first, the quiet wit of someone's being "reduced to a writer"; and Manny's comment: "There's a writer for you. . . . . Knows everything and at the same time knows nothing. . . . ." Cecilia thinks of Jane Maloney, a writer, "rather as a child thinks of a family dependent. I knew she was a writer, but I grew up thinking that writer and secretary were the same, except that a writer usually smelled of cocktails and came more often to meals."

Writers have little "rank" in Hollywood, as we know from other observers of the Hollywood social scene as well as from Fitzgerald. One of the key relationships so far as the content of pictures is concerned is the

producer-writer one, but the producer is almost always in control. Stahr, a producer, thinks, for instance, that the writer is someone he can "use." He is an artist of sorts himself (not a "merchant" as his partner Brady is, and as the new Hollywood will be), but he does not feel that he has anything particularly in common with other artists.

> "You writers and artists poop out [he tells Wylie] and get all mixed up, and somebody has to come in and straighten you out. You seem to take things so personally, hating people and worshipping them -- always thinking people are so important -- especially yourselves. You just ask to be kicked around. I like people and I like them to like me, but I wear my heart where God put it -- on the inside."

Although the unfinished state of The Last Tycoon inevitably handicaps the critic, still enough of it exists[1] to suggest much about what the completed novel might have been. Like Hyperion, it is a magnificent torso, arousing regret that more of it was not finished. Even part of another chapter might be enough to dispel one's lingering doubts as to its eventual quality. For, although there are many good things in the novel -- it is smoothly written, mature, broadly conceived -- there are also difficulties, which one cannot be quite

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[1] A hundred and twenty-eight pages in the first edition; around seventy thousand words; the first two "Acts" of what Fitzgerald conceived as a drama of four acts and an epilogue.

sure would finally be overcome.

In regard to the problem of authority for instance: one grants, of course, that any point of view that succeeds is convincing, and one cannot say that the Conradian privilege that Fitzgerald consciously gave himself of letting Cecilia imagine the actions of the actors is unsuccessful in the fragment we have. But could the reader be very much oftener or longer "bounced" into accepting Cecilia's authority? The first few times that she bridges us into a "dramatic present" of scenes which she did not herself see (pages 16, 19, and 25) we accept her authority. She says, "Afterwards Wylie told me what was in the note"; or "Years later I travelled with one of those same pilots and he told me one thing Stahr had said." After both these bridges the subsequent conversation (between Wylie and Stahr, between the pilot and Stahr) is given and Cecilia's authority is not questioned. A later bridge, "It was Bobby who later told me how Stahr found his love that night" is equally successful for a time; but on this occasion for the first time the author grants Cecilia the Conradian privilege of letting her imagine Stahr's thoughts without telling us that she is doing so. We simply enter his mind, and the alert reader balks. The same is true, I think, of the bridge in

Chapter III, when Cecilia has "determined," she tells us, to give

> a glimpse of [Stahr] functioning, which is my excuse for what follows. It is drawn partly from a paper I wrote in college on A Producer's Day and partly from my imagination. More often I have blocked in the ordinary events myself, while the stranger ones are true.

The account of A Producer's Day takes up the rest of Chapter III and most of Chapter IV. It is extremely well done, but it would be more satisfactory, since we do discover Stahr's most intimate thoughts, had we had it on some authority other than Cecilia's. Both the "partly from a paper I wrote in college" and the "partly from my imagination" cast too much doubt over all the thought processes; objective actions are one thing and motives and thoughts inferred from them quite another.

Altogether, the predictable difficulties that Fitzgerald would have encountered before the end of The Tycoon are bound up in this question of the narrator. Cecilia is a very good mouthpiece for much of the material; she is bright, slangy, witty, and knowledgeable. But what is strictly outside her experience remains outside her experience; such a device as the paper written in college has a certain amount of verisimilitude -- she is the type of girl who would have written such a paper -- it puts the reader off, though, rather than drawing him in.

The issue of what point of view would have been best is not easily decided. It might be suggested, though, that given the complicated picture that Fitzgerald wanted to present, the semi-omniscient author with access to Cecilia's and Stahr's minds might create fewer problems than the chosen method. Like our seeing Dick Diver first mainly through Rosemary's eyes, there is decidedly a virtue in first seeing Stahr and Hollywood from Cecilia's point of view. Her first-person narrative, even, has a fresh arrogance that her third-person center of consciousness might not have had.

On Hollywood customs and history Cecilia is certainly an authority. And being of the movies but not in them, she has a detachment toward the whole business that Stahr himself could not have. Her casual relation of the casual matings of the members of the Hollywood tribe has an innocence and a lack of smuttiness that it would not have from anyone else.[2]

But in the complex matter of writing a novel some advantages have to be sacrificed for other gains and this of Cecilia's first-person narrative, I think,

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[2]Her references, for instance, to Marcus' taking "his Canadian girl" dancing, and to Jane Maloney's "husbands," and the same woman's three-day affair with Brooks twenty years before, etc.

would have to be one of those sacrificed. Even in the hundred and twenty-eight pages of The Last Tycoon that we have, Cecilia's intrusions, "This is Cecilia," begin to gravel one. At least part of the reason why they do, aside from this rather mechanical aspect of her obtrusiveness, is that she does not seem a large enough person to understand all that is set before her. The "intensely physical love affair" between Stahr and Kathleen, perhaps she could have understood, and the thread of her own and Stahr's story she is the perfect authority for. But the larger story of Stahr's meaning to the industry, of its meaning to him, his relation to the American Dream -- she does not quite put that over. Of course we always come back to the fact that The Tycoon is incomplete. Anything might have happened between its present stage -- it is still an early draft -- and its completion.

The story of The Last Tycoon, in many ways is that of the aftermath of the fulfillment of the American Dream. For Monroe Stahr is what we like to think of as the representative American: the poor boy who makes good; the young Benjamin Franklin, who walks the streets of Philadelphia poor at the beginning of his career but who lives to be warmly welcomed in the courtly halls of Europe.

Stahr rose to the top in the movie industry, the

great field of opportunity in America, by a combination of shrewdness, brilliance, precociousness, and the virtues of kindness, forebearance, and tolerance. Once at the top, he is "democratic" as a prince is democratic; thoughtful and considerate, he inspires a deep personal loyalty. He is a paternalistic employer with all that entails in "caring" for his employees. "As a 'freelance writer' Wylie had failed from lack of caring, but here was Stahr to care, for all of them." The legerdemain with two senses of the word "care" is calculated; Stahr "cares" for (is concerned about) all of them, as Wylie had not been about himself; and he "cares" for (takes care of) all of them as a father does his children.

As a superior man Stahr knows the industry as few men do; however even he cannot know all the complications, and so he bluffs a little, deciding, pretending to know the "right way" even when he does not, keeping all the strings at all times in his hands. He may do this because, Fitzgerald thinks, "of a sureness about his health, because he felt in his 20's that he himself was able to keep a direct eye on everything, and, therefore, would have been hindered rather than helped by men who were positive-minded supervisors." He has the "great failing of surrounding himself with men who are very far below him," and in a way this alone,

despite his qualities, assures him of failure. With the best intentions in the world he uses people -- for their own good; he thinks, for instance, that "writers" belong to him because he can use their brains. But Stahr himself is a worker, a creative artist who has come to understand the industry as Brady, "the monopolist at his worst," has not.

We meet Stahr at what seems his height. He is calm, confident, authoritative. We see him functioning competently through a whole day. But his great moment, like Dick Diver's, is in the past. And even more than Dick's his moment is given a mythic quality. As William Troy has said there is a suggestion of the Icarus story in Stahr's having, when he was young, "flown up very high to see. . . . ." But not only, as we are reminded in the subsequent comparison, is the flight Icarian.

> And while he was up there he had looked on all the kingdoms, with the kind of eyes that can stare straight into the sun. Beating his wings tenaciously -- finally frantically -- and keeping on beating them, he had stayed up there longer than most of us, and then, remembering all he had seen from his great height of how things were, he had settled gradually to earth.
>
> . . . . [Hollywood] was where Stahr had come to earth after that extraordinary illuminating flight where he saw which way we were going, and how we looked doing it, and how much of it mattered. You could say that this was where an accidental wind blew him, but I don't think so. I would rather think that in a "long shot" he saw a new way of measuring our jerky hopes

> and graceful rogueries and awkward sorrows, and that he came here from choice to be with us to the end.

It is this larger story -- Stahr is referred to later as both a "Vine Street Jesus" and "Christ in Industry" -- which gives much of the power to Stahr and his story. For the tycoon's story as we have it is otherwise one of sordid intrigue and melodrama. It is only Stahr's heroic aloofness, his trying to do what he thinks right, his self-sacrifice, which give grace and meaning to his intense wearing out of himself -- in what, in the last analysis, it is difficult to conceive as more than a trivial business.

But we have only part of Stahr's story. In one of his last outlines for the novel, Fitzgerald called the existing fragment Acts I ("Stahr") and II ("Stahr and Kathleen") and sketched in a third act, which was to be "The Struggle," a fourth, "Murderers," and a fifth, "Epilogue." The principal motifs are stated in Acts I and II: Stahr's love affair with Kathleen, Brady's plot against Stahr, Cecilia's personal life. The destinies of all the main characters -- Stahr, Cecilia, Kathleen, Brady, Wylie White, and Robinson -- were to be entangled, with the industry labor difficulties of the thirties as a background.

Brady was to struggle with Stahr for the control of their company and to stoop to any means, even those involving Kathleen, to succeed. Stahr was to plot to retaliate at Brady's level but at the last moment to have a revulsion of feeling and decide to give up the struggle. He was to die before he is able to revoke the orders he had given. At the end, both Brady and Stahr were to be dead -- Brady murdered at Stahr's instigation, Stahr dead in a plane crash (Icarus finally come to earth) -- and Cecilia was to be tuberculer. All the material after Act II, though, is merely sketched, and we can do no more with it than to suggest the crowded disaster of the novel.

Although there is not the disorder that one still perceives everywhere in Tender Is the Night, The Last Tycoon possibly has too much going on. Fitzgerald probably would have reduced some of the complication in rewriting. Undoubtedly he would also have expanded his word limit,[3] but at the same time he probably would have cut out some episodes and cut down others. For, as it is sketched, The Last Tycoon contains almost too much. And the vast exceeding of expectation in the first two "acts" (70,000 words when he had planned only

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[3]One late draft gives it at 51,000 words.

27,000) would have necessitated some cutting, if not, indeed, a great amount.

I do not mean, of course, that Fitzgerald would have had to adhere to his outline; the fifth and the part of the sixth chapters that we have, though, would profit by judicious cutting. Chapter V, disproportionately packed and long, might well have been split up into two or three chapters: one on the progress of Stahr's and Kathleen's romance; another on Cecilia's search for Kathleen and her unexpected discovery about her father; and another on Stahr "functioning" with Boxley and making his decision about Kathleen. Chapter V does, in fact, show the need of a revising hand more than the preceding four chapters. The counterpointing of Stahr's and Kathleen's "intensely physical" love affair with the gross affair between Brady and his secretary is very good; but at the point we have it, the significance of the contrast is not completely clear. The Boxley scenes, further, while clever are not very much to the point in context.

What we have of The Tycoon, though, makes it clear that the novel was another step forward for Fitzgerald. Stahr is, as Edmund Wilson has wisely observed, the "one of Fitzgerald's central figures which he had thought out most completely and which he had most deeply come to

understand" and one who "is really created from within at the same time that he is criticised by an intelligence that has now become sure of itself and knows how to assign him to his proper place in a larger scheme of things." That alone, one admits, does not make The Last Tycoon significant; not even Fitzgerald's handling of a whole industry does that, although some critics have tended to overvalue the novel on that basis.

The Last Tycoon is still a fragment, but from a a literary as well as a biographical point of view it is a promising and encouraging fragment. It shows Fitzgerald the artist turning his lamented exile among the Philistines into something rich and strange. That the transformation is not complete is regrettable. But what is important is that Fitzgerald continued to function in Hollywood; intimates of the industry think that Fitzgerald understands Hollywood as few people have understood it. That understanding crops out on every page of The Tycoon.

Although Fitzgerald was always a keen observer of the social scene, that was never and is not in this novel his prime virtue. The Tycoon was not to be the story of an industry, except incidentally. The labor troubles were to be "background," and The Last Tycoon was again to be a personal story, the story of a talented

man, Monroe Stahr, who has his moment of promise (his flight)[4] when he makes his choice of Hollywood. After that, while seeming successful in every way, he still has his symbolic crack which shows at last so that he has to make his final effort to be "better" than his companions, in order to save himself. Within the compass of the fragment itself we see Stahr struggling, successfully, against the temptation of Kathleen. He loves her, but a cautious voice warns him to take his time, and he does. Hence he loses her. But as the novel was to go on, they were to be clandestinely reunited and she was to play an important rôle in his destruction.

The fragment of The Tycoon that we have is very good, but all the evidence to establish it as the greatest of Fitzgerald's novels is not there. It is certainly, as Edmund Wilson said, "among the books that set a standard" but not necessarily the standard in the Fitzgerald canon. As Arthur Mizener judiciously points out, it can be and has been read by individual critics "according to [their] established bias about the author."

Stahr, a gifted adult and an essentially good man,

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[4]As we all do. He merely "stayed up there longer than most of us. . . . ."

is the most convincing and sympathetic of Fitzgerald's heroes. While not as old as Dick Diver is at the end of Tender, he is so much more competent and sure of himself that he seems much older than and rather different from Fitzgerald's other heroes.[5] His primary concern seems to be his work. Like the other Fitzgerald heroes, though, he really lives in his love. And The Tycoon does not begin until he meets Kathleen and probably would not end until, like the other Fitzgerald heroines, she had managed to destroy him. His heart, he tells her melodramatically at one point, is in the grave, and in a measure it is there with his dead wife, Minna. But Kathleen is an emotional as well as physical (she resembles Minna) re-incarnation of Minna. She is able to get an emotional hold on Stahr because of this.

Stahr is like the other Fitzgerald heroes, too, in not being an intellectually complex individual. He is sensitive, intelligent, and by no means a simple person.

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[5] Unfriendly critics who have wished to make a point against Fitzgerald by castigating the sameness of his heroes have sometimes said that Amory, Anthony, Gatsby, Dick, and Monroe were five stages of the same individual, each significantly a little older than the previous one, Stahr, for instance, being in his early forties. Stahr seems older, but actually he is about thirty-five.

But his motives and his actions are ordinary, understandable ones. He embodies, however he may have acquired them, the same simple "Midwestern" virtues as the other Fitzgerald heroes. (Fitzgerald suggests that Stahr got beyond good and evil and then painstakingly learned tolerance, kindness and forebearance.) In The Tycoon, as we now have it, even the fact that he is a Jew does not make him more complicated psychologically or intellectually than Nick Carraway or Dick Diver. Stahr is a Jew, indeed, probably first and foremost for verisimilar reasons: because his original was a Jew; because of the omnipresence of Jews in the film world. But once this is given, there is no denying that Fitzgerald meant to capitalize on Stahr's Jewishness by contrasting him with the Jews Reinmand and La Borwitz, who are low in the moral scale, and with the Irishman Brady, who is the worst of them all; and by making him Christ-like.

It is Stahr, not the other two Jews or the Irishman, who is Christ-like and in that manner unlike the conventional stereotype of the Jew. In addition, Fitzgerald apparently wanted to identify Stahr with the great American dreamer. "Manny Schwartz and Andrew Jackson," Cecilia thinks in the first chapter, "it was hard to say them in the same sentence." Monroe Stahr and Andrew Jackson; "Jackson, who like,

Stahr," one critic has said, "had faced a democratic crisis indomitably for all his faults and his illness and his social disadvantage." Stahr and Abraham Lincoln, Lincoln who was a general as Stahr was an artist, "perforce and as a layman." Stahr, the great contemporary individual, has come up from at least as far as both Jackson and Lincoln. He has become a prince of a great industry which, despite whatever art may now and again be inherent in it, is strictly a business. But it is a great amusement business in a great country which for a decade had wanted, as Fitzgerald said in Tender, only to be entertained. Hollywood is now the embodiment of the American Dream which Gatsby had looked for in the recapturing of a past year's love. Its precise worth is epitomized in the brief scene in which the Knights of Columbus "who have seen the host carried in procession" swing their glances "vacantly" toward the "dream made flesh."

Stahr is in essence the representative clean-limbed American boy who by a combination of diligence, luck, and brains succeeds where others fail. Unlike Brady, who had luck but has done no more than to develop "his suspiciousness like a muscle" in order to consolidate his position, Stahr has really worked to learn the business. Even though he is an artist only perforce and as a layman

he has a genuine gift of organization and perception, and, functioning in his business, has exactly the right touch both to improve motion pictures a little at a time and to keep things moving.

Ironically the very quality, his personal responsibility for everything, which enabled him to succeed, at last defeats him. For the industry which, as Cecilia says in the first chapter, is years behind the times, finally catches up with the times and Stahr's individual effort has to give way to a world of specialization. I personally believe that Fitzgerald would have been able to present the complex labor scene in the Hollywood of 1935 without bogging down his narrative, just as he was able to give us all we needed to know about Gatsby's nefarious enterprises without having to show Gatsby engaged in ruthless and gangsterish activity (as the motion picture version of Gatsby unfortunately found it necessary to do). The Last Tycoon would have had to be a bigger novel than Gatsby, but it would still have been a personal story. Hollywood would have been only a background. A corrupt and decadent world where few things are what they seem and everything is out of scale, Hollywood is a particularly ironic place for Stahr to choose to settle after his grand flight on which he had seen how things were. At

the same time, it does give him such opportunity as he would have had few other places in any time and no other place, probably, in modern times. Hollywood is not commensurate with his dream, but what in America, since the Dutch sailors first sighted the fresh, green breast of the new world, is? Andrew Jackson's home, the Hermitage, is only a "white box" and a "raw shrine" for Manny Schwartz to come a long way from some Ghetto in order to present himself there. The tradition itself scarcely serves as a substitute object of belief, as Fitzgerald saw. Still as a way of life, the industry dominated by the responsible individual -- Stahr, Jackson -- working for the good of a people, was to be preferred to the class warfare the labor organizers offered on the one hand and the laissez-faire exploitation of the new Hollywood on the other.

2

For Fitzgerald, the Hollywood which he was able to see both from the outside and from the inside was such as to enable him to present his considered opinions on people and on life with grace, with wit, and with wisdom. The instrument of his simple prose, beautifully perfected in his last "tragic" years, is never more sure

than when he is puncturing appearance in order to present reality. An actress in a low-cut evening dress has bright eczema over her exposed neck and shoulders and utters unprintable epithets; but a real starshine photographs in her eyes. In The Tycoon, Wilson says, "Fitzgerald's writing is finer than any he had ever done before, and he had not made his final revision of any of it." His images, based primarily, as they were in his previous novels, on everyday objects, again are rich and imaginative. His "poetic gift," as Wilson notes,

> for getting at the quality and feel of a situation with muted figurative language never worked more unremittingly or more tactfully. . . . . There are no costume-jewelry comparisons or appeals to feelings outside the context of the narrative such as occasionally marred his earlier work. The feelings always belong to the people and the events; they are never forced on them, never asserted for their own sake.

The epigrams are perhaps a little forced at times -- e.g., "Emotionally, at least, people can't live by taking in each other's washing." But they are characteristic of the narrator, the young, bright, and cynical Cecilia. Her rather extraordinary background -- living in Hollywood, going to school in Florence, Italy, and then to Bennington -- along with her wit and intelligence make plausible her ability to maintain some sort of a balance in a contaminated atmosphere. The idealism of Bennington on the part of her repulsive father, whom she loves "in

a sort of irregular graph with many low swoops," for instance, she castigates in this passage of sophisticated and idiomatic prose which is her very "voice":

> And Pennington -- oh, what an exclusive -- dear God, my heart. I assured him there was the usual proportion of natural-born sidwvlos and biddies tastefully concealed by throw-overs from sex Fifth Avenue; but Father had worked himself up to practically an alumnus. "You've had everything," he used to say happily. Everything included roughly the two years in Florence, where I managed against heavy odds to be the only virgin in school, and the courtesy début in Boston, Massachusetts. I was a veritable flower of the fine old coast-and-gross aristocracy.

Everywhere in this fragment, though, one encounters Fitzgerald's supple prose, his ability to capture Cecilia's point of view, and his talent for seeing ordinary objects freshly and symbolically. Within the first six pages, Cecilia is said to accept Hollywood "with the resignation of a ghost assigned to a haunted house"; the trans-continental flight is a "sharp rip between coast and coast"; Schwartz's eyes follow Stahr with "a soulless economic lechery," and he speaks of his beautiful daughter "as if she had been sold to creditors as a tangible asset." Later, a big moon is seen as wedged helplessly in an open French window. In general the imagery in The Tycoon, as Kazin notes, is not a matter of incidental ornament. It is integral in the very texture of the prose as in this scene between Stahr

and Boxley, the English novelist:

> [Boxley] came in with the air of being violently dragged, though no one apparently had a hand on him. He stood in front of a chair, and again it was as if two invisible attendants seized his arms and set him down forcibly into it. He sat there morosely. Even when he lit a cigarette on Stahr's invitation, one felt that the match was held to it by exterior forces he disdained to control.
>
> Stahr looked at him courteously.
>
> "Something not going well, Mr. Boxley?"
>
> The novelist looked back at him in thunderous silence.
>
> "I read your letter," said Stahr. The tone of the pleasant young headmaster was gone. He spoke as to an equal, but with a faint two-edged deference.
>
> "I can't get what I write on paper," broke out Boxley. "You've all been very decent, but it's a sort of conspiracy. Those two hacks you've teamed me with listen to what I say, but they spoil it -- they seem to have a vocabulary of about a hundred words."
>
> "Why don't you write it yourself?" asked Stahr.
>
> "I have. I sent you some."
>
> "But it was just talk, back and forth," said Stahr mildly. "Interesting talk but nothing more."
>
> Now it was all the two ghostly attendants could do to hold Boxley in the deep chair. He struggled to get up.... . . .

Or in Cecilia's description of the earthquake:

> We didn't get the full shock like at Long Beach, where the upper stories of shops were spewed into the streets and small hotels drifted out to sea -- but for a full minute our bowels were one with the bowels of the earth -- like some nightmare attempt to attach our naval cords again and jerk us back to the womb of creation.
>
> Mother's picture fell off the wall, revealing a small safe -- Rosemary and I grabbed frantically for each other and did a strange screaming waltz across the room. Jacques fainted or at least disappeared, and Father clung to his desk and shouted, "Are you all right?" Outside the window the singer came to the climax of <u>I love you only</u>, held it a moment and then, I swear, started it all over. Or maybe they were playing it back to her from the recording

machine.
The room stood still, shimmying a little. We made our way to the door, suddenly including Jacques, who had reappeared, and tottered out dizzily through the anteroom on to the iron balcony. Almost all the lights were out, and from here and there we could hear cries and calls.

In both these passages the appearance of the main action is conveyed by brief, sharp figures: i.e., Boxley's non-existent "attendants"; the attempt to jerk them back to the womb of creation; the waltz; the room "shimmying." Stahr's roofless house in Malibu, the setting of the beginning of Stahr's affair with Kathleen, has an important unfinished, desolate, "waste land" note. When they first come up to its "fuselage," a headwind blows out of the sun to throw spray up the rocks and over the car. "Concrete mixer, raw yellow wood and builders' rubble waited, an open wound in the seascape, for Sunday to be over." When they leave it, the house seems "kindlier"

as if warmed by their visit -- the hard glitter of the place was more endurable if they were not bound there like people on the shiny surface of a moon. Looking back from a curve of the shore, they saw the sky growing pink behind the indecisive structure, and the point of land seemed a friendly island, not without promise of fine hours on a further day.
Past Malibu with its gaudy shacks and fishing barges they came into the range of human kind again, the cars stacked and piled along the road, the beaches like ant hills without a pattern, save for the dark drowned heads that sprinkled the sea.
Goods from the city were increasing in sight -- blankets, matting, umbrellas, cookstoves, reticules full of clothing -- the prisoners had laid out their shackles beside them on the sand.

On their return in the night, the house has "dissolved a little back into its elements" and is a sombre unfinished background for their romance. The almost frantic, compulsory quality of their return to the house, incidentally, is commented on with the compulsory running of the grunion, which occurs while they are at Stahr's house. But the fish, also, "Only the little fish were certain." -- Stahr and Kathleen are not.

Many of the comparisons and the objects chosen to be described are symbolical in this way. Once, for instance, a studio office building is said symbolically to have "long balconies and iron rails [which have a] suggestion of a perpetual tightrope," and Cecilia Brady's father has "a big painting of Will Rogers, hung conspicuously and intended. . . . to suggest [Brady's] essential kinship with Hollywood's St. Francis. . . . ."

This last comparison is representative of the particular charm of the imagery in The Last Tycoon. Almost more appropriate and more original than that in any of Fitzgerald's novels other than this one -- with the possible exception of Gatsby -- the imagery, along with the brisk satiric remarks of the narrator, is amusing, ironic, and authoritative about sketching

in the tribal customs peculiar to Hollywood. The prevailingly gloomy tone of the novel is, as a consequence, effectually balanced by the light attitude of the narrator who, knowing what it is, cannot quite take it all seriously. "I knew what you were supposed to think about it," she says, "but I was obstinately unhorrified." She has been to school in Italy, to Bennington, and she knows that people in the film industry differ only a little from people in other parts of the world. They are all pretty bad when you come right down to it. Still, there is a redeeming grace in knowing it thoroughly and knowing its exact worth. It is, finally, Fitzgerald's ability to take us in this fashion intimately into the Hollywood scene that constitutes much of the fascination of The Last Tycoon. This is an authentic section of the world, deeply understood. And with it we have come full circle, from the Princeton and youth that is "this side of Paradise" to the Hollywood and the declining will to live that is in California's earthly paradise. Now that we are at the beginning again, perhaps we can make some general remarks about Fitzgerald's accomplishment.

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER XI

ACCOMPLISHMENT

In a sense, the conflict which I have outlined as present in Fitzgerald's life and in the content of his work carries over into the very construction of his work. For, as Riley Hughes has observed, and as we have seen throughout this study, although we think of Fitzgerald as "a naturally mannered stylist, [he] spent most of his creative life wrestling with the problem of form." Even the retributive aspect of the other conflict remains in this struggle: Fitzgerald is granted certain incidental graces of style and manner in order to convey the depth of his feeling, but he is denied the larger grace, that of architectonics. However much we repeat that form is not something superimposed (as it is not) and that form _is_ meaning, we still have Fitzgerald the novelist expressing _some_ meaning while, with a single exception, he is the loser in his struggle with form.

> The American novel [Riley Hughes has noted], with the single transcendent exception of Henry James, has been the history of an unequal struggle with [this problem of form]. Hawthorne

> and Mark Twain were all but broken by it, and it hindered Melville more than most of his critics will admit. Our romantic impatience with form and our Emersonian feeling that the conscious stone will grow to beauty quite unaided account in part for our traditional inability to hammer the saying into meaning

Fitzgerald is a crucial instance of this inability. Only in The Great Gatsby is his form adequate for his material; only here is saying hammered into meaning. In his other novels the saying breaks down into the contrived (The Beautiful and Damned), the hasty (Tender Is the Night), or the unaware (This Side of Paradise). Possibly the fragment, The Last Tycoon, might have been another instance of saying hammered into meaning. In charity we should at least grant the chance. But success in that novel is far from certain. Fitzgerald's personal demon, the desire to be a social commentator as well as a creative writer, begins to thrust his head even into the six chapters that we have.

In Fitzgerald's completed work, then, we have continually Fitzgerald's failure in architectonics -- structure and point of view deficient with a resultant imperfection in the articulation of the theme. And his expression, from the only occasionally felicitous, more usually ornamented and precious prose of his first two novels, he advances to the polished prose of his middle and last years. But even a good style and something to

say is not enough. Form is necessary. It is true of Fitzgerald, as one critic has said, "as it is of all writers not absolutely of the first rank, that he could achieve idea, achieve the thing only through form. He had no other than oblique utterance."

". . . . as it is of all writers not absolutely of the first rank. . . . ." The judgment seems a harsh one. But Fitzgerald is not of the first rank. It is difficult to say how close he is. He has an elegance of style, a moral worth, a serious concern for craft and content. But he is not a James. And he is not a Melville or a Hawthorne or, to come into our own time, a T. S. Eliot or a Thomas Mann. He is a Fitzgerald ranking with Thackeray, Flaubert, and Dickens, not with Tolstoy or Dostoievsky or Sigrid Undset. He is an important writer in his own time ranking among his contemporaries Hemingway, Dos Passos, and Faulkner. (And that, as Gertrude Stein said about her own comparison of Fitzgerald to Thackeray, is not a bad compliment.) For Fitzgerald does offer something distinctive, as every writer, if he be of any worth, offers something distinctive: a poet in prose, he explores thoroughly and intensely one conflict, that between the emotional and the moral, between what one wants to do and what he knows he should do, between

the romantic young man and the spoiled priest. His authentic value derives from his saturation with this conflict, the saturation which gives him the power of making us (in Eliot's words) "from time to time a little more aware of the deeper unnamed feelings which form the substratum of our being, to which we rarely penetrate; for our lives are mostly a constant evasion of ourselves, and an evasion of the visible and sensible world." The intensity of Fitzgerald's feeling about this conflict enables him to bring us face to face with it and ourselves and with the visible and sensible world.

For the conflict, a primary phase of the human predicament, is one that we can understand, even if we cannot completely accept the categorical nature of Fitzgerald's choice. (Not for everyone must it be sex <u>or</u> God, the love of creature <u>or</u> the love of God.) Still, the choice was compulsory for Fitzgerald, and, remembering that no man's serious concerns are to be scorned, we can think (in John Peale Bishop's words),

> . . . . of all you did
> And all you might have done, before undone
> By death, but for the undoing of despair.

We have seen what he did -- one perfect novel, parts of two others, an assortment of short stories and essays -- and from that, critics have made conjectures as to what might have been done. It is the "undoing

of despair," though, that is at the heart of Fitzgerald's work; it is despair that paradoxically gives him his material as well as undoing him. For in the last analysis, his pervasive "idea" of the necessity of the choice between greatness and goodness and the consequence of emotional bankruptcy is but a theoretic exposition of despair. In this idea his end is in his beginning; his eventual inability to feel is forecast in his being able to feel deeply.

And, finally, though Fitzgerald's presentation of his idea is romantic as he was romantic, the idea itself is a classic, as well as a romantic, one, a traditional human one. Graham Greene found it when, at the age of fourteen, he read Marjorie Bowen's The Viper of Milan. If he had been on the classical side, Greene writes, he would have discovered in Greek literature instead of Miss Bowen's novel

> the sense of doom that lies over success -- the feeling that the pendulum is about to swing. . . . . one looked around and saw the doomed everywhere -- the champion runner who one day would sag over the tape; the head of the school who would atone, poor devil, during forty dreary undistinguished years; the scholar. . . and when success began to touch oneself too, however mildly, one could only pray that failure would not be held off for too long.
> [The second suspension is Greene's.]

Unlike Greene, Fitzgerald accepts the inevitable swing of the pendulum reluctantly. It is his reluctance at the same time, however, that gives depth to his work.

He does not present so wide and varied a world as some other novelists, as some of his own contemporaries; but his examination of one theme is thorough, his presentation of one fable, that made from his own experience, is consistent. And it is so, precisely because the intensity of his feeling gave him a compelling need at all times to examine and understand what he had experienced; even his theorizing of his despair was an attempt to get an additional tool to aid him in that examination and understanding. The "failure" of his father, for instance, was apparently significant in his experience, and late in his life Fitzgerald noted this "justification of the happy ending": "My father and Oscar Wilde born in the same year. One ruined at forty -- one 'happy' at seventy. So Becky and Amelia are, in fact, <u>true</u>."

Given his personal division of sensibility, his certainty that happiness ("success") cannot last, or, if it does, it disguises failure, it is almost inevitable that a major motif in his novels should be what is encompassed in the word "failure." To all intents and purposes, Gatsby who is slain by a jealous husband in a macabre case of mistaken identity; Nick who returns to the West without having acquired the riches he came East to get; Dick who disappears into the Finger Lakes region of New

York as a general practitioner; Stahr whom the new Hollywood supersedes -- are all failures. And Fitzgerald's short stories, as a recent reviewer of them has complained, have also "only one theme -- failure. His heroes fail to get the girl, or the job, or the inheritance, or the recognition, or whatever salvation they are seeking." But there is an interest in these "failures," an interest that makes of them almost types of victory. "I talk with the authority of failure," Fitzgerald himself perceptively remarked when noting the measure of his difference from a celebrated contemporary; "Ernest with the authority of success. We could never sit across the same table again."

"The authority of failure." It is not a bad phrase, for it is something to be able to talk with this authority. Failure is, after all, a part of the human condition, given our imperfect nature perhaps a more important part than success can ever be; and a wise and honest examination of failure can tell us much about that human condition. That is, I think, what Fitzgerald's contribution finally amounts up to: a picture of what man's destiny in this world is, an essentially tragic picture. While Fitzgerald's hero may have a certain amount of public success it either

does not last (Dick Diver's in Tender) or it is made bitter by private unhappiness (Charles Wales's in "Babylon Revisited"). Anthony Patch's (such as it is) and Dick Diver's tragedy, for instance, is not that their deterioration cuts short promising careers. Their true tragedy is antecedent and lies in their over-confidence (hubris) which is fatal and must be followed by até and then by nemesis. Gatsby sacrificially awaiting his death; Dick surrendering his adulterous wife to the civilized barbarian, Tommy Barban, without a word -- scapegoats both, still regain some of what they had lost when they had made their original wrong choices.

They actually become "aware" too late, of course, and only then separate themselves from evil. But they are able to withdraw (Nick withdraws for Gatsby) with the quiet dignity which assures them of a noble end anyway. Still, Fitzgerald's hero is lost: not morally confused he can, after once having made a wrong choice, "with an effort" at last choose the "right" course, but the most he can do after that is to suffer uncomplainingly. A stoic, like Fitzgerald himself, he sees that "life is essentially a cheat and its conditions are those of defeat, and that the redeeming things are not 'happiness and pleasure' but the deeper satisfactions that come out of the struggle." For Fitzgerald and his hero there

is nothing more.

Seen in a certain light, Fitzgerald would seem to offer no solution to man's spiritual problem. He does leave a window open however; the hero ends alone and a "failure" but he has been functioning and important on an adult level; he can create and accomplish. He can, for instance, bring Nicole to mental health if not to moral decency; he can maintain a line of moral excellence in Hollywood. And too, more importantly, his original choice of greatness rather than goodness, magnificence instead of asceticism, implies the actual existence of what "goodness" and "asceticism" symbolize: God. Though God is not chosen He is not denied. As T. S. Eliot has phrased it, "it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil [to make the wrong choice] than to do nothing [to make no choice]: at least, we exist. It is true to say that the glory of man is his capacity for salvation; it is also true to say that his glory is his capacity for damnation. The worst that can be said of most of our malefactors, from statesmen to thieves, is that they are not men enough to be damned."

Fitzgerald's hero is man enough to be damned. After he has made his wrong choice, he can do little more than wait for retribution to catch up with him. But at least

there is retribution. And in this implied view of humanity, it is not man who is too good, as he is for many romantics. Man is all too weak and prone to evil, his one glory his capacity for damnation. He is man cut off from God by his own choice, man in chains remembering that he was born free. His measure of nobility and tragic stature comes from his recognition of his individual responsibility with his concomitant uncomplaining sufferance of his fate.

Thus Fitzgerald's understanding of his theme is always greater than any solution he can offer. "While it is not the novelist's duty [as one critic has said] to solve the problems he sets for his characters, there ought to be nothing in his point of view that gets in the way of their being solved." In the past there was a possibility of the problems of Fitzgerald's hero being solved, a possibility that remains irrevocably in the past after the wrong choice. As a direct result, while Fitzgerald saw that the "redeeming things" were not "'happiness and pleasure' but the deeper satisfactions that come out of the struggle," there is little evidence in his work that he saw anything beyond the dilemma of his characters. They advance a step toward salvation by recognizing their failure and their resultant spiritual condition and by withdrawing in order to salvage what they can. But man here is not, apparently, in the

state of a wayfarer, the status viatoris of Christianity. He is man without hope, man alone, mutely holding on. Hope, like faith, is an act, and it is not one the Fitzgerald hero can make.

"Was all for naught?" The question Jeremiah Beaumont asks in World Enough and Time thunders through the last pages of Fitzgerald. "Was all for naught?" No, for man has dignity, worth. His final stoic despair is retributive. It is not what he "ordered," but it is what he deserves. He continues to pay his final tribute to things unforgotten, unshriven, unexpiated, because he was originally swayed by his concupiscent nature into making his original wrong choice, into choosing sex instead of God, and now he must endure the consequences. It is not a pleasant fate, but for man whom the ancient enslavement holds beneath the yoke of sin, it is the best that Scott Fitzgerald can offer.

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The following bibliography, confined to works which have contributed in some way to my study, is intended to indicate briefly my indebtedness to the scholars, the critics, and the reviewers who have aided in my understanding of Fitzgerald. Since my purposes are critical rather than scholarly, except in the few instances when a full citation seemed germane for purposes of reference or clarification, I have not given the sources of my information in my text. For the biographical facts my source is, with a single exception, Mizener's The Far Side of Paradise.

The list of Fitzgerald's works in Part I below includes only those which I quote from or comment on. A more compl te check list of Fitzgerald's writings is in the Scott Fitzgerald issue of The Princeton University Library Chronicle (12 [Summer, 1951], 198-208). I follow this check list in presenting these items chronologically; other bibliographical items are listed alphabetically. The second part of my bibliography includes all the works of biography and criticism to which I am consciously

indebted, whether for purposes of insight or of disagreement. No complete bibliography of Fitzgerald exists. Good partial ones are in the third volume of the Robert Spiller, et al., Literary History of the United States (Macmillan, 1948); in the Millett Contemporary American Authors (Harcourt, Brace, 1940); and in the Leary Articles on American Literature Appearing in Current Periodicals, 1920-1945 (Duke University Press, 1947), with the periodical supplements in American Literature. A number of references of varying degrees of biographical and critical importance are imbedded in the notes to Kizner's biography of Fitzgerald, The Far Side of Paradise.

The works listed in Part III of my bibliography are those consulted for points of technique and background or for influence on Fitzgerald. Hortense Powdermaker's study of Hollywood and the Dmytryks, Schulberg, and Van Vechten novels about Hollywood, for instance, are not cited in my study; my reading of these books, though, directly influenced my estimate of the accuracy of Fitzgerald's portrayal of Hollywood in The Last Tycoon, and so I have included them here.

Finally, I have also examined the manuscripts in the Fitzgerald collection at Princeton; most of the material I have taken from there is, I believe, in

print somewhere, and I have not listed any of those items separately.

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