

DREAM AND DISILLUSION:
THE MAJOR THEME IN
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S FICTION

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MICHAEL JAY STEINBERG
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F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S FICTION

presented by

Michael Jay Steinberg

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Clinton B. Burkhart, Jr.

Major professor

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ABSTRACT

DREAM AND DISILLUSION:
THE MAJOR THEME IN
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S FICTION

By

Michael Jay Steinberg

At the core of F. Scott Fitzgerald's thought and art is a major theme of dream and disillusion, a theme which forms the central and unifying concept of his developing aesthetic. Fitzgerald's treatment of this theme in his fiction grows in depth and complexity until it becomes a tragic vision of modern man.

In Fitzgerald's writing, the dream-and-disillusion theme is another form of the romantic quest. Most of his heroes live with a dream of great glory and beauty and wonder, "a heightened sensitivity to the promises of life." They do not take life as it is, but strive to transform it imaginatively by dreaming of something grander and more enduring; an ineffable nobility, a supernal beauty, "a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing." But Fitzgerald is not simply a dreamer. He recognizes the paradox and sad irony which causes men to dream of an existence which they can never fully realize, and in his best fiction he is able to dramatize this polarity.

For Fitzgerald, man's imperfections and limitations, those qualities which make him human, force him to dream of a more noble

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and a timeless existence. But, because he is an imperfect creature, man must inevitably incarnate his dream of perfection in the temporal forms of his own world: in great wealth, in glittering things, in other persons--thereby dooming the dream to ultimate destruction and himself to inevitable disillusion. Man, then, because he seeks the eternal essence in the perishable substance, must forever reach out for what he can never really grasp or can only destroy by grasping.

Although Fitzgerald recognizes that the human condition promises only ultimate defeat, many of his heroes attain a kind of tragic grandeur in their struggle to overcome their mortality, to transcend their limitations. His best fiction reminds us over and over again that despite defeat and despair, man must continue to dream, that the certainty of defeat must not kill in him the need to invest his life with imagined beauty and significance.

From the beginning, Fitzgerald's art is concerned with characters who dream or who have lost the ability to dream and with the pursuit of a dream and its incarnation in imperfect and ultimately perishable forms. His earliest heroes are young and hopeful idealists whose quest for such goals invariably brings them disillusion and pain. Their distinguishing characteristic, however, is their youth and resilience--their ability to struggle back from disillusion and loss to dream once more. Despite the inevitability of their failure, characters like Amory Blaine and Jay Gatsby are memorable for their "romantic readiness," their youthful spirit.

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As he grows to maturity and experiences personal and professional setbacks, a quality which he refers to as a "touch of disaster" begins to permeate Fitzgerald's work. As his heroes age, they are confronted like himself with the loss of their youthful romantic dreams; and many, like Gordon Sterrett and Anthony Patch, are disillusioned and unable to recover from personal hardship.

During the late twenties and through the mid-thirties, Fitzgerald begins to come to terms with this destructive disillusion. Understanding that his own dreams of early success are behind him, his stories during this time center on personal loss and domestic conflict; his characters are more human and moving; and he deals with more complex human problems. As his wife's mental condition worsens and his own reputation diminishes, Fitzgerald writes more openly of his disillusion and his sadness and reflects a more sombre vision, a deepening tragic perspective. In these last years, Fitzgerald writes of men like Charlie Wales and Monroe Stahr who learn how to live without their grand and glorious youthful illusions while retaining their capacity to dream of a life with meaning and value.

In this final phase of his career, then, Fitzgerald deepens his major theme to what he calls "the wise and tragic sense of life." At the deepest level of his art, he writes both of the inevitable failure of the individual dream and also of the inevitable corruption of the American dream and of all human dreams. At the same time, however, he evokes his conviction that in spite of such inevitable failure and corruption, man continues to dream, to invest his life with point,

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Michael Jay Steinberg

dignity, and meaning. In this enduring theme, rooted in Fitzgerald's ability "to hold two opposing ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function," lies his characteristic ethic both as a writer and as a man.



DREAM AND DISILLUSION:
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By

Michael Jay Steinberg

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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Department of English

1974

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MICHAEL JAY STEINBERG

1974

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The idea for this study grew out of several undergraduate courses taught by Clinton S. Burhans. He encouraged me to follow it through and for that I am grateful.

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Without Carole Steinberg's continuing patience and Buffy Steinberg's inspiration, this would have been a most difficult undertaking to complete.

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I THE DOMINANT IDEA

Fitzgerald once noted that "the two basic stories of all time are Cinderella and Jack the Giant Killer--the charm of women and the courage of men." As fantasy and heroic dreams were deeply a part of Fitzgerald's inner-life--like his dream of becoming a football hero or "one of the greatest writers who ever lived"--so romance became an important dimension in his work. Having within him also the need to approach life more sensibly and realistically, Fitzgerald "shuffled back and forth" between these two attitudes, always being both "the midwestern Trimalchio and the spoiled priest who disapproved but grudgingly admired him."² That side of him which fantasized about life's promises--eternal youth, romantic love, extravagant riches--co-existed with that part of his nature which saw these dreams as excessive and self-indulgent, and ultimately corruptible. Fitzgerald describes his own stories as containing "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."³ Important here is the two contrasting strains which are revealed in Fitzgerald's character and which provide the tension which he objectified and dramatized in his serious fiction. He believed that "one should, for example, be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise;"⁴ and it is this polarity--his alternating between living in a world of dream-like

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illusions accompanied simultaneously by an acute awareness of life's underlying and inevitable disillusion--which gives Fitzgerald's work its depth and significance.

Writing about his own early success, Fitzgerald says:

The compensation of a very early success is a conviction that life is a romantic matter. In the best sense one stays young. When the primary objects of love and money could be taken for granted and a shaky eminence had lost its fascination, I had fair years to waste, years that I can't honestly regret, in seeking the eternal Carnival by the Sea.⁵

Like Jay Gatsby, many of Fitzgerald's earlier heroes start out by conceiving of life as primarily a "romantic matter." Striving to transcend the banalities of everyday existence, they imagine life as something splendid and ineffable and themselves as noble and inimitable. So long as characters like John Unger, Dexter Green, Rudolph Miller and Gatsby remain young, so long as they do not suffer the disillusion of their dreams, they can retain their romantic vitality and freshness. But writing in 1936, Fitzgerald says: "This is what I think now: that the natural state of the sentient adult is a qualified unhappiness. I think also that in an adult the desire to be finer in grain than you are, 'a constant striving,' . . . only adds to this unhappiness in the end--that end that comes to our youth and hopes."⁶ And in losing their youth, Fitzgerald's later heroes--Anson Hunter, Charlie Wales, and Dick Diver--are forced to confront this reality and thereby to suffer the subsequent loss of their romantic dreams.

In his fiction Fitzgerald explores both those impulses and yearnings which made youth, love and wealth romantic matters for him, and also the inevitable loss of those dreams. As a result, the central and all-encompassing theme which emerges in his work is tension between dream

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and disillusion: the dream of youth and the inevitable erosion of age; the dream of romantic love and beauty and the reality of sex and perishability; the dream of great riches and success and the moral and spiritual corruption which accompanies the possession of wealth.

Briefly summarized, the dream-and-disillusion theme is another form of the romantic quest trapped in a realistic age. It is the destiny of man, Fitzgerald sees, to dream of an existence he can never fully realize. For Fitzgerald, man's imperfections, his limitations, lead him to search for something grander and more enduring, a supernal beauty. But because he is mortal and therefore imperfect, man must incarnate his dreams of perfection in the material and temporal forms of his own world: in other persons, in glittering possessions, and great wealth--thereby dooming his dream of perfection to ultimate destruction and opening himself to inevitable disillusion or its consequences. Because he seeks the eternal essence in the perishable substance, man must forever reach out for that which he can never fully grasp or finally keep.

This animating concept of dream-and-disillusion is deeply embedded in Fitzgerald's experience; and as he explores it in his fiction from many different perspectives and points of view, it evolves into his major theme. It is a theme which grows and develops as his art deepens and matures until, by the close of his career, he has refined it into a tragic vision of Western man in our time. It is my intention to define and to examine this dream-and-disillusion theme; to explain how it functions in Fitzgerald's work; and finally, to show how the development of this theme places Fitzgerald squarely within the tradition of Western writers from Plato to Faulkner. But before I go on to examine this

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theme in the works themselves, I will first explore it in Fitzgerald's own life and in the times in which he lived in order to demonstrate how deeply a part of him this tension was and how he transformed and transposed it into successful fictional forms.

II

While it can be misleading to read too much of a writer's life into his art, Fitzgerald's work--perhaps more so than that of most writers--is clearly a reflection of his own experience. Noting that "He always . . . wrote about himself or about people and things with which he was intimate" Arthur Mizener observes that, "As a consequence his life is inextricably bound up with his work."⁷ Fitzgerald says of himself: "Whether it's something that happened twenty years ago or only yesterday, I must start out with an emotion--one that's close to me and that I can understand."⁸ The stamp of his own personality was deeply and unmistakably impressed upon everything he wrote. Moreover, Fitzgerald was a personality with two conflicting sides, the intensely romantic dreamer and the restrained, almost puritanical moralist. Budd Schulberg recognizes this doubleness in Fitzgerald when he points to the " . . . ambivalence, that quality present in Balzac, Stendahl, and Dostoevski, and probably all the great writers: the ability to be emotionally involved while at the same time able to walk away from himself and see his own involvements, even his own confusions."⁹ Malcolm Cowley suggests the same duality when he says: " . . . it was as if all his stories described a big dance to which he had taken, as he once wrote, the prettiest girl;

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'There was an orchestra Bingo Bango
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 And the people all clapped as we arose;
 For her sweet face and my new clothes-'

and as if at the same time he stood outside the ballroom, a little Mid-western boy with his nose to the glass, wondering how much the tickets cost and who paid for the music. But it was not a dance he was watching so much as it was a drama of conflicting manners and aspirations in which he was both the audience and the leading actor."¹⁰

"Partly," Arthur Mizener declares, Fitzgerald " . . . was an enthusiastic, romantic young man. Partly he was what he called himself in the 'General Plan' for Tender is the Night, a 'spoiled priest'. This division shows itself in nearly every aspect of his life. The romantic young man was full of confidence about his own ability and the world's friendliness; the spoiled priest distrusted both himself and the world. The romantic young man wanted to participate in life and took delight in spending himself and his money without counting the cost . . . but the spoiled priest, shocked by debt and fearing the spiritual exhaustion Fitzgerald himself was later to call 'Emotional Bankruptcy' wanted to stand aside and study life."¹¹ It is this doubleness in Fitzgerald which endows his work with its unique quality. As Schulberg, Cowley, and Mizener suggest, Fitzgerald had the unusual ability both to imagine and to dream, to idealize and to glorify people and things; and, at the same time to stand a little apart from his own fascinations and understand that they were dreams and illusions.

From the time he was a young boy, Fitzgerald had always dreamed of "glittering things": great wealth, status, and a luxury and splendor which he associated with the very rich. Most of all, he connected

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success and happiness with popular acclaim and recognition. "It's not very difficult," he wrote in later life, "to run back and start over again--especially in private. What you aim at is to get in a good race or two when the crowd is in the stand."¹² To fulfill this goal, the young Fitzgerald felt he had to create an aura of great social charm and poise. He had to make himself known as a figure of greatness. It is no accident that his early models were soldiers and athletes, dashing heroes and romantic villains. But when he discovered that he did not possess natural aristocratic grace and bearing (he was told repeatedly that he was smug and had a big mouth,) nor the abilities to become a great athlete, he began to turn his attention to playwriting and fiction as a way of gaining the recognition and fulfillment he sought.

His early stories and plays written while he was at St. Paul Academy and Newman School preparing for his entrance to Princeton are full of outlandish but imaginative plots, romantic and heroic deeds of virtue and valor. His heroes are cunning detectives and sly villains out of nineteenth-century melodrama; and, in one sketch entitled "Reade, Substitute Right Half," Fitzgerald dramatizes his own frustrated dream of becoming a football star. Though it was not until later life that he finally lost the hope of becoming a charming, romantic figure or an athlete-hero, Fitzgerald knew by the end of his freshman year at Princeton that the possibilities of realizing his dream were dimming. Once, after failing to distinguish himself on the freshman football team, he later recalled in "Anthon's House," " . . . that if you weren't able to function in action you might at least be able to tell about it--because you felt that same intensity--it was a backdoor way out of facing reality."¹³ Fitzgerald learned early in his life that if reality

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In the next few years (1915-1917), Fitzgerald's dream took on an added quality and dimension. He became more and more involved in Princeton's cultural and intellectual life and began to associate with such literary figures as Edmund Wilson and John Peale Bishop, both of whom were to influence deeply his decision to become a serious writer. They not only exposed him to great literature but also prodded, stimulated, and encouraged him to read and write more than he had ever done before. In addition to serving on the editorial board of several prominent campus literary magazines, Fitzgerald published an abundance of stories and poems and helped write and direct the Triangle Club's annual musical comedy.

Although Fitzgerald was seriously involved in writing, he still thought of it primarily as a means to popularity and social success. His literary renown won him election to Cottage Club, an honor which was to him the crowning achievement of his social career at Princeton. As Arthur Mizener writes: "Cottage represented the type of social success Fitzgerald had dreamed of: Walker Ellis, with his personal charm, his apparently effortless embodiment of elegance and superiority which were the Princeton ideal, was the President of Cottage. It was the logical climax to Fitzgerald's social career."¹⁴

Several other things happened at this time which helped to reinforce the "old dream," the most significant of which were his introduction to the urbane and sophisticated world of Father Cyril Fay and his love affair with the glamorous debutante, Ginevra King. Father Fay's world not only served to heighten Fitzgerald's dream of literary success but also symbolized for him the ease and luxury of the eastern seaboard

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aristocracy, a world to which he yearned to belong. Arthur Mizener points out: "To be at home in Father Fay's world was to really succeed. . . . Father Fay was a man of taste and cultivation who, . . . had that unconscious ease and security . . . which Fitzgerald always envied and admired and could never achieve. . . . To a schoolboy of both literary and social ambitions, this combination of characteristics must have been nearly irresistible."¹⁵ The perfect complement to all of this was Ginevra King, who was to Fitzgerald the physical embodiment of his dream. She was aristocratic, graceful, wealthy, popular, and beautiful--in short, the "golden girl" of his romantic imagination. Significantly, as Arthur Mizener asserts: "He never loved merely the particular woman; what he loved was her embodiment for him of the splendid possibilities of life, he could in his romantic hopefulness, imagine."¹⁶

But clouds were already forming across the dream; and by midterm of his junior year, Fitzgerald had to face the reality that he had failed three subjects and was overcut in his classes. At mid-year he found himself placed on academic probation and seriously threatened with the loss of all the success he had struggled so hard to attain.

The experience of failure left its mark; and nineteen years later, Fitzgerald had forgotten neither the events nor the feelings. In 1934 he wrote: "To me college would never be the same. There were to be no badges of pride, no medals after all. It seemed to me one March afternoon that I had lost everything I wanted."¹⁷ Though Fitzgerald was not aware of it at the time, this period of failure was to be something of a turning point for him. Out of the ashes of the dead dream arose a new and more sobering but ultimately heartening recognition: "Years later," he wrote, "I realized that my failure in college was

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all-right--instead of serving on committees, I took a beating on English poetry; when I got the idea of what it was all about, I set out to write . . . it was a lucky break. At the moment it was a harsh and bitter business to know that my career as a leader of men was over."¹⁸

By the time he returned to school in September, 1917, his interests were beginning slowly to shift from social to more intellectual pursuits. As Arthur Mizener explains: "He began to see more of Bishop and John Biggs. . . . He became friendly with . . . Henry Strater who read Tolstoy and Edward Carpenter who read Whitman . . . He was especially amenable to the appeal of Strater's kind of distinction because, with the failure of his social career, he had begun to write for the first time with the mature intention of realizing and evaluating his experience."¹⁹

To some extent, then, Fitzgerald had embarked upon a new quest; and it is this ability to struggle back from disillusion and the defeat of his dreams which marks his career both as an artist and as a man. As he later states in the Crack-Up: "Some old desire for personal dominance was broken and gone. . . . A man does not recover from such jolts--he becomes a different person and, eventually, the new person finds new things to care about."²⁰ The "new" person who emerged was Fitzgerald the budding young writer, and the "new things" were his novel in progress (The Romantic Egoist, later to become This Side of Paradise), and his love affair with the striking and strangely disturbing Southern belle, Miss Zelda Sayre.

Fitzgerald left Princeton in October, 1917, to take an Army commission. During the war, while stationed at Camp Sheridan, Alabama, he met and was immediately--almost compulsively--drawn to Zelda; she attracted him not only because of her mysterious charm but also because

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the struggle to win her fulfilled Fitzgerald's need to idealize her and to make her a component of his dream. As Arthur Mizener recounts: "Zelda's extreme popularity and the competitive situation it created were an initial attraction to Fitzgerald. Like the Princess in the fairy story . . . she was barricaded and remote behind her host of admirers, a challenge to the unregarded younger son who was determined to marry the Princess and become a success."²¹

Following his discharge from the service in February 1918, Fitzgerald returned to New York with the idea of becoming a famous writer and thereby winning the hand of the Princess. But, as he was to discover, this fairy tale would not easily have the conventional happy ending. From the outset, there were bad signs; their courtship was stormy and uneven and demoralizing. While Zelda coquettishly flaunted her freedom and irresponsibility (she wrote him letters informing him about her other beaux), Fitzgerald was struggling to keep his dream alive by writing advertising copy during the day and stories at night. It was not an easy time for him. He was obviously not suited for his job, and his stories were being rejected in bunches. In an essay written after the success of This Side of Paradise, Fitzgerald recalls the time: "no one bought them [his stories] , no one sent personal letters. I had one hundred and twenty-two rejection slips pinned in a frieze about my room."²²

By now it was clear to him that Zelda would not marry him until he could provide her with a life of luxury and ease, and finally the frustration of writing both to win Zelda back and to satisfy himself wore him down. A subsequent visit to Alabama erupted into a bitter argument (later the subject for his story, "The Sensible Thing"), after which Fitzgerald returned to New York, went on an epic three week drunk

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(the first of many to come), and then packed up and returned to St. Paul to finish his novel. Once again his dream had been denied him; but Fitzgerald refused to give up. Arthur Mizener points out that " . . . the remarkably optimistic young man had not, in spite of his recent blow, altogether given up his dream of success; he took up the idea of writing his novel again in part because he still hoped to produce a best seller, win Zelda back, and become famous and admired."²³

The novel was accepted by Scribners and published in 1920. Although some critics had reservations, it became an immediate popular and critical success. The novel's popularity and acclaim gave Fitzgerald the confidence, assurance, and money he needed to claim Zelda. It was almost as if by sheer force of will he had made his dream come true. The struggle, it seemed, had been worth it; at the age of twenty-two he had become famous and had won the "top girl." As Fitzgerald, reflecting upon that period of early success, writes: "I remember riding in a taxi one afternoon between very tall buildings under a mauve and rosy sky; I began to bawl because I had everything I wanted and knew I would never be so happy again."²⁴

Following the critical acclaim and social success he enjoyed with the publication of This Side of Paradise and his marriage to Zelda, Fitzgerald's life became a continuous battle with waste, dissipation, and despair, caused mainly by the conflict between high living and his desire to write serious fiction. As he later tells his daughter in a letter:

When I was your age I lived with a great dream. The dream grew and I learned to speak of it and make people listen. The dream divided one day when I decided to marry your mother. . . . She was spoiled and meant no good to me. . . . She wanted me to work too much for her and not enough for my dreams.²⁵

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Once again, the pattern of dream-and-disillusion recurred in Fitzgerald's life but this time with more serious consequences and implications. After the success of This Side of Paradise, the Fitzgeralds became the symbol of the emerging Jazz Age's ideal couple--he the "Jazz Laureate," and she the "ultimate flapper." They did nothing to discourage the myth. Stories of their publicity stunts and hi-jinks are still legendary.²⁶ But it was also during this period that Fitzgerald's fame as a writer began to spread. Between 1920 and 1925, he wrote some of his finest stories, the best of which are "Ice Palace," "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," "May Day," "Winter Dreams," and "Absolution."

While he was writing some of his better fiction, however, he was beginning to show signs of dissipation and waste, and this increasing dissipation began to affect the substance and quality of his work. In order to maintain the opulent and grandiose life-style that had become the Fitzgerald trademark--gaudy parties, weekend binges, traveling spree--he wrote second and third-rate potboilers for the Saturday Evening Post. Periodically, to his own amazement, Fitzgerald found himself so deeply in debt that he had to write such stories simply to survive. As he sadly tells Edmund Wilson in a letter: "I really worked hard as hell last winter (1924)--but it was all trash and it nearly broke my heart as well as my iron constitution."²⁷

With the publication of The Great Gatsby in 1925, however, Fitzgerald realized the artistic promise of his youth. The novel is the most artistically controlled and sustained piece of fiction he had yet produced. But the artistic control of the novel masks the shaky and uneven quality of Fitzgerald's personal life. Instead of this being a new beginning, the ten years following The Great Gatsby were the most

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difficult and unhappy in Fitzgerald's life. By 1926 symptoms of dissipation had grown to almost disastrous proportions. The heart of the matter was Zelda's growing emotional and mental illness. From 1926 on, she manifested symptoms which culminated in her first breakdown in 1930, and her deterioration deeply affected Fitzgerald. In his biography Scott Fitzgerald, Andrew Turnbull describes the sad situation:

Fitzgerald's drinking wasn't his only problem. Zelda's long-smouldering discontent had made her increasingly difficult to live with. Her willfulness had modulated into a bizarre pettishness. Out with a group of friends, she would suddenly want fresh strawberries or watercress sandwiches and make everyone thoroughly uncomfortable, until she got them. When others were enjoying themselves, she would say she didn't like the orchestra and insist on going home. Her habit of nervously chewing the inside of her mouth had been growing, and recently her looks had begun to go. Her skin had coarsened, and her sharp features, now at times seemed graven, stony, a little angular.²⁸

As her illness increased, the situation developed as a competition between Zelda and Scott. Most revealing was her newly acquired passion for ballet dancing. Arthur Mizener suggests: "She had determined suddenly to become a ballet dancer and, almost from one day to the next, had taken to dancing with an intensity, which as one of her friends said, was like the dancing madness of the middle ages."²⁹ She had probably taken it up as a way both of gaining attention and of proving to herself that she possessed a talent to rival that of her husband.

From 1925 to 1930, the Fitzgeralds' personal life, both in America and abroad, was a stormy and chaotic affair, a countless succession of parties and drunken brawls followed by brief but unstable periods of relative sobriety. By 1930, though, it was clear that Fitzgerald had been deeply scarred emotionally by the double strains of caring for Zelda and of writing. "All this disappointment and suffering

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had their effect on Fitzgerald" Arthur Mizener writes, "His drinking increased, and it made him subject to fits of nervous temper and depression and less capable of providing the regular life Zelda needed. It also affected his work, for in spite of his attempts to persuade himself then, and later, that he could work only with the help of gin, he was as inefficient as most people when he had been drinking."³⁰

Fitzgerald's own physical health weakened drastically during this time, but more importantly, his sense of what he later called "emotional bankruptcy" had started to take hold of him. As he later writes in the Crack-Up: "I began to realize that for two years my life had been a drawing on resources that I did not possess, that I had been mortgaging myself physically and spiritually up to the hilt."³¹ Fitzgerald also refers to this feeling as " . . . an over-extension of the flank, a burning of the candle at both ends; a call upon physical resources that I did not command, like a man overdrawing at his bank."³² It is perhaps this fear of "emotional bankruptcy" which Fitzgerald projects in his description of his close friend Ring Lardner, whose problem he saw as similar to his own. In an essay written just after Lardner's death, Fitzgerald says of him: " . . . he was a faithful and conscientious workman to the end, but he stopped finding any fun in his work ten years before he died."³³ Clearly, Fitzgerald was afraid that the same loss of vitality would overtake him if he allowed himself to indulge his sorrows too fully. He turned to his writing with even more dedication and intensity than before, with the renewed hope not only that it might pay the bills but that it might also preserve his pride and dignity as a man. Throughout this trying period of disillusion, personal loss, and despair, through the publication of Tender is the Night in 1935, Fitzgerald somehow continued to write profusely and well.

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As tragedy increasingly touched him and he wrote of it, the idea of dream-and-disillusion took on a new dimension and quality both in his own life and in his work. As his personal life deteriorated and as he learned more about suffering and depression, his artistic vision also deepened and matured. Where the components of the "old dream" had been material success, recognition, and possession of the "glittering things," the dream had now taken on a more sober and restrained quality. Fitzgerald's old dream of being "an entire man" had been " . . . relegated to the junk heap of the shoulder pads worn for one day on the Princeton freshman football field and the overseas cap never worn overseas."³⁴

From 1925 to 1935, Fitzgerald produced only two novels: The Great Gatsby, his greatest artistic triumph; and Tender Is the Night, one of the most sadly moving and human novels of its own or of any other time. In addition, some of his short stories of this time are among the best Fitzgerald ever wrote: "The Rich Boy," for example, "The Freshest Boy," (and several other Basil Lee stories), "The Last of the Belles," "Outside the Cabinet Maker's," "Babylon Revisited," and "Crazy Sunday." Where his earlier stories centered around the dream of great wealth and status, the stories of this period evoke a somber and serious concern with disillusion and the loss of the dream. Behind many of these stories lies the concept of "emotional bankruptcy," and many of them represent an attempt on Fitzgerald's part to find some way to reconstruct through his art a new and more meaningful ethic to replace the shattered dream of his youth.

While Fitzgerald was losing control of his personal life, these stories testify that he was at the same time seeking greater control

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and restraint in his art; and as his personal suffering continued, his artistic vision deepened in complexity and began to take on a more sober and ultimately tragic tone. As Arthur Mizener points out:

. . . his ideas became more penetrating, his feelings more considered, less conventional, his craftsmanship more precise. Apart from the steady development of his craftsmanship, this maturity was overwhelmingly a matter of personal experience rather than of literary development in the narrow sense . . .³⁵

It seems clear, indeed, that only through the reflex of his art was Fitzgerald able to survive his own crack-up in 1935. As he tells his daughter in a letter five years later: "I am not a great man but sometimes I think the impersonal and objective quality of my talent and the sacrifices of it, in pieces, to preserve its essential value has some sort of epic grandeur. Anyhow after hours I nurse myself with delusions of that sort . . ."³⁶ Writing became to him something of a heroic and romantic quest to transcend his own despair and personal deterioration. As Mizener again asserts:

The wonder really is, given his temperament and upbringing, the social pressures of his times and the tragic elements in his personal life, that Fitzgerald did not give in entirely to hackwork, as so many of his contemporaries did, but returned again and again, to the end of his life, to the self-imposed task of writing seriously. For all its manifest faults and mistakes, it was in some ways a heroic life. But it was a life of which Fitzgerald himself, writing to an old friend, a lawyer, could only say rather sadly: 'I hope you'll be a better judge than I've been a man of letters.'³⁷

From 1935 to the end of his life in 1940, Fitzgerald was only a shadow of the dashing and romantic figure he once was. Tragedy had touched him, and he understood that he must adapt himself to a new world, a new life, and a new art. In the Crack-Up essays, Fitzgerald

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rites honestly and openly of his despair, and by so doing, begins to discover a new perspective and a new esthetic. In these essays and in the stories following, he pauses, reflects, and takes stock of what has happened to him. He then begins to struggle back in the only way he knows how, through the discipline of his art. As he tells his daughter: "When Wordsworth decided that 'there had passed away a glory from the earth,' he felt no compulsion to pass away with it, and the literary Particle Keats never ceased in his struggle against t.b. nor in his last moments relinquished his hope of being among the English poets."³⁸

Still, his last stories and the draft of his final novel, The Last Tycoon, are more somber and restrained in tone and theme. No longer does Fitzgerald respond with "a heightened sensitivity to life's promises" as he did in his hey-day, but neither is he defeated nor broken. Despite despair and tragedy in his life, he had not lost the capacity to dream. In his last years, Fitzgerald no longer dreamed of great wealth and success; these became subordinated to achieving the one goal which he had perhaps always been indirectly striving for--to be a great writer. "What little I have accomplished," he says, "has been by the most laborious and uphill work, and I wish now I'd never relaxed or looked back but said at the end of The Great Gatsby: 'I've found my line--from now on this comes first. This is my immediate duty--without this I am nothing.'"³⁹

It is significant, then, that Fitzgerald always struggled back from disillusion, despair, and the defeat of his dreams with more insight, perspective, and greater clarity of vision. In "Early Success," he writes:

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The dream had been early realized and the realization carried with it a certain bonus and a certain burden. Premature success gives one an almost mystical conception of destiny as opposed to will power--at its worst the Napoleonic delusion. The man who arrives young believes that he exercises his will because his star is shining. The man who only asserts himself at thirty has a balanced idea of what will power and fate have each contributed, the one who gets there at forty is liable to put the emphasis on will power alone. This comes out when storms strike your craft.⁴⁰

It is this quality, this tenacity, which defines his life and which he invests in many of his fictional heroes; and it is this which marks them as more than simply pathetic figures who are seduced by gaudy dreams of money and success. Moreover, it is this unique quality--the ability to dream while at the same time being able to stand apart from his dreams and aspirations and understand the disillusion inherent in them--which is Fitzgerald's trademark both as a man and as a writer.

III

Since Fitzgerald's first novel was published in 1920 and his last was in progress when he died in 1940, his life and career provide resistible parallels to the time in which he lived. For a man like Fitzgerald, endowed with a double vision--a lively and creative imagination and an equally compelling sense of life's sad realities--the twenties and thirties in America provide an ideal framework. These two turbulent and formative decades were as double as Fitzgerald himself and in many of the same ways. Set-off by two devastating and emotionally shattering World Wars and centered upon the almost total collapse of

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the country's economic system, these years offer a vivid example of the pattern of boom and bust, triumph and tragedy, dream-and-disillusion in American life.

The years immediately preceding and up through World War One were a time of great idealism and hope in this country. Initially, the war engendered a spirit of nationalism and a great faith in America's ability to "make the world safe for democracy." World War One promised to be "the war fought to end all wars," and once this nation was drawn in on the side of the Allies, people saw the war as a crusade to lead Western man further forward in a quest for moral, spiritual and political-social perfection.

But by 1920 it was clear that all was not so rosy in Camelot. With the war's end, the mood of the country began to change. Young soldiers returning home brought with them a completely different set of values than those they had held only a few years before. Men who entered the war believing it was to be a glorious, heroic, and noble adventure, quickly discovered in the forests and trenches of France and Germany that war was not a game, that it was dirty, ugly, and horrifying, that innocent men and women died violent and senseless deaths.

But returning soldiers were not the only ones affected by the war neurosis. For most middle-class youth and even for some of their elders, the decade following the war was one of questioning and despair, restlessness and rebellion. After the Versailles Treaty, many Americans felt for the first time that perhaps their ideals were all wrong. Millions of Europeans and thousands of Americans had died and nothing was really changed. In this country many were still poor and out of work; and while statesmen and politicians were mouthing platitudes about

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a just and lasting peace, they were carving up Germany amongst themselves. By the early part of the new decade, it had become increasingly clear to many Americans that the peace had failed the noble ideals of the war.

Thus, the ten years following the war became a time of great confusion and turmoil. Instead of creating order and stability, the war "fought to end all wars" had shaken the faith which many Americans had placed in the old Victorian values and created the need for new ideals, new dreams, and new values. Concepts such as "honor," "glory," and "sacrifice," which once had meaning, were now becoming empty and irrelevant phrases. "Spartan idealism was collapsing" writes Frederick Lewis Allen. "People were tired of girding up their loins to serve noble causes. They were tired of making the United States a land fit for heroes to live in. They wanted to relax and be themselves."⁴¹

Now that the old gods had been pronounced dead, new ones were resurrected in their place. By the mid-twenties a new code evolved in reaction to Victorianism. Easy slogans and catch-terms such as "rules are made to be broken," "live it up," and "anything goes" became the watchwords of a new generation. The reaction to the Eighteenth Amendment is a good example of this. In 1919 Prohibition was conceived of as an all-purpose good. As Frederick Lewis Allen writes:

The war also brought with it a mood . . . of which the Eighteenth Amendment was a natural expression . . . the American people were seeing Utopian visions; if it seemed possible to them that the war should end all wars and that victory should bring a new and shining world order, how much easier to imagine that America might enter an endless era of sobriety.⁴²

Almost immediately after the Prohibition Amendment was signed into law, Americans began to find ways to evade it. The results were speakeasies and bootlegging, which in turn stimulated the rise of Al Capone and

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the gangs, thus transforming organized crime into a national syndicate almost overnight. Only a short time earlier the symbol of America's crusade to save mankind from the evils of the bottle, prohibition had ironically and inadvertently precipitated a spirit of lawlessness and recklessness hitherto unparalleled in American life. As Fitzgerald himself describes the period:

. . . there were entire classes (people over fifty, for example) who spent a whole decade denying its existence [lawlessness] even when its puckish face peered into the family circle. Never did they dream that they had contributed to it. The honest citizens of every class, who believed in a strict public morality and were powerful enough to enforce the necessary legislation did not know that they would necessarily be served by criminals and quacks, and do not really believe it today. Rich righteousness had always been able to buy honest and intelligent servants to free the slaves or the Cubans, so when this attempt collapsed our elders stood firm with all the stubbornness of people involved in a weak case, preserving their righteousness and losing their children.⁴³

Out of the chaos and disillusion of the war, coupled with the ill-timed Prohibition Amendment, there emerged temporarily a new ethic--one of unrestrained freedom, instant heroes, materialism and easy prosperity. By the mid-twenties Freudian psychology had stripped away the veil of respectability surrounding sex by openly declaring that sex was not a forbidden and secret lust but a basic human instinct and life force which all men shared. As is often the case when a new idea is popularized, Freud's theories were misunderstood by public and critics alike, both of whom thought and acted as if the problems of sexual repression were solved forever. As a result dances became more suggestive, men more seductive and alluring, sex more open and blatant.

The new freedom created an immediate need for new symbols and new heroes, and they were found in a hurry. Both Hollywood and the press

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answered the call. Motion pictures manufactured instant tinsel and instant stars. Newspaper stories and cheap magazine fiction created excitement and pandered to the romantic delusions of an eager and willing audience. The press and radio helped create the image of the super-athlete and placed him on the level of a culture hero. In less than a decade athletes such as Babe Ruth, Red Grange, Jack Dempsey, Bill Tildon, Bobby Jones, and Gertrude Ederle became immortals, legends in their own time. In addition, advertising was elevated almost to an art form. Publicity stunts such as flagpole sitting, dance marathons, and ticker-tape parades were accorded equal status with great cultural events and works of art. Revivalists like Billy Sunday and Amy Semple-MacPherson made religion a form of entertainment. But perhaps the most significant and revealing characteristic of the times was the false sense of prosperity created by business and the stock-market boom. In keeping with the spirit of the day, people took it on faith that the ever-increasing market was a sign that unrestrained capitalism would bring permanent economic growth and furnish never-ending wealth. Thus, when looked at from one point of view, the twenties was a time of unbounded excitement, of youthful indulgence; a time of dreams and of a naivete which saw all dreams as possible.

The decade, however, like any other in American history, had more than one dimension and one side. As Fitzgerald writes in his essay "Early Success":

The uncertainties of 1919 were over--there seemed little doubt about what was going to happen--America was going on the greatest, gaudiest spree in history and there was going to be plenty to talk about. The whole golden boom was in the air--its splendid generousities, its outrageous corruptions and the tortuous death struggle of old America in prohibition . . . but I was pretty sure that living wasn't the reckless, careless business these people thought.⁴⁴

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the spirit of revolt, then, did not register exactly the same response in all Americans. In fact, to those with vested interests who saw themselves as guardians of the country's morality and economy, the post-war rebellion against the old values threatened the foundations on which they had built reputations and fortunes. In a mood of fear and self-preservation, they advocated and enforced more severe laws and puritanical restraints in order to check what they felt was a dangerous enemy--anarchy. Attorney-General Mitchell Palmer searched for and found a Red under every bed; the Ku Klux Klan openly spread its venom and hate in the North and South alike; bluenoses censured harmless books like Cabel's Jurgen because of implicit references to sex.

Toward the end of the twenties it was gradually becoming clear to participants and critics alike that all was not well. In "Echoes of the Jazz Age"--written two years after the stock-market crash--Fitzgerald reflects on the time: "But in those days," he says, "life was like the race in Alice in Wonderland, there was a prize for everyone . . . The Jazz Age had a wild youth and a heady middle age. . . . It ended . . . because the utter confidence which was its essential prop received an enormous jolt, and it didn't take long for the flimsy structure to settle earthward. . . . one day in 1926 we looked down and found we had flabby arms and a fat pot and couldn't say boop-boop-a-doop to a Sicilian."⁴⁵ With the stockmarket crash on Tuesday, October 19, 1929, the dream of easy prosperity became a horrible nightmare. For the second time in little more than a decade, the country was faced with a crisis which threatened to destroy its idealism and capacity for hope. As Allen Tate in Since Yesterday: "There was hardly a man or woman in the country whose attitude toward life had not been affected by it

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[the crash] in some degree and was not now affected by the sudden and brutal shattering of hope. With the Big Bull Market gone and prosperity going, Americans were soon to find themselves living in an altered world which called for new adjustments, new ideas, new habits of thought, and a new order of values."⁴⁵

The twenties' naive and optimistic dream of unrestrained freedom and easy prosperity gave way in the thirties, first to the inevitable sadness and disillusion which accompanies the loss of a dream, and then to a more sober and restrained recognition and acceptance of life's harsher realities. Bread lines replaced ballrooms; the divorce rate decreased as did the fanfare about sex and drinking; fashions became more conservative; the mania for spectator sports waned; and religion became more secularized and functional. In the early thirties, then, a profound disillusion and fear uprooted America's heady idealism and blind faith in its ability--indeed, the ability of the entire capitalistic economic and social structure--to endure.

The thirties, too, was not without its other side. For growing out of the mood of sadness and sobriety was in time a more restrained kind of optimism and hope. Along with the belief that Roosevelt's New Deal would supply an economic cure came a renewed interest in Russian Marxism. Many victims of the Depression looking for somewhere to place the blame were quick to fault the entire capitalistic system and so turned to communism in the hope that it would create new and better conditions.

Daniel Aaron in Writers on the Left writes:

In contrast to the dreary scenes of capitalism in decline, Russia during the early thirties seemed a hive of happy industry. . . . Confronted with what appeared to be a social and economic breakdown in their own country, a good many Americans were powerfully affected by the well-publicized

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In addition, the New Deal had made Americans more politically and socially aware than they had been before; and though it did not solve the country's economic problems, it arrested them successfully enough so that by the mid-thirties it looked to many Americans as if conditions were indeed getting better. The renewed idealism and hope spawned by Marxism and the New Deal, however, only masked an underlying reality--the fact that by the end of the decade over 8 million were still unemployed; and in 1939 Stalin and Hitler signed a non-aggression pact which was to dispel the notion in many sympathizers that communism would be America's saving ideology.

While the Depression and subsequent events did not shatter America's idealism, in some ways they did produce a more realistic and restrained vision. In the 1920's and 1930's, America's ideals had been tested and found wanting; the country had been scarred, had learned to suffer the loss of its hopes and dreams, and had been forced to sober up and fight back from the brink of despair. But history tends to run in cycles; and, by the end of the thirties it was impossible to ignore the threat of European Fascism: Hitler in Germany, Mussolini in Italy, and Franco in Spain. By 1939, the Western world was already realigning and forming for a renewed conflict, and America would be drawn into it for the second time in a little more than two decades.

Since Fitzgerald experienced great popular success and acclaim in the twenties, he has often been considered a symbol of the Jazz Age.

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But, while it is not misleading to say that at least one dimension of his fiction captures the atmosphere and reflects much of the mood of the country during those turbulent years, this is not the dominant aspect of his art. Fitzgerald, like his times, embodied fundamental and irreconcilable conflicts; and if his art reflects the glittering dream of the twenties, it evokes at the same time the disillusion and the despair of the thirties. The tension and polarity between dream-and-disillusion was deeply rooted, then, in the experience of Fitzgerald and his time and place; and because he wrote mostly about emotions and feelings and ideas which were close to him, this duality manifests itself from the start as the central theme emerging in his work.

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II THE APPRENTICE FICTION

Since dream-and-disillusion was so deeply a part of Fitzgerald's own life and times and since he struggled so hard to realize and to fulfill his own dreams, it is not surprising that from the beginning his fiction would be centered around the pursuit of dreams and the loss of illusions. Emerging in Fitzgerald's earliest work is the idea of the dream as attached to success in athletics and courage on the battlefield. It is no accident that two of Fitzgerald's early protagonists in "Reade, Substitute Right Half," (1910) and "A Debt of Honor" (1910) were an athlete and a soldier. Written while Fitzgerald was attending St. Paul Academy, "Reade, Substitute Right Half" is a semi-autobiographical sketch which tells of a young scrub on a prep-school football team who, when called upon in the big game, becomes a hero by scoring the winning touchdown. Also concerning a heroic act, "A Debt of Honor" takes place during the Civil War. The protagonist, Private Jack Sanderson, is ordered not to fall asleep on guard duty; but, when General Lee grants him a last-minute reprieve, he quickly redeems his honor by sacrificing his life in a crucial battle.

Reflecting on these youthful dreams, Fitzgerald later writes:

As the twenties passed with my own twenties marching a little ahead of them, my two juvenile regrets--at not being big enough (or good enough) to play football in college, and at not getting overseas during the war--resolved themselves into childish waking dreams of imaginative heroism.¹

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When Fitzgerald could center these "childish waking dreams" in successful fictional forms, his strongest and most honest work emerges. And, as early in his career as these apprentice stories, Fitzgerald experiments with various fictional devices. For example, although his early protagonists are thinly drawn, one-dimensional figures, and his plots are contrived and highly melodramatic, Fitzgerald's apprentice fiction reveals a good deal of experimentation with varying points of view. Both of his early melodramas--"The Mystery of the Raymond Mortgage," (1904) and "The Room with the Green Blinds" (1911)--are told by a narrator-agent who, although he is not directly involved in the action, functions as a window into the story and illuminates the main character's dilemma. In "Reade, Substitute Right Half" and "A Debt of Honor," the point of view is third-person limited omniscient. Curiously, though, in these four sketches, Fitzgerald does not grant the reader access to the thoughts and feelings of the main characters. Perhaps this is because Fitzgerald is concentrating mainly on narrating the action of the stories. But it is significant that even in his earliest pieces, the stories testify that Fitzgerald is aware of the importance of form and structure, while they also reveal his concern with dreams of courage and heroism.

II

The next stories Fitzgerald published were three he wrote while attending Newman School. In two of the three, "A Luckless Santa Claus," (1912) and "The Trail of the Duke" (1913) the idea of disillusion or disappointment in romance first appears. In the first story, Harry Talbot's whimsical fiancé tests him by requesting on Christmas Eve that he give

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away all of his money to needy strangers. He agrees, but his strange behavior arouses so much suspicion that he is beaten up by those "needy" strangers who suspect him of trying to stir up trouble. In "The Trail of the Duke," Dotson Garland's fiancé solicits his help in her search for a "lost Duke." He diligently walks the entire city, and is almost assaulted by an ex-convict before he finally discovers that the "Duke" is a lost poodle, not a visiting dignitary.

In these two sketches, Fitzgerald's protagonists, both infatuated with their fiancés, allow themselves to be manipulated until, finally, upon discovering their folly, both soothe injured prides by walking out on their tormentors. And while neither Harry Talbot nor Dotson Garland is a very exciting or heroic figure, each is more fully drawn and realistically motivated than their St. Paul predecessors. Despite the seemingly trivial nature of their dilemmas, in their disappointment both are sympathetic and human. Thus, in his earliest fiction, Fitzgerald introduces dream-and-disillusion in the contexts of heroism and bravery and of disappointment in romance.

III

The first really substantial evidence both of Fitzgerald's potential as a serious writer and also of the emergence of dream-and-disillusion as a coherent theme appears in six stories which he wrote while at Princeton, the best of which mark his transition from apprentice writing to the more skillful and complex fiction he was to produce throughout his career.² In the Princeton stories, Fitzgerald deepens the dream-and-disillusion duality as he explores it in different fictional forms and situations, ranging from pseudo-sophisticated

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romantic comedy in "The Debutante," (1917) and "Babes in the Woods" (1917) to more complex and dramatic stories like "The Ordeal," (1915) "The Spire and the Gargoyle," (1917) "Sentiment and the Use of Rouge," (1917) and "The Pierian Springs and the Last Straw" (1917).

Both "The Debutante" and "Babes in the Woods" treat dream-and-disillusion in the context of what Fitzgerald called "the love game." In "The Debutante," written in the form of a dramatic dialogue, Helen, the femme-fatale, defines the nature of the game: "I like the thrill when you meet them [other men]. . . . I like the way they begin to follow you with their eyes. They're interested. . . . Then I begin to place him. Try and get his type, find out what he likes; right then the romance begins to lessen for me and increase for him."³ Explaining that the "love game" is only exciting until she captures her prey, Helen is suggesting that only the pursuit, only the struggle to win her man, heightens and colors her existence. For upon capturing her prey, she is neither able to care for him nor to idealize him. What Fitzgerald is implying here is that possession of the dream (in this case the love object) can kill the ability to dream; once having grasped the object of her dreams, Helen no longer has any goal to strive for, nothing to hope for, no challenge. Knowing this, she will probably continue to reject her suitors until she finds one who will reject her first."⁴

Published a few months after "The Debutante" (and later rewritten and incorporated into This Side of Paradise), "Babes in the Woods" expands upon a similar theme in more depth and detail. Fleshing out the characters and using the "love game" here as a central metaphor, Fitzgerald unifies and tightens up the story, giving it more plausibility, direction and meaning.

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The setting is a semi-formal dinner party. Upon arriving, Fitzgerald's heroine, Isabelle, an attractive and popular teen-aged girl, has already set herself the task of landing the dashing young college freshman, Kenneth Powers. In her open pursuit of Kenneth, Isabelle is playing a familiar game, one which both of them understand:

Isabelle and Kenneth were distinctly not innocent, nor were they particularly hardened. Moreover, amateur standing had very little value in the game they were beginning to play. They were simply sophisticated, very calculating and finished young actors, each playing a part they had accepted for years.⁵

Each of them knows the rules of the game, and each accepts the other's pose. So long as the game is played according to the rules and so long as the masks remain in place, Isabelle knows that she will be able to fantasize about the romance's infinite possibilities:

. . . everything was wonderful tonight, most of all this romantic scene in the den with their hands clinging and the inevitable looming charmingly close. The future vista of her life seemed an unending succession of scenes like this, under moonlight and pale starlight, and in the backs of warm limousines and in low cosy roadsters stopped under sheltering trees--only the boy might change, and this one was so nice.⁶

In this story Fitzgerald once again treats the notion that the dream will remain alive only if the illusion is not shattered by its summation--in this case, by a kiss. And, because Isabelle and Kenneth never do kiss, she will be able to preserve in her imagination the wonder of the dream, the romantic illusion of what might have been or what still is possible. In the story's final scene Fitzgerald writes:

In her eyes was the light of the idealist, the inviolate dreamer of Joan-like dreams. . . . As she crept into bed she wondered what he'd say in his special delivery tomorrow. He had such a good-looking mouth--would she ever--?

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In both "The Debutante" and "Babes in the Woods," Fitzgerald's heroines are playing at love rather than committing themselves to it. They believe that if they can avoid possessing their love objects, they can remain untouched by disappointment and disillusion, thus allowing themselves to luxuriate in their romantic dreams. But in several other more complex stories Fitzgerald writes during this same period, he is concerned with depicting characters who, in committing themselves to their dreams, do suffer disappointment and disillusion.

"The Ordeal" is especially notable because it is a story which resisted completion that Fitzgerald found himself returning to it at least two more times (in "Benediction" and "Absolution") before he was satisfied with his conclusion.⁸ Focusing on the spiritual crisis of a young novice experiences before finalizing his priestly vows, "The Ordeal" is Fitzgerald's first dramatization of his ambivalent reactions to his own Catholicism.

The young man's conflict is between his feeling that taking his vows will make him stronger and more able to resist temptation and his feeling that it will force him to renounce the worldly pleasures he desires. The subject, then, is a person's inner struggle to resolve conflict between two sides of his character--his need to fulfill what he believes is his moral obligation to himself and his Creator and his sensitivity to life's pleasures. When the story opens, several months before he is about to take his vows, the young man is tormented and assailed by doubts and fears:

Other music ran now as an undercurrent to his thoughts; wild, incoherent music, illusive and wailing, like the shriek of a hundred violins, yet clear and chord-like. Art, beauty, love, and life passed in a panorama before

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him, exotic with the hot perfumes of the world--passion
 . . . and looking at him through it all were the sweet
 sweet sad eyes of a girl.⁹

As the imagery suggests, he identifies worldly pleasures with discord,
 temptation, and ultimately with evil. These temptations however, drive
 him even harder to embrace his vows:

Then it began. Something before had attacked the roots
 of his faith, had matched his world-sense against his God
 sense . . . A whole spiritual realm evil in its every
 expression engulfed him. He could not think, he could
 not pray . . . he realized only that the forces around
 him were of hell. . . . He felt himself alone pitted
 against an infinity of temptation. . . . Then the forces
 gathered for one final attack . . . the eternity and
 infinity of all good seemed crushed, washed away in an
 eternity of evil. . . . Then he suddenly became aware
 of a new presence . . . It was the stained glass window
 of St. Francis Xavier. He gripped it spiritually, clung¹⁰
 to it, and with an aching heart called silently for God.

Rejecting his parents' warning that he is "ruining a promising young life
 because of a sentimental notion of self-sacrifice, a boyish dream,"
 the young novice, after a fierce internal struggle, chooses the priest-
 hood. But, Fitzgerald implies, he has done so out of a self-imposed
 sense of duty and a fear of his own sensual impulses, rather than through
 sincere dedication to his religion.

In the young novice's decision to take his vows, Fitzgerald
 offers no real resolution to the problem; for, while the boy does
 fulfill one side of his nature by actualizing his "boyish dream" of
 becoming a priest, he neglects that part of him which is unavoidably
 drawn to worldly and sensual pleasures. Recognizing this conflict
 and tension within himself, Fitzgerald later spoke pointedly of what
 he called "the spoiled priest in me," that aspect of his own dual
 nature which reflects his puritanism, restraint and cynicism, his

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basic distrust and fear of his own impulses--impulses which he connects with dissipation and loss of restraint. In conflict with the "spoiled priest" is that other side of Fitzgerald's nature which Arthur Mizener refers to as "the romantic young man."--the involved, subjective, romantic dreamer in Fitzgerald. Where the "romantic young man" searches out life's pleasures--beautiful women, wealth, and glittering possessions--the "spoiled priest" demands that he strive for discipline, restraint, control and objectivity both in his life and in his art. And this tension, here reflected in the young boy's conflict with his religious commitments, produces Fitzgerald's most characteristic fiction.

Like "The Ordeal," "The Spire and the Gargoyle" is an attempt by Fitzgerald to probe more deeply into his own dual nature, in this case the attraction-repulsion he felt towards his college education. Later incorporated as a section of This Side of Paradise, this story concerns a young man who, after being expelled from the university and subsequently forced to confront his own failure, recognizes sadly that he has lost an opportunity which he can never recapture.

In the beginning of his college career, education had meant very little to the young man; he had taken it for granted. Now, on the eve of his final make-up exam, he faces inevitable expulsion. But at the moment before he is about to begin preparation for the crucial exam, he is seized by a sudden, unexpected emotion. "Through the careless hell that covered his undergraduate consciousness had broken a deep and almost reverent liking for the grey wall and gothic peaks and all they symbolized in the store of the ages of antiquity."¹¹ His sudden desire to remain in school takes on the quality of an unattainable dream symbolized by the spire outside his window:

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Once he had associated the beauty of the campus night with the parades and singing crowds that streamed through it, but in the last month the more silent stretches of sward and the quiet halls with an occasional late-burning scholastic light held his imagination with a stronger grasp--and this tower in full view of his window became the symbol of his perception. . . . To him the spire became an ideal. He had suddenly begun trying desperately to stay in college.¹²

His transformation coming too late to save him from expulsion failing his exams, the young man departs for New York. After spending first days dissipating with a fast, rich crowd, he finds himself constantly assaulted by his conscience--by his sense of having failed to do something he wanted. Reflecting on his new life away from school, he thinks:

It was much too easy; it lacked the penance of the five o'clock morning train back to college that had faced himself and his fellow student revelers, it lacked the penance of the long morning in classes, and the poverty of weeks.¹³

Feeling guilty and depressed, he chances to run into the preceptor (the goyle) who had failed him on his last exam. The meeting rekindles thoughts of the old days at school, and he decides to return for one last look.

On the journey down from New York, the young man imaginatively relives his old experiences, but the moment he steps off the train his illusions are quickly shattered:

The night was typical of the place. It was very like the night on which he had taken his last examination, yet somehow less full and less poignant. Inevitability became a reality and assumed an atmosphere of compelling and wearing down. Where before the spirit of the spires and towers had made him dreamily acquiescent, it now overawed him. Where before he had realized only his own inconsequence, he now realized his own impotence and insufficiency. . . . and in front of him the college dreamed on--awake. He felt a nervous excitement that might have been the throb of its slow heart.¹⁴

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Realizing that he cannot go back and recapture his lost dream, feeling the pain of regret, he

... cried out from a complete and overwhelming sense of failure. He realized how outside of it all he was. . . He felt no injustice, only a deep, mute longing. The very words that would have purged his soul were waiting for him in the depths of the unknown before him--waiting for him where he could never come to claim them.¹⁵

Drawing explicitly on his own failure at Princeton, Fitzgerald's work reflects what perspective he has gained on the incident. In depicting his protagonist's deeply felt sorrow and disillusion at the loss of his dreams, Fitzgerald is also highlighting the young man's resignation and sad acceptance of the reality that he could not go back to the past and recapture those dreams.

In "Sentiment and the Use of Rouge," Fitzgerald once again is concerned with depicting disillusion and loss. The story is about Syneforth, a young English aristocrat who, upon returning from the front briefly before going back into combat, finds, to his amazement, that the pre-World War One society he grew up in has been radically changed. In the story his ideals and illusions about religion and society are gradually stripped away until at the end he is unable to understand or to adjust to the breakdown of the old values.

The person whose action triggers Clay's bewilderment is Eleanor Markbrooke, the former fiancée of his dead brother Dick. By coldly and capriciously seducing him, Eleanor initiates Clay into the complexities and complexities of sex. Because Clay is unable to divorce his idealized view of romance and marriage, he cannot comprehend her actions. Deeply out of guilt and partially out of a sense of honor, Clay feels compelled to ask her to marry him; refusing, she almost mockingly proceeds

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After what is left of his illusions by telling him the truth he has avoided confronting:

Well,' she continued, 'there had to be an outlet--and there was, and you know the form it took in what you call the fast set . . . it was spreading slowly, some people even thought rather normally, but when men began to go away and not come back, when marriage became a hurried thing, and widows filled London, and all traditions seemed broken, why then things were different.'¹⁶

Unable to grasp the meaning of this, Clay finds himself utterly confused:

Bubbles of conventional ethics seemed to have burst and the long stagnant gas was reaching him. He was forced to seize his mind and make it cling to whatever shreds of the old still floated on the moral air. Eleanor's voice came to him like the grey creed of a new materialistic world, the contrast was the more vivid because of the remains of erotic honor and sentimental religiosity she flung out with the rest.¹⁷

Illusioned and groping for answers, Clay returns to the front and is only wounded. At the moment before death, he tries to reaffirm his faith, but finds he cannot:

It was all such a mess. He'd like to have gone back and finished the conversation. It had stopped at Rochester--he had stopped living in the station at Rochester . . . he . . . didn't feel sentimental--only cold and dim and mixed up.¹⁸

"Sentiment and the Use of Rouge" effectively captures the sense of illusion many people felt following World War One. Men and women brought up by nineteenth-century Victorian standards of religion and morality were naturally shocked and outraged at the "new morality," especially the violent shift in sexual mores. And Fitzgerald himself was one of those who felt the impact of the new moral current. The character of Clay Syneforth (spoiled priest) in him believed with Clay Syneforth that

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relationships between men and women ought to be primarily spiritual--that men were to be worshipped from afar, that chastity before marriage was a necessity, and that premarital sex represented a kind of moral corruption. This was deeply ingrained in him as these puritanical notions were, and Fitzgerald through the character of Eleanor Marbrooke, also reveals his aesthetic leanings toward the new morality.

Marking the culmination of Fitzgerald's apprentice fiction, "The Great Gatsby" is a thematically complex and artistically skillful treatment of the dream-and-disillusion theme. The story centers on the decline of one George Rombert, popular author and public figure; but because the events are narrated and interpreted by Jay Gatsby's young nephew, it is really two interwoven stories. First, it is the story of Uncle George the romantic dreamer, "whose life stopped at midnight--one one night in October at sixteen minutes after ten."¹⁹ It is the story of his nephew, who comes to understand the meaning of his uncle's failure.

His curiosity aroused by listening to family conversations, the nephew initially forms an impression of his uncle as a romantic and enigmatic figure:

Uncle George was a Romeo and a misogamist, a combination of Byron, Don Juan and Bernard Shaw, with a touch of Melville for good measure. . . . At one time he was the Thomas Hardy of America and he was several times heralded as the Balzac of his century. He was accused of having the great American novel in his coat pocket, trying to peddle it from publisher to publisher.²⁰

First encountering George, the young man perceives that his uncle's life is "not dependent so much upon a vivid personality but on a series of perfectly artificial mental tricks, his gestures, the peculiar

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All the time I was idealizing her . . . I was perfectly conscious that she was about the faultiest girl I'd ever met. . . . Each fault was knit up with a sort of passionate energy that transcended it. Her selfishness made her play the game harder, her lack of control put me rather in awe of her and her conceit was punctuated by such delicious moments of remorse and self-denunciation that it was almost--dear to me-- . . . She had the strongest effect on me. She made me want to do everything for her, to get something to show her. Every honor in college took on the semblance of a presentable trophy. ²¹

George proceeds to tell his nephew of the jealous and drunken rage which inevitably ruined the affair and of his later feeling of loss and remorse. He explains that his whole life since the "minute he stopped loving" has been dedicated to winning back the hand of his lost love.

Fascinated by his uncle's single-minded dedication to this, the nephew is surprised to learn that only lately, many years after the breakup of their romance, George and the now-divorced Myra have once again seeing each other. Upon meeting Myra for the first time, the young man is duly impressed with her "intense physical magnetism and most expressible mouth." "It was," he says "a mouth to be taken to. . . . It contained the emotions of a drama, and the history, the sum, of an epic. It was, as near as I could fathom, the eternal." ²² But after spending some time in their company and witnessing a violent quarrel between Myra and his uncle, he finds their romantic life beginning to wane:

The story ought to end here. My uncle should remain with Marc Antony and Demusset as a rather tragic semi-genius, ruined by a woman. Unfortunately the play continues into an inartistic sixth act where it topples over and descends like Uncle George himself to one of his more inebriated states, contrary to all the rules of dramatic literature.²³

ving gained some emotional distance from his uncle, the young nephew able to understand and relate the sad paradox of George's situation:

One month afterward Uncle George and Mrs. Fulham eloped in the most childish and romantic manner the night before her marriage to the honorable Howard Bixby was to have taken place. Uncle George never drank again, nor did he ever write or in fact do anything except play a middling amount of golf and get comfortably bored with his wife.²⁴

Through his narrator, Fitzgerald implies that, in gaining his am and simultaneously wiping out the stigma of his past, George's st has ended. Because he marries Myra Fulham, the "golden girl" of dreams, George can no longer romanticize her; he has won the trophy, prize he has so ardently and tenaciously sought. Having achieved goal, all compulsion to write and create, to strive and to dream, gone.

First writing of this paradox in "The Debutante" and "Babes in Woods," Fitzgerald in "The Pierian Springs" deepens the complexity the dream-and-disillusion theme as well as renders it more skillfully. dealing with dream-and-disillusion as it relates to the pursuit of the den girl," this story foreshadows the Dexter Green-Judy Jones nce in "Winter Dreams," the similar "George O'Kelley-Jonquil affair The Sensible Thing," and finally the more complex Gatsby-Daisy tionship in The Great Gatsby.²⁵ Moreover, in employing the more ched and objective nephew as a narrator-agent to tell and interpret story of George Rombert's romantic quest for Myra Fulham, Fitzgerald

for the first time separates and balances the "spoiled priest"--"romantic young man" duality and further foreshadows The Great Gatsby.²⁶

IV

In treating dream-and-disillusion in several varying contexts and situations in his apprentice work, Fitzgerald reveals his early preoccupation with this still-emerging theme. In his youthful fiction the dream is reflected in Fitzgerald's day-dream fantasies and wish projections of heroism on the football field and bravery in battle. From the time he writes "The Ordeal" in 1915 through "The Pierian Springs" and the "Last Straw" in 1917, these fantasies deepen into a more complex and dualistic preoccupation with dream-and-disillusion as reflected in Fitzgerald's own experiences, both real and imagined. In his apprentice fiction Fitzgerald writes of his ambivalence toward his own religion, his college education, youthful romance, sex, and early marriage. And if in these works he arrives at no concrete solutions nor offers any tangible solutions, Fitzgerald's earliest fiction provides valuable insights into his developing thought and art.

III THIS SIDE OF PARADISE

Having sketched out the dream-and-disillusion idea in his apprentice fiction, Fitzgerald expands it in This Side of Paradise. In gain, he draws fully and freely on his own experiences and sensibilities; describing Fitzgerald, Malcolm Cowley could just as well be speaking of the novel's protagonist, Amory Blaine:

He lived harder than most people have ever lived and acted out his dreams with an extraordinary intensity of emotion. The dreams themselves were not unusual; in the beginning, they were dreams of becoming a football star and a big man in college, of being a hero on the battlefield, of winning through to financial success and of getting the top girl; they were the commonplace aspirations shared by almost all the young men of his time and social class.¹

In the writing of Amory's youthful dreams and illusions, Fitzgerald endows them with surprising forcefulness and vitality; but in tracing and detailing Amory's growth and development, Fitzgerald is also concerned with the inevitable disillusion which lies at the core of Amory's dreams. Gradually in this novel, Fitzgerald strips away his protagonist's illusions and poses until, finally at the end, a disillusioned and saddened Amory is confronted with his "fundamental" self.

As Amory grows and develops, Fitzgerald stresses his ambivalence, his dual response to life. Co-existing with strong tendencies toward sensuality and materialism in Amory is an equally compelling sense of restraint and control which, in times of stress, tends to fall back on. It is this duality (the "spoiled-priest"--

romantic young man" dichotomy) within him which constantly confuses Amory and tears at the fabric of his experience. As his confidante and professor, Monsignor Darcy later tells him:

'... it's the fear that what you begin you can't stop; you would run amuck... it's that half-miraculous sixth sense by which you detect evil, it's the half-realized fear of God in your heart.'²

and it is Amory's constant struggle to come to grips with the problem of evil which becomes the novel's thematic center.

In the course of the novel Amory does not resolve this fundamental conflict within himself so much as he learns that he must live with its tensions. Forced in the end to confront the loss of his hopes, dreams and illusions, Amory is able to recognize that despite the certainty of disillusion and defeat he must go on and, in the words Monsignor Darcy, learn to do "the next thing."

II

In entitling the novel's two books "The Romantic Egoist" and "The Education of a Personage," Fitzgerald clearly wishes to point out these two tendencies within Amory as he grows from late adolescence to young manhood. As Monsignor Darcy says to him:

A personality is what you thought you were... Personality is a physical matter almost entirely... But while a personality is active, it almost always overrides 'the next thing.' Now a personage, on the other hand, gathers. He is never thought of apart from what he's done. He's a bar on which a thousand things have been hung--glittering things sometimes, as ours are, but he uses those things with a cold mentality back of them.'³

In "The Romantic Egoist," Fitzgerald traces Amory's career at Princeton until the time he enters until his education is interrupted by World War

One. Initially, Amory's dreams and ambitions are bound up with his need for success, popularity, and leadership. He seeks his goals first in athletics, which he notes are "the touchstone of power and popularity at school."⁴ After discovering painfully that he is simply not an outstanding athlete, Amory next turns to campus social activities in hopes of finding the recognition he seeks. "For four years . . . the best of Amory's intellect" Fitzgerald writes, "was concentrated on matters of popularity, the intricacies of a university social system and American society as presented by Biltmore Teas and Hot Springs golf links."⁵ Talking later to his friend Kerry Reardon, Amory admits: "'Oh, it isn't that I mind the glittering caste system, . . . I like having a bunch of hot cats on top, but gosh Kerry, I've got to be one of them.'"⁶ Amory's pride is also the source of his vitality and in turn his ability to wonder and to dream, to imagine himself as a dashing, heroic, romantic figure. " . . . before he fell asleep he would dream one of his favorite romantic dreams, the one about becoming a great halfback, or the one about the Japanese invasion, when he was rewarded by being made the youngest general in the world."⁷ What is also significant about Amory's capacity to dream is that "it was always the becoming he dreamed of, never the being. This too was quite characteristic of Amory."⁸

In the first part of Book I, Amory struggles to capture his dream of campus success. Accepted by the top fraternity, he is acknowledged and respected by its leader, Dick Humbird, who seems to Amory to be "the eternal example of what the upper-class tries to be."⁹ In addition, he courts and wins the glamorous Isabelle Borge, the "top girl." If Humbird represents the leadership and recognition Amory seeks, success with Isabelle brings him to "the high point of his vanity, the crest of his young egotism."¹⁰

Having realized his dream of campus success and notoriety, Amory finds it a hollow triumph. Amory "had conformed, he had succeeded, but as his imagination was neither satisfied nor grasped by his own success, he had listlessly, half-accidentally chucked the whole thing . . ." ¹¹ After Humbird's death in an automobile accident, Amory finds himself rudely confronted with the grim reality of the senseless tragedy. All that remained of the charm and personality of the Dick Humbird he had known--oh, it was all so horrible and unaristocratic and close to the earth." ¹² Humbird's death coupled with the subsequent loss of Isabelle (for whom he discovers "he had not an ounce of real affection . . .") ¹³ forces Amory to the recognition that once again he must turn to new aspirations and goals: " . . . with the defection of Isabelle" Fitzgerald writes, "the idea of undergraduate success had loosened its grasp on his imagination, . . . "

No longer wishing "to pass as many boys as possible and get to the vague top of the world," Amory finds himself concentrating on developing his newly awakened intellectual and spiritual potentialities. In conversing with Burne Holiday, Amory tells him: "'I've just discovered that I've got a mind, and I'm starting to read.'" ¹⁴ Amory's new reaction is reflected in his initial awe of Burne:

The intense power Amory felt for Burne Holiday differed from the admiration he had for Humbird. This time it began as a purely mental interest. With other men . . . he had been attracted first by their personalities, and in Burne he missed that immediate magnetism to which he usually swore allegiance . . . Amory was struck by Burne's intense earnestness . . . and by the great enthusiasm that struck dead chords in his heart. Burne stood vaguely for a land Amory hoped he was drifting toward--and it was almost time that land was in sight. ¹⁵

friendship with Burne symbolizes Amory's mental and intellectual growth, his relationship with the ethereal Clara Page marks the shift from the youthful and superficial "love game" he had played with the belle to a purely spiritual love relationship. Clara, he thinks is memorial . . . Her goodness was far above the prosy morals of the band seeker, apart from the full literature of female virtue."¹⁶ Through his contact with Monsignor Darcy, Burne, and Clara, the "romanticist" has gained a sensitivity and reverence for knowledge, learning, tradition.

Just as he is forced to shed his dream of popularity and leadership, however, Amory finds that he must ultimately reject his education as irrelevant and completely unrelated to present-day realities. For as Clinton S. Burhans writes, in the face of an impending World War, Amory recognizes "that Princeton is calmly educating him in a nineteenth-century world manifestly tearing itself to pieces in the worst war in history."¹⁷ Cherishing his college days, Amory knows too that he is leaving behind "more than this class; it's the whole heritage of youth. We're just one generation--we're breaking the links that seemed to bind us here to top-booted and high-sneaking generations."¹⁸

Although he is more chastened and serious-minded by the end of Book I, what has characterized Amory throughout his Princeton years is the relative ease with which he could realize his youthful wishes and dreams. At this stage of his education he is trying on various youthful poses and roles. And because he is still young there is always the certainty of another girl to romance, and another goal to strive for. Experience in the war, however, shakes Amory's

confidence and changes his perspective. Writing to his friend Tom D'Invilliers, he says, "the war instead of making me orthodox, which seems to be the current reaction, has made me a passionate agnostic."¹⁹ The world Amory returns to is fragmented, disillusioned and confused. Consequently in response to a changing world, Amory's goals, aspirations, and values become more complex and elusive. As Monsignor Darcy tells him:

'This is the end of one thing; for better or for worse you will never be quite the same Amory Blaine that I knew, never again will we meet as we have met, because your generation is growing hard, harder than mine ever grew, nourished as they were on the stuff of the nineties.'²⁰

As Book II opens, Amory returns from the war with "a horror of getting fat or falling in love and growing domestic,"²¹ yet this is largely what happens to him. After meeting and romancing Rosalind Connage, Amory finds that he loves her "as he would never love another living person."²² Dazzled by her beauty, he convinces himself that he must marry her. But wanting romance and excitement, not domesticity, a frightened Rosalind tells him: "I can't, Amory. I can't be shut away from the trees and flowers, cooped up in a narrow little flat, waiting for you."²³ Emotionally shattered by the loss of Rosalind, Amory temporarily loses control; but after an epic binge, he gradually takes hold of himself and begins to consider who he is and where he fits.

This is the beginning of Amory's transition from "romantic goist" to "personage;" for until he loses Rosalind, Amory has never really experienced deep sadness, nor has he had to struggle back from real disillusion. In the past when his youthful dreams have proved to

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be either unsettling or disappointing, Amory has been able to strike another pose, create a new dream. But as Burhans points out, these earlier dreams "are all egotistic and what Monsignor Darcy terms his personality."²⁴ Now, as Amory struggles back from his first serious defeat, he begins gradually to cast aside his remaining illusions and poses; and this new direction is dramatized in his relationship with Eleanor Savage.

With Eleanor (clearly an extension and deepening of Eleanor Marbrooke in "Sentiment and the Use of Rouge"), Amory experiences his first mature sexual encounter. The mysterious, sensuous, Eleanor forces him into confrontation with his sensuality, that part of his dual nature which he has been unable either to control or to understand. Because he views sex as having "too many associations with license and indulgence"²⁵ and discord, Amory has consistently backed away from or feared his own sensuous impulses. "Inseparably linked with evil was beauty--beauty, still a constantly rising tumult; . . . Amory knew that every time he had reached toward its longingly it leered out at him with the grotesque face of evil."²⁶ Worshipping beauty in women and drawn to sex, Amory is deeply disturbed by his own impulses. He views these tendencies in himself as indications of his lack of discipline and restraint. As Burhans suggests, it is Amory's deepest fear that "without informing goals and moral restraints, his desires and passions, his feelings and emotions, his imagination and intellect could run out of control in several directions and destroy him and those he influences."²⁷

In his affair with Eleanor Savage, however, Amory is forced to confront his passions and desires. Previously in his relationships with women, Amory idealized them as pure, almost sacred; and upon meeting

Eleanor, Amory characteristically romanticizes and idealizes her beauty;

"Oh, she was magnificent--pale skin, the color of marble in starlight, slender brows, and eyes that glittered green as emeralds in the blinding glare."²⁸ In his brief but intense affair with Eleanor, however, Amory learns that "sex is right in the middle of our purest abstractions, so close that it obscures vision . . ."²⁹

Throughout the novel much of Amory's confusion stems from an inability to confront the problem of evil, which for him "has solidified into the problem of sex."³⁰ Prior to his affair with Eleanor, each time he is in an obvious sexual situation, something occurs which either inhibits or frightens him. For example, when, early in the book, he kisses Myra for the first time he is seized by "Sudden revulsion . . . disgust, loathing for the whole incident. He desired frantically to be away, never to see Myra again, never to kiss anyone: . . . he wanted to creep out of his body and hide somewhere safe out of sight, up in the corner of his mind."³¹ Years later, in Axia's apartment, just before he is about to engage in sex with one of the chorus girls, Amory sees a mysterious Devil-like figure and flees the scene in terror. And once more, after consummating his affair with Eleanor, the figure appears to him, this time as a face leering out at them from the clover. Standing his ground for the first time, Amory finds that some deep confusion inside him has broken up. He has,

. . . lost a further part of him that nothing could restore; and when he lost it he lost also the power of regretting it. Eleanor was, say, the last time that evil crept close to Amory under the mask of beauty, the last weird mystery that held him with wild fascination and pounded his soul to flakes.³²

Recognizing evil not as something inherent in beauty or sex, but as a lack of moral restraint within himself, Amory is now prepared to "the next thing." In the very next scene--in the hotel room in Atlantic City--Amory handles the situation with surprising composure and self-possession. By protecting Alec Connage and his girl rather than himself, Amory feels "a sudden surge of joy and then like a face in a motion picture the aura over the bed faded out; . . ."³³ Because evil comes to him this time unmasked, Amory recognizes that he must sacrifice himself in order to help a friend. Having found the confidence and poise within himself which allows him to subdue his own romantic egoism, Amory's "supercillious sacrifice" marks an important step in his transition from "personality" to "personage."

Having recognized and confronted deep duality within himself, Amory is now left for Amory to strip away his remaining illusions and poses before he is able to gain any true insight and perspective. The first illusion he is forced to part with is his dream of Rosalind. Upon reading the announcement of Rosalind's engagement he realizes:

She was gone, definitely, finally gone. Until now he had half unconsciously cherished the hope deep in his heart that some day she would need him and send for him and cry that it had been a mistake, that her heart ached only for the pain she had caused him. Never again could he find even the sombre luxury of wanting her-- . . . Amory had wanted her youth, the fresh radiance of her mind and body, the stuff she was selling now once and for all. So far as he was concerned, young Rosalind was dead.³⁴

Before he has even had sufficient time to recover from this emotional blow, Amory receives news of Monseignor Darcy's death. His spiritual mentor and confessor gone, Amory, "in the pageantry of his disillusion," concludes that "There were no more wise men; there were no more heroes; the Holliday was sunk from sight . . . Monsignor was dead." He "had

grown up to a thousand books, a thousand lies; he had listened eagerly to people who pretended to know, who knew nothing."³⁵ Rejecting his former heroes, "The Byrons and the Brookes who had defied life from mountain tops" as "in the end but flaneurs and poseurs, at best mistaking the shadow of courage for the substance of wisdom," and "repelled by the discrepancies and contradictions" of leaders, men like "Bernard Shaw, Bernhardi, Bonar Law and Bethmann-Hollweg . . . Amory can no longer maintain "faith in help from others." Having concluded that slavish belief in the tenets of wise men, heroes, "Prophets, Martyrs, Saints, Scientists, Don Juans, Jesuits, Puritans, Fausts, Poets, Pacifists who saw "the glory of life and the tremendous significance of man . . . " is but a fantasy and delusion,³⁶ Amory finds too that his former worship of beauty in women was another false ideal. "Isabelle, Clara, Rosalind and Eleanor," he thought "were all removed by their very beauty, around which men had swarmed, from the possibility of contributing anything but a sick heart and a page of puzzled words to write."³⁷ Alone, and finally stripped of his old dreams and illusions, Amory "began for the first time in his life to have a strong distrust of all generalities and epigrams. . . . Life was a damned muddle . . . a football game with everyone and the referee gotten rid of. . . . In self-reproach and loneliness and disillusion he came to the entrance of the labyrinth."³⁸

At the point of deepest disillusion, while attending Monsignor Darcy's funeral, Amory suddenly finds himself overwhelmed by a strange feeling of confidence and security:



Of Amory's attempted sacrifice had been born merely the full realization of his disillusion, but of Monsignor's funeral was born the romantic self who was to enter the labyrinth with him. He found something that he had 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, to be indispensable; . . . Amory felt an immense desire to give people a sense of security.³⁹

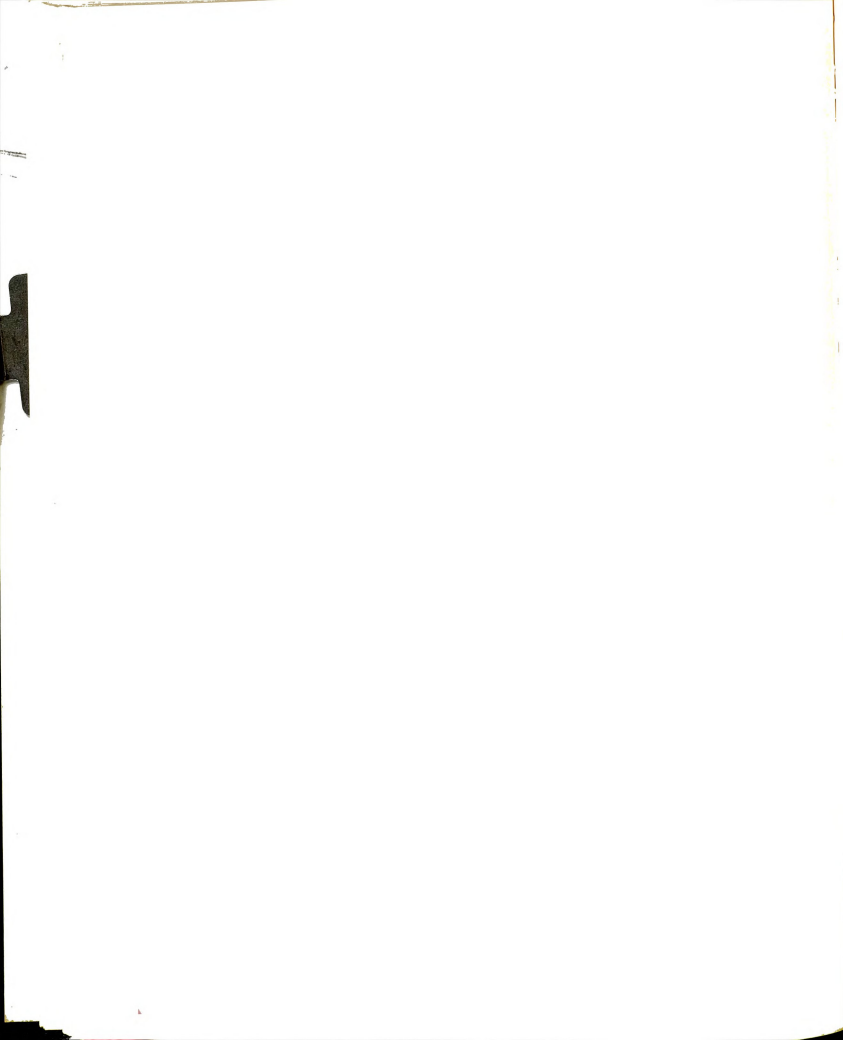
In rejecting his old goals and heroes, his "romantic egotism," Amory discovers that "It is not life that's complicated, it's the struggle to guide and control life."⁴⁰ In a final moment of illumination, Amory exclaims, "'It is by somehow transcending rather than by avoiding that selfishness that I can bring poise and balance into my life.'"⁴¹

Paradoxically, in the process of gradually accepting his disillusion and the loss of his old dreams, Amory's strongest trait, his old capacity to dream is once again reborn. "'One thing I know,'" he says. "'If living isn't a seeking for a goal it may be a damned amusing game.'"⁴² The new Amory who emerges from the labyrinth, . . . felt that he was leaving behind him his chance of being a certain type of artist. It seemed so much more important to become a certain sort of man."⁴³ By the novel's completion, Amory has resolved that:

Whatever his medium should be, he knew he was safe now, free from all hysteria--he could accept what was unacceptable, roam, grow, rebel, sleep deep . . . the waters of disillusion had left a deposit on his soul, responsibility and a love of life, the faint old stirring of ambitions and unrealized dreams.⁴⁴

In This Side of Paradise, Fitzgerald depicts Amory Blaine's growth and development from "romantic egoist" to what he labels, "personage." At the same time he deepens the dream-and-disillusion idea to an emerging central thematic concern. In addition, in

centering on Amory's confrontation with the problem of evil as it is linked to sex and beauty, Fitzgerald successfully dramatizes Amory's (and his own) dual tendencies toward, beauty, materialism and self-indulgence on the one hand, and balance, poise, and control on the other.



IV EARLY SUCCESS AND "A TOUCH OF DISASTER"

The years 1920-1921 mark a shift in Fitzgerald's writing from the largely experimental apprentice fiction to a more serious and concentrated commitment to his art. With the publication of This Side of Paradise in 1920, his thought and art take definite shape and direction, especially in his transformation of dream-and-disillusion from a loosely worked-out motif to a central thematic concern. Many of the stories Fitzgerald wrote between This Side of Paradise (1920) and The Beautiful and Damned (1922), reflect a profound concern with sadness and disillusion, that quality in his work which Fitzgerald himself refers to as "a touch of disaster." Growing out of Fitzgerald's own fear that the passing of his youth would strip him of his vitality, energy, and commitment to his dreams, several of these stories are centered on characters who suffer deep disillusion and are ultimately forced to give up their youthful hopes and dreams. And it is this erosion of spirit and loss of vitality (later called by Fitzgerald "emotional bankruptcy") which develops as the dominant idea in his later work.

Of the nineteen stories Fitzgerald wrote between 1920 and 1921, "The Ice Palace" and "May Day" are without question the most effective. But because Fitzgerald always wrote of ideas and emotions which were close to him, his exploration of dream-and-disillusion is not confined only to his better stories and novels. Much of his so-called "second-rate" fiction--stories like "The Offshore Pirate," "The Cut-Glass Bowl," "The Lees of Happiness" and "His Russet Witch" --reveal, though with

somewhat less polish, care, and skill, the same fear of disillusion and loss of dreams which he dramatizes in his best work.

II

A good deal of "The Offshore Pirate" (1920) is a parody of the standard, slick, romance fiction that Fitzgerald was to write throughout his career. The story concerns Toby Moreland, dashing young romantic hero, who kidnaps and wins the heart of the rich and beautiful "golden girl," Ardita Farnam. At one point, however, Fitzgerald, abruptly breaks into the story:

... this is not the story of two on an island, nor concerned primarily with love bred of isolation. It is merely the presentation of two personalities, and its idyllic setting among the palms of the Gulf Stream is quite incidental. Most of us are content to exist and breed and fight for the right to do both, and the dominant idea, the foredoomed attempt to control one's destiny, is reserved for the fortunate or unfortunate few. To me the interesting thing about Ardita is the courage which will tarnish with her beauty and youth.

Though this is a rather heavy-handed intrusion, Fitzgerald wishes to remind the reader and perhaps himself that, although the story of Toby and Ardita may read like a fairy-tale, they will not, after all, live happily ever after. They will age, and Fitzgerald knows that aging will tarnish Ardita's physical beauty and diminish Toby's heroic dreams.

Published one week after "The Offshore Pirate," "The Cut-Glass Bowl" explores this idea with much more incisiveness and depth. At the very outset of the story in which he depicts the personal tragedy of Evelyn Piper, Fitzgerald introduces Evelyn as a once proud, alluring, and beautiful young woman, who at thirty-five, finds herself in an advanced state of physical and spiritual decline:



Concerning Mrs. Harold Piper at thirty-five, opinion was divided--women said she was still handsome; men said she was pretty no longer. And this was probably because the qualities in her beauty that women had feared and men had followed had vanished. Her eyes were still as large and sad, but the mystery had departed; their sadness was no longer eternal, only human, . . . Back in the days when she revelled in her own beauty Evelyn had enjoyed that smile of hers--she had accentuated it. When she stopped accentuating it,² it faded out and the last of her mystery with it.

Atoning for an affair she had had several years before, Evelyn attempts to revitalize her marriage only to find, to her astonishment, that "There simply wasn't anything left. She might have been youth and love for both--but that time of silence had slowly dried up the springs of affection and her own desire to drink again of them was dead."³ From this point on Evelyn's life is a series of unending disappointments and misfortunes, and ultimately, tragedy. Her marriage a failure, her youth and beauty a dim memory, she pauses one evening several years later to reflect on her golden past: " . . . with a little half yawn, half-laugh, she remembered one long moonlight affair of her youth. It was astonishing to think that life had once been the sum of her current love-affairs. It was now the sum of her current problems."⁴ These problems include the loss of her young daughter's arm in an accident involving the family's cut-glass bowl and the recent death of her son in combat. Having viewed the strange-shaped bowl with apprehension and suspicion since her daughter's tragic accident it enlarges and magnifies in her imagination until it becomes an almost tangible and overwhelming force,

'You see I am fate,' it shouted, 'and stronger than your puny plans, and I am how-things-turn-out and I am different from your little dreams, and I am the flight of time and the end of beauty and unfulfilled

desire; all the accidents and imperceptions and the little minutes that shape the crucial hours are mine. I am the exception that proves no rules, the limits of your control, the condiment in the dish of life.¹⁵

In the somewhat labored final scene, Evelyn is accidentally killed when trying to discard the seemingly indestructible agent of disaster.

For Fitzgerald, then, the bowl clearly symbolizes Evelyn Piper's loss of youth and her decline into "emotional bankruptcy." Although his over-reliance on symbolism is sometimes clumsy and intrusive, "The Cut-Glass Bowl" is the first story in which disillusion, loss of will, and personal tragedy emerge both as unrelenting, undeniable, and dominant forces and also as the central theme of the story.

In "The Lees of Happiness," (1920) Fitzgerald treats this theme in a more sombre, subdued manner. The story centers on a young actress's decline into "emotional bankruptcy." Originally Roxanne's youthful marriage to the successful writer Jeffery Curtain was a love match. He was sufficiently spoiled to be charming; she was ingenuous enough to be irresistible. Like two floating logs, they met in a head-on rush, caught, and sped along together.¹⁶ But beneath the surface of this idyllic marriage, Fitzgerald writes of impending disaster. Jeffery could not have put a quirk into one of his stories weirder than the one that came into his own life.¹⁷ Similarly, if Roxanne had "played three dozen parts and filled five thousand houses she could never have had a role with more happiness and more despair than were in the fate prepared for [her]."¹⁸ Their dream world is abruptly shattered when, after several strange and uncharacteristically irrational outbreaks, "A blood clot the size of a marble had broken in his brain."¹⁹ The accident leaves Jeffery a hopeless invalid and Roxanne the burden of caring for him until he dies.

Roxanne is joined in her suffering by the Curtain's mutual friend, Harry Cromwell, who, having recently separated from his wife, confides his misery to her. Between the two there develops a strange bond of mutual suffering. "Roxanne found his sympathy welcome--there was some quality of suffering in the man, some inherent pitifulness that made her comfortable when he was near."¹⁰ Their familiarity with one another's sadness produces a destructive form of mutual pity. With Harry to comfort her, Roxanne withdraws more deeply into memories of her happy past with Jeffery. Shielding herself from the reality of Jeffery's moribund condition, Roxanne's existence becomes a living sacrifice.

Even Jeffery's seemingly merciful death cannot free Roxanne from her self-imposed burden. Instead of relief from her pain and suffering, his death creates a void in her daily existence. "She missed having to care for him . . . missed her rush to town . . . missed the cooking for two . . . the preparation of delicate liquid food for him."¹¹ Having formed a deep and lasting attachment to her dead past, Roxanne's fervent desire is "To meet Jeff again" to go back in spirit to that wonderful year, that intense, passionate absorption and companionship, . . . "¹²

Following Jeffery's death and the final breakup of his marriage, Harry returns with the vague hope of making some sort of future for Roxanne and himself. Experiencing a brief moment of tenderness, both quickly recoil from commitment. In retreating from each other, they allow the moment to pass, and with it all chance for future happiness:

After he left she would go in and light the gas and close the shutters, and he would go down the path and on to the village. To these two life had come quickly and gone, leaving not bitterness, but pity; not disillusion, but only pain. There was already enough moonlight when they shook hands for each

other to see the gathered kindness in the other's eyes.¹³

In "The Lees of Happiness," Fitzgerald points not only to the sadness which is brought on by life's disappointments, but also to the deeper sense of emptiness and the loss of vitality which accompany one's surrender of the impulse to dream. Having lost this capacity, both Roxanne and Harry must also forfeit the hope of ever again investing their lives with color, romance, and excitement. By shielding themselves from suffering and disillusion, neither is able to open himself again to life's romantic possibilities. Both will remain closed, forever without dreams and forever without hope of release from despair.

Similarly, "His Russet Witch" (1921), is the story of a man who in his youth idealizes a beautiful young girl only to find that in the process of aging she, like him, has lost her mysterious radiance and allure. Cast in the form of a fairy-tale fantasy, the story traces Merlin Granger's development and decline from age twenty-five to sixty-five. On the surface, "His Russet Witch" seems to be only about a man who grows old and sad because he longs for a lovely, young, mysterious beauty whom he could never possess. But a closer look reveals once again Fitzgerald's dualistic concern with dream-and-disillusion, for this is a story about what happens to romantic love when a man's illusions and fantasies about the girl he loves are shattered.¹⁴

To begin with, the names "Merlin" and "Arthur" and the atmosphere of physical and spiritual antiquity throughout the story, all suggest romance and magic--the world of knights, quests, and holy grails. But Merlin Granger is no knight in shining armor, and his son who sells bonds on Wall Street is a dull, mechanical, fellow who passes

his life "undistinguished and unnoticed." And if the Holy Grail here is the love of the elusive and dazzling Lady Caroline, then Merlin is certainly unworthy of the quest. Though he is enchanted by her mass of russet waves and the promise of kisses in her features, his love is one born only of illusion, forever promising realization but remaining always unfulfilled.

Still, Merlin is the name not of a knight but of a magician. And if this Merlin possesses any magic it is his youth, vitality, and capacity to dream and, most of all, his self-enchancement by the vision of a lovely girl. It is a vision which has the power to transform his lonely, sad world of dusty books and meagre delicatessen dinners into one of romance and expectation, one which in his imagination sometimes becomes "a perfect orgy of merriment." Merlin spends his evenings dreamily watching the ritual in Caroline's apartment just across the court from his room. At a distance, his first impression of her is that she is somehow unreal, an enchanted creature from another world. "She was like a ghost: . . . She sprang into life when the lights went out in her apartment about six and she disappeared . . ."¹⁵ Her mysterious existence casts a spell on him and it is the breaking of the spell which is the central focus in the story.

Tracing Merlin's growth, Fitzgerald covers the time from the "mellow" musty bindings of his bookstore youth through the "helpless glee" of his initial face-to-face encounter (where, pressing "the softness of her hand," he touches her for the first and last time) to his listless "decay" and "weariness" and final loss of illusions about his fair Princess. For when Caroline enters the shop again for the first time in forty years, Merlin sees "an old woman, remarkably preserved,

handsome, unusually erect, but still an old woman." ¹⁶ And despite the fact that her voice had " . . . a ring in it that still could and did make chauffeurs want to drive laundry wagons and cause cigarettes to fall from the fingers of urbane grandsons," ¹⁷ the old magic is no longer there. As Merlin soberly reflects, "I see now that on a certain night when you danced upon a table-top you were nothing but my romantic yearning for a beautiful and perverse woman." ¹⁸ Telling her in rage and frustration that " . . . the spirit withers with the skin," Merlin is forced to confront the reality that the "romantic spirit" which had given "a zest and glory" to his existence is forever lost to him: ¹⁹

He was an old man now indeed, so old that it was impossible for him to dream of ever having been young, so old that the glamour was gone out of the world passing now into the faces of children and into the persistent comforts of warmth and life, but passing out of the range of sight and feeling . . . He was too old now even for memories. ²⁰

At the story's close, Merlin is only a small grain of a man, truly old because only the old have no dreams of youth and romantic love. He'd "wasted Earth" by keeping Carolyn a dream, only a romantic possibility, but Fitzgerald suggests here and in other places, that it is "earth" or life and love in the real world which truly wastes men and their dreams.

III

Though similar in mood and tone to stories like "The Cut-Glass Bowl," and "The Lees of Happiness," "May Day," (1920) is a much more ambitious and profound exploration of the disillusion and tragedy which accompanies broken dreams and lost hopes. Set against the strange mixture of expectation and hope, anxiety and despair in this country

following World War I, "May Day" is a compilation of several intertwining tales, all of which concern characters who suffer misfortune or personal ruin. Among the stories which Fitzgerald relates are those of Rose and Key, the two returning soldiers who, expecting to be treated as conquering heroes, instead find themselves virtually ignored; Edith Bradin, who, unable to face up to the loss of her youthful romantic dreams, withdraws into memories of the past; and the central character, Gordon Sterrett, who, in the course of the story, declines spiritually and emotionally until he becomes a suicide.

Setting the tone for this drama of frustrated dreams and thwarted expectations, Fitzgerald's introduction to "May Day" reflects his deliberately ironic stance. Portraying the surface mood of elation surrounding the return of the conquering army in 1919, as a contrast to the examples of disillusion and despair which comprise the story, Fitzgerald describes the army's triumphant return to New York in vividly mythic terms:

There had been a war fought and won and the great city of the conquering people was crossed with triumphal arches and vivid with thrown flowers of white, red, and rose. All through the long spring days the returning soldiers marched up the chief highway behind the strump of drums and the joyous, resonant wind of the brasses, . . . Never had there been such splendor in the great city, for the victorious war had brought plenty in its train, . . . So gaily and noisily were the peace and prosperity impending hymned by the scribes and poets of the conquering people that more and more spenders had gathered from the provinces to drink the wine of excitement, . . .²¹

The soldiers are "pure and brave, sound of tooth and pink of cheek," and the adoring young women who turn out to cheer them are "virgins and comely both of face and figure."²²

In the story which follows, however, Fitzgerald highlights the misfortunes of several people, all of whom serve to reflect, heighten, and illuminate the tragedy of the main character, Gordon Sterrett. Most prominent among the minor characters are the two unfortunate soldiers, Rose and Key. These two returning heroes supposedly "pure and brave, sound of tooth and pink of cheek," are in reality " . . . ugly and ill-nourished, devoid of all except the very lowest forms of intelligence, and without even that animal exuberance that in itself brings color into life . . . " ²³ Their "combined finances were something less than five dollars," Fitzgerald writes, and their "entire mental pabulum . . . consisted of an offended nasal comment extended through the years upon the institution--army, business or poorhouse--which kept them alive, and toward their immediate superior in that institution." ²⁴ Impressed by the glitter and opulence of the great city, these two misfits find only a harsh world which is coldly indifferent to them. After the glorious celebration, soldiers like Rose and Key, expecting to be treated as conquering heroes, instead are dismayed to find themselves "vermin-ridden, cold, and hungry in a dirty town of a strange land; they were poor, friendless; tossed as driftwood from their births, they would be tossed as driftwood till their deaths." ²⁵ Like them,

All through the crowd were men in uniform, sailors from the great fleet anchored in the Hudson, soldiers with divisional insignias . . . wanting fearfully to be noticed, and finding the city thoroughly fed up with soldiers unless they were nicely massed into pretty formations and uncomfortable under the weight of a pack and rifle. ²⁶

Expecting their share of the glory, these men find themselves outcasts, not heroes but helpless and insignificant victims. Quite naturally, then, they find their outlets not in noble gestures nor graceful acts,

but in drinking to drown their disappointment and in the brutal and sadistic persecution of "dangerous radicals," like the socialist Henry Bradin.

If Rose and Key are ironic parodies of the brave young men "sound of tooth and pink of cheek," then Edith Bradin, is the ironic personification of those young virgins, "comely both of face and figure." "For all her beauty," Fitzgerald writes, "Edith was a grave, slow-thinking girl . . . whose . . . line . . . was made up of the current expressions, bits of journalese and college slang strung together in an intrinsic whole, careless, faintly provocative, delicately sentimental."²⁷ Finding herself at age twenty-two bored and "a little tired" and wanting to get married, Edith, upon arriving at the Yale class-reunion dance, determines to land her former beau, Gordon Sterrett:

. . . this dance, first of its kind since the war, was reminding her, with the accelerated rhythm of its associations of something else--of another dance and another man, a man for whom her feelings had been little more than a sad-eyed, adolescent mooniness. Edith Bradin was falling in love with her recollection of Gordon Sterrett.²⁸

Dreaming of a dashing, suave, handsome Prince Charming, she finds instead that Gordon is "pitiful and wretched, a little drunk and miserably tired."²⁹ Seeing that the real Gordon does not measure up to her romantic recollection of him "Edith was seized with a new feeling--unutterable horror."³⁰ In her romantic dreams, Edith had fancied that "There was a quality of weakness in Gordon that she wanted to take care of; there was a helplessness in him that she wanted to protect. And she wanted someone she had known a long time, someone who had loved her a long while."³¹ Now, however, Edith realizes that Gordon is not

that man; and wanting only to abstract the warmth, glow, and music of romance, she withdraws into the comfortable, safe world of her romantic dreams. "Love is fragile--she was thinking--but perhaps the pieces are saved, the things that hovered on lips, that might have been said. The new love words, the tendernesses learned, are treasured up for the next lover."³²

That the handsome, brave, conquering soldier does not marry the comely virgin of his dreams is even more harshly borne out in Fitzgerald's depiction of the sordid and emotionally squalid existence of Gordon Sterrett, who, only a few years before this class reunion, had been one of the most popular, sought-after, and respected men in his class at Yale. By the time the story opens Gordon has become what his highly successful former friend and classmate, Phillip Dean, describes as "bankrupt--morally as well as physically."³³ Through a series of misfortunes due in part to his own poor judgment, Gordon has been steadily deteriorating emotionally and psychologically until, he has been reduced to a groping, pitiful husk of a man. He has become involved with Jewel Hudson, a girl of questionable morals and breeding, and in trying to extricate himself from the affair, he has been threatened with blackmail by her. Failing in his attempt to borrow money from Dean, who is in town attending the class reunion, Gordon then tries to escape his misery by going to the reunion. There he succeeds only in further debasing himself; for, disheveled and drunk, he is rebuffed by Edith.

Dean's refusal to lend him money and Edith's snub strip him of all remnants of hope. As he humbly, pathetically admits to Dean, "'I'm all in. I'm half-crazy, Phil. If I hadn't known you were coming East, I'd have killed myself."³⁴ All avenues of escape closed, in despair

and panic, he and Jewel go off on a drunken spree, and in the midst of an alcoholic haze, impulsively get married. Awakening the next morning to find himself irrevocably tied to Jewel and aware that his hopes, dreams and aspirations are unalterably crushed, Gordon puts a bullet through his head.

Although "May Day" deals with the misfortunes of many characters, Gordon Sterrett is a central figure in Fitzgerald's early fiction. In his failure to marshal the emotional energy and spiritual vitality to ward off his misfortunes and ultimate disaster, Gordon is the most fully-developed reflection in this period of Fitzgerald's own personal fear of emotional bankruptcy."

Also centering on the shattered hopes and the loss of the ability to dream of its main character, Sally Carrol Happer, "The Ice Palace" (1920) is structurally and thematically the most balanced short story that Fitzgerald wrote between This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned. Moreover, in telling the story of this young girl's journey from her native South to the North, Fitzgerald underscores the extremes of culture existing within the United States. Explaining his original conception of the story, Fitzgerald says:

'... idea grew out of a conversation with a girl in St. Paul . . . We were riding home from a moving picture show late one November night. 'Here comes the Winter,' she said, as a scattering of confetti-like snow blew along the street. I thought immediately of the Winters I had known there, their bleakness and dreariness and seemingly endless length . . . At the end of two weeks I was in Montgomery, Alabama and, while out walking with a girl I wandered into a graveyard. She told me I would never understand it so well that I could put it down on paper. Next day on my way back to St. Paul it came to me that it was all one story . . . 135

Using this contrast between North and South as a governing structural principle, Fitzgerald is able to hold in balance the

dream-and-disillusion idea, while at the same time deepening his exploration of it.

Fitzgerald's South in the story (represented by Tareyton, Georgia, Sally Carrol's home town) is characterized by its "tolerant kindly patience."³⁶

Farther out were the lazy cotton fields, where even the workers seemed intangible shadows lent by the sun to the earth, not for toil, but to wile away some age-old tradition in the Golden September fields. And round this drowsy picturesqueness, over the trees and shacks and muddy rivers, flowed the heat, never hostile, only comforting, like a great warm nourishing bosom for the infant earth.³⁷

This is a land of dreams, insulated, comfortable a pastoral world, suspended in time and space. In one respect, because of her charm and lazy dreams of romance, Sally Carrol fits like a jewel into this rich, idyllic setting. Her favorite place is the cemetery containing the graves of Confederate soldiers who died in the Civil War, graves which are appropriate symbols for the romantic and yet faded values of the old South:

. . . dusty-gray and mouldy for the fifties, quaintly carved with flowers and jars for the seventies; ornate and hideous for the nineties with fat marble cherubs lying in sodden sleep on stone pillows, . . . but over most of the graves lay silence and withered leaves with only the fragrance that their own shadowy memories could awaken in living minds.³⁸

While this dead South and its values are charming and romantic, Fitzgerald knows that it is a dying culture, an ante-bellum society fast becoming an anachronism in a rapidly changing, dynamic, age.

Surrounded by this tradition, Sally Carrol feels secure, protected and safe. The one grave in particular to which she is drawn is that of the dead Southern belle, Margery Lee, who, Sally Carrol imagined,

"always wore her hair with a ribbon in it, and gorgeous hoop skirts of alice blue and old rose . . . " and who "was the sort of girl who was born to stand on a wide pillared porch and welcome folks in."³⁹ At the same time that Sally Carrol identifies with Margery Lee, she also harbors secret dreams of excitement and romance. She becomes engaged to Harry Bellemy, a visiting Northerner; and, feeling the need "to go places and see people," she tells her friend Clark Darrow that "I want my mind to grow. I want to live where things happen on a big scale."⁴⁰ Wanting deeply to pursue this dream, Sally Carrol accepts Harry's invitation to visit him in Minnesota.

Arriving during the annual winter celebration, Sally Carrol is initially fascinated by the carnival-like atmosphere and drawn to the verve and energy, color and pageantry, of her fiancé's world. In time, however, she senses that beneath the surface gaiety the people are cold and harsh in their personal dealings with one another and that they lack the decorum and grace, warmth and compassion, which are familiar to her; " . . . toward the women she felt a definite hostility. Myra, her future sister-in-law, seemed the essence of spiritless conventionality. Her conversation was so devoid of personality that Sally Carrol, who came from a country where a certain amount of charm and assurance could be taken for granted in the women, was inclined to despise her."⁴¹ Still another shock to Sally Carrol's sense of decorum is the behavior of her fiancé's friends who "danced with her with conspicuous precision and who seemed to take it for granted that she wanted to talk about nothing but Harry. . . . In the South an engaged girl, even a married woman, expected the same amount of half-affectionate badinage and flattery that would be accorded a debutante, but here all that seemed banned."⁴² As her discomfort and confusion increases, Sally Carrol

finds herself retreating into her familiar world of dreams and illusions. She had "an instantaneous vision of the old battered library at home, with her father's huge medical books, and the old oil paintings of her three great uncles, and the old couch that had been mended up and was still luxurious to dream on."⁴³

Sally Carrol's disillusion culminates in the celebration surrounding the construction of the ice palace. Just as the cemetery reflects the heroic values of the dead South, "the gorgeous transparency" of the ice palace symbolizes the glitter and appeal, as well as the cold and impersonal nature of Northern life. Finding herself momentarily lost within the maze of this icy structure, in fear and panic, she desperately clings for support to the memory of her old graveyard:

Oh, if there should be snow on her grave. To be beneath great piles of it all winter long. . . . Her grave--a grave that should be flower-strewn and washed with sun and rain. . . . Her spring--to lose it forever--with its lilacs and the lazy sweetness it stirred away in her heart.⁴⁴

As her disassociation becomes more real to her, in panic Sally Carrol recedes further into her illusions, which culminate in her hallucination and vision of Margery Lee, who comes to her "just as Sally Carrol had known she would be, with a young, white brow, and wide, welcoming eyes, and a hoop skirt of some soft material that was quite comfortable to rest on."⁴⁵ In clinging to the illusion of Margery Lee, Fitzgerald suggests that Sally Carrol commits herself irrevocably to the values of the dead South. So long as she is able to retreat into the dead past, Fitzgerald implies, Sally Carrol can preserve her romantic dreams and spare herself the pain of disillusion which accompanies the loss of dreams. But in fastening her dreams on to a dead past, she is forfeiting her commitment to excitement and new dreams. She had implied as much earlier, talking to Harry in the Confederate graveyard:

'These were just men, unimportant evidently or they wouldn't have been 'unknown'; but they died for the most beautiful thing in the world--the dead South. You see . . . people have these dreams they fasten on to things, and I've always grown up with that dream. It was so easy because it was all dead and there weren't any disillusion's comin' to me.'⁴⁶

In "The Ice Palace," Fitzgerald reveals his ambivalence toward both the South and the North. While he is drawn to the grace and gentility, decorum and charm, of Sally Carrol's world, he understands at the same time that it must perish simply because progress, symbolized by the North, cannot be halted. Still, despite his recognition that his heroine belongs to a dead tradition, Fitzgerald mourns the passing of its values from our age. And in thus contrasting the heroic and chivalric legacy of the dead South with the expansive, energetic, and materialistic vision of the dynamic North, Fitzgerald further objectifies and deepens his concern with dreams and their disillusion.

V THE BEAUTIFUL AND DAMNED

Between the publication of This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned, Fitzgerald's short fiction clearly reflects his deepening preoccupation with characters who, upon encountering serious misfortunes which strip them of their youthful romantic dreams, suffer deep disillusion and loss of will. Confronted with the harsh and painful realities of broken love affairs, aging, and ill-health, they reflect Fitzgerald's own growing fear of impending "emotional bankruptcy." Not surprisingly, therefore, Fitzgerald's second novel, The Beautiful and Damned, centers on the "lesion of vitality" and ultimate destruction of his protagonist, Anthony Patch. In a letter to Charles Scribner II in 1920, Fitzgerald writes:

My new novel called, The Flight of the Rocket, concerns the life of one Anthony Patch between his 25th and 33rd years (1913-1921). He is one of those many with the tastes and weaknesses of an artist but with no actual creative inspiration. How he and his beautiful wife are wrecked on the shoals of dissipation is told in the story.¹

In tracing Anthony's decline in the context of his eroding marriage to the young and beautiful Gloria Gilbert, Fitzgerald tells of characters who, losing their naïve and hopeful dreams of eternal youth and love, beauty and happiness, suffer deep disappointment, sadness, and ultimately lose the capacity and spirit to struggle against their misfortunes. While both suffer the loss of their hopes and dreams, however, it is Anthony who clearly emerges as the main character in this work. Beyond a doubt,

the value of the book lies with Fitzgerald's willingness to make a full-length record of his protagonist's complete disaster.

II

From the outset Anthony is a romantic dreamer, but, like Gordon Sterrett and Sally Carrol Happer, he has no real inclination to struggle in quest of his dreams. Believing somewhat snobbishly that he is "an exceptional young man, thoroughly sophisticated, well-adjusted to his environment," Anthony also views himself as "somewhat more significant than anyone else he knows . . . attractive to intelligent men and all women."² Remaining aloof and passive, an observer of life rather than a participant, Anthony creates in his indulgent daydreams a self-image which allows him to believe that he is " . . . 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."³

So long as Anthony can afford the luxury of daydreaming he can maintain this detached and heroic pose. Fitzgerald suggests, however, that in reality Anthony does not derive his identity nor does he formulate his goals from "within"; instead, he draws them from things which exist outside of him--wealth, status, and other people. "Anthony drew as much consciousness of social security from being the grandson of Adam Patch, as he would have from tracing his line over the sea to the crusaders."⁴ His grandfather's wealth and the status it represents afford young Anthony a luxury and security which he knows will fortify and protect him against the harsher realities of work, effort, and struggle:

The big trust company building seemed to link him definitely to the great fortunes whose solidarity he respected and to assure him that he was adequately chaperoned by the hierarchy of finance. From these hurried men he derived the sense of safety that he had in contemplating his grandfather's money--even more, for the latter appeared, vaguely, as a demand loan made by the world to Adam Patch's own moral righteousness, while this money downtown seemed rather to have been grasped and held by sheer indomitable strengths and tremendous feats of will; in addition, it seemed more definitely and explicitly money.⁵

Secure in the knowledge that possession of great wealth will bring him the comfort and happiness he seeks, Anthony has no inclination to work for his dream. Wanting to "accomplish some subtle thing that the elect would deem worthy, and passing on, join the dimmer stars in a nebulous, indeterminate heaven half-way between death and immortality."⁶ Anthony is nevertheless content merely to fantasize and dream of what life will be like when he inherits his grandfather's fortune. "With a stray boyishness he saw himself as a power upon the earth; with his grandfather's money he might build his own pedestal and be a Tallyrand, a Lord Verulam. The clarity of his mind, its sophistication, its versatile intelligence, all at their maturity and dominated by some purpose yet to be born would find him work to do."⁷

In contrast to many of Fitzgerald's heroes, Anthony Patch is a passive observer, a man who withdraws from life's struggles rather than attempting to shape and control his own destiny. As he himself reveals: "Here I sit, young Anthony, as I'll sit for a generation or more and watch gay souls . . . go past me, dancing and singing and loving and hating one another and being eternally moved. And I am moved only by my lack of emotion."⁸ Anthony's refusal to act, to participate in life's struggles, stems partially at least from an almost

paralytic fear of failure. "It worried him to think that he was, after all, a facile mediocrity. . . . It seemed a tragedy to want nothing--and yet he wanted something, something. He knew in flashes what it was--some path of hope to lead him toward what he thought was imminent and ominous old age."⁹ Feeling the need to achieve something, but possessing neither the drive nor will, Anthony finds himself at age twenty-three "with no record of achievement, without courage, without strength to be satisfied with truth when it was given him. Oh, he was a pretentious fool, making careers out of cocktails and meanwhile regretting, weakly and secretly, the collapse of an insufficient idealism. He had garnished his soul in the subtlest taste and now he longed for the old rubbish."¹⁰

It is with these weaknesses, props, and poses that Anthony enters his relationship with the radiant and alluring "golden girl," Gloria Gilbert. Because Gloria appeals to "that part of him which cherished all beauty and all illusion," Anthony at first "wanted to appear suddenly to her in novel and heroic colors. He wanted to stir her from that casualness she showed toward everything but herself."¹¹ But as he is drawn more deeply into the relationship he begins to seek the comfort, protection, and insulation he so deeply needs. Believing that with Gloria he could forget the " . . . suffocating pressure of life,"¹² he dreams that marriage, like wealth, will insure "the end of all restlessness, all malcontent."¹³

If Anthony is a spoiled and self-indulgent day-dreamer, Gloria (though more tough-minded than he) cherishes illusions of her own--namely, the preservation of her youth and beauty. Just before the wedding she writes in her diary: " . . . what a fate to grow rotund and unseemly,

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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 on golden, golden wings--"14

Though Gloria dreams of a man who, unlike Anthony, is a "temporarily passionate lover with wisdom enough to realize when it has flown and that it must fly . . . ,"¹⁵ she also needs someone "who could appreciate me and take me for granted, a man who would fall in love with me and admire me."¹⁶ Though Anthony is neither the passionate lover nor admirer she dreams of, Gloria believes that he has enough money to keep her comfortable and secure. And so, sacrificing romantic love for security, she resolves to marry him.

At the outset, the marriage is a gay, romantic idyl. The freshness of their youth, the newness of love, and, more importantly, the promise of Anthony's inheritance, allow them, for the time being, to drift and dream. But, inevitably, with the gradual passing of time, "the breathless idyl left them, fled to other lovers; they looked around one day and it was gone . . . bearing with it its extortion of youth."¹⁷

In the ensuing years, Anthony's money gradually begins to run out, partially because of his blatant refusal to earn a living and partly due to the extravagant manner in which he and Gloria live. In an attempt to wall out the reality of their growing lethargy of spirit, party follows upon party, and their quarrels become more frequent and bitter. As Anthony finds the initial security and comfort of the marriage eroding, he begins to drink more heavily and withdraws more frequently for sustenance into his miasmic world of daydreams and illusions, a world where "It was vaguely understood between them that on some misty day he would enter a sort of glorified diplomatic service and be envied by princes and prime ministers for his beautiful wife."¹⁸

Despite the fact that the first flush of romance is gone from the marriage, Anthony and Gloria are still able to dream, sustaining themselves with the assurance that someday his grandfather's fortune will belong to him:

That spring, that summer, they had speculated upon future happiness--how they were to travel from summer land to summer land, returning eventually to a gorgeous estate and possible idyllic children, then entering diplomacy or politics, to accomplish for a while, beautiful and important things, until finally as a white-haired (beautifully, silkily, white-haired) couple they were to loll about in serene glory, worshipped by the bourgeoisie of the land . . . These times were to begin 'when we get our money'; it was on such dreams rather than on any satisfaction with their increasingly irregular, increasingly dissipated life that their hope rested.¹⁹

That security blanket is ripped from them, one night, however, when during another of their summer bacchanals, Adam Patch pays them a surprise visit. Horrified and outraged by what he sees, the stern and puritanical old man immediately institutes legal proceedings to cut his grandson out of his will. When the realization of what has happened sinks in, Anthony finds himself for the first time confronted with the prospect of having to earn a living in order to survive. Making a brief, abortive attempt to write a novel, he finally takes a job, only to quit when the reality of responsibility and hard work overwhelms him. In desperation and despair, he retreats deeper into his daydreams of the "breathless idyl." Anthony "found himself remembering how one summer morning they two had started from New York in search of happiness. They had never expected to find it, perhaps, yet in itself that quest had been happier than anything he expected forevermore."²⁰

But even retreating into past dreams of happiness offers him no release, and Anthony resigns himself fatalistically to misery and

déspair. "Life," he concludes, "must be a setting up of props around one--otherwise it was a disaster. There was no rest, no quiet. He had been futile in longing to drift and dream; no one drifted except to maelstroms, no one dreamed without his dreams becoming fantastic nightmares of indecision and regret."²¹ Sensing his condition, he is yet powerless to act; his disillusion is marked by a complete loss of vitality and will. "In the days of his integrity . . . he would have cried that to struggle was to believe . . . but at present he had no such delicate scruples."²² Overcome by fear of impending failure and finally paralyzed by this fear, Anthony withdraws into an alcoholic haze.

After Adam Patch's death and the beginning of legal proceedings by which they hope to regain the inheritance, Anthony and Gloria now have only that bond and that illusion to share. But as court proceedings drag on almost interminably, their relationship continues to stagnate and erode. Having " . . . reached the stage of violent quarrels that smouldered and broke out again at intervals or died away from sheer indifference . . . "²³ both are offered a much needed respite and postponement of the inevitable when Anthony is drafted into the service and sent to Georgia. Desperately seeking repose and escape from his inner turmoil, Anthony immediately responds to the restful, soothing quality of life in the South. Feeling momentarily revitalized and renewed, he has a brief affair with Dot Roycroft, a flighty and insecure girl who idealizes and looks up to him. Seeking comfort and security in her, Anthony instead finds Dot dependent, possessive and jealous. Unwilling to take the responsibility and fearing complications, Anthony, in a panic of worry and confusion, abruptly breaks off the affair.

During Anthony's absence, Gloria temporarily regains her old spirit. "Recently, without his continual drain upon her moral strength she found herself wonderfully revived. Before he left she had been inclined through sheer association to brood on her wasted opportunities-- now she returned to her normal state of mind, strong, disdainful, existing each day for each day's worth."²⁴ Upon his discharge and return, the "breathless idyl" of their honeymoon returns, but the romantic illusion proves to be ephemeral, and once again reality intrudes. "After that reflowering of tenderness and passion each of them returned into some solitary dream unshared by the other and what endearments passed between them passed, it seemed, from empty heart to empty heart, echoing hollowly the departure of what they knew at last was done."²⁵ Knowing the magic and romance of their youthful dreams has vanished, never to return, Gloria falls victim to a brief melancholy regret. "All she wanted was to be a little girl, to be efficiently taken care of by some yielding yet superior power, stupider and steadier than herself. It seemed that the only lover she had ever wanted was a lover in a dream." Believing that " . . . her beauty was all that never failed her. She had never seen beauty like her own,"²⁶ Gloria hopes to preserve it by becoming a film star.

She would be twenty-nine in February. As the long night wanted she grew supremely conscious that she and beauty were going to make use of these next three months. . . . She was in earnest now. No material want could have moved her as this fear moved her. No matter for Anthony, Anthony the poor in spirit, the weak and broken man with bloodshot eyes, for whom she still had moments of tenderness. No matter. She would be twenty-nine in February-- a hundred days, so many days; . . .²⁷

But her dreams are unalterably shattered when she finds she has been considered only for a "small character part" as an older "very haughty rich widow."

Meanwhile with nothing remaining to sustain him but the fading hope of winning back his inheritance, Anthony retreats anew into an alcoholic haze where "Only for a brief moment every day in the warmth and renewed life of a first highball did his mind turn to those opalescent dreams of future pleasure--the mutual heritage of the happy and the damned. But this was only for a little while. As he grew drunker the dreams faded and he became a confused spectre, moving in odd crannies of his own mind, full of unexpected devices, harshly contemptuous at best and reaching sodden and despirited depths."²⁸ Having given up the struggle, Anthony has become a helpless victim of his own indulgences and weaknesses.

Drifting deeper into a spiritual inertia and malaise, his mind in total confusion and chaos, Anthony receives the news that he has won his case. Believing as always that the money can transform his misery and suffering, Anthony fantasizes that he might escape to Italy, "a land where the intolerable anxieties of life would fall away like an old garment. . . . and among the bright and colorful crowds forget the grey appendages of despair. The thought of Italian women stirred him faintly--when his purse hung heavy again even romance might fly back to perch on it" ²⁹

In the course of his suffering, Fitzgerald suggests, Anthony has learned nothing. Even in his moment of triumph, he is a pitiful, self-deluded creature, believing that he has overcome great adversity and insurmountable obstacles:

He was thinking of the hardships, insufferable tribulations he had gone through. They had tried to penalize him for the mistakes of his youth. He had been exposed to ruthless misery, his very craving for romance had been punished, his friends had deserted him--even Gloria had turned against him. He had been alone, alone--facing it all . . . people had been urging him to give in, to submit to mediocrity, to go to work. But he had known too that he was justified in his way of life--and had stuck it out staunchly. 'I showed them. . . . It was a hard fight, but I didn't give up and I came through.'³⁰

By the end of the novel, Anthony, in his madness, has retreated irrevocably into a world of self-delusion and daydreams. Because of his passivity and inability to struggle for his goals, he remains unenlightened, unregenerate--emotionally and spiritually bankrupt.

In the course of the novel, Fitzgerald traces the degeneration of the Patches' relationship and emphasizes Anthony's deterioration and ultimate erosion of spirit. In addition, the novel (as well as the short stories of this period) reveal Fitzgerald's deepening concern with the weakness, disillusion, and personal misfortunes which cause men like Anthony to lose their youthful and romantic dreams. None of the heroes of this period, therefore, have the energy and vitality of an Amory Blaine, nor do they possess the stature and wisdom of the later tragic figures. But in his deepening examination of the broken dreams and faded hopes, Fitzgerald explores in great depth the idea of "emotional bankruptcy," a condition which he is to treat in even more complexity and with more insight for the remainder of his career.

VI REFINING THE FORM

"Sometime between The Beautiful and Damned (1922) and The Great Gatsby (1925)," writes James E. Miller, "Fitzgerald won 'intellectual control' over his imagination. . . ."¹ Miller no doubt draws his conclusion from "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" (1922), "Winter Dreams" (1922), "The Sensible Thing" (1924), and "Absolution" (1924), four of Fitzgerald's very best short stories. In them, Fitzgerald shapes and refines, deepens and broadens the emerging theme of dream-and-disillusion to the point at which, in The Great Gatsby (1925), this duality becomes both structurally and thematically the novel's governing principle.

In earlier stories, protagonists like Gordon Sterrett and Anthony Patch lose their romantic dreams of youth, wealth, and love because of some inherent character weakness. In stories like "Winter Dreams," "The Sensible Thing," "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," and "Absolution," Fitzgerald has deepened his treatment of dream-and-disillusion to reveal the essentially tragic paradox which lies at the core of all human dreams: possession of the dream leads to ultimate disillusion and the loss of dreams. Dexter Green ("Winter Dreams") and George O'Kelley ("The Sensible Thing"), for example, capture their dreams only to find them insufficient; Braddock Washington ("The Diamond as Big as the Ritz") realizes his dream of great wealth only

to be dehumanized by it; and young Rudolph Miller ("Absolution") is warned by Father Schwartz that reality can only shatter his romantic dreams.

"Winter Dreams" is the story of Dexter Green, a hopeful and ambitious young man. Unlike many of Fitzgerald's other romantic dreamers, Dexter longs to possess wealth, position, and status because these goals represent for him the best life has to offer. Not wanting "association with glittering people--he wanted the glittering things themselves. Often he reached out for the best without knowing why he wanted it. . . ." ² Uninterested in the romance and allure of success, Dexter dreams only of tangible and attainable things--money, position, and possession of the "golden girl," here the glamorous and elusive Judy Jones.

Over a period of years, Dexter rises from an obscure young caddy at the exclusive Sherry Island Country Club to become one of the richest and most successful young business tycoons in the middle-west. By the end of the story, he has joined the ranks of financiers in New York City. On the surface, it seems that Dexter has realized his "winter dreams," but one still eludes him--he has been unable to win Judy Jones.

In attaining all of his other dreams, Dexter found, as Clinton S. Burhans says, that "the farther he moves into the world of his winter dreams, the more he is disillusioned with it." ³ For example, early in the story, Dexter realizes his dream of becoming a champion golfer and defeating T. E. Hedrick, the man for whom he once caddied. Having imagined "a marvelous match" which he "played a hundred times over the fairways of his imagination," Dexter finds that in actually defeating Hedrick, he is "impressed by the tremendous superiority he

felt toward Mr. T. E. Hedrick, who was a bore and not even a good golfer any more."⁴ Similarly, after he has gained the money and position which allow him access to those elite groups he once admired from afar, Dexter again is surprised to find that "he had no social aspirations and rather despised the dancing men who were always on tap for the Thursday or Saturday parties. . . ."⁵ Burhans remarks that at this point "the only one of Dexter's 'winter dreams' with which he is not ultimately disillusioned is the only one he cannot have in the real world and time--Judy Jones."⁶ Because she has eluded him, Dexter has been able to keep the image of a youthful, radiant, and infinitely desirable Judy Jones alive in his imagination. Dexter, in fact, associates her in his memory with the time in his youth when he was hovering on the edge of success--that magic moment just before the fulfillment of his winter dreams.

As Fitzgerald describes the scene, Dexter is lying peacefully and dreamily on a raft in the middle of the lake which surrounds the Sherry Island Country Club. He is listening to a piano on the other side of the lake playing a tune which reminds him of "a prom . . . when he could not afford the luxury of proms, and he has stood outside the gymnasium and listened. The sound of the tune precipitated in him a sort of ecstasy and it is with that ecstasy he viewed what happened to him now. It was a mood of intense appreciation, a sense that, for once, he was magnificently attune to life and that everything was radiating a brightness and glamour he might never know again."⁷ "For Dexter," Burhans writes "the melody drifting over the water fuses the past and the present, the years of struggle just behind and the fulfillment just beginning. This is the magic moment when dreaming and striving

reach out to grasp realization, the time of rapture before the fullness of achievement brings its seemingly inevitable disillusion."⁸ It is on this night and in this mood that Dexter falls irrevocably in love with Judy Jones and forever associates her in his memory with this radiant time of youthful promise and hope. For many years hence, his relationship with Judy Jones remains a succession of failures and new beginnings. Each time he thinks he is close enough to finally reach out and possess her, she breaks it off.

As the affair continues to fluctuate, Dexter is finally forced to realize that he can never possess his elusive and fickle dream girl. He gives up the pursuit, but he finds he cannot give up the dream: "No disillusion in the world in which she has grown up could cure his illusion as to her desirability."⁹ For without tangible Judy, Dexter finds that "fire and loveliness were gone, the magic nights and the wonder of the varying hours and seasons . . . slender lips, downturning, dropping to his lips and bearing him up into a heaven of eyes . . . The thing was deep in him. He was too strong and alive for it to die lightly."¹⁰

The last scene in the story finds Dexter weeping for the loss of this lingering youthful dream. For at this moment, he has learned from a business associate that Judy Jones, the beautiful, elusive, and hitherto unattainable girl of his "winter dreams," has become just another housewife. Having successfully attained his material goals, Dexter "had thought that having nothing else to lose he was invulnerable at last--but he knew that he had just lost something more, as surely as if he had married Judy Jones and seen her away fade before his eyes."¹¹

Up to this crucial point in his life, Dexter had been able to keep his dream of Judy Jones alive simply because he has been unable

to possess her. When he learns of her deterioration and aging, Dexter's dream of her youthful vitality and beauty is irrevocably shattered; and with it, a part of him dies:

The dream was gone. Something had been taken from him. In a sort of panic he pushed the palms of his hands into his eyes and tried to bring up a picture of the waters lapping on Sherry Island and the moonlite veranda, and gingham on the gold links and the dry sun and the gold color of her neck's soft down. And her mouth damp to his kisses and her eyes plaintive with melancholy and her freshness like new fine linen in the morning. Why, these things were no longer in the world! They had existed and they existed no longer. For the first time in years the tears were streaming down his face. But they were for himself now. He did not care about mouth and eyes and moving hands. He wanted to care and could not care.¹²

Dexter's tears are most certainly "for himself." Forced to imagine Judy Jones as Mrs. Lud Sims, he realizes that he can never again return in his memory to that "fragile moment in time, when youth and his winter dreams were making his life richer and sweeter than it would ever be again."¹³ Once this part of him is lost, Dexter senses that:

. . . he had gone away and could never go back anymore. The gates were closed, the sun was down, and there was no beauty but the grey 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. 'Long ago,' he said, 'long ago, there was something in me, but now that thing is gone. Now that thing is gone, that thing is gone. I cannot cry. I cannot care. That thing will come back no more.'¹⁴

In gaining his winter dreams, therefore, Dexter Green has discovered that their greatest value to him was not in the fulfillment but in the struggle to gain them and that he was most closely "attuned to life" at the moment just before the fulfillment of his hopes and dreams. Moreover, when his romantic illusion of Judy Jones is shattered,

Dexter loses that part of him which has nourished and kept that moment alive. At the end of the story, he is forced to recognize that he can no longer preserve, either in his memory or in his imagination, the ecstasy, wonder, and excitement of that magic youthful time when the dream was a shimmering illusion that he had only to reach out and grasp.

It is this central insight--that the struggle to gain the dream is richer than the possession of it and that possession or loss of the dream kills the capacity to dream--which also lies at the core of "The Sensible Thing." Although not so richly detailed or complex a story as "Winter Dreams," "The Sensible Thing" has a good deal in common with its predecessor and, in addition, contains several motifs and situations which Fitzgerald will develop more fully and completely in The Great Gatsby.

Like Dexter Green, George O'Kelley is an ambitious young man who dreams of wealth, position, and status. Moreover, George equates success with romantic love. "There was no triumph without a girl concerned," Fitzgerald writes, "and if he did not lay his spoils at her feet he could at least hold them for a passing moment before her eyes."¹⁵ It is George's futile pursuit of a double dream--material success and the possession of the "top" girl--which is the subject of the short story.

Upon graduating from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, O'Kelley, a young engineer, goes to New York to pursue his dream of success. He imagines that through effort, tenacity, and force of will, he will be able to "change the sweep of rivers and the shape of mountains so that life would flourish in the badlands of the world where it had never taken root before. He loved steel, steel inexhaustible, to be

made lovely, austere in his imaginative fire. . . . "¹⁶ In his imagination, George is able to transform worlds; but in reality because he needs money to win Jonquil Cary, the beautiful southern belle, "he was an insurance clerk at forty dollars a week with his dream slipping fast behind him. The little dark girl who had made this intolerable mess was waiting to be sent for in a town in Tennessee."¹⁷ Thus, Fitzgerald implies that George is compromising his dream of success in order to pursue another more immediate goal--that of marrying Jonquil. But that dream is also to elude George.

Because of her aversion to poverty and struggle and because of her impatience, Jonquil tells George plainly in a letter that she is unwilling to wait for him. George hurries South only to find that she wishes to break off the relationship because it's "'the sensible thing'" to do. Stung by her rejection, George goes to South America and ultimately rises to great success as an engineer. However, he soon discovers (as did Dexter Green), that the realization of his dream of success has brought with it only dissatisfaction and disillusion. Believing that Jonquil's love will restore his old vitality and spirit, George returns to claim her. He is surprised to find her willing and anxious to take him back, but he is also startled to discover that the old dream no longer holds the same fascination and allure. Now that he is finally able to possess his dream girl, he finds that he does not desire her with the same single-minded intensity: "There was nothing changed--only everything was changed. . . . There was no cloud of magic . . . He sat in a chair, amazed to find it a chair, realizing that his imagination had distorted and colored all these simple and familiar things."¹⁸ As the dream recedes before him, George begins to understand

the magnitude of the compromise he made when he had originally agreed to break off the affair:

It seemed to him long ago and inexpressibly sad. On that sofa he had felt agony and grief such as he would never feel again. He would never be so weak and so tired and so miserable and so poor. Yet he knew that that boy of fifteen months before had something, a trust, a warmth that was gone forever. The sensible thing--they had done the sensible thing. He had traded in his first youth for strength and carved success out of despair. But with his youth, life had carried away the freshness of his love.¹⁹

In the conclusion of the story, George finds that although "he still wanted this girl, and he knew that the past sometimes comes back . . . ,"²⁰ a part of him which once was youthful, fresh, and hopeful is irrevocably lost. In a magnificent passage (which is a direct foreshadowing of the key thematic scene in The Great Gatsby where Gatsby kisses Daisy for the first time), George makes a painful recognition:

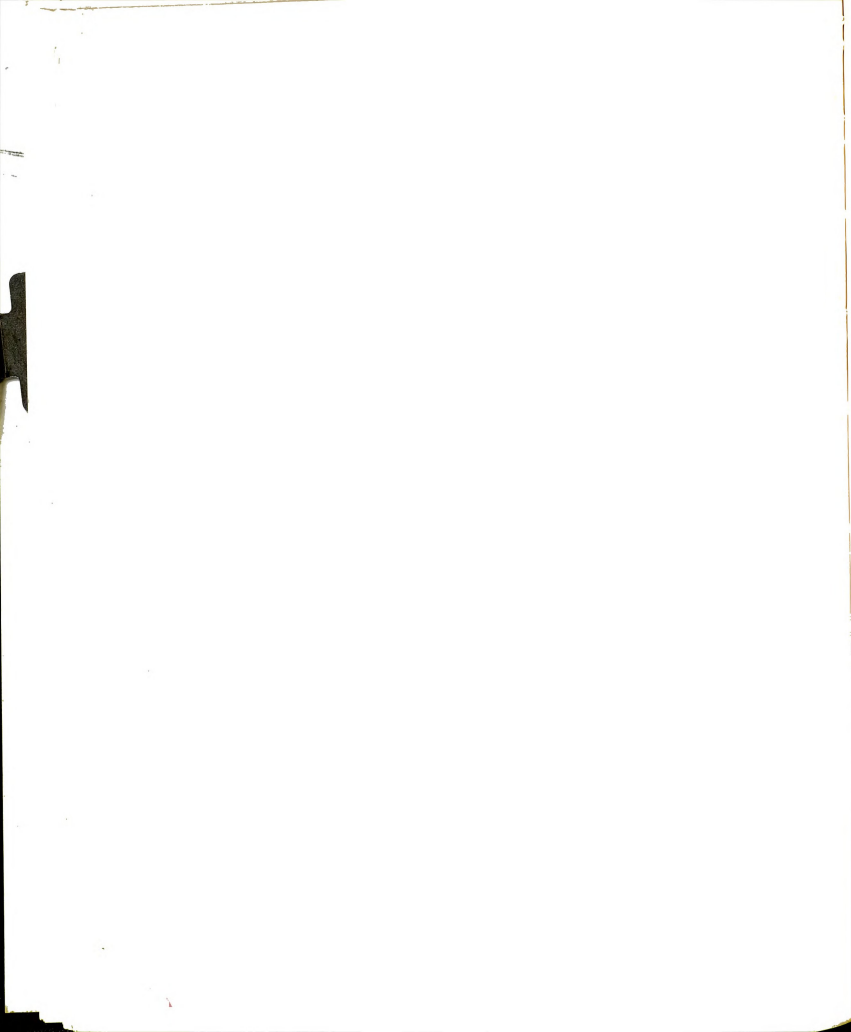
All the time in the world--his life and hers. But for an instant as he kissed her he knew that though he searched through eternity he could never recapture those lost April hours. He might press her now till the muscles knotted on his arms--she was something desirable and rare that he had fought for and made his own--but never again an intangible whisper in the dusk or on the breeze of night. . . . Well, let it pass he thought; April is over, April is over. There are all kinds of love in the world, but never the same love twice.²¹

In Dexter Green's and George O'Kelley's sad and sober recognitions, Fitzgerald is perhaps suggesting that every man's romantic dreams are either behind him or a whisper of hope in the future and that once the dream has been realized, something is lost--the drive to struggle, to strive, and to hope. Possessing the dream must inevitably kill the ability to dream. Fitzgerald implies, therefore, that dreams are best kept in the imagination, for only there can they remain timeless. Only in his imagination can man remain secure from disillusion and the loss of his hopes and dreams.

"The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" is set apart from "Winter Dreams" and "The Sensible Thing" by Fitzgerald's more ambitious treatment of the dream-and-disillusion paradox on two levels simultaneously. Although the focus in this short story is on Braddock Washington's world, one must first come to terms with the character of John Unger, Fitzgerald's narrator. For it is John who, in the process of the story, gradually becomes aware both of his attraction to Braddock Washington's glittering riches and of the ultimate corruption resulting from Washington's possession of great wealth.

To understand John Unger, it is necessary first to examine his middle-class background and his upbringing. Coming from "Hades--a small town on the Mississippi River--,"²² John Unger derives his values from a creed which has at its core "the earnest worship of and respect for riches."²³ While John's hometown of Hades is not Hell, its motto "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here" suggests that it is a world inhabited by dead souls. Moreover, Fitzgerald suggests that in elevating possession of wealth to a creed, the people of Hades have sacrificed spiritual values and replaced them with materialism.

In keeping with family tradition, John, when he is old enough to leave home, is sent by his family to St. Midas, "the most exclusive and most expensive boy's preparatory school in the world."²⁴ It is no wonder that he is initially awed by his schoolmate Percy Washington whose father "is by far the richest man in the world" and who possesses "a diamond bigger than the Ritz Carleton Hotel."²⁵ When Percy invites him to visit his home, John cannot refuse "else his parents would have turned away in horror at the blasphemy."²⁶



Subsequently, John journeys from Hades to the Montana mountains where Percy's family resides. But before he arrives at the Washington empire, he must first pass through the foul and barren village of Fish. In contrast with the mountain valley of "golden haze" and "sweeps of lawns and lakes and valleys," the dessicating village of Fish is "minute, dismal, and forgotten":

There were twelve men, so it was said, in the village of Fish, twelve sombre and inexplicable souls who sucked a lean milk from the almost literally bare rock upon which a mysterious populatory force had begotten them. They had become a race apart, these twelve men of Fish, like some species developed by an early whim of nature, which on second thought had abandoned them to struggle and extermination . . . there remained in them none of that vital quality of illusion which would make them wonder or speculate, else a religion might have grown up around these mysterious visitations. But the men of Fish were beyond all religion--the barest and most savage tenets of even Christianity could gain no foothold on that barren rock--so there was no altar, no priest, no sacrifice; only each night at seven the silent concourse by the shanty, a congregation who lifted up a prayer of dim, anemic wonder.²⁷

Like Hades, Fish is a world in which spirituality (specifically Christianity) no longer has any viable meaning. As. K. W. G. Cross remarks:

This barren landscape inhabited by those twelve dead souls could suggest the sickness of American society dedicated to the service of Mannon. The dream of limitless wealth has rendered religion obsolete; spiritually dead, these sinister apostles of Fish retain only the bare extinguished spark of wonder.²⁸

Fitzgerald's portrait of Hades and Fish skillfully foreshadows the appearance of Braddock Washington's own self-created world of pure materialism. Upon his arrival in Washington's world, John is awed at its florid magnificence and views the house and the mountains as "a sort of floating fairyland":²⁹



Full in the lilt of the stars, an exquisite chateau rose from the borders of the lake, climbed in marble radiance half the height of an adjoining mountain, then melted into grace, in perfect symmetry, in translucent feminine languor, into the massed darkness of a forest of pine. The many towers, the slender tracery of the sloping parapets, the chiselled wonder of a thousand yellow windows with their oblongs and hexagons and triangles of golden light, the shattered softness of the intersecting planes of star shine and blue shade, all trembled on John's spirit like a chord of music.³⁰

Coming upon the place where the diamonds are stored, he is startled to discover:

. . . a room that was like the platonic conception of the ultimate prison ceiling, floor and all, it was lined with an unbroken mass of diamonds, diamonds of every size and shape, until lit with tall violet lamps in the corners, it dazzled the eyes with a whiteness that could be compared only with itself, beyond human wish or dream.³¹

Because John is so utterly entranced by the magnificence and glitter of the diamonds, he is convinced that Braddock Washington has created an earthly paradise, a true Utopia, the epitome of which is a golf course "all green, you see,--no fairway, no rough, no hazards."³² It is here in this dream world of "perfect" riches that John T. Unger falls in love with Washington's daughter Kismine, who at first seems to be the "incarnation of physical perfection."³³

As he becomes more deeply a part of this world, however, John soon learns that this "platonic" realm of perfect wealth and beauty is built upon a legacy of corruption--deceit, double-dealing, racism, and finally, murder. As John becomes privy to the grim, secret history of the Washington family and learns of their attempts to preserve their fortune, he begins to view their paradise with new eyes. He listens in rapt amazement as Braddock Washington explains to him how the family has schemed and connived to prevent the discovery of its secret fortune:

'The first time my grandfather corrupted a whole Department of State survey; the second time he had the official maps of the United States tinkered with--that held them for fifteen years--Then he had the river deflected and he had what looked like a village built up on its banks--so that they'd see it and think it was a town ten miles farther up the valley.'³⁴

Moreover, John learns that the founder Fitz-Norman Washington "was compelled, due to a series of unfortunate complications, to murder his brother, whose unfortunate habit of drinking himself into an indiscreet stupor had several times endangered their safety."³⁵ Before he is able to fully comprehend the implications of what he has heard, John learns that several aviators who accidentally discovered the mountain are kept prisoner in deep dungeons. He is further horrified to learn from Kismine that, for obvious reasons, all of the children's guests have been put to death. She sees nothing wrong with this: "'We can't let such an inevitable thing as death stand in the way of enjoying life . . .,'" she tells him matter-of-factly. "'Think how lonesome it'd be out here if we never had any one. Why father and mother have sacrificed some of their best friends just as we have.'"³⁶

By now it has become clear to John that his life is in danger and he must act quickly to save himself. Taking Kismine and her sister Jasmine with him, he attempts to escape from the valley during an air attack led by an escaped aviator. From a vantage point atop the mountain, John watches as Braddock Washington desperately attempts to preserve his empire from destruction by offering a bribe to God:

Prometheus Enriched was calling witness to forgotten sacrifices, forgotten rituals, prayers obsolete before the birth of Christ . . . and now, he, Braddock Washington, Emperor of Diamonds, king and priest of the age of gold, arbiter of splendor and luxury, would offer up a treasure such as princes before him had never dreamed of, offer it up not in suppliance, but in pride.³⁷

Washington's faith in the power of his own riches is so strong that he has little doubt but that God will comply:

There was no one else with whom he had ever needed to treat or bargain. He doubted only whether he had made his bribe big enough. God had his price, of course. God was made in man's image, so it had been said: He must have His price. Everything would be up to specifications and there was nothing vulgar in his assertion that it would be cheap at the price. He implied that Providence could take it or leave it.³⁸

When there is no answer from the heavens, Washington blows up his empire.

Cast in the form of a fantasy, "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" is nevertheless about reality. It points out the inherent attractions and benefits of great wealth and also its power to corrupt and dehumanize those who subordinate everything to possessing it. But through his narrator John Unger, Fitzgerald also repeats his now familiar theme: the possession of man's material dreams can only destroy the purity of those dreams.

Early in the narrative, Fitzgerald introduces this theme in a description of John Unger:

He was enjoying himself as much as he was able. It is youth's felicity as well as its insufficiency that it can never live in the present, but always by measuring up the day against its own radiantly imagined future--flowers and gold, girls and stars, they are only prefigurations and prophecies of that incomparable, unattainable young dream.³⁹

Fitzgerald is here suggesting that men can dream of untarnished beauty, perfection and radiance so long as this dream remains "incomparable" and "unattainable." John's initial dream of perfect riches and perfect beauty--reflected in Washington's diamond paradise--is shattered by his realization of Washington's corruption. At the end of the story a sober and more chastened John Unger tells Kismine cynically: "At any rate, let us love for a while, for a year or so, you and me. There are only

diamonds in the world, diamonds and the shabby gift of disillusion. Well, I have that last and I will make the usual nothing of it.'"40

Implied here (as well as in "Winter Dreams" and "The Sensible Thing") is a paradox which Fitzgerald will develop more fully and carefully in The Great Gatsby: man inevitably dreams of a beauty and perfection, "a platonic realm that could be compared only with itself, beyond human wish or dream;" however, he attempts to build his timeless realm, with riches and beauty, the perishable, material, corruptible substances of his own world. Therefore, as both Braddock Washington's and John Unger's experiences suggest, the purity of the dream can be preserved only if man fails to attain his dream.

In "Absolution," "a story intended to portray Gatsby's early life,"41 Fitzgerald again centers and objectifies the dream-and-disillusion paradox in two characters--an aging priest and a boy. Although the story is mainly concerned with young Rudolph Miller's rejection of his guilts and fears and his escape into a world of dreams and fantasy, it is at the same time a recounting of the spiritual and emotional crisis of Father Schwartz. In fact, by framing the boy's story with the priest's recognition of his own agony, Fitzgerald deliberately parallels the two crises and uses one to mirror the other.

Fitzgerald begins the story with a vivid and sensual portrayal of the priest's suffering:

There was once a priest with cold, watery eyes, who in the still of the night wept cold tears. He wept because he was unable to attain a complete mystical union with our Lord. Sometimes near four o'clock, there was a rustle of Swede girls along the path by his window, and in their shrill laughter he found a terrible dissonance that made him pray loud for the twilight to come. At twilight the laughter and the voices were quieter, . . . But there was no escape, from the hot madness of four o'clock. From his window, as far as he could see, the Dakota wheat thronged the valley of the Red River. The wheat was terrible to look upon and the carpet pattern to which in agony he bent his eyes sent his

thoughts brooding through grotesque labyrinths, open always to the unavoidable sun.⁴²

Aside from carefully evoking a sense of mood and place, Fitzgerald depicts the sensuality which surrounds the priest and effects him as an aphrodisiac. It is Father Schwartz's response to this sensuality which is the cause of his disillusion: for having taken the vows of chastity, Father Schwartz has become acutely aware of his inability to realize his dream of attaining "a complete mystical union with our Lord."

While the priest is in the midst of his agony, young Rudolph Miller enters his study ostensibly to confess his sins and receive absolution. As he begins his confession, it becomes obvious that his conflict is very similar to that of the priest. Rudolph, too, has been unable to reconcile his desires with his guilts and fears. Like Father Schwartz, the young boy senses that there is something powerful and compelling within him which is in conflict with what he has been taught to believe and to feel. When he enters confession, the boy thinks that "He must try now with all his might to be sorry for his sins--not because he was afraid, but because he had offended God. He must convince God that he was sorry and to do so he must first convince himself."⁴³

Having recently seen a young boy and girl necking in a hayloft, Rudolph "could not tell Father Schwartz how his pulse had pumped in his wrist, how a strange, romantic excitement had possessed him. . . ."⁴⁴ Rudolph's immediate reaction to the scene was fear of punishment and retribution and then guilt. Momentarily frightened, he avoids telling the priest his true feelings. A moment later, however, a strange sensation comes over him. He realizes that by withholding information he has, for the first time, lied in confession. To his amazement, he feels no guilt, no fear of eternal damnation:

A minute later when he emerged into the twilight, the relief in coming from the muggy church into an open world of wheat and sky postponed the full realization of what he had done. Instead of worrying he took a deep breath of the crisp air and began to say over and over to himself the words 'Blatchford Sarnemington, Blatchford Sarnemington.'⁴⁵

Rudolph's subsequent invocation of his imaginary alter-ego Blatchford Sarnemington is the first stage in the birth of his new self: "Blatchford Sarnemington was himself, . . . When he became Blatchford . . . a suave nobility flowed from him. Blatchford Sarnemington lived in great sweeping triumphs."⁴⁶

Almost at once, however, his "exhilaration faded out and his mind cooled, and he felt the horror of his lie. God, of course, already knew of it--but Rudolph preserved a corner of his mind where he was safe from God, where he prepared the subterfuges with which he often tricked God. Hiding now in this corner he considered how he could best avoid the consequences of his misstatement."⁴⁷

Hoping now to avoid communion, the next morning Rudolph defiantly attempts to drink a glass of water while his angry father watches. He is surprised to find that his father's subsequent threats and warnings of "reform school" and "hell" no longer intimidate him:

Not even this familiar threat could deepen the abyss that Rudolph saw before him. He must either tell all now, offering his body for what he knew would be a ferocious beating, or else tempt the thunderbolts by receiving the Body and Blood of Christ with sacrilege on his soul. And of the two the former seemed more terrible..⁴⁸

At church that morning Rudolph tests his new freedom by deliberately lying once more in confession. As soon as the words are out of his mouth he cringes in fear as he awaits the inevitable punishment:

"There was no reason why God should not stop his heart. During the past twelve hours he had committed a series of mortal sins increasing in gravity, and he was now to crown them all with a blasphemous sacrilege."⁴⁹ As he proceeds to take communion, Rudolph's guilts once again overwhelm him. He was "alone with himself, drenched with perspiration and deep in mortal sin. As he walked back to his pew the sharp taps of his cloven hoofs were loud upon the floor, and he knew it was a dark poison he carried in his heart."⁵⁰ But surprisingly when no bolt of lightning flashes down from the sky to strike him dead, the boy feels a sense of relief:

A maudlin exultation filled him. Not easily ever again would he be able to put an abstraction before the necessities of his ease and pride. An invisible line had been crossed and he had become aware of his isolation--aware that it applied not only to those moments when he was Blatchford Sarnemington, but that it applied to all his inner life. Hitherto such phenomena as 'crazy' ambitions and petty shames and fears had been but private reservations, unacknowledged before the throne of his official soul. Now he realized unconsciously that his private reservations were himself--and all the rest a garnished front and a conventional flag. The pressure of his environment had driven him into the lonely secret road of adolescence.⁵¹

Although it seems as if Rudolph has momentarily escaped his guilts and fears about his family and his religion, Fitzgerald implies that the boy's decision never again "to put an abstraction before the necessities of his ease and pride" is a self-delusion, a fantasy. For, in fact, Rudolph only has substituted a new set of abstractions for the old ones:

There was something ineffably gorgeous somewhere that had nothing to do with God. He no longer thought that God was angry at him about the original lie, because He must have understood that Rudolph had done it to make things finer in the confessional, brightening up the dinginess of his admissions by saying a thing radiant and proud. At the moment when he had affirmed immaculate honor a silver pennon had flapped

out into the breeze somewhere and there had been the crunch of leather and the shine of silver spurs and a troop of horsemen waiting for dawn on a low green hill. The sun had made stars of light on their breast plates like the picture at home of the German cuirassiers at Sudan.⁵²

Hence, Fitzgerald implies that Rudolph has simply replaced God with new abstractions found in his romantic dream--beauty, honor and chivalry.

At the end of the story, having seen his own dream of attaining "a complete mystical union with our Lord" shattered by the sensuality of life around him and by the real sexual urges he feels, Father Schwartz desperately warns the boy:

'Well, go and see an amusement park. It's a thing like a fair, only much more glittering. Go to one at night and stand a little way off from it in a dark place--under dark trees. You'll see a big wheel made of lights turning in the air, and a long slide shooting boats down into the water. And a band playing somewhere, and a smell of peanuts--and everything will twinkle. But it won't remind you of anything, you see. It will all just hang out there in the night like a colored balloon--like a big yellow lantern on a pole. . . . But don't get up too close . . . because if you do you'll only feel the heat and sweat and the life.'⁵³

Because of his own failure to reconcile his dual urges, the priest knows that putting another abstraction in place of a discarded one results only in dangerous self-delusion. By portraying the simultaneous conflicts of both the boy and the priest, Fitzgerald is raising the complex, human, and painfully real problem man faces when his abstract dreams inevitably clash with reality. The moralist or "spoiled priest" in Fitzgerald is suggesting to the "romantic young man" that in seeking "something ineffably gorgeous which had nothing to do with God," punishment will be meted out, but not by Divine Providence. For when Rudolph Miller's abstract dreams do fasten onto concrete, tangible reality, he too, like the priest, will inevitably suffer disillusion and loss of his dreams.

III

In all four stories, Fitzgerald explores the dream-and-disillusion paradox in some depth and complexity and with maturing insight and perspective. In each one, he emphasizes the romantic, illusory, and almost ineffable quality that the dream embodies before it becomes attached to something tangible, mortal and ultimately perishable. In summary, these stories offer both structurally and thematically the fullest and most complete treatment of dream-and-disillusion in Fitzgerald's early work. It is thus only a short step from a work such as "Absolution" to the creation of The Great Gatsby.

VII THE GREAT GATSBY

Just before the publication of The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald wrote to Maxwell Perkins explaining that " . . . in my new novel I'm thrown directly on purely creative work--not trashy imaginings as in my stories but the sustained imagination of a sincere yet radiant world. . . . This book will be a consciously artistic achievement and must depend on that as the first books did not."¹ Fitzgerald's contention that his novel "will be a consciously artistic achievement" is not simply an idle boast. For structurally and thematically, The Great Gatsby is the most integrated piece of long fiction that Fitzgerald wrote.

As in "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" and "Absolution," The Great Gatsby has two main characters: the romantic, enigmatic, and symbolic Jay Gatsby and the stolid and staunch narrator and interpreter, Nick Carraway. Both characters, as John Henry Raleigh points out, offer contrasts in personality, temperament, and vision:

Allegorically considered, Nick is reason, experience, waking, reality and history, while Gatsby is imagination, innocence, sleeping, dream, and eternity. Nick is like Wordsworth listening to the still, sad music of humanity, while Gatsby is like Blake seeing hosts of angels in the sun. The one can only look at the facts and see them as tragic; the other tries to transform the facts and see them as an act of the Imagination. Nick's mind is conservative and historical, as is his lineage; Gatsby's is radical and apocalyptic--as rootless as his heritage. Nick is too much immersed in time and in reality; Gatsby is hopelessly out of it. Nick is always withdrawing, while Gatsby pursues

the green light. Nick can't be hurt, but neither can he be happy. Gatsby can experience ecstasy, but his fate is necessarily tragic. They are generally two of the best types of humanity: the moralist and the radical.²

While Raleigh's comparisons seem a bit oversimplified, there is no doubt that Carraway and Gatsby are separate and distinct types who complement each other. Moreover, it is possible to view them as representing both "spoiled priest" and "romantic young man," those two conflicting and yet complementary aspects of Fitzgerald's own dualistic nature. Since Fitzgerald is contrasting the two and since Carraway is Gatsby's "biographer," it is important to come to terms with Nick's character and with his function as narrator. In addition to being the novel's interpreter and, to some extent, Fitzgerald's spokesman, Nick is the single source of information and insight into the mysterious and enigmatic world of Jay Gatsby.

Clearly in his initial depiction of Nick, Fitzgerald is assigning him a dual function--that of participant and observer. And because he is capable of both detachment and sensitivity and because he is humanistically inclined,³ Nick is able to draw contrasts, make comparisons, and also interpret the significance of events and people. For example, succinctly characterizing the world of Tom and Daisy Buchanan, he says: "Why they came East I don't know. They had spent a year in France for no particular reason, and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together."⁴ In that one magnificent epigram, Nick reveals the essence of the Buchanans' world: a select and closed society, a world characterized by an indolence, restlessness, lack of direction. It is a world in

which its inhabitants embody a kind of pride or moral superiority which is seemingly conferred upon them at birth.⁵

The Buchanan's "secret society" is the insulated, exclusive world of the very rich, which Nick here characterizes as arrogant, pretentious, and morally corrupt.

For example, in describing Tom, Nick says: "' . . . I felt that Tom would drift on forever seeking, a little wistfully, for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game."⁶ Nick goes on to observe that Tom had a " . . . hard mouth and a supercilious manner . . . arrogant eyes . . . enormous power . . . a body capable of enormous leverage--a cruel body."⁷

Of his cousin Daisy, Nick observes: "Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright mouth, but there was an excitement in her voice that men who cared for her found difficult to forget; a singing compulsion, a whispered 'Listen,' a promise that she had done gay, exciting things, and that there were gay, exiting things hovering in the next hour."⁸ But in response to Daisy's comment that "'I've been everywhere and seen everyone and done everything. . . . Sophisticated--I'm so sophisticated,'"⁹ Nick says:

. . . I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. It made me uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory emotion from me. I waited, and sure enough, in a moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face, as if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged.¹⁰

In contrast to the glittering but spiritually sterile Buchanans is the mysterious and enigmatic Jay Gatsby. Upon first observing Gatsby, his West Egg neighbor, " . . . who was standing with his hands

In his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars. Nick surmises that something in his leisurely movements and the secure position of his feet upon the lawn suggested that it was Mr. Gatsby himself, come out to determine what share was his of our local heavens."¹¹ It is evident from the delicate texture and poetic quality of the language Nick uses to describe Gatsby that he views his neighbor's nightly ritualistic vigil with a kind of wonder and awe:

. . . he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone--he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily, I glanced seaward--and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished, and I was alone again in the quiet darkness."¹²

In comparing and contrasting both East and West Egg, Nick sees beneath the glitter and appeal of wealth to the soulless indifference and arrogance which characterizes Tom and Daisy's world. At the same time, Gatsby's domain remains a mystery and enigma, something which attracts Nick and which he wishes to explore more deeply. In singling out for praise "Gatsby who represented everything for which" Nick has "an unaffected scorn," Nick is admitting that although this strange character offends his own sense of propriety, still "there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life . . . --it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again."¹³

The outraged moralist in Nick--the "spoiled priest" who wants the "world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever"--suspects that Gatsby is deeply involved in some mysterious and perhaps

corrupt dealings. But the humanist in Nick also recognizes that this man possesses some intangible quality--call it goodness, purity, or perhaps a strange kind of naïve innocence--which sets him apart from the sordid, morally corrupt, and spiritually barren world of the Buchanans, Jordan Baker, and later, Meyer Wolfsheim. For as he comments: "No, Gatsby turned out all right in the end; it was what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men."¹⁴

As the "spoiled priest" telling and evaluating both his own and the "romantic young man" Jay Gatsby's story, Nick is the ideal narrator. Capable of objectivity and detachment, he is able to stand outside the world of this novel and comment upon its corruptions. At the same time Nick is not too cynical, or too detached. By singling out Gatsby for praise and sympathy, Nick is also admitting to and vicariously indulging his own romantic inclinations and attractions for the "glittering things"--money, romance and success.

For several other reasons, Nick is eminently qualified to narrate and interpret this complex tale. First, he is linked to all of the major characters in the novel by virtue of their common background. Commenting at the end of the novel, Nick observes: "I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all--Tom and Gatsby, Daisy, Jordan and I, were all Westerners, and perhaps we possessed some deficiency in common which made us singularly unadaptable to Eastern life."¹⁵ But unlike Gatsby whose parents were poor Dakota farmers and unlike Tom, Daisy, and Jordan who were born into wealth, Nick's family, he says, are "something of a clan, and we have a tradition that we're

descended from the Dukes of Buccleuch, . . ."¹⁶ What at first seems to be snobbishness on Nick's part is, in fact, a deep sense of respect and reverence for tradition learned in a community ". . . where dwellings are still called through decades by a family's name."¹⁷ And although Nick also understands that the middle-west is in many ways dull and narrow-minded (it is one of the reasons he has come East), he clings, nevertheless, to the old Victorian belief that community and tradition foster in one a sense of integrity and responsibility.

More significantly, Nick's upbringing has taught him the importance of restraint and patience. "Reserving judgements," he says, "is a matter of infinite hope. I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that, as my father snobbishly suggested, and I snobbishly repeat, a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth."¹⁸ Nick also does not forget his father's admonition as he seeks those rare individuals who possess genuine human goodness, that quality of humanity and incorruptibility which might be described as "purity," "integrity," "beauty," and "love." And he cannot be fooled or cajoled into accepting any shams or substitutes. As he says of himself with a tinge of self-irony, "I am one of the few honest people I have ever known."¹⁹ In fact, Fitzgerald deliberately endows Nick with the "fundamental decencies" of responsibility and honesty; for if he is to be the window through which Gatsby and the others are viewed, he must be both worthy of trust and dependable.

Curiously drawn by Gatsby's mystery and allure, Nick attempts to penetrate the veil of secrecy surrounding Gatsby, and he is invited to

attend one of Gatsby's famous parties. His initial reaction to his mysterious host is a mixture of awe and skepticism; he sees Gatsby both as larger than life and, at the same time, as almost a fabrication, a fraud:

He smiled understandingly--much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced--or seemed to face--the whole external world for an instant, and then concentrated on 'you' with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself, and assured you that it has precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. Precisely at that point it vanished--and I was looking at an elegant young roughneck, a year or two over thirty, whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd. Sometime before he introduced himself I'd got a strong impression that he was picking his words with care.²⁰

Because he views Gatsby, at least in part, as possessing some moral superiority or "heightened sensitivity," Nick suggests that Gatsby's motive for throwing his magnificent and gaudy parties is not simply a need to show off or to please his guests: "I would have accepted without question the information that Gatsby sprang from the swamps of Louisiana or from the lower East Side of New York. But young men didn't--drift coolly out of nowhere to buy a palace on Long Island."²¹ Observing his host more closely, Nick becomes conscious of Gatsby's obvious remoteness and intense preoccupation. At the close of the evening, Nick finds Gatsby standing alone on his porch:

A wafer of a moon was shining over Gatsby's house, making the night as fine as before. . . . A sudden emptiness seemed to flow now from the windows and the great doors, endowing with complete isolation the figure of the host, who stood on the porch, his hand up in a formal gesture of farewell.²²

The next day, Gatsby invites Nick to accompany him to New York City. En route, Gatsby drops his guard and suddenly begins to unfold an incredible history. At first he tells the startled Nick: " . . . I lived like a young rajah in all the capitals of Europe--Paris, Venice, Rome--collecting jewels . . . hunting big game, painting a little, things for myself only, and trying to forget something very sad that happened to me long ago."²³ Nick's initial reaction to the fantastic tale is a mixture of skepticism and disbelief: "With an effort I managed to restrain my incredulous laughter. The very phrases were worn so threadbare that they evoked no image except that of a turbaned 'character' leaking sawdust at every pore as he pursued a tiger through the Bois de Boulogne."²⁴

However, Nick's incredulity, is quickly dispelled when having related an equally fantastic tale of his heroic efforts during the war, Gatsby produces a medal of valor from Montenegro. Now, almost completely mesmerized, Nick marvels:

Little Montenegro! He lifted up the words and nodded at them--with his smile. The smile comprehended Montenegro's troubled history and sympathized with the brave struggles of the Montenegrin people. It appreciated fully the chain of national circumstances which had elicited this tribute from Montenegro's warm little heart. My incredulity was submerged in fascination now; it was like skimming hastily through a dozen magazines.²⁵

Nick drops the last of his reservations when Gatsby produces a picture of himself taken at Oxford. Momentarily charmed, Nick no longer cares if the stories are true or fabulous fairy-tales; now he wants fervently to believe Gatsby: "Then it was all true, I saw him opening a chest of rubies to ease, with their crimson-lighted depths, the gnawing of his broken heart."²⁶

Enchanted by Gatsby's vitality and dream weaving, Nick now undertakes the task of both uncovering, reconstructing and finally



interpreting Gatsby's mysterious past and his "incorruptible dream."

Nick's probe gains direction from Jordan Baker who tells him of Gatsby's youthful courtship of Daisy Fay and his subsequent attempts to win Daisy back.

"Then it had not been merely the stars to which he had aspired on that June night," Nick thinks. "He came alive to me, delivered suddenly from the womb of his purposeless splendor."²⁷

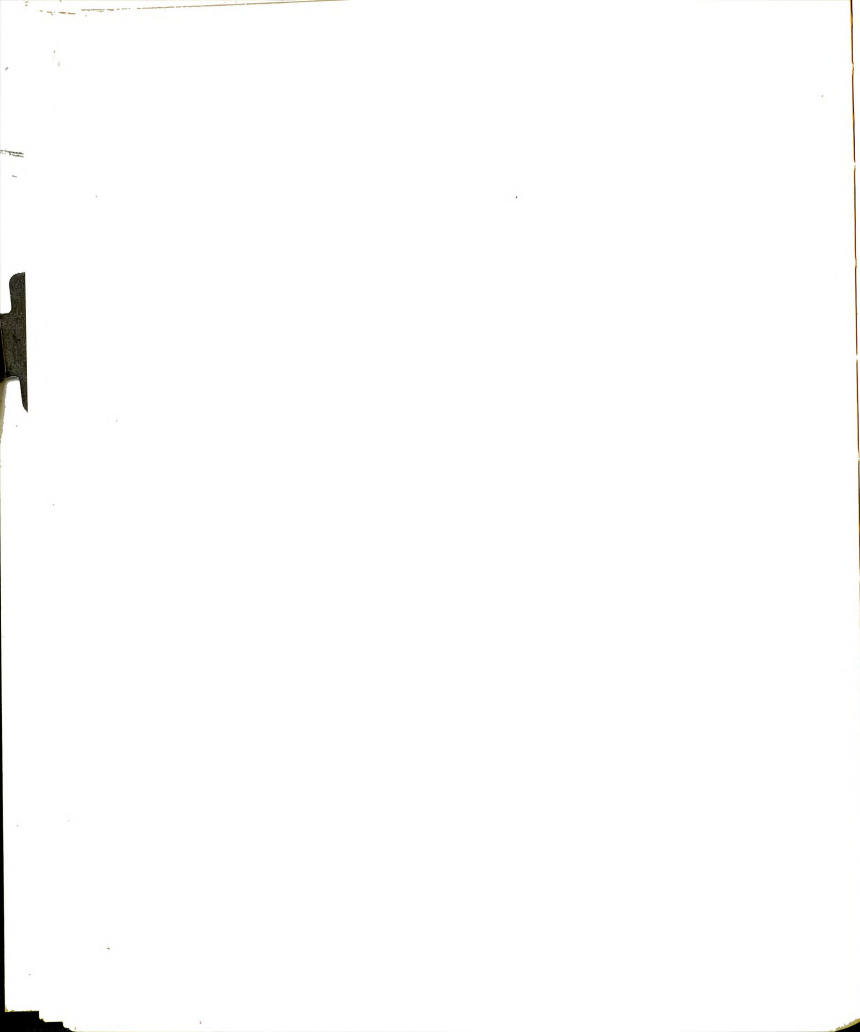
Nick surmises that Gatsby, born James Gatz, never really accepted his lot in life:

James Gatz--that was really, or at least legally, his name. He had changed it at the age of seventeen . . . I suppose he'd had the name ready for a long time, even then. His parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people--his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all.²⁸

Even at an early age, then, there was something remote and romantic, something unusual and compelling about Gatz. According to Nick:

The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God--a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that--and he must be about his father's business, the service of a vast vulgar, and meretricious beauty. So he invented the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end.²⁹

James Gatz' "Platonic conception of himself" functions much like Rudolph Miller's alter-ego Blatchford Sarnemington. It is the escape and rebellion of an imaginative, sensitive young man growing up in bleak and barren surroundings. Young Gatz' only alternative to the harshness and sterility of his existence is his fantasy-life, his dreams. Moreover, in stating that he " . . . sprang from his Platonic conception of himself," Nick is investing Gatz with a sensitivity, an innocence, and quality of romance which sets him apart from ordinary men. It is the Platonic person who sees beyond the sensual reality and imperfection



of his own earthly existence to a realm of pure spiritual essences and archetypes. Nick is implying, therefore, that though unaware of his goals, Gatz is seeking a goodness, truth, and beauty which transcend his bleak existence. Sensing that life offers much more than the dull day-to-day routine he has experienced, Gatz, in his dreams, imagines an existence which is beautiful and transcendent, radiant and hopeful.

But his heart was in a constant, turbulent riot. The most grotesque and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at night. A universe of ineffable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain while the clock ticked on the washstand and the moon soaked with wet light his tangled clothes upon the floor. Each night he added to the pattern of his fancies until drowsiness closed down upon some vivid scene with an oblivious embrace. For a while these reveries provided an outlet for his imagination; they were a satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing.³⁰

Because his imagination is forced to draw from his limited, narrow experience, the dreams, at first, had to be composed of " . . . an ineffable gaudiness," of shifting shapes, forms, and colors. Having as yet no concrete idea of what would constitute a better life, Gatz intuitively discerns something more glorious, more beautiful, and more exciting to life.

According to Nick, Gatz' dream remains alive yet unspecific in his imagination until the day he sights Dan Cody's yacht in Lake Superior:

It was James Gatz who had been loafing along the beach that afternoon in a torn green jersey and a pair of canvas pants, but it was already Jay Gatsby who borrowed a rowboat, pulled out to the 'Tuolomee', and informed Cody that a wind might catch him and break him up in half an hour.³¹

Nick says: "To young Gatz, resting on his oars and looking up at the railed deck, that yacht represented all the beauty and glamour in the



world."³² Thus, at seventeen, " . . . at the specific moment that witnessed the beginning of his career."³³ Gatz' abstract and formless dream finally fastens to something concrete and material. James Gatz' dream, his vague sense of a better life, draws him to the kind of existence Dan Cody incarnates--a life dedicated to the pursuit of wealth and beauty, status and power. For as the youthful Gatsby learns from Cody, only wealth and power can purchase the " . . . vast, vulgar and meretricious beauty . . . " to which he aspires.

However romantic a figure Cody appears to be to the impressionable boy, the more objective and moralistic Nick recognizes the sinister and sordid aspects of Cody's life and personality. At one point Nick describes him as " . . . --the pioneer debauché, who during one phase of American life brought back to the Eastern seaboard the savage violence of the frontier brothel and saloon. . . . And it was from Cody that he [Gatz] inherited money--a legacy of twenty-five thousand dollars."³⁴ Thus, as Nick suggests, Gatsby's "Platonic" dream, almost from its inception, is tied to material corruption.

After Cody dies, Gatsby begins to pursue his own fortune, but very soon after he meets and falls irrevocably in love with the "golden girl," the rich and beautiful Daisy Fay. Taken together, great wealth and great physical beauty are perhaps the two most powerful and compelling forces to which all men respond. And for Gatsby, who yearns deeply for both, Daisy is irresistible. Explaining her allure, Gatsby tells Nick: "Her voice was full of money." Nick responds: "I'd never understood before. It was full of money--that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbal's song of it. . . . High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl . . ."³⁵ Moreover, Nick adds:



. . . Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves, of the freshness of many clothes, and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor.³⁶

Overwhelmed by all that Daisy is and represents, Gatsby determines to win her. In the novel's key thematic passage, Nick explains:

. . . One Autumn night, five years before, they had been walking down the street when the leaves were falling, and they came to a place where there were no trees and the sidewalk was white with moonlight. They stopped here and turned toward each other. Now it was a cool night with that mysterious excitement in it which comes at the two changes of the year. The quiet lights in the houses were humming out into the darkness and there was a stir and bustle among the stars. Out of the corner of his eye Gatsby saw that the blocks of the sidewalks really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees--he could climb to it, if he climbed alone, and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder. His heart beat faster and faster as Daisy's white face came up to his own. He knew that when he kissed this girl and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never ramp again like the mind of God. So he waited, listening for a moment longer to the tuning fork that had been struck upon a star. Then he kissed her. At his lips touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete.³⁷

Here Nick interprets, as Gatsby never could, the tragic paradox of Gatsby's romantic dream and, by extension, of all those who dream. For as Nick suggests, from the moment Gatsby "incarnates" his Platonic dream of perfection and pure beauty in the mortal, "perishable" form of Daisy Fay, the dream itself is forever shattered. So long as the dream remains in the imagination, in the inner life, it can flourish. But the moment that "perfect" dream fastens onto a tangible, material object or person, it takes on all of the forms, forces, and tensions of life in the physical and material world and is thus subjected to decay, corruption and mortality.

Gatsby, then, could have retained his dream only if he had not attached it first to Cody's material wealth and then to Daisy's physical beauty. " . . . he could climb to it," Nick explains, "if he climbed alone, and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder." But at that very moment of Incarnation--when he kisses Daisy--Nick suggests, Gatsby's Platonic dream is already behind him. Gatsby is, of course, aware of none of this. For him, Daisy is at first only a target of irresistible desire, an object to be used and passed by en route to other dreams:

'I can't describe to you how surprised I was to find out I loved her, old sport. I hoped for a while that she'd throw me over, but she didn't because she was in love with me too. She thought I knew a lot because I knew different things from her . . . Well, there I was, way off my ambitions, getting deeper and deeper in love every minute, and all of a sudden I didn't care. What was the use of doing great things if I could have a better time telling her what I was going to do.'³⁸

Nick highlights Gatsby's initial disappointment and his growing awareness of unexpected consequence:

'It didn't turn out as he had imagined. He had intended, probably, to take what he could and go--but now he had committed himself to the following of a grail . . . She vanished into her rich house, into her rich, full life, leaving Gatsby--nothing. He felt married to her, that was all.'³⁹

After losing Daisy to Tom, Gatsby believes, unlike Dexter Green, who weeps for the irrevocable loss of his "winter dreams," that he can regain Daisy and with her "ineffable" dreams. Refusing to believe that the past is irreversible, Gatsby tells Nick with great conviction and sincerity:

'Can't repeat the past?' he cried incredulously. 'Why of course you can!'

He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand.

'I'm going to fix everything just the way it was before,' he said, nodding determinedly, 'She'll see.'⁴⁰

"He talked a lot about the past," Nick recounts, "and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was."⁴¹

Gatsby's quest to "repeat the past," Nick suggests, is an attempt to recapture that "Platonic" image of himself he had had before he kissed Daisy and "wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath." But to do this, Gatsby believes that he must first make Daisy disavow her love for Tom:

He wanted nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say 'I never loved you.' After she had obliterated four years with that sentence they could decide upon the more practical measures to be taken. One of them was that, after she was free, they were to go back to Louisville and be married from her house--just as if it were five years ago.⁴²

Observing Gatsby's reactions to his first meeting with Daisy after five years, Nick says:

He had passed visibly through two states and was entering upon a third. After his embarrassment and his unreasoning joy he was consumed with wonder at her presence. He had been full of the idea for so long, dreamed it right through to the end, waited with his teeth set, so to speak, at an inconceivable pitch of intensity. Now at the reaction, he was running down like an over-wound clock.⁴³

As the initial shock of seeing Daisy again gradually wears off, Nick senses Gatsby's disappointment:



Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It has seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one.⁴⁴

Even though after five years Daisy fails to equal the heightened quality of Gatsby's dreams, Nick is amazed to find that Gatsby still clings with absolute fidelity to his quest:

There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dream--not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart.⁴⁵

The inevitable confrontation between Gatsby and Tom is the central dramatic scene in the novel. It is here that Gatsby's fairy-tale dream of regaining the princess crumbles. Ill-prepared, Gatsby confronts Tom Buchanan with the fact that he and Daisy are in love. In retaliation, Tom mercilessly and vengefully exposes Gatsby's corruption, his alleged bootlegging and his involvement with Meyer Wolfsheim, the man who fixed the 1919 World Series. As Tom triumphantly and vindictively continues to berate, discredit, and taunt Gatsby, Nick observes his friend's panic:

. . . he began to talk excitedly to Daisy, denying everything, defending his name against accusations that had not been made. But with every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up, and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly, toward that lost voice across the room.⁴⁶

Despite being hopelessly beaten, Gatsby still will not give up his quest. Following the accident in which Daisy inadvertently kills Tom's mistress, Myrtle Wilson, Gatsby steps forward and takes the blame. By sacrificing himself for Daisy, Gatsby now assumes the role of Daisy's protector, her knight in shining armor, ironically,--the hero of all romantic dreams and fairy-tales. "She'll be all right tomorrow," he tells Nick after the accident. "I'm just going to wait here and see if he tries to bother her. . . . She's locked herself into her room, and if he tries any brutality, she's going to turn the light out and on again."⁴⁷

Although Gatsby cannot admit to himself that his dream of winning Daisy is behind him, Nick sees both the futility of Gatsby's quest and the magnificence of his dedication. For as Gatsby keeps his self-appointed protective vigil outside the Buchanan's home, Nick, peering in the window, observes Tom and Daisy sitting together at the kitchen table:

They weren't happy, and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale--and yet they weren't unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture, and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together.⁴⁸

Describing the scene, Nick renders Gatsby's pathos:

He put his hands in his coat pockets and turned back eagerly to his scrutiny of the house, as though my presence marred the sacredness of the vigil. So I walked away and left him standing there in the moonlight--watching over nothing.⁴⁹

Despite knowing of Gatsby's corruption and despite his own deep moral fiber, Nick is so taken by his friend's single-minded dedication and

unwavering faithfulness to his "incorruptible dream" that he sees him as an innocent--morally and spiritually superior to all of the others:

'They're a rotten crowd,' I shouted across the lawn. 'You're worth the whole damn bunch put together.' I've always been glad I said that. It was the only compliment I ever gave him, because I disapproved of him from beginning to end. First he nodded politely, and then his face broke into that radiant and understanding smile, as if we'd been in ecstatic cahoots on that fact all the time . . . I thought of the night when I first came to his ancestral home, three months before. The lawn and the drive had been crowded with the faces of those who guessed at his corruption--and he had stood on those steps, concealing his incorruptible dream, as he waved them goodby.⁵⁰

Were it not for Nick's attraction to and sensitive understanding of this mysterious man, Gatsby would seem just a gaudy clown or racketeer. And in his final assessment of both his own and Gatsby's experiences, Nick endows his friend with a tragic magnificence and grandeur by paralleling Gatsby's pursuit of Daisy with the paradox and tragedy of the American Dream:

And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailor's eyes--a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams, for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in human history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.⁵¹

In the novel's final passages, Fitzgerald comments through Nick upon the paradox which lies at the core of the American experience. America is the only nation in all of Western culture to found its civilization upon a dream, a dream which asserts that America is the



unwavering faithfulness to his "incorruptible dream" that he sees him as an innocent--morally and spiritually superior to all of the others:

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New Canaan, the new Eden, an earthly paradise set aside by God for man to make a fresh start. In this "fresh, green breast of the new world," truth, justice, equality, and freedom should reside. By paralleling the Dutch sailor's first vision of the New World to Gatsby's relationship with Daisy, Nick correlates Gatsby's dream with the American dream. While pointing out the wonder and purity of both dreams, Nick recognizes that at their core lie materialism and corruption. Although the Dutch sailors saw the new world as a place in which they could make a fresh start, they came, at the same time, in search of riches--gold and treasure. Thus, as Gatsby's dream is incarnated in Daisy, so the dream of the Dutch sailors will be materialized by their desire to possess the riches and beauty of the new world. This is the tragic paradox of the human condition: once man incarnates his imaginative dream of beauty and perfection in mortal, transitory, and ultimately perishable substances, he inevitably destroys the dream.

In the novel's closing lines, Fitzgerald, through Nick, writes of this inevitable human paradox:

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter--tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther . . . And one fine morning--So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.⁵²

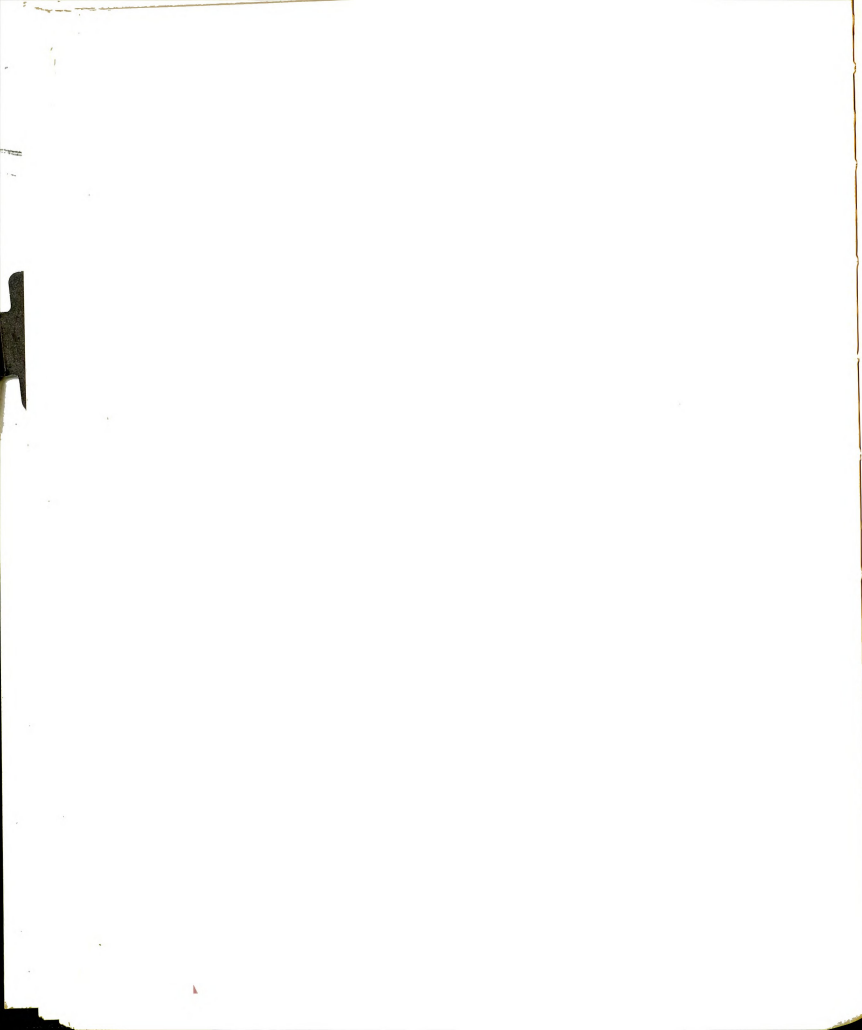
Thus, Fitzgerald suggests that in striving to build a new world, man succeeds only in re-creating the old one. Because of the nature of human experience, man is continually borne back to visions of the old Eden. The dream, therefore, always exists in the past before its incarnation in an imperfect, material reality. For human experience has demonstrated time and again that if man embodies his "incorruptible

dream" in something real and immediate, the dream inevitably takes on not only the purities but also the imperfections of that embodiment. So, at the core of every human dream lies sadness, loss, and, ultimately, disillusion.

III

Like all of Fitzgerald's major fiction, then, The Great Gatsby is concerned with the nature and significance of dream-and-disillusion. Gatsby differs from Fitzgerald's other heroes who live with a "great dream" in his undying loyalty to the pursuit of his dream. Gatsby never really grasps his dream and so never truly suffers disillusion. Never giving up his quest, he dies in the service of his dream and so remains forever faithful to that "Platonic conception" of himself he created as a young man.

The success of The Great Gatsby, I believe, lies with Fitzgerald's ability to integrate and objectify within a fictional structure those formerly irreconcilable dualities of "spoiled priest" and "romantic young man." As Fitzgerald himself later states in "The Crack Up": "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function."⁵³ Through Nick Carraway "the spoiled-priest" who both narrates and interprets Jay Gatsby's quest, Fitzgerald has found the means by which he is able to hold in balance both sides of his own duality. At the same time, it enables him to both deepen and broaden the dream-and-disillusion theme until it touches first upon the American dream and finally extends to a tragic vision of Western man.



VIII THE MAJOR THEME IN TRANSITION:
STORIES FROM 1926-1930

In Nick Carraway and Jay Gatsby, Fitzgerald finally succeeded in fully objectifying the "spoiled-priest"--"romantic young man" dichotomy. And the fact that Gatsby dies in the service of his romantic dreams is significant: it marks a turning point in Fitzgerald's thought and art, especially in his treatment of the dream-and-disillusion theme. From the publication of "The Rich Boy" (1926) through Tender is the Night (1934), most of Fitzgerald's heroes no longer struggle in quest of their youthful and romantic dreams. Instead, his art at this time reflects a turning away from dreams to an increasing awareness of and concern with disillusion and despair.

During these years, Fitzgerald himself suffered severe emotional setbacks that can be attributed partially to Zelda's growing instability and partially to his awareness of his own mortality and of his declining popularity as a writer. Deeply disturbed by these developments in his personal and professional life, Fitzgerald began to drink more heavily, and feelings of hopelessness and despair progressively took hold of him.

II

In the first half of his career, Fitzgerald's "pot-boilers" reflected in miniature many of the kinds of characters,

situations, ideas, and themes which he developed with more depth and artistry in his better short stories and in his first three novels. So, too, with his magazine stories between 1926-1930. They reveal his growing sense of sadness and disillusion at the loss of his youthful dreams, a theme which he deepens in much finer stories like "The Rich Boy" and "The Last of the Belles."

"Jacob's Ladder," published in 1927, foreshadows the darker, more sombre tone which characterizes his post-Gatsby fiction. In the beginning of the story, Jacob Booth "like so many Americans . . . valued things rather than cared about them. His apathy was neither fear of life nor affectation; it was the racial violence grown tired. It was a humorous apathy."¹ But upon meeting the young and beautiful Jenny Delahanty, Jacob finds himself deeply moved by her vitality and enchanted by her youthful radiance:

Her face, the face of a saint, an intense little Madonna, was lifted fragily out of the mortal dust of the afternoon. On the pure parting of her lips no breath hovered; he had never seen a texture pale and immaculate as her skin; lustrous and garish as her eyes. His own well-ordered person seemed for the first time in his life gross and well-worn to him as he knelt suddenly at the heart of freshness.²

Because she represents youth and hope to him, Jacob idealizes, almost spiritualizes, Jenny. Consequently, when she approaches him sexually, he rebuffs her advances. Confused and disappointed at his rejection, Jenny goes to California where she is subsequently transformed into Jenny Prince, Hollywood love goddess.

Jenny's transformation initiates Jacob's spiritual decline. At one time, she was the force which could transform his apathy into hope; but now he cynically views her as only a seductive and tawdry symbol of glamour, luxury, and self-indulgence. As a final irony, Jacob, in losing Jenny's love, is forced to learn painfully for himself what he had earlier warned Jenny: " . . . if you lose it [love] once-- it'll never come back again, and then what do you want to live for?"³

Published one month after "Jacob's Ladder," "The Love Boat" probes in more depth a character's sadness, disillusion, and subsequent loss of his romantic dreams. The story centers on a middle-aged man's abortive attempt to repeat the past, to recapture his lost youth and dreams.

While attending a yacht party, young Bill Frothington meets and falls in love with Mae Purley, a beautiful but poor girl. Because they come from different backgrounds, Bill knows that he cannot marry Mae. Disappointed and sad, he enlists in the service and, following the war, reluctantly marries a girl from his own social class, raises a family and goes on to a successful business career. Finding himself growing restless several years later, Bill begins once again to crave the romance and excitement of his lost youth. "Suddenly Bill remembered the boat," Fitzgerald writes, " . . . and Mae Purley on the deck under the summer moon."⁴

Impulsively and blindly, Bill searches for and finds Mae only to discover that the magic is gone: "For a moment he possessed her, her frailty, her thin smouldering beauty; then he had lost her again . . . It was gone from her."⁵ Bewildered and sad, he returns to the scene of the

boat ride and in blind, drunken desperation attempts to recapture that lost feeling. Discovered foolishly romancing a young girl, Bill is subsequently tossed into the river by her escort. Utterly humiliated and defeated, he returns home to find that his wife and family have left him. Finally regaining his senses, Bill realizes too late what he lost:

It was like a dream, this change of his life. She [his wife] was no longer his; . . . Suddenly he wanted it back . . . he prayed crazily for the restoration of his life, the life he had just as crazily cut in two . . . and suddenly there it was, in the sky over his lawn, all the restless longing after fleeting youth in the world--the bright uncapturable moon.⁶

Although a melodramatic and contrived story, "The Love Boat" succeeds in effectively capturing Bill Frothington's frustration and despair. Forced to confront the fact that he can no longer live in his youthful and romantic dreams of the past, Bill is unable to struggle back from the defeat of his dream.

This sense of an impending paralysis of will increasingly dominates Fitzgerald's imagination during this time, and in more skillfully written stories like "The Rich Boy," he explores it in greater dimension and with more artistic skill. Published in 1926, "The Rich Boy" is a story of a man who cannot dream and who, as a result, declines emotionally and spiritually until he is cut off from his family, friends, and ultimately from his own feelings and emotions.

One of Fitzgerald's concerns in this story is again with the corruption which lies at the core of great riches; but for the first time in his fiction, Fitzgerald presents a picture of wealth which

is wholly negative. Earlier, in "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" and in The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald, while drawn to wealth's glamour and appeal, is, at the same time, deeply critical of its corrupting powers. In telling Anson Hunter's story, however, Fitzgerald is no longer ambivalent: he underscores and exaggerates those qualities in great wealth which he feels are inherently corrosive and deeply destructive.

Like Tom Buchanan, Anson Hunter did not acquire but inherited his riches. In his essay "Fitzgerald's Fable of East and West," Robert Ornstein points out that men like Tom born into money are "surrounded from childhood by the artificial security of wealth. Accustomed to owning rather than wanting, they lack anxiety or illusion, frustration or fulfillment. Their romantic dreams are rooted in adolescence from which they have never completely escaped . . ." ⁷ As Fitzgerald's characterization of Tom and Daisy Buchanan suggests and as he emphatically states in "The Rich Boy," the world of the established rich is spiritually barren and dangerously devoid of human values. As a representative of this world, therefore, Anson Hunter embodies its cynicism and contemptuousness:

Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me. They possess and enjoy early and it makes them soft where we are hard, and cynical where we are trustful, in such a way that, unless you were born rich, it is very difficult to understand. They think, deep in their hearts, that they are better than we because we had to discover the compensations of life for ourselves. ⁸

Because Anson is born into wealth, his status and position are assured. Unlike Fitzgerald's earlier heroes who had to struggle against obstacles and barriers in quest of their dreams of riches,

Anson believes that success and recognition were granted him by right of birth:

He accepted this as the natural state of things, and a sort of impatience with all groups of which he was not the center--in money, in position, in authority--remained with him for the rest of his life. He disdained to struggle with other boys for precedence--he expected it to be given him freely, and when it wasn't he withdrew into his family.⁹

As Fitzgerald's narrator implies, Anson's snobbishness is a disability:

. . . his very superiority kept him from being a success in college--the independence was mistaken for egotism, and the refusal to accept Yale standards with the proper awe seemed to belittle all those who had. . . . His aspirations were conventional enough--they included even the irreproachable shadow he would someday marry, but they differed from the aspirations of the majority in that there was no mist over them, none of that quality known as 'idealism' or 'illusion.' Anson accepted the world of high finance and high extravagance, of divorce, of dissipation, of snobbery and of privilege. Most of our lives end as a compromise--it was as a compromise that his life began.¹⁰

Another key to understanding Anson's personality is his need to be the center of attention. As Sergio Perosa writes, "The Rich Boy" is:

. . . a kind of parable on the isolation and impotence of the very rich, which is embodied in the pathetic story of Anson Hunter. His unlimited wealth has given Hunter a sense of his own superiority and aloofness . . . a desire for predominance and a contempt of everyday life . . . and an excessive indulgence for his own faults. When he grows up this attitude results in complete isolation from his fellow creatures . . . Wealth separates him from happiness; instead of fulfilling his dreams, it becomes an obstacle to his self-realization.¹¹

Perosa suggests that because Anson has nothing to strive for, he is emotionally incapable of committing himself to anyone or anything. "The Rich Boy," therefore, is the story of Anson's inevitable decline into "spiritual" and "emotional bankruptcy."

Anson's story is narrated in the first person by a nameless, yet seemingly close friend who traces his friend's life and career from his mid-twenties through his mid-thirties. This narrator depicts Anson's progressive decline in successive stages, each of which centers on a relationship or situation in which Anson's pride and sense of superiority not only cut him off from communication and fulfillment but wound another human being as well.

Described first is his relationship with Paula Le Gendre. Although Anson sincerely cares for Paula, he cannot commit himself to her:

It was a sort of hypnosis. . . . They were only happy when the dialogue was going on, and its seriousness bathed them like the amber glow of an open fire. . . . At first, too he despised her emotional simplicity . . . but with his love her nature deepened and blossomed, and he could despise it no longer. He felt that if he could enter Paul's warm safe life he would be happy.¹²

What Anson really wants from Paula is the security of knowing that some one is there to comfort and care for him, to minister to his needs and to indulge his whims. Thinking that he can have Paula simply for the asking, Anson avoids making any emotional commitment; and when Paula finally presses him for a commitment, he smugly declines. Because of his arrogance and presumption, he soon loses her: "He had forgotten that Paula was too worn away inside with the strain of three years. Her mood passed forever in the night."¹³

Very soon after this rebuff, Paula marries another man. Anson's first reaction to the news is shock and disbelief, and then later a kind of resigned sadness and self-pity. Although the sadness lingers, the experience neither humbles him nor alters his feeling

of superiority. In fact, Paula's disaffection only makes him more cynical and detached.

In his next love affair, the next stage in his decline, Anson one night abruptly and without warning breaks it off. He tells Dolly Karger: "This is all foolishness. . . . I don't love you and you'd better wait for somebody that loves you. I don't love you a bit, can't you understand?"¹⁴ Insensitive and thinking once more only of his own self-interest, Anson destroys another human being: "For a long time afterward Anson believed that a protective God sometimes intervened in human affairs. But Dolly Karger, lying awake and staring at the ceiling, never again believed in anything at all."¹⁵

As he grows older, Anson's superiority hardens into even greater cynicism and detachment. When news reaches him of his aunt's alleged affair with another man, his inflexible pride once again triggers a brutal and inhuman response. Despite his aunt's plea that her marriage is a failure and that she deeply loves Cary Sloane, Anson coldly forces the affair to an end to preserve the family name. His self-righteous action ultimately results in Sloane's suicide, but Anson himself feels neither remorse nor responsibility.

In the final two sections of the story, Anson finds himself approaching thirty and becoming increasingly aware of his loneliness. In the past few years, most of his old friends and business associates have married; and he finds to his surprise that their lives no longer center around him. In the past, his friends relied on him for advice, but now "they were always glad to see old Anson, but they dressed up for him and tried to impress him with their present importance, and kept their troubles to themselves. They needed him no longer."¹⁶ Thus, on a



mid-summer's weekend in New York City, Anson finds himself virtually alone:

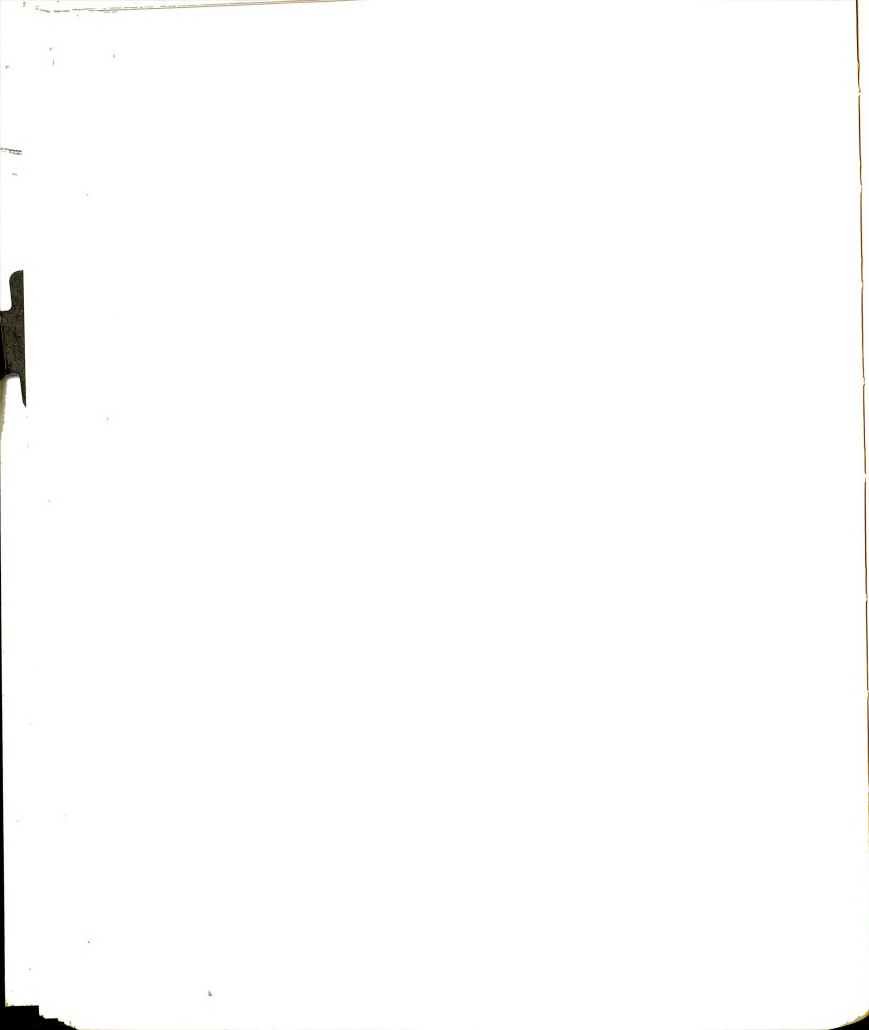
Two years before he would have known the date, the hour, come up at the last moment for a final drink, and planned his visit to them [his friends]. Now they had gone without a word. . . . He stood for a few minutes motionless on the sidewalk in front of a 47th Street apartment house; for almost the first time in his life he had nothing whatever to do.¹⁷

Just as his loneliness begins to gnaw at him, Anson accidentally meets Paula, her new husband, and their children. He is invited to their home; and once there, he becomes acutely aware of Paula's happiness and security. Somewhat envious of her situation, he tells her:

'I could settle down if women were different. . . . If I didn't understand so much about them, if women didn't spoil you for other women, if they only had a little pride. If I could go to sleep for a while and wake up in a home that was really mine--why, that's what I'm made for Paula, that's what women have seen in me and liked in me. It's only that I can't get through the preliminaries any more.'¹⁸

Tired, lonely, and sincerely seeking security and comfort, Anson is still unable to make a real commitment; he is still unable to give himself. Never having had to strive for anything, now at thirty, he no longer has the energy and vitality to even "get through the preliminaries."

Several weeks later, when he hears that Paula has died in childbirth, Anson grows even more depressed and despirited. Observing his despair, the members of his firm send him on a European cruise. While on board ship, a seemingly revitalized Anson romances an attractive girl. But as the narrator comments in the closing lines:

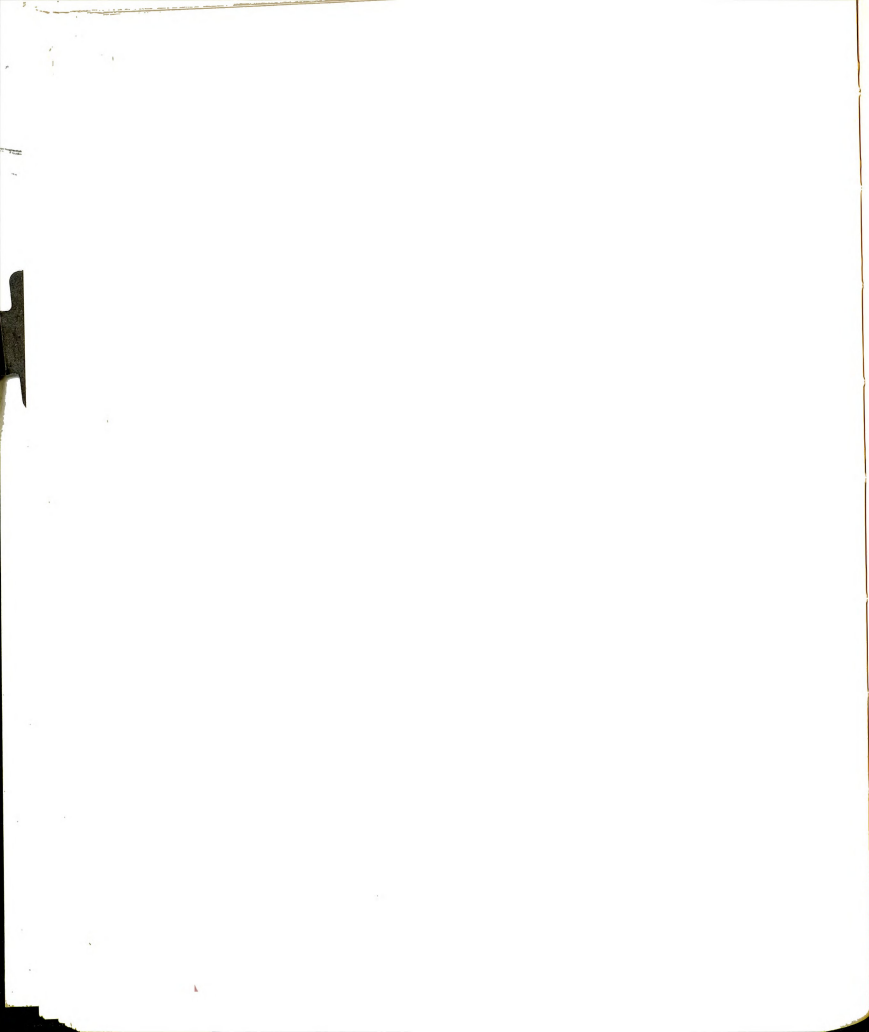


I don't think he was ever happy unless someone was in love with him, responding to him like filings to a magnet, helping him to explain himself, promising him something. What it was I do not know. Perhaps they promised that there would always be women in the world who would spend their brightest, freshest, rarest hours to nurse and protect that superiority he cherished in his heart.¹⁹

Although "The Rich Boy" lacks the depth and complexity of Fitzgerald's best short stories, it is an important transitional work, for it is the first fictional piece in which Fitzgerald is able to dramatize convincingly his own growing fear of "emotional bankruptcy." For the first time in his fiction, Fitzgerald creates in Anson Hunter, a credible portrait of a man who has none of that "vital quality of illusion." The epitome of the "rich boy," Anson Hunter is born with all the advantages and privileges which characters like Amory Blaine, Gordon Sterrett, Anthony Patch, Dexter Green, George O'Kelley and James Gatz dream of possessing. Ironically, however, it is precisely these advantages and privileges which deprive Anson of the capacity to dream. Thus, "The Rich Boy" is the story of a man destined to be emotionally and spiritually bankrupt forever.

III

Following "The Rich Boy," Fitzgerald turns his attention almost exclusively to characters who meet with personal misfortune and lose their youthful dreams, yet do not succumb to "emotional bankruptcy." As a result of having had to adjust to the loss of their youth and romantic dreams, characters like Dolly Harlan in "The Bowl," Michael in "The Bridal Party," the father in "Outside the Cabinet Maker's," and Andy, in "The Last of the Belles," take on a stature and dimension which men like Jacob Booth, Bill Frothington, and Anson Hunter lacked.

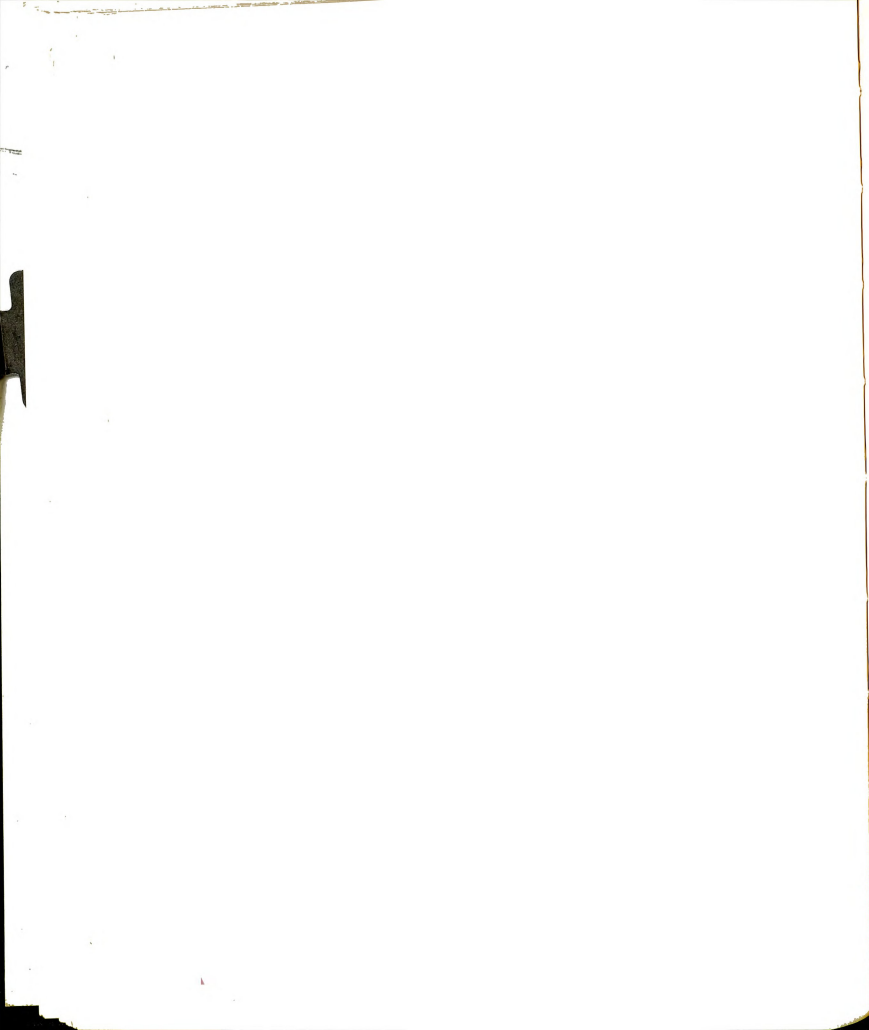


In rejecting the glory, recognition, and adulation which is proffered upon a football hero, Dolly Harlan, protagonist in "The Bowl" (1928), is the first athlete-hero whom Fitzgerald endows with perspective and wisdom. Having lost his desire for the hoopla and fanfare of college football, Harlan resolves for himself (and at the same time teaches his friend Jeff) that "all achievement was a placing of emphasis--a moulding of the confusion of life into a form."²⁰

Deepening this idea in "The Bridal Party" (1930), another Saturday Evening Post story, Fitzgerald strips away his protagonist's self-indulgent, self-deceiving illusions about wealth and possession of "the top girl." The story concerns Michael, a young man who, in losing his dream of "the golden girl," gains a more sober and mature acceptance of life's harsh realities.

In the opening of "The Bridal Party," Michael rationalizes that he has been thrown over by Caroline "because he had no money." Michael's rationalizations are self-indulgent and wrong-headed, however, for in reality, Caroline saw him "as something pathetic, futile and shabby, outside the great shining stream toward which she was inevitably drawn." She rejects him not because he is poor but because "with all the energy and good will in the world, he could not find himself."²¹

By a sudden twist of fate, Michael inherits his grandfather's fortune. Suddenly rich and self-assured and feeling himself a part of a world to which he has always aspired, Michael confidently presents himself once again to Caroline. But to his shock and dismay, she turns him away again and becomes engaged instead to the more self-possessed, poised, and debonair Hamilton Rutherford.

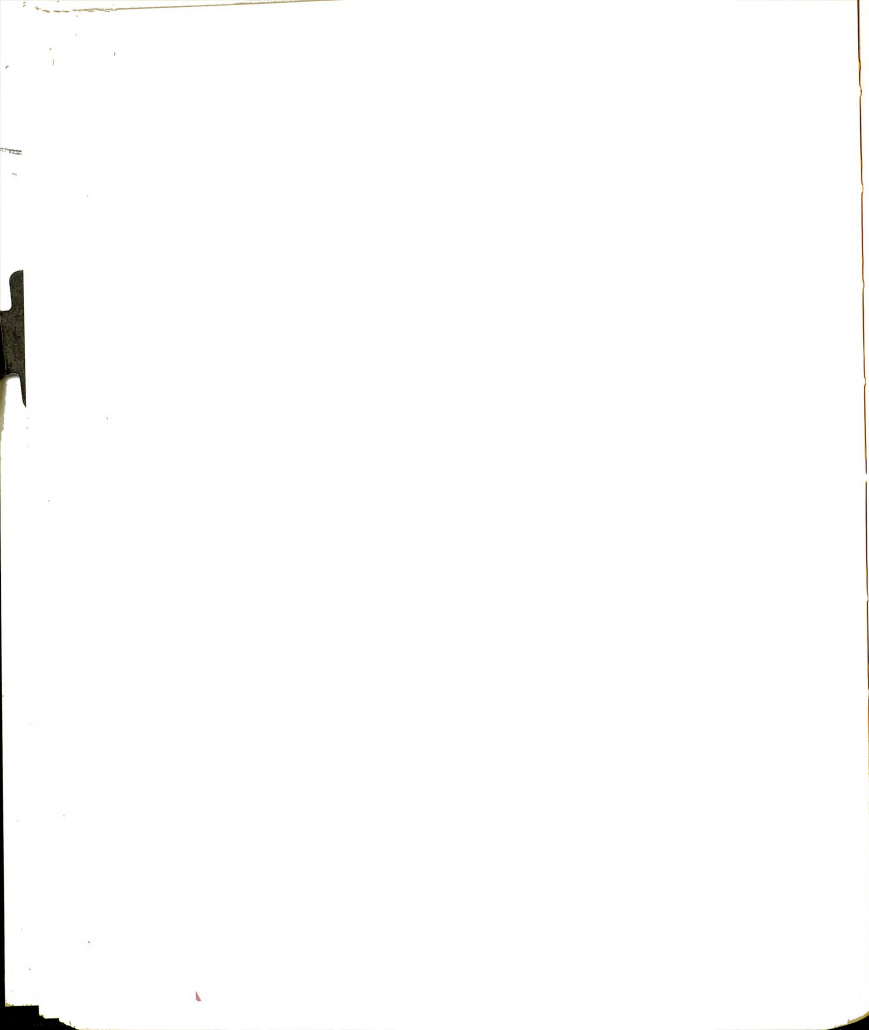


Michael subsequently learns that Rutherford has just lost all his money in the market crash, has been threatened with blackmail by a former girl-friend, and has suffered through his parents' painful divorce. Michael's first impulse is to go to Caroline and disparage his rival; but instead, he attends the wedding ceremony. While watching both Hamilton and Caroline and Hamilton's newly divorced parents maintain a facade of calm, Michael undergoes a transformation:

Michael was cured. The ceremonial function . . . had stood for a sort of initiation into life where even his regret could not follow them. All the bitterness melted out of him and suddenly the world reconstructed itself out of the youth and happiness that was around him.²²

Suddenly sensing that his old dreams and illusions were based upon false hopes and self-delusions, Michael now views both himself and the newlyweds with a new perspective. At the story's close, he watches them "recede and fade off into joys and griefs of their own--into the years that would take the toll of Rutherford's fine pride and Caroline's young, moving beauty. . . ."²³

While neither "The Bowl" nor "The Bridal Party" are among Fitzgerald's better short stories, both reveal still another perspective in his treatment of dream-and-disillusion. Fitzgerald is concerned at this time with characters who attempt to face the loss of their romantic dreams without succumbing to self-pity and "emotional bankruptcy." And in two of the finest stories of this period "Outside the Cabinet Maker's" and "The Last of the Belles," Fitzgerald amplifies and deepens this aspect of dream-and-disillusion. In these stories, Fitzgerald's protagonists reflect his growing awareness and understanding that if one "can't repeat the past," then it is necessary to find some way to live with present

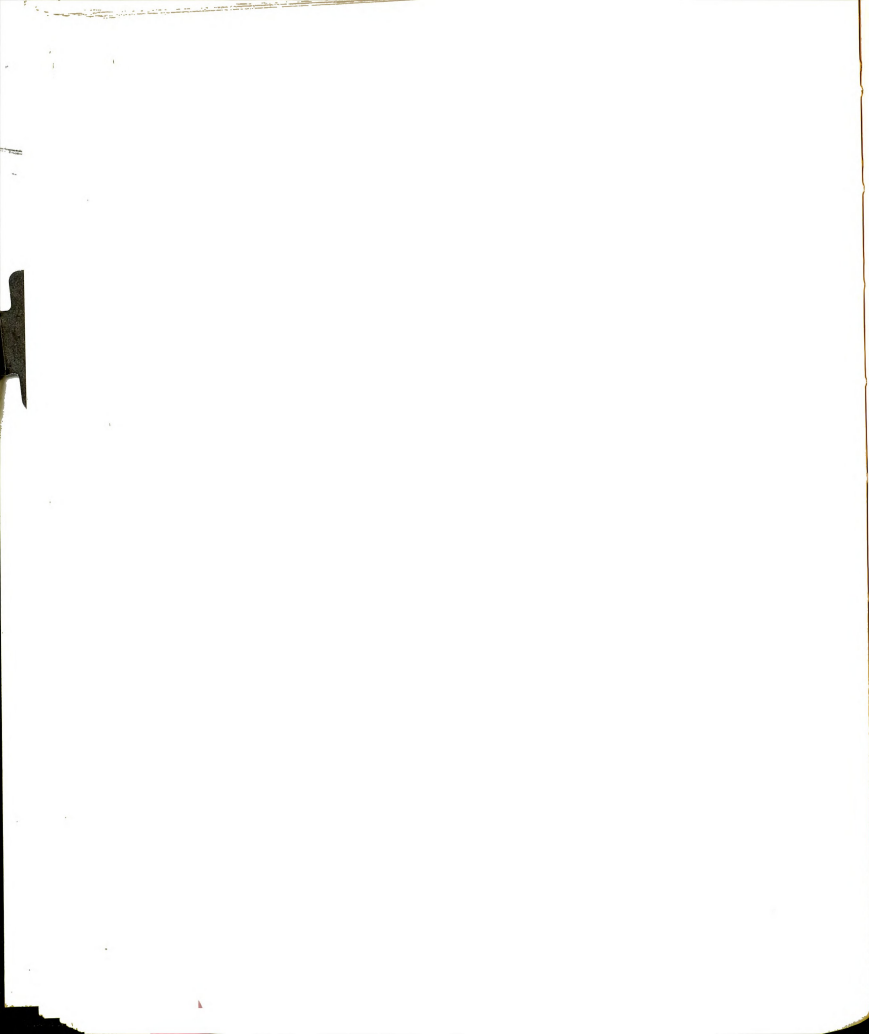


realities and at the same time to continue to struggle vigorously against the erosion of spirit which ultimately accompanies the loss of youth and romantic dreams.

"Outside the Cabinet Maker's" (1928) is a tightly woven piece, the central thread of which is a story within a story, a fairy-tale which a middle-aged father tells to his young daughter. But at a deeper level, it is also about the father's gradually emerging recognition of the gulf which separates the little girl's world from his own. The story is set outside a cabinet maker's shop where the mother and father have come to purchase a doll's house as a surprise gift for the little girl. To divert his daughter's attention while his wife goes into the shop, the man points to a window in a building across the street and makes up a fairy-tale about a princess who is being held prisoner in a tower by an ogre. As the girl becomes more deeply engrossed in the fantasy, she demands that he give more details. The father embellishes his story but his wife returns before he is able to complete it. As they are driving home, the little girl creates an ending to the tale--one in which the King and Queen die and the Princess becomes the new ruler of the kingdom: "They had the rescue in the next street. And there's the Ogre's body in that yard there. The King and Queen and Prince were killed and now the Princess is queen." But the father, Fitzgerald writes, "had liked his King and Queen and felt that they had been too summarily disposed of.

'You had to have a heroine,' he said rather impatiently. 'She'll marry somebody and make him Prince.'"²⁴

Undoubtedly, Fitzgerald is here suggesting that both the father and daughter inhabit separate worlds. For, earlier, as the man was



telling the fairy-tale to his daughter, he was becoming gradually aware that "he was old enough to know that he would look back to that time--the tranquil street and the pleasant weather, and the mystery playing before his child's eyes, a mystery which he had created, but whose lustre and texture he would never see or touch anymore."²⁵ As the man begins to realize that the wonder and enchantment of youth are gone, a feeling of sadness and nostalgia grip him. Observing his daughter's reactions, he contemplates: "She was staring at the house. For a moment he closed his eyes and tried to see with her but he couldn't see--those ragged blinds were drawn against him forever. There were only occasional darkies and the small boys and the weather that reminded him of more glamorous mornings in the past."²⁶

Knowing that he can never recapture his youthful dreams, by the story's end the father is forced to accept the gap between his world and that of the little girl. This realization saddens him but neither shatters him nor renders him "emotionally bankrupt." In the story's final lines, as father, mother and daughter are riding home, Fitzgerald writes that:

The lady thought about the doll's house, for she had been poor and had never had one as a child, the man thought how he had almost a million dollars and the little girl thought about the odd doings on the dingy street that they had left behind.²⁷

Fitzgerald's insightful suggestion in "Outside the Cabinet Maker's" that recognition of the inevitable loss of youth and romantic dreams is an important step toward mature adjustment becomes the thematic center of "The Last of the Belles." Published in 1929, this fine tale of a young Northerner stationed in the South during World War I represents (along with "The Freshest Boy" and "Basil and Cleopatra," two of the Basil Lee stories) Fitzgerald's most ambitious rendering both structurally and thematically of the dream-and-disillusion theme during this period. In its evocation of the nostalgia which Andy, the

narrator-protagonist, feels for his youth and for his old dream of the Southern Belle, Allie Calhoun, "The Last of the Belles" echoes stories like "The Ice Palace," "Winter Dreams," and "The Sensible Thing." But "The Last of the Belles" is distinguished from the others in that Fitzgerald demonstrates his hero's ability to cope with the loss of his romantic dreams.

Fitzgerald carefully divides the story into three sections: each one deepens Andy's involvement with Tarleton, Georgia, and with Allie Calhoun's world, until, in the final section, he is forced to understand and accept that his dreams both of the South and of Allie are behind him. Narrating the story some fifteen years later, Andy recalls his initial impressions of that small Southern town where he was stationed during the last months of the war:

It was a little hotter than anywhere we'd been--a dozen rookies collapsed the first day in that Georgia sun--and when you saw herds of cows drifting through the business streets, hi-yaed by the colored drivers, a trance stole down over you out of the hot light; you wanted to move a hand or foot to be sure you were alive.²⁸

As Andy sees it now, Tarleton was an anachronism, a mid-nineteenth-century ante-bellum world. In its tranquility and isolation, the town hung almost suspended outside time. Its only touch with the world outside was the army camp. Andy suggests, therefore, that his stay in Tarleton had the quality of an illusive dream. It was as if "a magic carpet lighted on the Southern countryside and any minute the wind could lift it and waft it away."²⁹

It was in this idyllic and pastoral setting that Andy first encountered the beautiful and mysterious Allie Calhoun who, to him, seemed to be "the southern type in all its purity." Andy recalls:

I would have recognized Ailie Calhoun if I'd never heard Ruth Draper or read Marse Chan. She had the adroitness sugarcoated with sweet, voluble, simplicity, the suggested background of devoted fathers, brothers and admirers stretching back into the South's heroic age, the unfailing coolness acquired in the endless struggle with the heat. There were notes in her voice that ordered slaves around, that withered up Yankee captains, and then soft, wheedling notes³⁰ that mingled in unfamiliar loveliness with the night.

Although romantically drawn to her, Andy explains that because of her coquettishness, he was forced to remain somewhat detached from her. Thus, in his dual role of unrequited lover and confidante, he gradually comes to understand why Ailie was unable to make a commitment either to him or to any other Northerner:

We had a joke about my not being sincere. My theory was that if she'd let me kiss her I'd fall in love with her. Her argument was that I was obviously insincere. In a lull between two of these struggles she told me about her brother who had died in his senior year at Yale . . . told me that when she met someone who measured up to him she'd marry. I found this family idealism discouraging, even my brash confidence couldn't compete with the dead.³¹

Like Sally Carrol Happer in "The Ice Palace," Ailie had attached her hopes to a dead dream, a dead past, and ultimately to a dead world. Nevertheless, Andy explains why he was originally drawn both to her and to Tarleton:

. . . I had grown to love Tarleton, and I glanced about half in panic to see if some face wouldn't come in for me out of that warm, singing, outer darkness that yielded up couple after couple in organdie and olive drab. It was a time of youth and war, and there was never so much love around.³²

But as the war became more of a tangible reality, the soldiers knew that the romance and unreality of Tarleton was about to dissolve. Andy reveals his feelings before departing from Tarleton for an overseas assignment which never materialized:

And I can still feel that last night vividly, the candle-light that flickered over the rough boards of the mess shack . . . the sad mandolin down a company street that kept picking 'My Indiana Home' out of the universal nostalgia of the departing summer. The three girls Sally Carrol Happer, Nancy Lamar, and Ailie lost in this mysterious men's city felt something too--a bewitched Impermanence as though they were on a magic carpet that had lighted on the Southern countryside, and any moment the wind would lift and waft it away. We toasted ourselves and the South. . . . The South sang to us . . . I remember the cool pale faces, the somnolent amorous eyes and the voices. . . . Suddenly we knew it was late and there was nothing more. We turned home.³³

Remembering the "magic" town, after the war Andy had returned once more to Tarleton:

By January the camps, which for two years had dominated the little city, were already fading. There was only the persistent incinerator smell to remind one of all that activity and bustle. . . . And now the young men of Tarleton began drifting back from the ends of the earth--some with Canadian uniforms, some with crutches and empty sleeves. A returned battalion of the National Guard paraded through the streets with open ranks for their dead, and then stepped down out of romance forever and sold you things over the counter of local stores.³⁴

This observation reveals not only the war's effect on the sleepy little Southern town, but the change which Andy, too, had undergone. He had returned with distance from and perspective on his pre-war experience. His relationship with Ailie, he suggests, is little more than a memory. "I saw her sometimes when she wasn't busy with returned heroes from Savannah and Augusta," he says, "but I felt like an outmoded survivor--and I was."³⁵ Several days after his arrival Andy had sadly departed, feeling that "it wasn't real."

In the final section of "Last of the Belles," now a successful businessman, Andy describes how he was drawn back after a six-year absence, for his last visit to Tarleton and to Ailie:

Allie Calhoun was scarcely a name on a Christmas card; something that blew in my mind on warm nights when I remembered the magnolia flowers. . . . Oddly enough, a girl seen at twilight in a small Indiana station started me thinking about going South. The girl, in stiff pink organdie, threw her arms around a man who got off our train and hurried him to a waiting car, and I felt a sort of pang. It seemed to me that she was bearing him off into the lost midsummer world of my early twenties, where time had stood still and charming girls, dimly seen like the past itself, still loitered along the dusky streets. I suppose that poetry is a Northern man's dream of the South. But it was months later that I sent off a wire to Allie, and immediately followed it to Tarleton.³⁶

This wonderfully evocative passage reveals that although Andy knows his youthful and romantic dream is behind him, he has not yet resolved to his own satisfaction his attraction to Tarleton and to Allie. Consequently, his final return wasn't really an attempt to repeat the past or to recapture the lost dream of his youth; Andy knows better than to entertain seriously those illusions. Clearly, what compelled him to return was his still unsettled and unspoken love for Allie.

When he returned he found the town had deteriorated: "It was July. The Jefferson Hotel seemed strangely shabby and stuffy--a booster's club burst into intermittent song in the dining room that my memory had long dedicated to officers and girls."³⁷ Sadly, Andy had perceived that his old dream of the South and of the Tarleton he had known just six years ago had undergone an unalterable change, and consequently, so had Allie. Andy describes his response to seeing her again:

I suppose some of Allie's first young lustre must have gone the way of such mortal shining, but I can't bear witness to it. She was still so physically appealing that you wanted to touch the personality that trembled on her lips. No--the change was more profound than that. At once I saw she had a different line. The modulations of pride, the vocal hints that she knew the secrets of a brighter, finer ante-bellum day, were gone from her voice; there was no time for them now as it rambled on in the half-laughing, half-desperate banter of the newer South.³⁸

Although she was as attractive to him as ever, Andy had seen that Ailie, like the life around her, had had to change and adapt. In order to remain in "the nervous growing centre of it," she has become a "reckless clown."

Dismayed at first by her seeming flippancy, Andy gradually began to understand that for Ailie " . . . everything was swept into this banter in order to make it go and leave no time for thinking--the present, the future, herself, me."³⁹ And it is at the country-club dance that Andy finally understood that Ailie's outward mirth was only a brave mask hiding her true feelings:

When we reached the country club she melted like a chameleon into the--to me--unfamiliar crowd. There was a new generation on the floor, with less dignity than the ones I had known, but none of them were more a part of its lazy, feverish essence than Ailie. Possibly she had perceived that in her initial longing to escape from Tarleton's provincialism she had been walking alone, following a generation which was doomed to have no successors. Just where she lost the battle, waged behind the white pillars of her veranda, I don't know. But she had guessed wrong, missing out somewhere. Her wild animation, which even now called enough men around her to rival the entourage of the youngest and freshest, was an admission of defeat.⁴⁰

In her pathos and defeat, Ailie becomes a symbol for the ante-bellum South, a gentle-mannered and dignified culture which has long been dead and which for Andy represents a dying romantic illusion.

Half-hopeful and half-fearful of winning her hand, the next day Andy had told Ailie of his love for her. Although she had dashed his ambitions, her reply "You know I couldn't ever marry a Northern man." had not surprised him. From the beginning, he had recognized Ailie's desire to transcend the provinciality of Tarleton and the other "belles" around her. But because she was unable to make her commitment

to a Northerner, Allie had instead tied herself to the dead South and consequently had lost her chance to escape. Like Sally Carrol Happer, Allie had fastened her hopes to a dying past, to an outmoded culture and civilization. Her only possible avenue of escape lay in her ability to make an emotional commitment to a more dynamic, more energetic, more vital way of life. But because of her background and breeding, this was impossible. Consequently, in finally accepting a Southerner she did not really love, Allie had chosen familiarity and security; she had spared herself disillusion, but at the same time had sacrificed her dream of romance and excitement. Not being able to break from her past, she had finally merged with it; and thus had lost her capacity to dream.

In the final scene, Andy describes his last visit to the army camp, now a delapidated old race course. Andy stumbles " . . . here and there in the knee-deep underbrush, looking for my youth in a clapboard or a strip of roofing or a rusty tomato can. . . . Upon consideration they didn't look like the right trees. All I could be sure of was that this place which had once been so full of life and effort was gone, as if it had never existed, and that in another month Allie would be gone, the South would be empty for me forever."⁴¹

Andy suffers the sadness which accompanies the loss of his dream, but unlike Allie he retains the ability to dream again. Although the South would be empty for him forever, he is able to keep the romantic illusion of pre-war Tarleton and of Allie alive in his imagination. Unlike Dexter Green, he will never have to see this romantic ideal grow old, change, or tarnish; thus, he can continue to dream of Allie as she was--youthful, fragrant, alluring. In his memory she will always represent "the Southern type in all its purity." "I was deeply, incurably in love with her," Andy says. "In spite of every incompatibility, she was

still, she would always be to me, the most attractive girl I had ever known."⁴² Thus, in telling this story fifteen years later, Andy, like Nick Carraway, is able to stand aside and understand the significance of his involvement.

IV

As sadness and disillusion touch him in this period, Fitzgerald searches in his art for characters and structures which not only reflect his awareness of the loss of his "old dream," but which also reveal his attempts to gain a more coherent perspective on this condition. And because Fitzgerald continues to write deeply and honestly, in his best works he is able to transform his disappointment and suffering into a deeper and more mature evocation of the sad human condition.

IX THE RETURN TO THE PAST:
THE BASIL LEE STORIES

From 1926 until the publication of Tender is the Night (1934), many of Fitzgerald's heroes continually are confronted with the loss of their youthful dreams and with the recognition that they "can't repeat the past." As a result, the dominant mood and texture of Fitzgerald's fiction during that time is a measured sadness accompanied by a steadily increasing sense of personal despair. In the final two years of the Twenties, however, in stories like "The Last of the Belles" and the Basil Lee series, Fitzgerald returns for the last time to the old romantic dream and to the materials and experiences of his youth. Like "The Last of the Belles," the Basil Lee stories are reminiscent in texture and tone of Fitzgerald's earlier work, but are differentiated from his youthful fiction by the mature perspective which he brings to his art.

As it was in "The Last of the Belles," the central problem in all eight of the Basil Lee stories is how one is to cope with the loss of youthful, romantic dreams.¹ And in two of these stories, "The Freshest Boy" and "Basil and Cleopatra," Fitzgerald searches for a resolution to this most poignant of human dilemmas.

II

In "He Thinks He's Wonderful," the middle story of the Basil Lee series, Fitzgerald writes:

Fifteen is of all ages the most difficult to locate--to put one's fingers on and say, 'That's the way I was.' The melancholy Jacques does not select it for mention, and all that one can know is that somewhere between thirteen, boyhood's majority, and seventeen, when he is a sort of counterfeit young man, there is a time when youth fluctuates hourly between one world and another--pushed ceaselessly forward into unprecedented experiences and trying vainly to struggle back to the days when nothing had to be paid for.²

This important declaration summarizes Fitzgerald's intentions in the Basil Lee stories. In tracing Basil's physical growth and emotional development from "boyhood's majority" to his becoming a "counterfeit young man," Fitzgerald consistently depicts a boy with a dual nature: Basil lives deeply in the world of his private dreams and, at the same time, is forced to acknowledge that he must accommodate his dreams to reality. Thus, in addition to evoking sensitively and compassionately the confusions and complexities of adolescence, Fitzgerald here establishes dream-and-disillusion as the center of Basil's experience, and consequently as the dominant and unifying theme in the series.

At the beginning of the series, Basil is a sensitive, romantic and energetic fourteen-year-old with a penchant for trouble. His dreams of popularity, success, and recognition are reminiscent of Fitzgerald's own youthful dreams. Indeed, Basil's distinguishing characteristic, like Fitzgerald, is his all-consuming involvement in the world of his imagination. For example, even in early adolescence, Basil's dreams have already taken tangible shape:

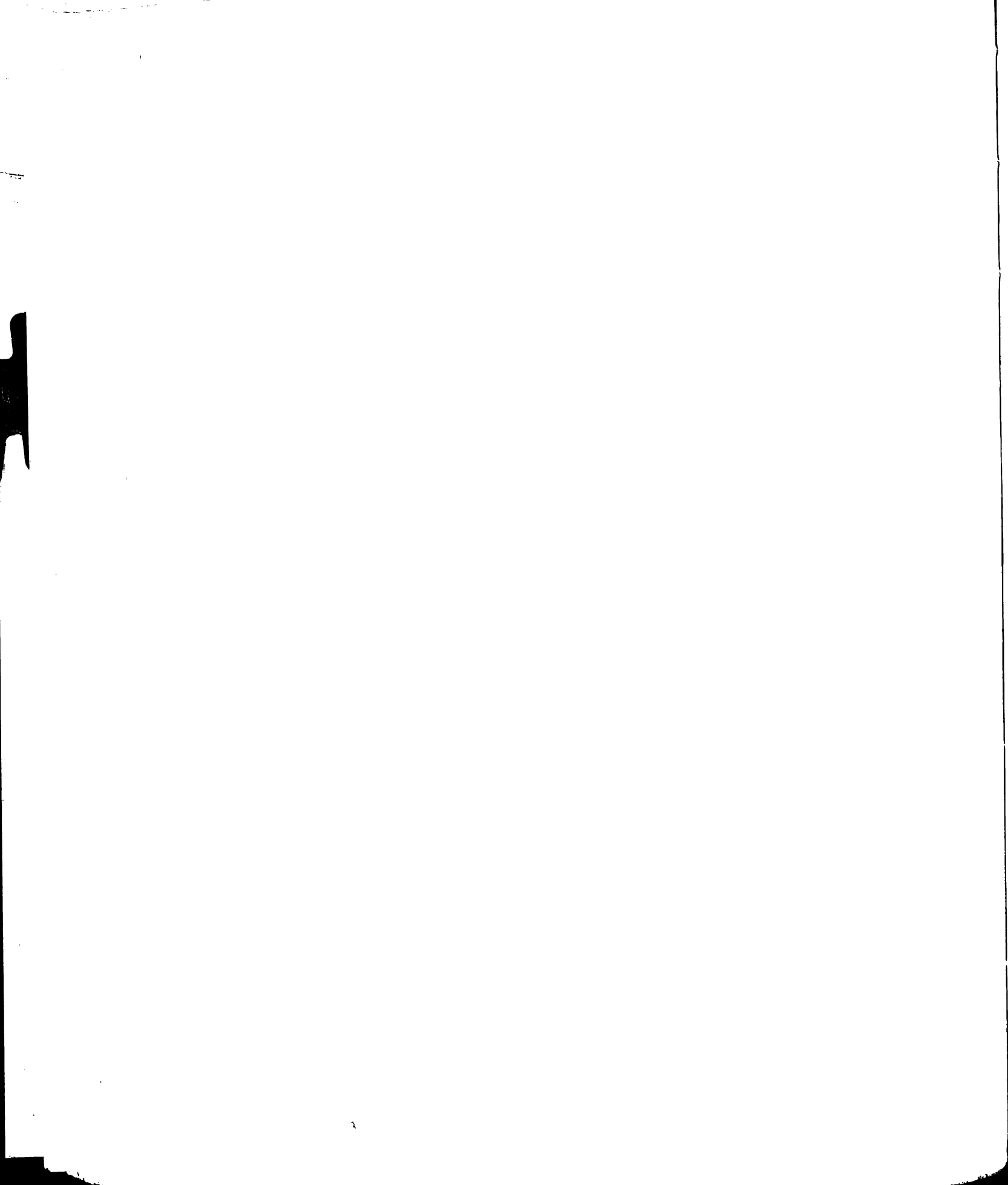
This summer he and his mother and sister were going to the lakes and next fall he was starting away to school. Then he would go to Yale and become a great athlete, and after that--if his two dreams fitted into each other chronologically instead of existing independently side by side--he was due to become a gentleman burglar. Everything was fine. He had so many alluring things to think about that it was hard to fall asleep at night.³

Because Basil's dreams are concrete and immediate, Fitzgerald suggests that reality can never equal the heightened fancies spun in the imagination of this energetic boy. As Kenneth C. Frederick points out: "Fitzgerald discovered in the scenes of his youth a complex and tangible world, within which and against which his protagonist must struggle to find himself. . . . The series depicts the succession of shocks by which the dreaming boy is brought out of himself into the world of others."⁴

As Frederick suggests, in each story Basil encounters some seemingly unconquerable obstacle or barrier to his romantic dreams. And as he grows from adolescence to young manhood, Basil learns to accept the fact that he cannot realize his dreams; at the same time, he retains his resiliency and enthusiasm for life.

III

It is well-known that when Maxwell Perkins suggested that Fitzgerald publish the Basil Lee series as a book, the author flatly refused. As Malcolm Cowley notes, " . . . he feared that they were too much like the Penrod stories that Booth Tarkington had written as he emerged from a period of heavy drinking . . . "⁵ For as Fitzgerald writes: "Tarkington! I have a horror of going into a personal debauch and coming out of it devitalized with no interest except an acute observation of the behavior of colored people, children and dogs."⁶ Despite Fitzgerald's objections, the Basil Lee series, like a novel, has a sense of unity, continuity, and consistency of character development. Basil's growth and development are depicted in three distinct stages: early adolescence; prep-school experiences; and, finally, preparation for and subsequent enrollment at Yale.



From adolescence to early manhood, Basil's two pivotal experiences occur in his first year of prep-school and in his freshman year at Yale. These incidents are described in the two most carefully developed stories in the collection: in "The Freshest Boy," the third story in the series, Basil is forced to confront the irrevocable loss of his dream of popularity and athletic success. In the closing story, "Basil and Cleopatra," his hopes of winning "the golden girl" are irrevocably dashed. Both are artistically superior to the other stories in the series; and although both can be read apart from the other six, they take an added significance and dimension when they are considered as the underpinnings of the series' structure.

The first two stories, "The Scandal Detectives" and "A Night at the Fair," foreshadow "The Freshest Boy." In both, Fitzgerald depicts Basil as alternatively sensitive and intelligent, adventurous and energetic, and somewhat reckless and smug. He is "by occupation, actor, athlete, scholar, philatelist, and collector of cigar bands," a romantic dreamer who "must evolve a way of life which should measure up to the mysterious energies . . . inside . . ." ⁷ In "The Scandal Detectives," Basil attempts to win young Imogene Bissell's affections by humiliating his rival, Hubert Blair, a vain and conceited boy who possesses all the attractive qualities and heroic virtues upon which the adolescent Basil builds his own dreams. "He was confident;" Fitzgerald writes of Hubert, "He had personality, uninhibited by doubts or moods . . . already he was a legend." ⁸ Consequently, when pitted against Hubert Blair, Basil generally finishes second.

Following Imogene's rejection of him, Basil concocts an outrageous and ultimately unsuccessful plan to upstage Hubert. But

the fact that Basil fails to triumph or gain the notoriety and attention he seeks is incidental. For importantly, though Basil is humbled, he gains a valuable insight into himself:

He perceived eventually that though boys and girls would always listen to him when he talked, their mouths literally moving in response to his, they would never look at him as they looked at Hubert. So he abandoned the loud chuckle that so annoyed his mother and set his cap straight on his head once more.

But the change in him went deeper than that. He was no longer sure that he wanted to be a gentleman burglar, though he still read of their exploits with breathless admiration. . . . And after another week he found he no longer grieved over losing Imogene. . . . The ecstatic moment of that afternoon had been a premature birth, an emotion left over from an already fleeting spring . . .⁹

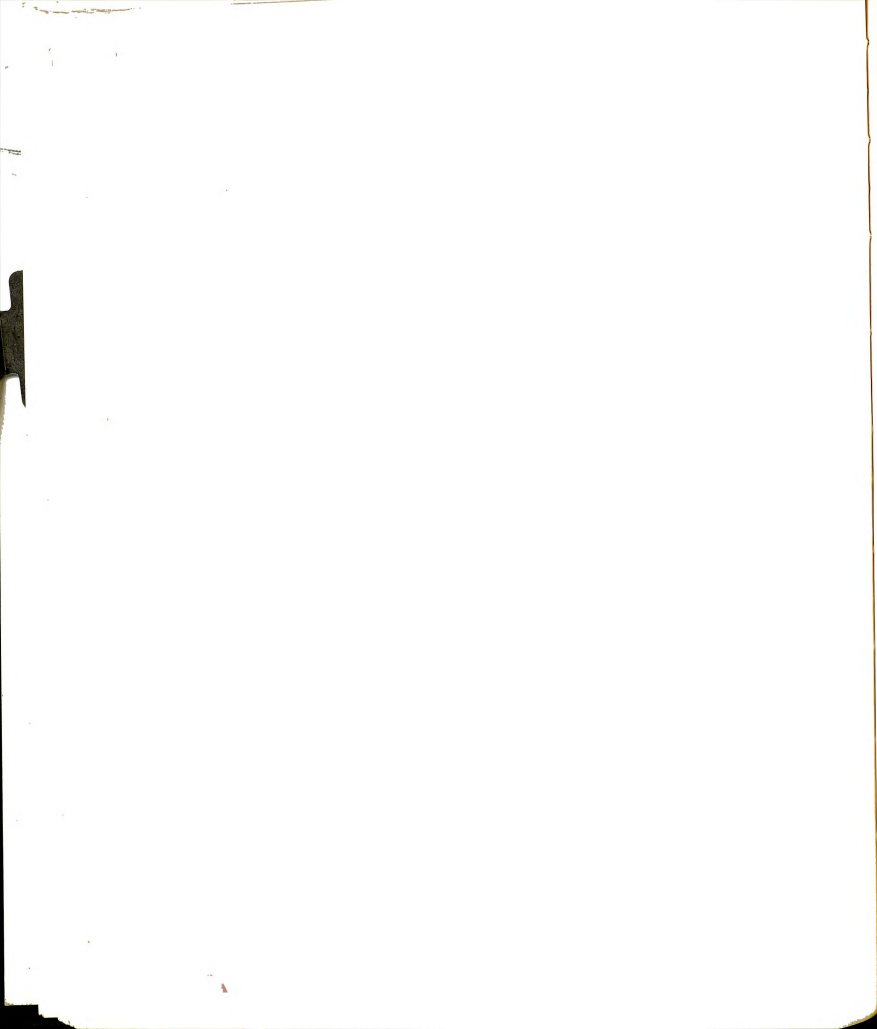
With this perspective, Basil turns his attention to new possibilities and dreams. At the story's close, "all he [Basil] knew was that the vague and restless yearnings of three long spring months were somehow satisfied. They reached a combustion in that last week--flared up, exploded, and burned out. His face was turned without regret toward the boundless possibilities of summer."¹⁰ Thus, in this first story, Fitzgerald emphasizes Basil's resiliency--his ability to admit defeat while keeping his spirit intact.

In "A Night at the Fair," Basil's romantic expectations are once again thwarted. At first, Basil fantasizes about romantic possibilities with his blind date for the fair, until he is faced with an inescapable reality: his date is a plain, dull and immature girl he finds he cannot endure. Thus, when the flamboyant Hubert Blair joins Basil's group and draws the girl's attention to himself, Basil seizes the opportunity to slip away quietly into the night.

Wandering about the fairgrounds, Basil meets the rich and beautiful Gladys Van Schellinger, a girl whom he has always admired.

Exalted at his clever escape from his date, he imagines that there exists between Gladys and himself "a feeling of kinship . . . as if they had been . . . chosen together for a high density that transcended the fact that she was rich and he was only comfortable."¹¹ Unaware of Basil's infatuation, Gladys encourages his fantasies when she invites him to watch the fireworks from her private box. Sitting proudly with Gladys and her parents, Basil then spots his friends and their dates marching into view foolishly looking like a "sort of Lilliputian burlesque of the wild gay life."¹² As Gladys and her family express their shock and outrage at the grotesque procession, Basil savors his small victory. But as usual, Basil's moment of glory is short-lived, for in the story's final scene, just at the "exquisite moment" when Basil is about to kiss Gladys, she jolts him out of his daydream by whispering, "Basil--Basil, when you come tomorrow, will you bring that Hubert Blair?"¹³

The story-line and structure of the next story in the series, "The Freshest Boy" are deceptively simple: it is a series of encounters and conflicts between Basil, his peers, and his teachers during his first term at prep-school. On the most basic level, the story is a real and moving evocation of the frustrations and growing pains, the small triumphs and fleeting moments of fulfillment and disappointment that the alternately brash and sensitive Basil experiences during that bitter-sweet transition between adolescence and young manhood. In the course of this story, Basil recognizes that, in spite of disappointments, he must continue to struggle against future inevitable disappointments, disillusion, and defeats.



At the beginning of this story, Basil is full of "ignorant enthusiasm" for the trip East to St. Regis, his new school. He has lived "with such intensity on so many stories of Boarding-school life" that he cannot abide his travelling companion, the irascible and unimaginative Lewis Crum, who hates school and is hopelessly homesick. Basil foolishly taunts Lewis, who in turn prophetically warns the aggressive Basil that "They'll take all that freshness out of you."¹⁴

At St. Regis, Basil is gradually forced to face the reality of his failure to realize his fantasies. He has not excelled at football; and, because of his brashness and seeming arrogance, he has become the most unpopular boy at the school. As the malice of his classmates finally breaks his "supreme self-confidence," Basil looks forward to a trip to New York City as a release from "the misery of daily life," hoping it will propel him back into "the long awaited heaven of romance."¹⁵

At first, his spirits buoyed by his momentary escape into what he imagines is a romantic, fantasy world, Basil is relieved to find that "School had fallen from him like a burden; it was no more than an unheeded clamor, faint and far away." Moreover, when Basil opens a letter from his mother and finds that he has been invited to spend the remainder of the year in Europe, he is exalted and relieved; for that letter offers him what he has been seeking--an easy and romantic avenue of escape from the misery and frustration of the past two months. Basil thinks:

No more Doctor Bacon and Mr. Rooney and Brick Wales and Fat Gaspar. No more Bugs Brown and on bounds and being called Bossy, . . . He need no longer hate them, for they were impotent shadows in the stationary world that he was sliding away from, sliding past, waving his hand. 'Good-bye! he pitied them. 'Good-bye! . . . why, he needn't ever go back! Or perhaps it would be better to go back and let them know what he was going to do, while they went on in the dismal dreary round of school.¹⁶

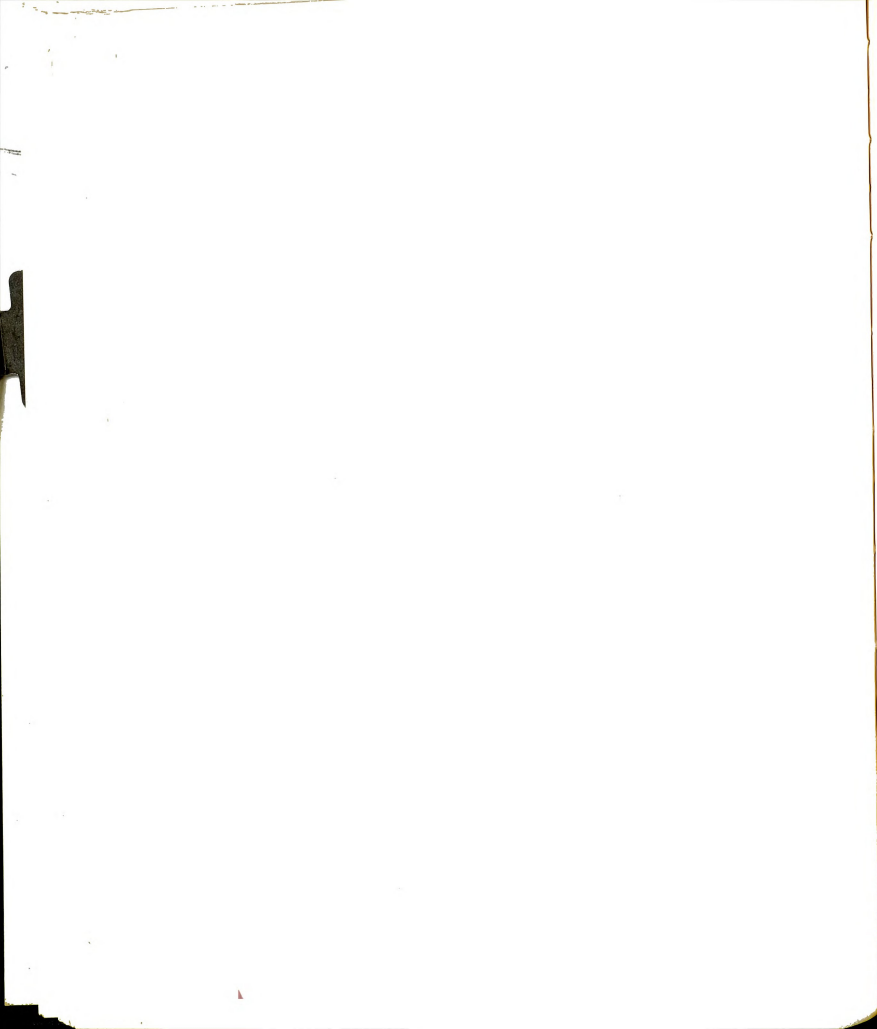
Bolstered by his new resolve, Basil is further elated when standing under the marquis of a theatre he chances a glimpse of his football idol, Ted Fay, who was to Basil "more than a name-- . . . a legend, a sign in the sky . . . the Yale football captain, who had almost single-handedly beaten Harvard and Princeton last fall." Watching Fay, "Basil felt a sort of exquisite pain."¹⁷

In this mood of elation and with his imagination now aglow, Basil finds that the first two acts of the "show of shows" he attends leaves him feeling as if he had "missed things." Emerging from the theatre to find his chaperone drunk, Basil chances to overhear a conversation between Ted Fay and the beautiful star of the show. She tells Fay decisively: "you've got to make up your mind just like I have--that we can't have each other."¹⁸ This defeat for his idol throws Basil momentarily into "a state of wild confusion," and he begins to feel an odd kinship between Ted Fay, the actress, and himself:

He did not understand all he had heard, but from his clandestine glimpses into the privacy of these two, with all the world that his short experience could conceive at their feet, he had gathered that life for everybody was a struggle, sometimes magnificent from a distance, but always difficult and surprisingly simple and a little sad. . . . Ted Fay would go back to Yale, put her picture in his bureau drawer and knock out home runs with the bases full this spring--at 8:30 the curtain would go up and she would miss something warm and young out of her life, something she had had this afternoon.

Inspired by his belief that the heroic Ted Fay would rebound from the defeat of his dreams, Basil vows to emulate him:

Suddenly Basil realized that he wasn't going to Europe. He could not forget the molding of his own destiny just to alleviate a few months of pain. The conquest of successive worlds of school, college and New York--why, that was his true



dream that he had carried from boyhood into adolescence and because of the jeers of a few boys he had been about to abandon it and run ignominiously up a back alley!²⁰

In the final section of the story, Basil returns to St. Regis and slowly, painfully, attempts to practice patience, perseverance, and self-discipline. "It was a long hard time," writes Fitzgerald. "Basil got back on bounds again in December and wasn't free again until March. An indulgent mother had given him no habits of work and this was almost beyond the power of anything but life itself to remedy, but he made numberless starts and failed and tried again."²¹ Although he has changed, Basil is not accepted by his classmates:

. . . Basil was snubbed and slighted a good deal for his real and imaginary sins, and was much alone. But on the other hand, there was Ted Fay and the Rose of the Night on the phonograph--'All of my life whenever I hear that waltz'--and the remembered lights of New York, and the thought of what he was going to do in football next autumn and the glamorous mirage of Yale and the hope of spring in the air.²²

Instead of escaping into a daydream fantasy as his life becomes more difficult, Basil quietly perseveres and slowly begins to succeed: In the heat of a basketball scrimmage his former enemy Brick Wales calls him "Lee-y." This simple gesture signifies to Basil that he has finally been accepted: "He had been called by a nickname. It was a poor makeshift, but it was something more than the bareness of his surname or a term of derision."²³ More than this, Fitzgerald implies that the seemingly insignificant incident will have a profound and far-reaching effect on young Basil:

Brick Wales went on playing, unconscious that he had contributed to the events by which another boy was saved from the army of the bitter, the selfish, the neurasthenic and the unhappy. It isn't given to us to know those rare moments when people are wide open and the slightest touch can wither or heal. A moment too late and we can never reach them anymore in this world. They will not be cured by our most efficacious drugs or slain with our sharpest swords. Lee-y! It could scarcely be pronounced. But Basil took it to bed with him that night, and thinking of it, holding it to him happily to the last, fell easily to sleep.²⁴

Having begun "The Freshest Boy" with Basil's fantasies of athletic glory and heroism, Fitzgerald depicts in the story's main body the conflicts between Basil's imaginative world and the real one and concludes with Basil achieving a tentative balance between the two. In this, he is suggesting that Basil has been chastened but that his imagination and intensity have been tempered, not stifled. Basil has come to realize, as did Ted Fay, that life is no "musical comedy"; he is disillusioned and suffers the temporary loss of his dreams. Yet, because he is young, and resilient, his capacity for wonder is not destroyed. Knowing that he must face the reality of disillusion, Basil, nonetheless, will continue to pursue his dreams. In the first three Basil Lee stories, then, Fitzgerald depicts the initial stages of Basil's "education," a phase which culminates in Basil's awareness of the need for self-restraint and humility. In the next five stories, Kenneth Eble notes, Basil is "now brought into the larger world for which he has yearned and is sharply rebuffed by that world. He carries that experience with him . . . as a vital part of his past."²⁵

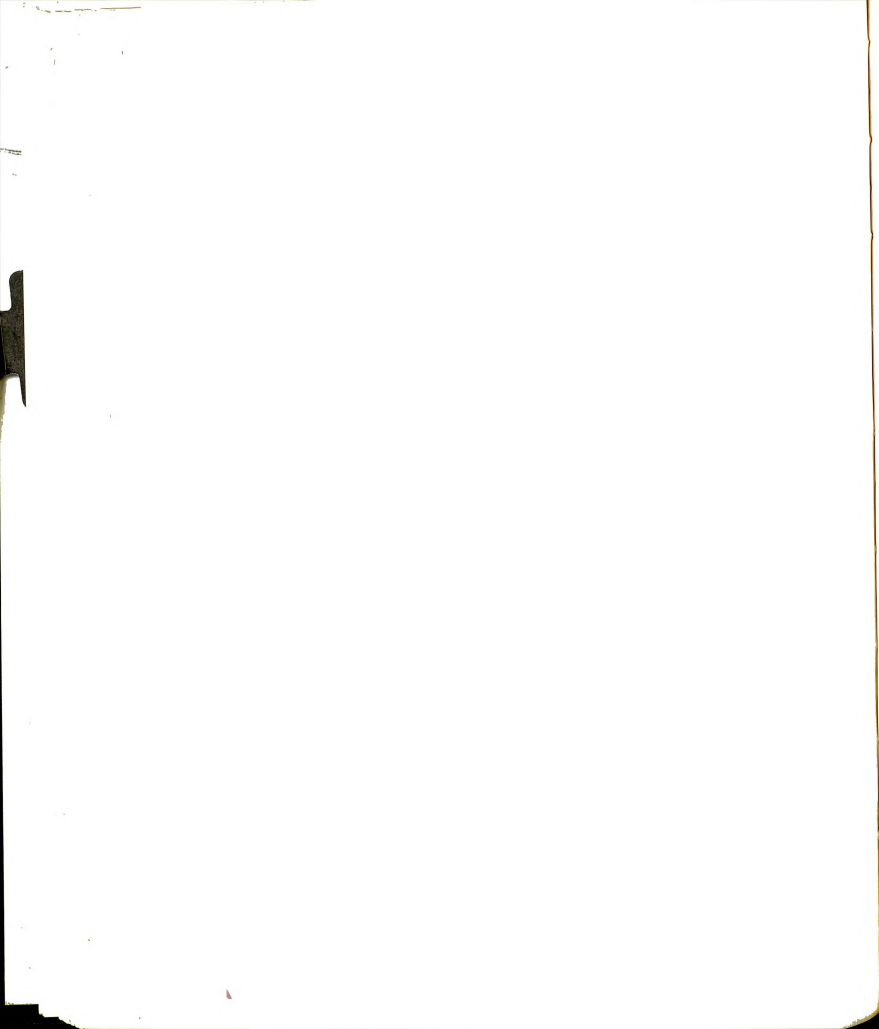
In "He Thinks He's Wonderful," Basil returns home after his difficult first year at St. Regis still nurturing his old romantic dreams of attaining popularity and success:

Within he was by turns a disembodied spirit, almost unconscious of his person and moving in a mist of impressions and emotions and a fiercely competitive individual trying desperately to control the rush of events that were the steps of his own evolution from child to man. He believed that everything was a matter of effort--the current principle of American education--and his fantastic ambition was continually forcing him to expect too much. He wanted to be a great athlete, popular, brilliant and always happy.²⁶

Fitzgerald also comments that Basil, having undergone his soul-searching ordeal at school, "had grown uselessly introspective, and this interfered with that observation of others which is the beginning of wisdom."²⁷

But during the course of "He Thinks He's Wonderful," Basil's impulsiveness once again gets the best of him. Learning that he has been chosen the most attractive boy in town by three girls, he momentarily forgets his recent lesson, and once again allows himself to become boastful and smug over his newly-won popularity, only to find that his bragging has again isolated him from his friends. Given a reprieve from his misery, Basil meets and falls in love with "the golden girl," the irrepressible Minnie Bibble, who "would come to Basil as a sort of initiation, turning his eyes out from himself and giving him a first dazzling glimpse into the world of love."²⁸

Again, however, Basil repeats his mistakes. His boastfulness and loquacity so irritate Minnie's father that Mr. Bibble withdraws his invitation for Basil to accompany the family on a trip West. Realizing that for the second time in one summer he has lost something important to him, Basil no longer reacts with childish and self-centered rage. Where earlier he had accused his friends of disaffection and treachery, Basil now accepts the reality that he alone is to blame: "He knew what had happened as well as if Minnie had told him. He had made the same



old error, undone the behavior of three days in half an hour."²⁹

Having lost the "top girl," Basil again must struggle back from this defeat if he is to dream again:

He [Basil] lay on his bed baffled, mistaken, miserable but not beaten. Time after time, the same vitality that had led his spirit to a scourging made him able to shake off the blood like water, not to forget, but to carry his wounds with him into new disasters and new atonements--toward his unknown destiny.³⁰

Though no more than a sketch, the fifth story, "The Captured Shadow," is a turning point in Basil's pursuit of "his unknown destiny." Here, Basil succeeds in capturing his dreams of success and recognition for the first time, only to find they are empty triumphs. The story centers around Basil's efforts to cast and direct his own play. In the early rehearsals, Basil's cast accuse him of "bossiness", but after much strategic plotting, cajoling, and convincing, Basil finally succeeds in soothing their wounded prides and sensitive egos. Finally, as a result of his effort and hard work, the play is a success; and Basil is praised as "a young man that's going to be heard from one day."

With his success come the adulation and fame Basil has long coveted, but his response to his triumph is curiously unenthusiastic:

It might have all been very bad and demoralizing for Basil, but it was already behind him. Even as the crowd melted away and the last few people spoke to him and went out, he felt a great vacancy come into his heart. It was over, it was done and gone--all that work, and interest and absorption. It was a hollowness like fear.³¹

In discovering a perplexing and unexpected emptiness at the core of his achievement, Basil has realized what Dexter Green and George O'Kelley before him had painfully learned: the value of the dream is in the

struggle, the hard work, and the striving. For when the play is over, Basil no longer has anything to struggle against, to strive for, to achieve. Thus, he has moved one step closer to understanding what he had only sensed in "The Freshest Boy": "that life for everybody was a struggle sometimes magnificent from a distance, but always difficult and surprisingly simple and a little sad."

As "The Perfect Life" opens, Basil is in his final year at St. Regis. Through hard work and determination, he has finally realized his dream of becoming a star on the football team. Basking in his momentary triumph, Basil imagines his future conquests as "future splendors, triumphant descents upon cities, romantic contacts with mysterious and scarcely mortal girls."³² But despite this "ambulatory dream," Basil is seeking something more spiritual. After a football game Basil is introduced to John Granby, a distinguished and highly respected (though somewhat stiff and moralistic), alumnus of St. Regis. Lacking self-irony and perspective, Basil is immediately drawn to Granby's suggestion that he become a model of virtue and respectability for the younger boys at school because he believes it offers him a fool-proof avenue to success:

Granby had outlined the perfect life to him, not without a certain stress upon its material rewards such as honor and influence at college, and Basil's imagination was already far into the future. When he was tapped for last man at Skull and Bones at Yale and shook his head with a sad sweet smile, somewhat like John Granby's, . . . then, out into the world, where at the age of twenty-five, he would face the nation from the inaugural platform on the Capitol steps, and all around him his people would lift up their faces in admiration and love . . .³³

By embracing Granby's ideals, Basil is able to view himself as noble and grand, responsible and restrained, and, therefore, worthy of the honor and admiration which he dreams will be heaped upon him.

As the story progresses, however, Basil finds himself vacillating between his newly-formed resolve to live the "perfect life" and his familiar yearnings for the glittering secular world, represented by the beautiful young Jobena Dorsey. He is awed by his first view of the Dorsey family's Fifth Avenue home:

For Basil there was a new world in its compact luxury. It was thrilling and romantic . . . more precious than the rambling sweep of the James J. Hill house at home. In his excitement . . . He was possessed by the same longing for a new experience, that his previous glimpses of New York had aroused . . . the hard bright glitter of Fifth Avenue . . . this lovely girl with no words to waste . . . In the perfectly organized house, he recognized nothing, and he knew that to recognize nothing was usually a guarantee of adventure.³⁴

Fighting off these indulgent impulses, Basil fantasizes that his mission is to save the beautiful Jobena from her reckless, dissolute beau, Skiddy de Vinci. Self-deluded, Basil envisions Jobena and himself in an ideal spiritual union, one which includes "marriage and a life of service, perfection, fame and love."³⁵

At the height of his delusion, however, Basil is jolted back to reality when he chances to overhear a conversation in which Jobena refers to him as a "nasty little prig":

'A nasty little prig'--the words, uttered with conviction and scorn, had driven the high principles of John Granby from his head. He was a slave to his own admirations, and in the past twenty-four hours Jobena's personality had become the strongest force in his life; deep in his heart he believed that what she had said was true.³⁶

Alone, humbled, and aware that his excesses have again been his undoing,

Basil calls upon his old resourcefulness:

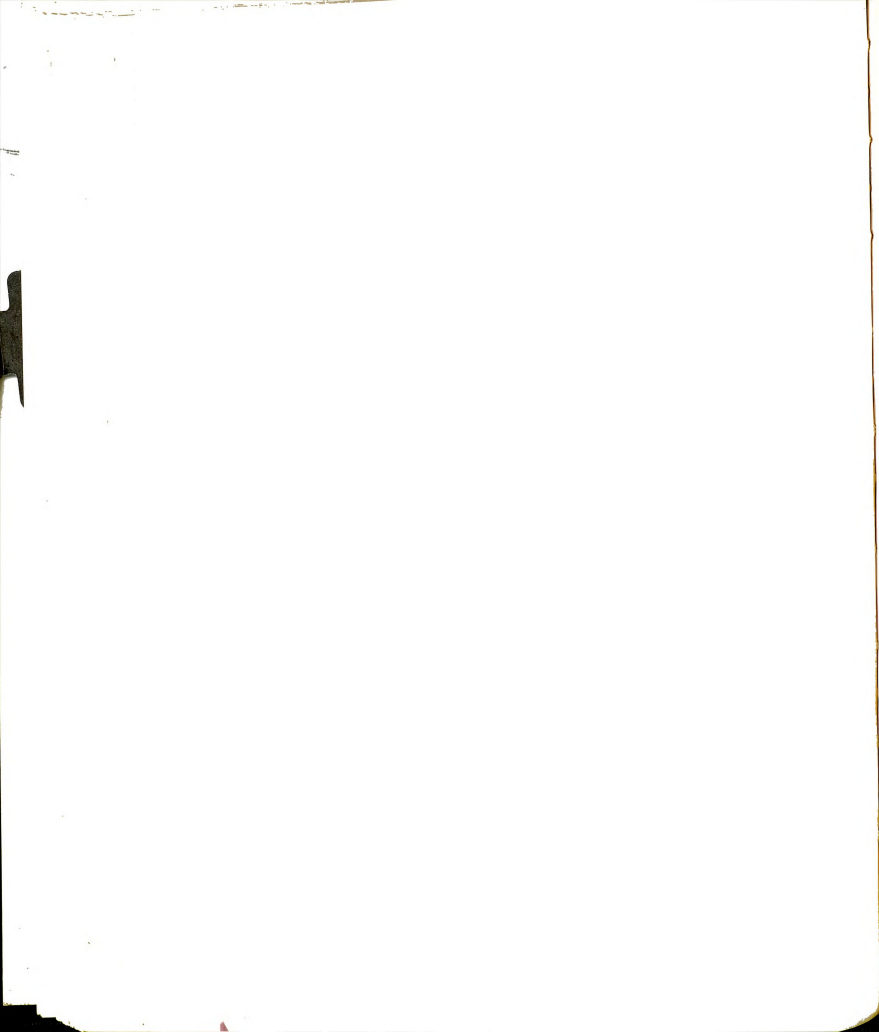
An older man might have taken refuge behind the virtue of his intentions, but Basil knew no such refuge. For sixteen years he had gone his own way without direction, due to his natural combativeness and to the fact that no older man save John Granby had yet captured his imagination. Now John Granby has vanished into the night and it seemed the natural thing to Basil that he should struggle back to rehabilitation alone and unguided.³⁷

Like several other Basil Lee stories, "The Perfect Life" is not skillfully crafted. Its plot is contrived and its characters, except Basil, stereotypes. But despite these weaknesses and the story's uneven texture, Fitzgerald renders Basil's excesses and pretenses warmly and compassionately. Because of his self-righteousness, Basil looks foolish; yet at the same time, Fitzgerald conveys the idea that Basil's total dedication to his dream of "the perfect life" is only temporary. It is another stage of adolescent phase through which he must pass on his way to manhood.

In "Forging Ahead," Basil, now seventeen, has just graduated from St. Regis. The story concerns his disappointment when he finds that financial problems will prevent him from attending Yale in the fall. However, through a series of setbacks, accidents, and coincidences, Basil succeeds in recapturing his dream.

Because he has lived so long with his romantic dream of Yale and the East, as the story opens Basil is unable to think of his future or define himself in any other terms:

But first, as a sort of gateway to that deeper, richer life, there was Yale. The name evoked the memory of a heroic team backed up against its own impassable goal in the crisp November twilight, and later, of half-a-dozen immaculate



noblemen with opera hats and canes standing at the Manhattan Hotel bar. And tangled up with its triumphs and rewards, its struggles and glories, the vision of the inevitable, incomparable girl.³⁸

Rather than face disillusion and the loss of his dream, Basil resolves to earn the necessary money to finance his own education. Immediately after taking a job with the railroad, however, Basil discovers that working is not as romantic as he had envisioned it:

It was like entering a new school except that there was no one who showed any interest in him or asked him if he was going out for the team. He punched a time clock . . . and without even an admonition from the foreman to 'go in and win,' was put to carrying boards for the top of a car. . . . The president's little daughter had not come by, dragged by a runaway horse; not even a superintendent had walked through the yard and singled him out with an approving eye.³⁹

Having been laid off by the railroad, Basil's next scheme is to enter into a bargain with his rich great-uncle whereby, in return for a job at his great-uncle's drug store, Basil is to act as a guide and escort to Rhoda Sinclair, the man's step-daughter. Despite finding Rhoda to be dull and irritating, Basil grimly and doggedly accepts his burden. He escorts her to dances and parties all summer until his old flame Minnie Bibble comes to town. Torn between his obligation to Rhoda and his dream of Yale and the excitement generated by Minnie's return, Basil's romantic imagination soars:

There it was, in her face touched by the sun--that promise--in the curve of her mouth, the tilted shadow of her nose, the point of dull fire in her eyes--that promise that she could lead him into a world in which he could always be happy.⁴⁰

Although Basil's dilemma is resolved--his mother raises the money for him to go to Yale--Fitzgerald writes of Basil: "Not yet delivered from adolescence, Basil's moments of foresight alternated with those when the future was measured by a day. The glory that was Yale faded beside the promise of that incomparable hour."⁴¹

As "The Freshest Boy" marked the end of one phase of Basil's "education," the series' final story, "Basil and Cleopatra," signals his entrance into young manhood. At seventeen, Basil has moved through the successive worlds of his small-town origins, prep-school, and New York. During the course of his experiences over these four years, he has been striving to fulfill his romantic dreams and realize his goals, while painfully gaining insights about himself and others. This story finds Basil about to embark upon the quest for his final adolescent dream--entering Yale and becoming both a football hero and a social success.

Early in the story, Basil becomes aware that he has lost Minnie Bibble to Le Moyne Littleboy, a brash freshman football player at Princeton. Disheartened, he suffers further disappointment when he finds that he has flunked his exams and is ineligible for freshman football. But, struggling back, he passes his makeup exams and discovers that despite his despair over losing Minnie, his old spirit is slowly regenerating:

Basil began to look around him gloomily to see if there was anything left in life. Not since his miserable first year at school had he passed through such a period of misery; only now did he begin for the first time to be aware of Yale. The quality of romantic speculation reawoke, and listlessly, at first, then with growing determination, he set about merging himself into this spirit which had fed his dreams for so long.⁴²

Reluctantly, Basil tries out for the freshman team; and slowly, patiently, he works his way up to the second team. Finding that he is to accompany the team to Princeton,

Basil felt the old lust for glory sweep over him. Le Moyne was playing end on the Princeton freshman and it was probable that Minnie would be in the stands, but now, . . . the fact seemed of less importance than the game . . . for once the present was sufficient: He was going to spend two hours in a country where life ran at the pace you demanded of it.⁴³

At a crucial point in the game, Basil displays poise, balance, and control; under the pressure of impending defeat, he takes charge of his team and leads them to victory.

Later, spotting Minnie at the post-game dance, his old romantic yearnings return. He confides his misery to Jobena Dorsey and she wisely tells him to "show her you don't care . . . It's all over."⁴⁴ Taking hold of himself, Basil dances with Minnie; and when he is once again assailed by his old desires, he follows Jobena's advice and is able to defeat them: "He wanted to put his arm around her and tell her she was the most romantic person in the world, but he saw in her eyes that she scarcely perceived him; . . . He remembered what Jobena had said--there was nothing left but to escape with his pride."⁴⁵

As Matthew Bruccoli notes, this realization marks an important change in Basil's character: "In the previous stories Basil was influenced by considerations of conceit, but not of pride."⁴⁶ Rather than dwelling on the sadness of his loss and taking refuge in futile self-pity, Basil turns hopefully to the future:

Resolutely he refused to look at her, guessing that she had wriggled slightly and folded her hands in her lap. And as he held on to himself an extraordinary thing happened--the world around, outside of her, brightened a little. Presently more freshmen would approach him to congratulate him on the game, and he would like it--the words and the tributes in their eyes. There was a good chance he would start against Harvard next week.⁴⁷

Having made the decision that he must give up his dream of Minnie, in the story's final scene, Fitzgerald describes the moment of Basil's recognition:

Basil's heart went bobbing off around the ballroom in a pink silk dress. Lost again in a fog of indecision, he walked out on the veranda. There was a flurry of premature snow in the air and the stars looked cold. Staring up at them he saw that they were his stars as always--symbols of ambition, struggle and glory. The wind blew through them, trumpeting that high white note for which he had always listened, and the thin-blown clouds, stripped for battle, passed in review. The scene was of an unparalleled brightness and magnificence, and only the practiced eye of the commander saw that one star was no longer there.⁴⁸

In understanding that life is a bittersweet mixture of pain and glory, that his dreams cannot always come true and that at the core of every dream of glory is a certainty of sadness, disillusion, and loss, Basil has taken an important step toward manhood. As Bruccoli suggests:

The title, 'Basil and Cleopatra,' points to this duality of loss and gain. To the Basil who did not know when he had made all his mistakes for one time, Minnie was what Cleopatra was to Antony. . . . Antony, the practiced commander gives up the world for love; Basil in giving up his Cleopatra for the world, becomes the practiced commander. . . . Basil is on his way to this domination; however, it is tempered by a sense of something having been lost, the one missing star. Basil has now assumed the quality of double-vision that Fitzgerald has treated him with throughout all the stories.⁴⁹

Undoubtedly, Fitzgerald had in mind a comparison with Amory Blaine when he created the character of Basil Lee. As Sergio Perosa points out:

His [Basil's] education is complete, of course, but he has achieved better awareness of life than Amory did and he has gone through a series of painful trials that will prevent him . . . from following in the footsteps of his predecessor in college. His emotional freshness, his very simplemindedness, carry in them a touch of greater engagement; it is hardly believable that he will repeat the mistakes of Amory, assume the mask of the 'aesthete,' and strike an 'egotistical' attitude. In the supposed limbo of infancy and adolescence, Basil has already discovered the secret flaw of falsehood and conflict and has become aware that life, at any stage, is a painful struggle.⁵⁰

IV

As Bruccoli and Perosa argue, the Basil Lee series reveals Fitzgerald's growing mastery of his craft and the deepening of his thought. In tracing Basil's fortunes from prep-school through his entrance into college, Fitzgerald has created a character with resonance and dimension. In depicting Basil's gradually developing consciousness, Fitzgerald has broadened and extended his major theme of dream-and-disillusion. For, although Basil never truly gives up his dreams, his growing sense of sadness and resignation reflects Fitzgerald's deepening concern with characters, situations, and problems which are more deeply human and ultimately tragic.

X "EMOTIONAL BANKRUPTCY" AND THE STRUGGLE FOR
PERSPECTIVE--STORIES FROM 1930-1933

By the beginning of the Thirties, Fitzgerald's own personal dreams of wealth, success, and popularity had faded into memories. Misfortunes coupled with the increasing strain caused by Zelda's mental and emotional deterioration catapulted Fitzgerald into a severe and prolonged depression. As a result of his despair he drank to excess and temporarily lost his vitality and commitment to his work. In addition, he was becoming increasingly paranoid over the fact that he wasn't young anymore. "This is what I think now" writes Fitzgerald in "Pasting It Together": "that the natural state of the sentient adult is a qualified unhappiness. I think also that in an adult the desire to be finer in grain than you are,. . . only adds to this unhappiness in the end--that end that comes to our youth and hope."¹ Acutely aware of his own "lesion of vitality," his fiction beginning with "The Rich Boy" in 1926 through Tender Is the Night reflects Fitzgerald's preoccupation with characters who either succumb to or struggle to ward off personal dissipation and "emotional bankruptcy."

II

Sergio Perosa has aptly described the nature and substance of Fitzgerald's fiction after 1930:

The Jazz Age has given way to an age of crisis and uncertainty. Human integrity is the victim of deep lacerations, eaten by the worm of inner evil, of personal weakness, or restlessness. The theme of 'education' must be turned over--in the new reality, only motives of deterioration and personal ruin are fit material for artistic elaboration.²

Similarly, writing in "Echoes of the Jazz Age" in 1931, Fitzgerald says:

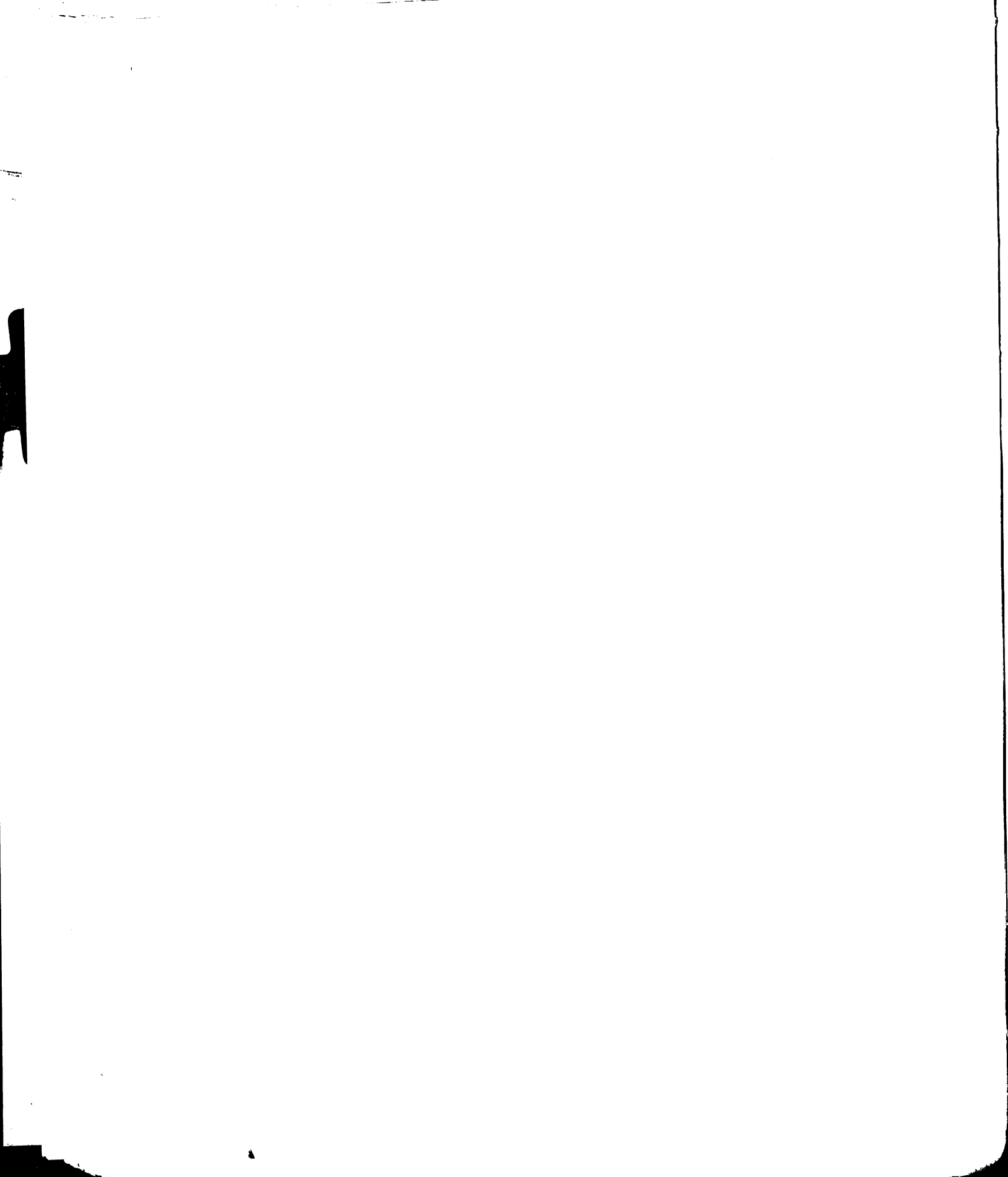
By this time contemporaries of mine had begun to disappear into the dark maw of violence. A classmate killed his wife on Long Island, another tumbled 'accidentally' from a skyscraper in Philadelphia, another purposely from a skyscraper in New York. One was killed in a speakeasy in Chicago; another was beaten to death in a speakeasy in New York and crawled home to the Princeton Club to die; still another had his skull crushed by a maniac's axe in an insane asylum where he was confined. These are not catastrophes that I went out of my way to look for--these were my friends, . . .³

It is no coincidence, therefore, that in several of Fitzgerald's Saturday Evening Post stories of this period, his characters either meet with violence or suffer personal ruin. The protagonist of "A New Leaf" (1931), for example, is an alcoholic who jumps from a skyscraper window after an old girl-friend jilts him. "A Change of Class" (1931) concerns a barber who, acting on a stock-market tip from Phillip Jadwin, a wealthy customer, rises from pauper to millionaire almost overnight and then just as quickly loses his money in the market crash. Moreover, while the barber's fortunes rise and fall, Jadwin loses all of his money in the crash and at the end of the story "wasn't sure he had any emotions at all."⁴ In "Flight and Pursuit" (1932), Carolyn Martin, having suffered

through a loveless marriage and been jilted by the man she loves, "accepted the idea that she had wrecked her life, and her capacity for dreaming had left her . . . simply because conditions were intolerable."⁵

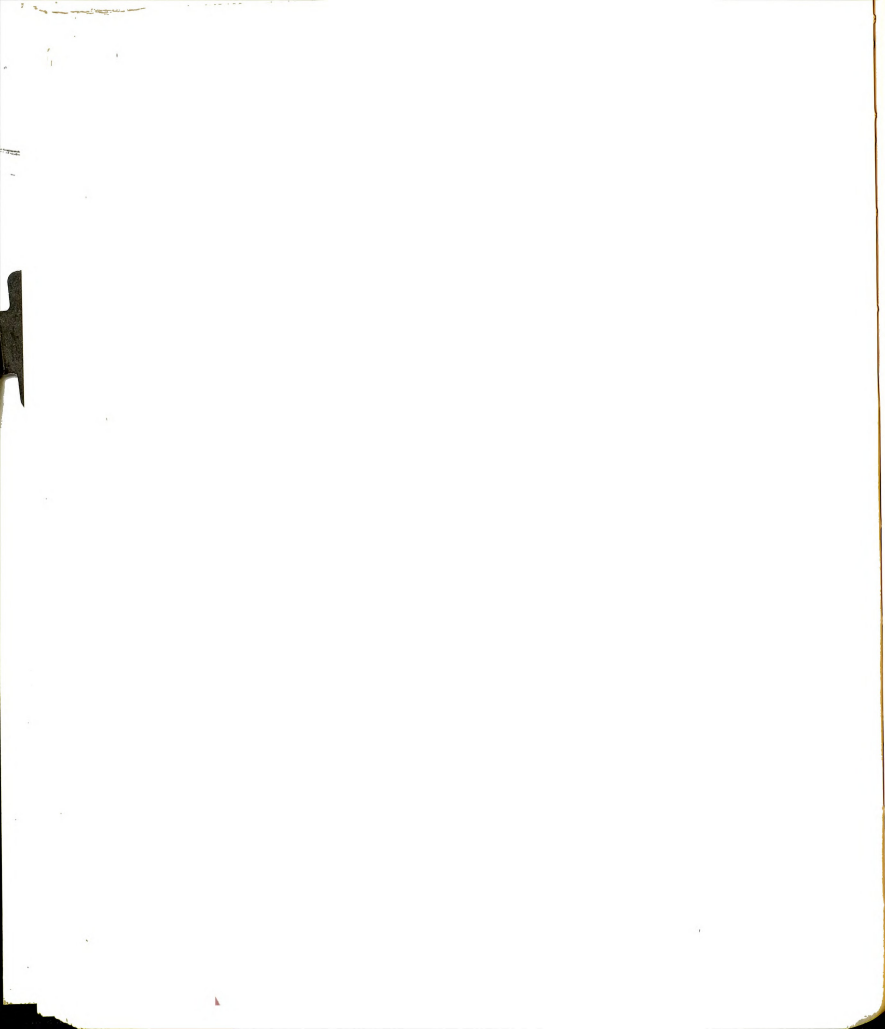
Through the five Josephine Perry stories (1930-1931), Fitzgerald traces the central character's progressive decline into "emotional bankruptcy." What is particularly interesting about Josephine is that despite her youth she has none of the compassion, warmth, and ingratiating enthusiasms of Basil Lee, to whom she has been so often compared. Moreover, where Basil's romantic dreams grow out of a deep need to invest his life with vitality, excitement, and hope, Josephine's dreams result from her boredom and ennui. Where Basil dreams of becoming the most popular boy and best athlete in school, Josephine dreams only of possessing and manipulating men. And, because of her striking physical beauty and allure, she is able to draw men to her almost at whim; consequently at 16, she "had no desire for achievement. . . . Josephine accepted the proud world into which she was born."⁶

In the first two stories, "First Blood" and "A Nice Quiet Place," Fitzgerald establishes his protagonist as willful, selfish, and capricious. Because of her startling beauty, she is successful at winning men over; but having achieved her goal, Josephine immediately discards them. In the third tale, "A Woman with a Past," Josephine finds "that for the first time in her life she had tried for a man and failed."⁷ Realizing that "the wound was not in her heart, but in her pride," in "A Snobbish Story" she has a brief flirtation with a married man to soothe her ego. But when the affair causes complications, she throws him over.



By the time she is eighteen, therefore, Josephine has experienced almost every kind of flirtation and love affair. Consequently, at the opening of the final story, "Emotional Bankruptcy," Josephine, who has centered her hopes and ambitions on a facile and ultimately destructive ability to lure and conquer men, has wearily come to the conclusion that her love affairs are like "A game played with technical mastery but with the fire and enthusiasm gone."⁸ As the story opens, Josephine, bored with her latest conquest, retreats into a daydream fantasy where she envisions her ideal mate as a man who would have "some kind of position in the world, or else not care whether he had one or not. . . . He'd have to be a leader . . . and dignified but very pash, and with lots of experience so I'd believe everything he said or thought was right."⁹ When Captain Edward Dicer, a dashing and debonair French aviation officer enters her life, Josephine at first believes that "the figure before her seems to have stepped out of a fairy-tale."¹⁰ Her infatuation with Dicer is heightened when her friends dote on him and skittishly treat him like a matinee idol. But when the two of them are finally left alone together, Josephine is horrified to discover that she feels neither elation nor anticipation. "You're everything I've always wanted" she tells him despairingly. "I've got nothing to give you. I don't feel anything at all."¹¹ Like Dexter Green and George O'Kelley, Josephine finds that after having captured her dream the romance and excitement are gone. Thus, by the story's close, she finds herself emotionally and spiritually bankrupt.

She was very tired and lay face downward on the couch with that awful, awful realization that the old things are true; one cannot both spend and have. The love of her life had come by, and looking in her



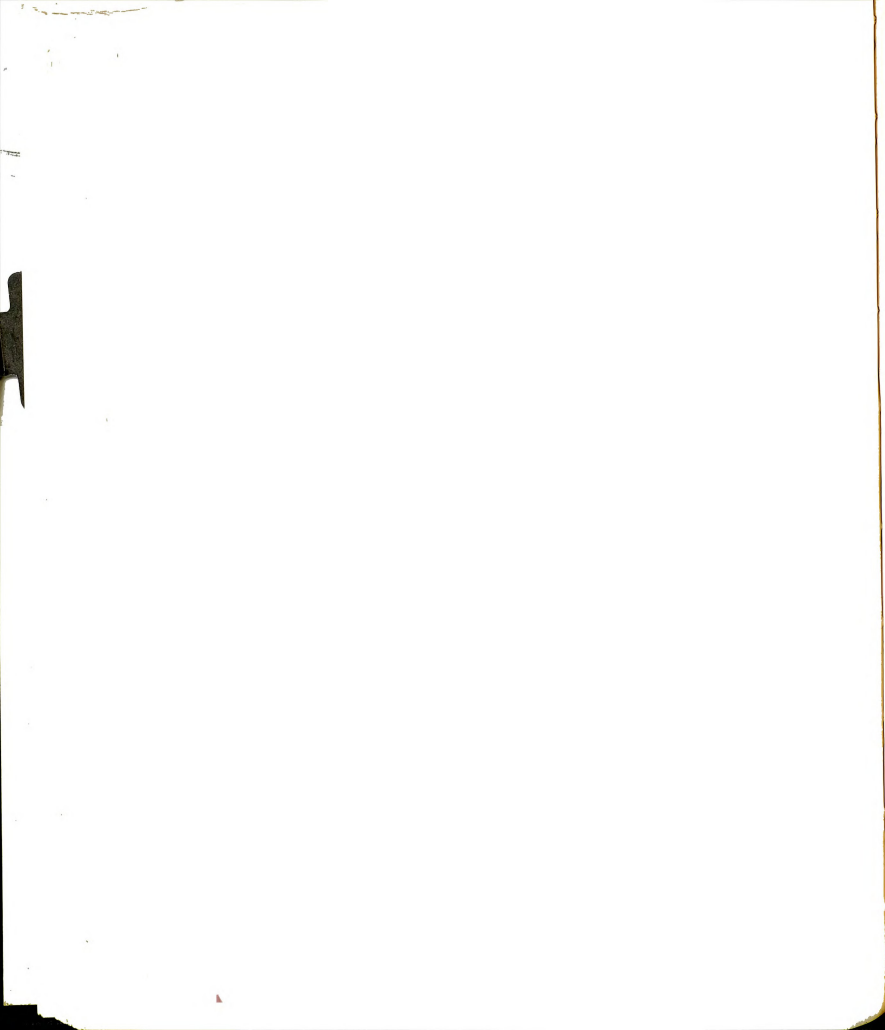
empty basket, she has found not a flower left for him--not one. After a while she wept. 'Oh what have I done to myself?' she wailed. 'What have I done.'¹²

Fearing his own "emotional bankruptcy" in this period, Fitzgerald also writes stories about characters who are struggling against encroaching despair and paralysis of will. Men, for example, like Charley Horne in "Diagnosis" (1932), Bill Norton, in "One Interne" (1932), Doctor Forrest Janney in "Family in the Wind" (1932), and Charlie Wales in "Babylon Revisited" (1931) all struggle back from the loss of their youthful hopes and dreams and begin to forge a new and more sober ethic, one which allows them to face reality and endure disappointments and disillusionments without falling prey to false hopes or self-delusions. In addition, in both "Family in the Wind" and to a greater extent in "Babylon Revisited," Fitzgerald is once more hoping that he can restore his waning vitality and commitment through the discipline of his art.

At the outset of "Family in the Wind" Fitzgerald's protagonist, Dr. Forrest Janney bitterly, sardonically, and with an edge of self-irony, rationalizes his "lesion of vitality" and subsequent dissipations:

'I am very happy, . . . or very miserable. I chuckle or weep alcoholically and, as I continue to slow up, life accommodately goes faster, so that the less there is of myself inside, the more diverting becomes the moving picture without. I have cut myself off from the respect of my fellow men, but I am aware of a compensatory cirrhosis of the emotions. And because of my sensitivity, my pity no longer has direction, but fixes itself on whatever is at hand, I have become an exceptionally good fellow--much more so than when I was a good doctor.'¹³

As the story progresses, Fitzgerald reveals that Dr. Janney, once a first-rate surgeon, "has committed professional suicide by taking to cynicism and drink."¹⁴ This condition is a result of Janney's suspicion that his



nephew Pinky has inadvertently caused the death of Mary Decker, a girl Janney had once loved. Midway through the story, Pinky receives a nearly-fatal head injury; and when asked by his brother and sister-in-law to perform a delicate brain operation, Janney flatly refuses.

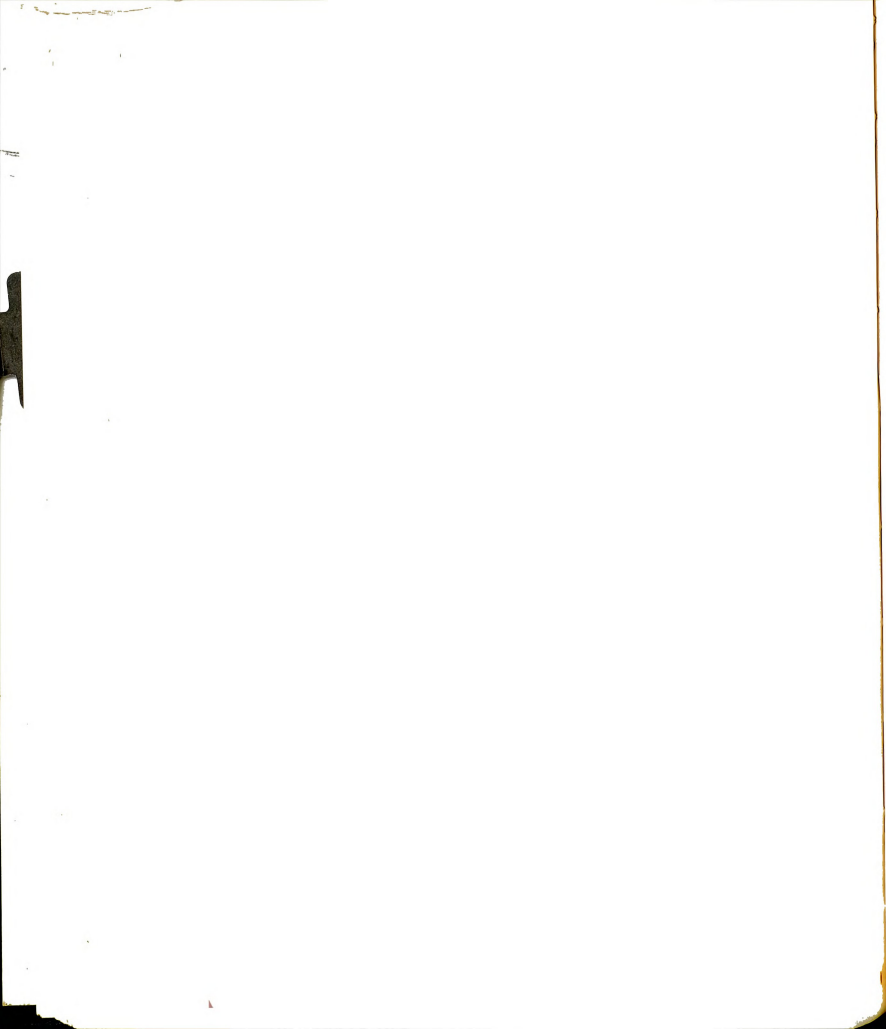
As Pinky remains in a coma, a violent tornado strafes the community. The storm injures hundreds of people, and Dr. Janney treats the injured. When confronted once again with the request to treat Pinky, Janney approaches it with a different sense of its import:

For a moment the doctor hesitated, but even when he closed his eyes, the image of Mary Decker seemed to have receded, eluding him. Something purely professional that had nothing to do with human sensibilities had been set in motion inside him, and he was powerless to head it off.¹⁵

As Sergio Perosa points out, Dr. Janney has "reacquired his professional and human integrity . . . chiefly because during the tornado his feelings have been stirred by the sight of human sufferings and by an encounter with an orphan girl."¹⁶

Having performed the operation successfully, Doctor Janney notices a marked change in himself. He now feels "an urge to go away permanently. . . . He knew the present family quarrel would never heal, nothing would ever be the same; it would all be bitter forever. And he had seen the placid countryside turned into a land of mourning. There was no peace here. Move on!"¹⁷ In the final scene, when Doctor Janney is leaving his hometown, he takes the orphan girl with him. Now that his strength and integrity have regenerated, he is able to protect and care for someone other than himself:

He settled down in his seat, looking out the window. In his memory of the terrible week the winds still sailed about him, came in draughts through the corridor of the car--winds of the world--cyclones, hurricanes,



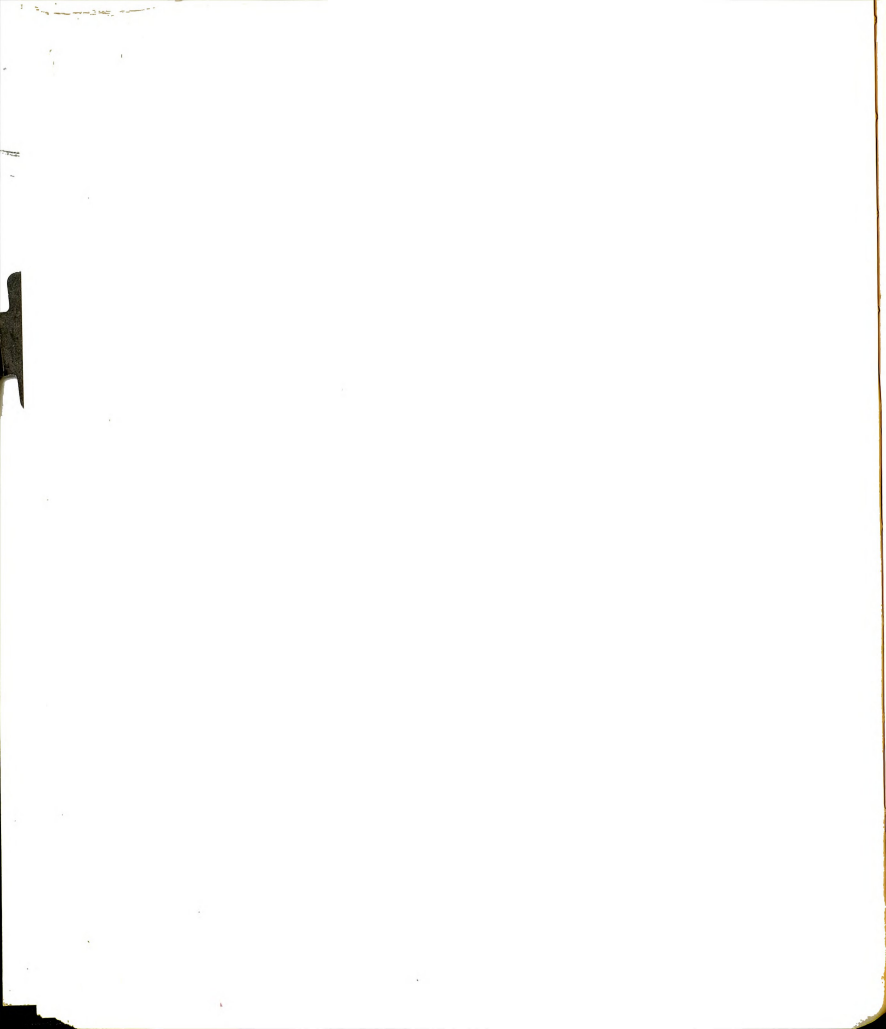
tornadoes--grey and black, expected or unforeseen, some from the sky, some from the waves of hell. But he would not let them touch Helen again if he could help it . . . 'All right Helen,' he said aloud . . . 'I guess the old brig can keep afloat a little longer--in any wind.'¹⁸

Although his is a sentimental story, Doctor Janney's departure is, as Sergio Perosa contends, "neither an evasion nor a flight but an affirmation of will and acceptance of life."¹⁹ Having undergone a personal ordeal and regained confidence in himself, Forrest Janney is now prepared both to accept himself and to understand his responsibilities as a doctor and a man.

Much of the sentiment in "Family In the Wind" grows out of Fitzgerald's deep affection for his daughter as well as his concern with overcoming his own spiritual deterioration. These same concerns form the core of the slightly earlier and much finer, "Babylon Revisited."

A masterful and deeply moving story, "Babylon Revisited" is one of those rare pieces in which an author creates an artistic structure which serves as an ideal vehicle for his most profound thoughts and feelings. At the deepest level of this complex and beautifully woven story, Charlie Wales' quest to win custody of his young daughter reflects Fitzgerald's deep need to restore his own pride, honor, and dignity as a man. There are, I believe, very few stories in the language which depict a man's painful and deliberate struggle to regain his self-respect in so human and compassionate a manner as does this one.

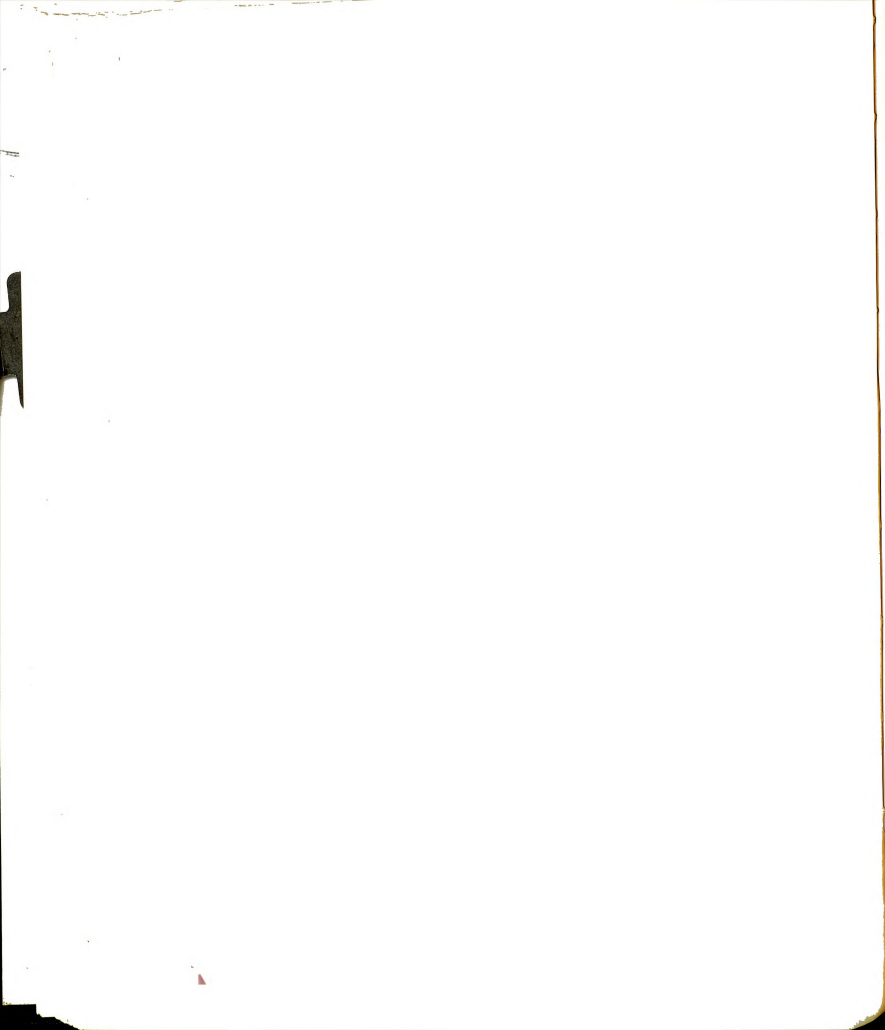
The story's setting is Paris, three years after the stock market crash. In hopes of regaining custody of his daughter Honoria, Charlie Wales returns for the first time since his post-1929 breakdown to the scene of his former revelries. Between the time of the crash and the present,



Charlie has lost everything and fought back: he'd been in a sanitarium, overcome his alcoholism, and learned to live with the knowledge that his old dissipations were partially to blame for his wife's premature death. Having suffered through a nightmare of guilt and recrimination, Wales is now bravely attempting to reconstruct a new ethic out of the dissipation and ruin of his recent past, one which will allow him to live without falling prey to false hopes and to his former easy dreams of success and happiness. During this time, his daughter has been in the custody of Charlie's sister and brother-in-law, Marion and Lincoln Peters. At the story's outset, then, it is clear that the man who returns to Paris to reclaim Honoria and to atone for his past mistakes is not the same Charlie Wales who left it three years ago: "He was curious to see Paris by night with clearer and more judicious eyes than those of other days."²⁰

Upon arriving in the city, Charlie "was not really disappointed to find Paris was so empty. But the stillness in the Ritz bar was strange and portentous. It was not an American bar anymore--he felt polite in it, and not as if he owned it."²¹ While portraying the subdued and sombre mood of post-Depression Paris, Fitzgerald is at the same time suggesting the more crucial change which Charlie himself has undergone.

"I spoiled this city for myself," he thought "I didn't realize it, but the days came along one after another, and then the years were gone, and then everything was gone, and I was gone."²² Awed and horrified at the magnitude of his dissipations, Charlie is still not without memories of their almost irresistible lustre and appeal. As he later tells his sister-in-law Marion Peters, ". . . it was nice while it lasted . . . We were a sort of royalty, almost infallible with a sort of magic around us."²³



Despite the nostalgia and sentiment he feels for the old days, however, those memories are no longer forceful nor seductive enough to detract him from his new purpose--to reclaim Honoria:

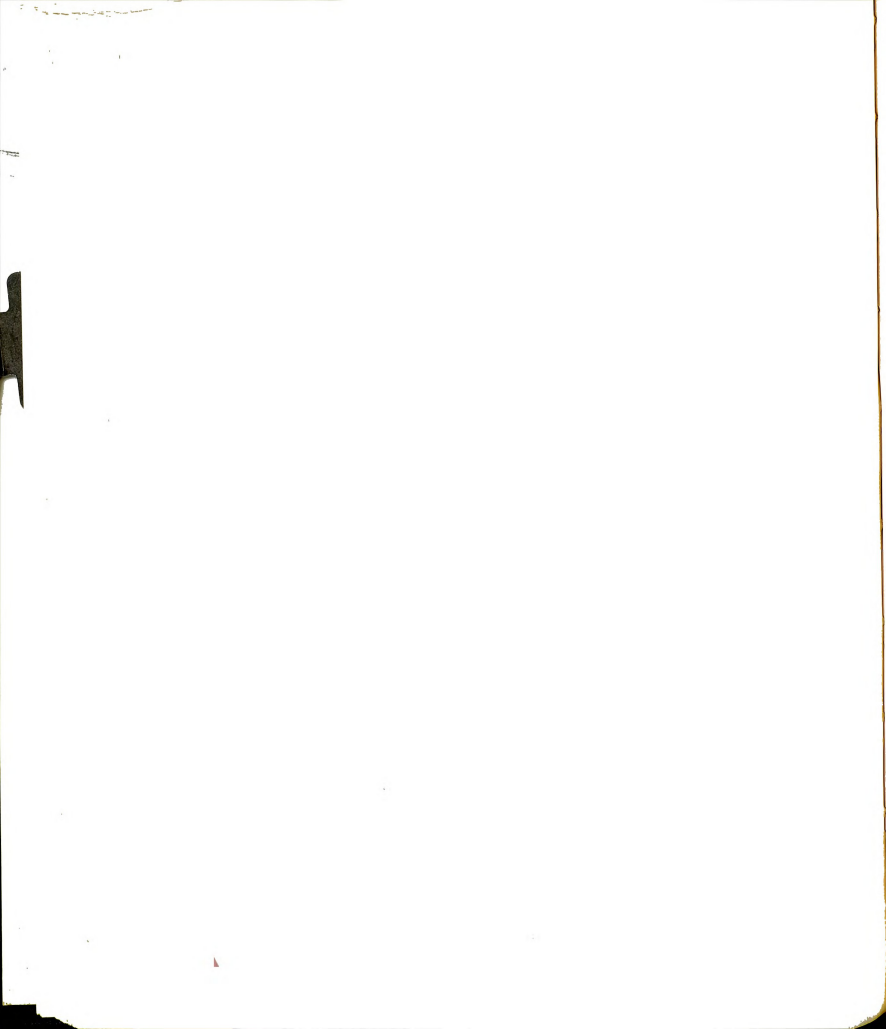
. . . a great wave of protectiveness went over him. He thought he knew what to do for her. He believed in character; he wanted to jump back a whole generation and trust in character again as the eternally valuable element. Everything else wore out . . . All the catering to vice and waste was on an utterly childish scale, and suddenly he realized the meaning of the word 'dissipate'--to dissipate into thin air; to make nothing out of something.²⁴

Charlie has returned to Paris, then, not to repeat the past but to bury it and to establish a secure present and future built upon recognition and atonement for his old dissipations and indiscretions:

He remembered thousand-franc notes given to an orchestra for playing a single number, hundred-franc notes tossed to a doorman for calling a cab. But it hadn't been given for nothing. It had been given, even the most wildly squandered sum, as an offering to destiny that he might not remember the things most worth remembering, the things that now he would always remember--his child taken from his control, his wife escaped to a grave in Vermont.²⁵

Formerly, his life had been a series of drunken parties; now, he realizes that "in the little hours of the night every move from place to place was an enormous human jump, an increase of paying for the privilege of slower and slower motions."²⁶

In Part II, Fitzgerald very delicately and yet emphatically underscores the genuine intimacy and natural affection between Charlie and his daughter. It is clear that Charlie wants Honoria back not only because of the guilt he feels but also because he sincerely wants to make a home and build a future for both of them. "When there had been her mother and a French nurse," Charlie thinks to himself, "he had been inclined to be strict; now he extended himself, reached out for a new



tolerance; he must be both parents to her now and not shut out any of her communication."²⁶ In considering Honoria's welfare above his own, Charlie establishes himself as both a capable and a qualified father. But as if to remind him of his past mistakes, Charlie, at the close of Part II encounters Duncan Shaeffer and Lorraine Quarrels, "sudden ghosts out of the past. . . . As always, he felt Lorraine's passionate attraction, but his own rhythm was different now."²⁷

In Part III, it becomes unavoidably clear that if he is to gain custody of his daughter, Charlie's task is to convince Marlon of his stability. Mentally preparing himself for his meeting with the Peters, Charlie,

. . . knew now that he would have to take a beating. It would last an hour or two hours, and it would be difficult, but if he modulated his inevitable resentment to the chastened attitude of the reformed sinner, he would win his point in the end. Keep your temper, he told himself. You don't want to be justified. You want Honoria.²⁸

Almost immediately after he has arrived at the Peters' apartment and settled in a chair, Marion launches her battering offensive. Feeling bitter and resentful toward him, she first interrogates Charlie about his drinking and then coldly confronts him with the painful and all-too-familiar memory of the time he locked his wife [her sister] out in the snow. Fighting off the unbearably tempting impulse to "launch out into a long expostulation and explanation,"²⁹ Charlie wisely retains himself and instead attempts rationally and dispassionately to measure the force of his opposition:

He looked at her startled. With each remark the force of her dislike became more and more apparent. She had built up all her fear of life into one wall and faced it toward him . . . Charlie became increasingly alarmed at leaving Honoria in this atmosphere of hostility against himself;

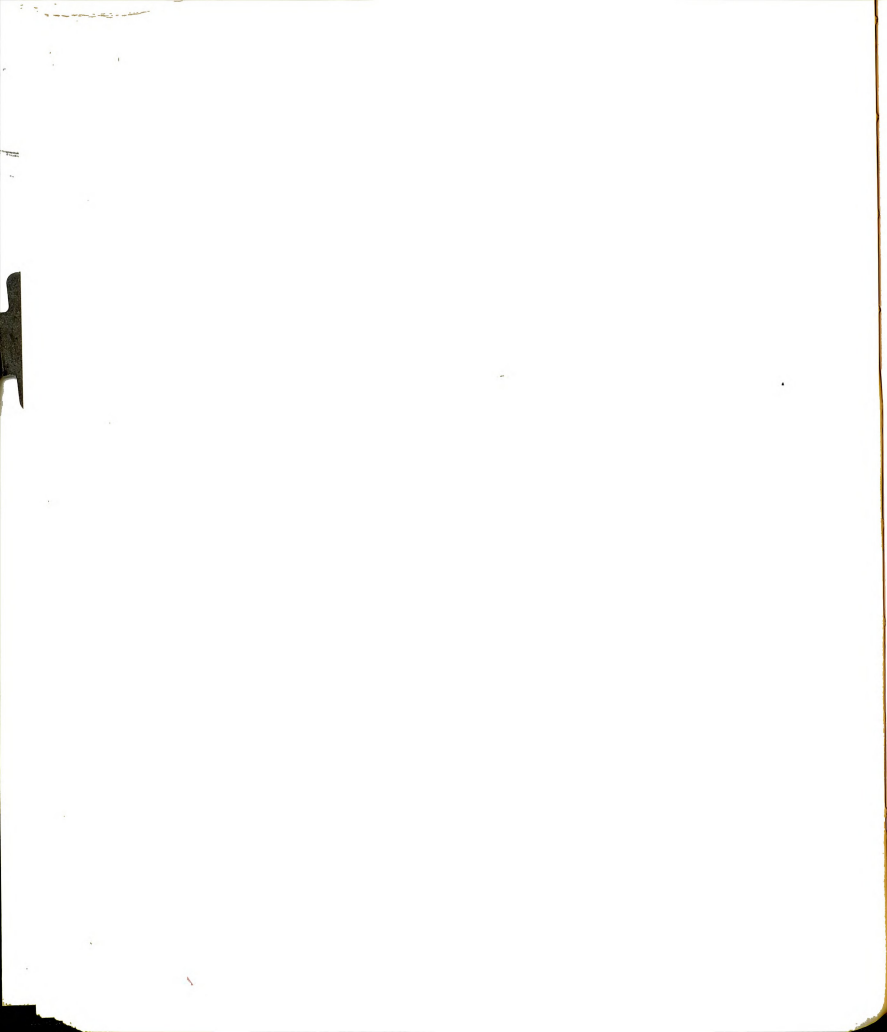
sooner or later it would come out, in a word here, a shake of the head there, and some of the distrust would be irrevocably implanted in Honoria. But he pulled his temper down out of his face and shut it up inside him; he had won a point . . .³⁰

Knowing that he must continue to bear Marion's accusations, insults, and scorn with silence and restraint, Charlie forces himself to endure her most savage indictment--the irrational accusation that he alone was responsible for his wife's death: "An electric current of agony surged through him; for a moment he was almost on his feet, an unuttered sound echoing in his throat. He hung onto himself for a moment, another moment."³¹ Sensing the tension, Marion's husband, Lincoln comes to Charlie's aid by deflecting his wife's anger. Once the crisis passes, all of them silently acknowledge that Charlie "had somehow arrived at control over the situation."³²

In the final scene in Part III, Charlie, deeply shaken by his ordeal, returns to his hotel room, only to be tormented again by memories of his past: "the image of Helen haunted him. Helen whom he had loved so until they senselessly begun to abuse each other's love, tear it to shreds."³³ Charlie fights off this renewed onslaught of guilt and self-pity; and, by the close of Part III, he has regained his balance and self-esteem:

Going over it again brought Helen nearer, and in the white, soft light that steals upon half sleep near morning he found himself talking to her again. She said that he was perfectly right about Honoria and that she wanted Honoria to be with him. She said she was glad he was being good and doing better. She said a lot of other things--very friendly things--but she was in a swing in a white dress, and swinging faster and faster all the time, so that at the end he could not hear all that she said.³⁴

In the first three parts of "Babylon Revisited," Fitzgerald skillfully establishes the fact that Charlie is undoubtedly capable and



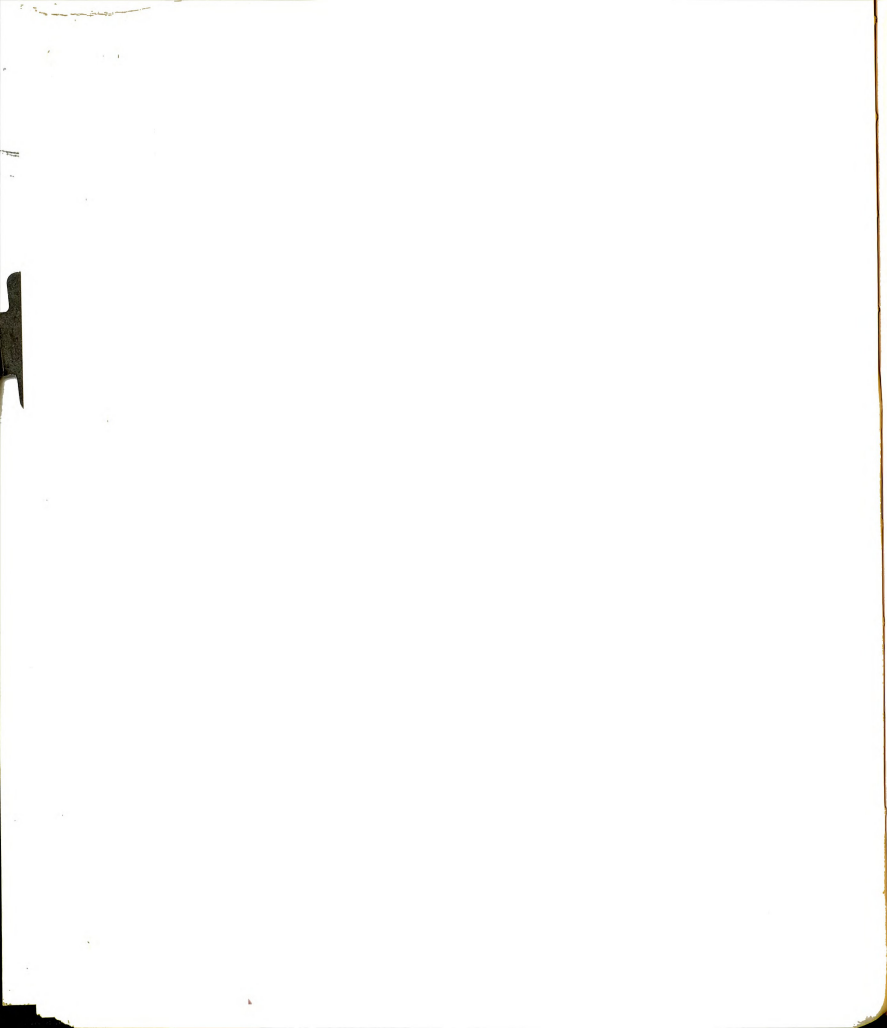
justified in his claim to Honoria. He has suffered sufficient agony, despair, and guilt in atoning for his past mistakes and deserves an opportunity to build a new and more meaningful life for himself and Honoria. At the same time, though, despite Charlie's capabilities and regardless of his suffering, his past continues to haunt him and to cause him renewed sorrow and pain. And it is this harsh reality which, in the final two sections of "Babylon Revisited," Charlie must recognize and overcome.

As Part IV begins, Charlie awakens the next morning believing that he is finally on the verge of gaining the goal for which he has so ardently struggled during the past three years:

He woke up feeling happy. The door of the world was open again. He made plans, vistas, futures for Honoria and himself, but suddenly he grew sad, remembering all the plans he and Helen had made. She had not planned to die. The present was the thing--work to do and someone to love.³⁵

At the Peters' residence that afternoon, however, just as Charlie is about to take charge of his daughter, his former friends Duncan and Lorraine reappear and drunkenly demand entrance. Shocked and outraged at their coarseness and pitiful inebriation Charlie quickly sends them away, but not before they have done irreparable damage. Their presence has so unnerved Marion that she withdraws her consent to let Honoria go with him.

Shattered by this sudden and unexpected turn of events, Charlie returns in the opening scene of Part V to the Ritz bar. Anxious and disconsolate, he nevertheless fights off the tempting impulse to sink further into self-pity and despair. Refusing a drink, he reluctantly engages in a conversation with the club's owner. Once again he finds the spectre of his past hovering over him:



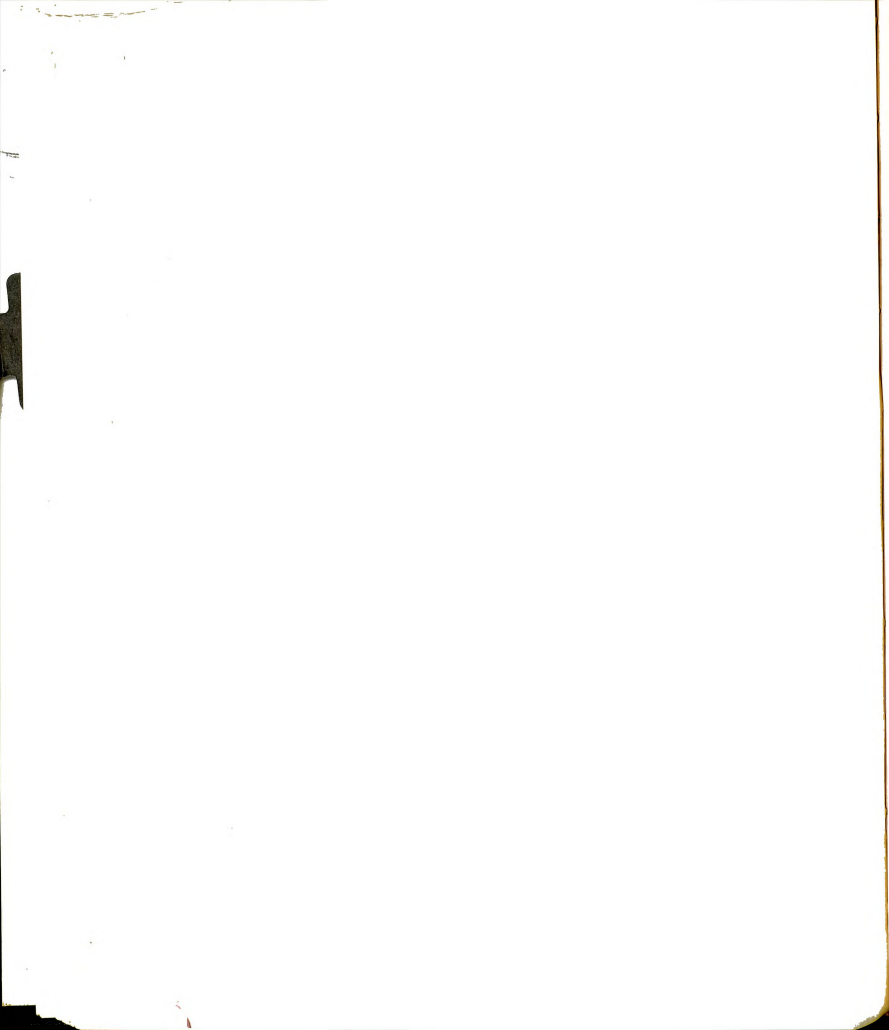
'I heard you lost a lot in the crash.' 'I did,' and he added grimly, 'but I lost everything I wanted in the boom.' 'Selling short.' 'Something like that.' Again the memory of those days swept over him like a nightmare--the people they had met travelling; then the people who couldn't add a row of figures or speak a coherent sentence. . . . the women and the girls carried screaming with drink or drugs out of public places-- --The men who locked their wives out in the snow, because the snow of twenty-nine wasn't real snow. If you didn't want it to be real snow, you just paid some money.³⁶

This is both the story's turning point and also Charlie's most severe test of character. Despite his anger and bitterness and the temptation to lose himself in drink and self-indulgence, Charlie resigns himself once more to his difficult task of waiting and hoping. Having fought off the final assault of his conscience, he phones Lincoln Peters and learns that he must wait at least another six months before renewing his claim to Honoria. Shunning the temptation to give up, Charlie vows:

He would come back some day; they couldn't make him pay forever. But he wanted his child, and nothing was much good now, beside that fact. He wasn't young anymore with a lot of nice thoughts and dreams to have by himself. He was absolutely sure Helen wouldn't have wanted him to be so alone.³⁷

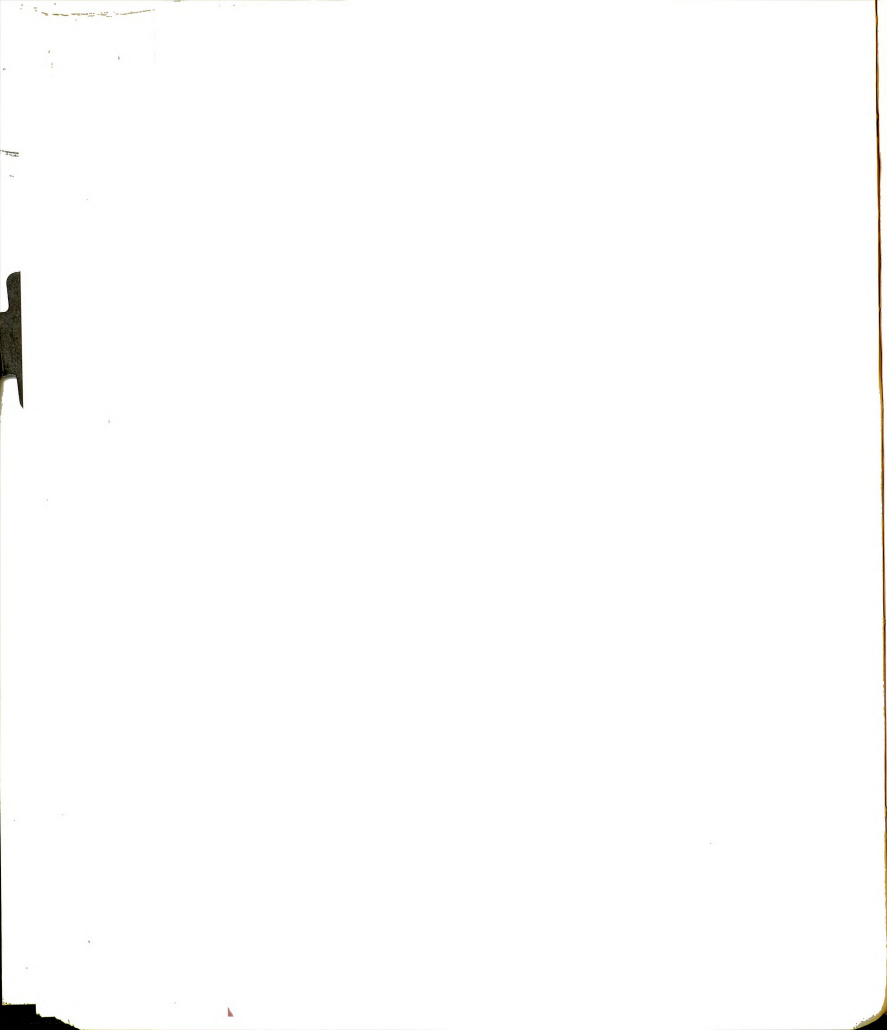
By the end of "Babylon Revisited," all Charlie can look forward to is more suffering and despair. He knows that only patience and perseverance will allow him to struggle back from his disappointment. But his resolve to "come back some day; they couldn't make him pay forever," endows him with dignity and nobility.

In the years between the publication of The Great Gatsby and Tender is the Night, Fitzgerald's work reflects a more sober, restrained, and mature perspective. Where earlier heroes had youth and resiliency, men like Forrest Janney and Charlie Wales undergo the painful process of



aging and of watching their youth and dreams fade. Moreover, Janney and Wales are not romantic heroes in quest of an "impossible dream." They are men who have suffered deep disillusion and anguish. They are flawed, sometimes pathetic men struggling against inevitable erosion of spirit and decline of vitality. Their hopes and aspirations are no longer bound up in romantic dreams of wealth, beauty, and youth. Where a younger, "larger-than-life" figure like the symbolic Gatsby could transcend the loss of his "fantastic" illusion by creating an imaginative dream world, men like Janney and Charlie Wales (and later Dick Diver) are forced to face the inescapable reality that they cannot escape their mortality; for them there remains only the recognition of suffering, and their only hope lies in their existential commitment to endure, to persevere, and to continue to pursue new goals, find new alternatives, and consider new perspectives.

As Fitzgerald's vision deepens in the second half of his career, his work reflects a preoccupation with a more complex and tangible reality and with problems which are more perplexing and more profoundly human. He finds himself faced with the necessity of creating new characters (older, sadder, and wiser) and of exploring new techniques and forms to serve as vehicles for his more profound thoughts and feelings. And although he does not produce a single sustained work which is artistically as skillful as The Great Gatsby, I believe that in his next novel Tender Is the Night, Fitzgerald writes a most human and poignant story, one which is the artistic culmination of all he has been working toward since the publication of "The Rich Boy" in 1926.



XI TENDER IS THE NIGHT AND RELATED STORIES

As stories like "The Last of the Belles," "The Freshest Boy," "Basil and Cleopatra," and "Babylon Revisited," clearly testify, a sad and disappointed Fitzgerald struggled hard to accept the passing of his youth and the loss of his "old" dreams of wealth, romance, and success. But his most profound disillusion was over the disintegration of his marriage to Zelda, a breakdown reflected in three short stories, "The Rough Crossing," "One Trip Abroad," and "Two Wrongs," and in the novel Tender is the Night.

In the three stories, written between early summer, 1929, and early fall, 1930--the period during which Zelda suffered her first breakdown--Fitzgerald depicts the spiritual erosion and disintegration of hopeful young couples due to emotional and psychological incompatibilities. For example, in "The Rough Crossing" and "One Trip Abroad," both couples are unable to face the loss of their youthful romantic dreams; they lose their emotional stability and drift into self-indulgence and dissipation. In the third story "Two Wrongs," Fitzgerald traces the degeneration of a strong and creative man and contrasts his decline with his wife's growing vitality.

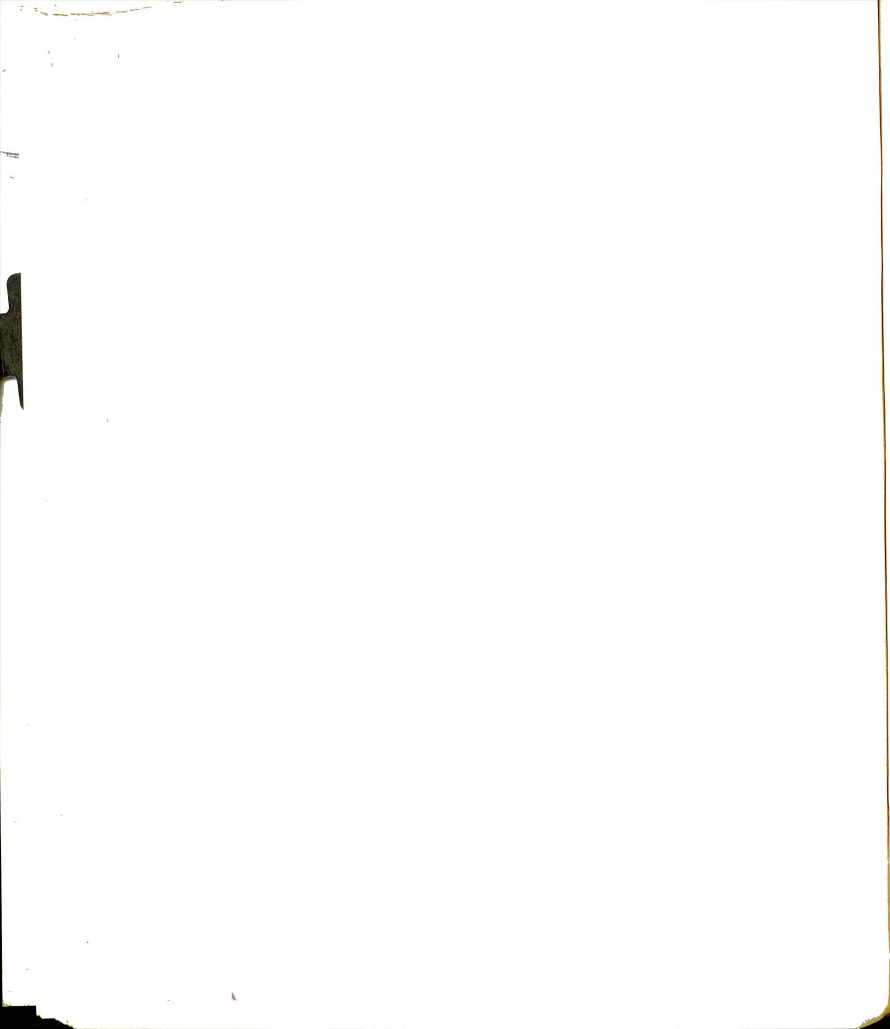
At the beginning of "A Rough Crossing" (1929), Eva and Adrian Smith's marriage is already shaky due to Eva's jealousy of Adrian's popularity and success as an actor. Hoping to rescue their declining relationship, Eva suggests they take a European holiday: "It was in the

hope that there was some secret of graceful living, some compensation for the lost careless confidence of twenty-one, that they were going to spend a year in France."¹ But Eva's dreams are short-lived; while on board ship, Adrian has a brief but intense flirtation with a young woman, an infatuation "bearing him up into a delicate romantic ecstasy that transcended passion." "He couldn't relinquish it," Fitzgerald adds, "he had discovered something he thought was lost with his youth forever."² Although the story ends with a reconciliation of the Smiths, Fitzgerald implies that it is at best temporary. Adrian will continue to be drawn to romance and excitement, and Eva will remain torn by self-destructive jealousy.

Written a year later, "One Trip Abroad" depicts another failed marriage. Fitzgerald traces the decline of the relationship of Nicole and Nelson Kelley (a younger couple than the Smiths) from the beginning of their marriage until a time several years later when both become patients in a Swiss Sanitorium.

At the outset of their marriage, Nicole and Nelson dream of becoming successful artists--she as a singer and he as a painter. Like Dexter Green before he meets and falls in love with Judy Jones, both are "magnificently, attune to life" and hopeful of attaining their dreams. But, having embarked on a European honeymoon, both discover that now, (instead of struggling to pursue their careers) "they wanted the taste and smell of the living world; for the present they were finding it in each other."³

As they travel through Europe and Africa, they slowly and progressively begin to drift from their original aims: "for as yet his



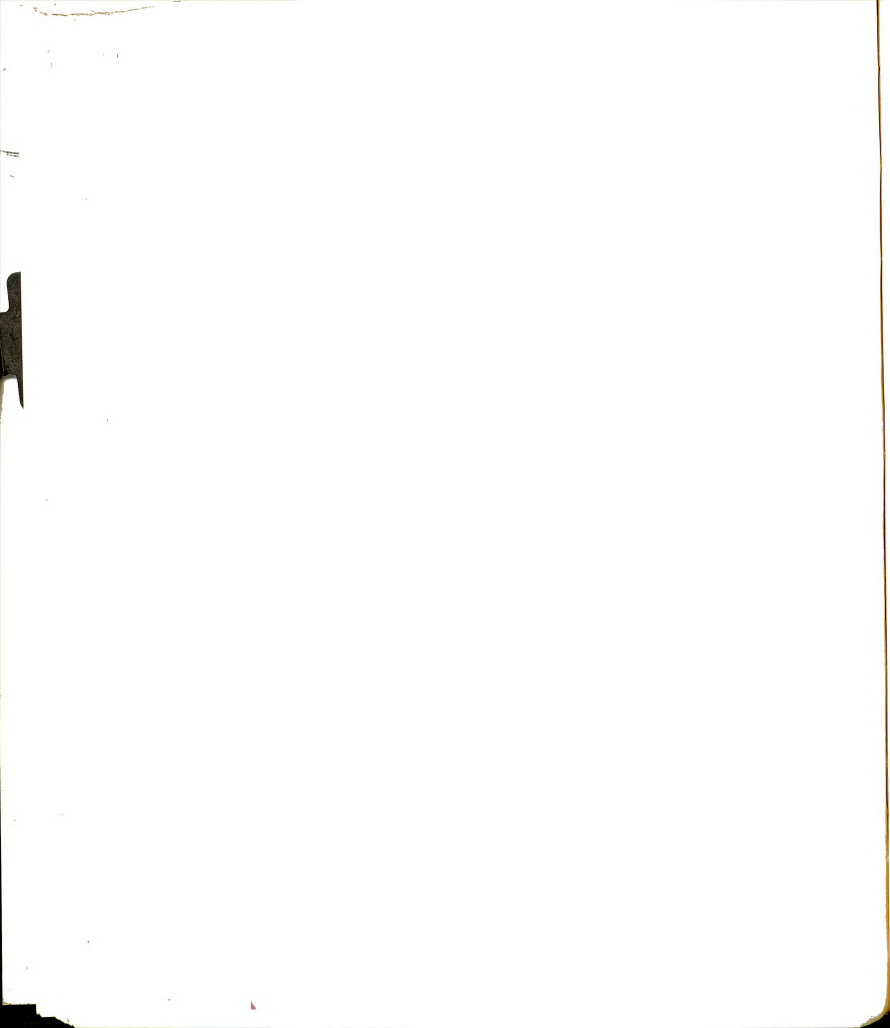
painting had no serious direction and her singing had no immediate prospect of becoming serious. They said they were not 'getting anywhere'--the evenings were long, so they began to drink a lot of vin de Capri at dinner."⁴

Wandering from the Italian to the French Riviéras in search of some romantic ecstasy neither is able to grasp or define, Nicole and Nelson increasingly focus their lives on parties and glittering social events. As they become more restless and confused, they mask their degeneration with the illusion that "'we're getting out of it all soon . . . after this summer.'"⁵

Gradually the Kelleys sink into boredom and dissipation: each engages in a brief and unsatisfying affair followed by the inevitable violent arguments that only re-open old wounds and leave lasting emotional scars. Even the birth of a child fails to mend the relationship or halt its decline. Thus, by the story's end, both are in a Swiss sanitorium, still deluding themselves, still believing that they can recapture the romantic dreams of their youth:

. . . the moon lifted itself and the lake brightened; the music and the faraway lights were like hope, like the enchanted distance from which children see things. In their separate hearts Nelson and Nicole gazed backwards to a time when life was all like this. . . . 'We can have it all over again,' she whispered. 'Can't we Nelson . . . It's just that we don't understand what's the matter,' she said. 'Why did we lose peace and love and health, one after the other? If we knew, if there was anyone to tell us, I believe we could try.'⁶

While "The Rough Crossing" and "One Trip Abroad" clearly prefigure the break-up of the Divers in Tender is the Night, Fitzgerald offers even



more striking and concrete foreshadowings in "Two Wrongs" (1930). In this story, he contrasts the decline of the once-strong and energetic Bill McChesney with the liberation of his formerly dependent wife, Emmy. At the height of his success as a Broadway producer and patron of the arts, Bill meets and falls in love with the young and beautiful Emmy Pincard. Stirred by her beauty and youthful radiance, he offers her a role in his new production. Subsequently, she becomes an overnight sensation. It is at this point that Bill's transformation begins:

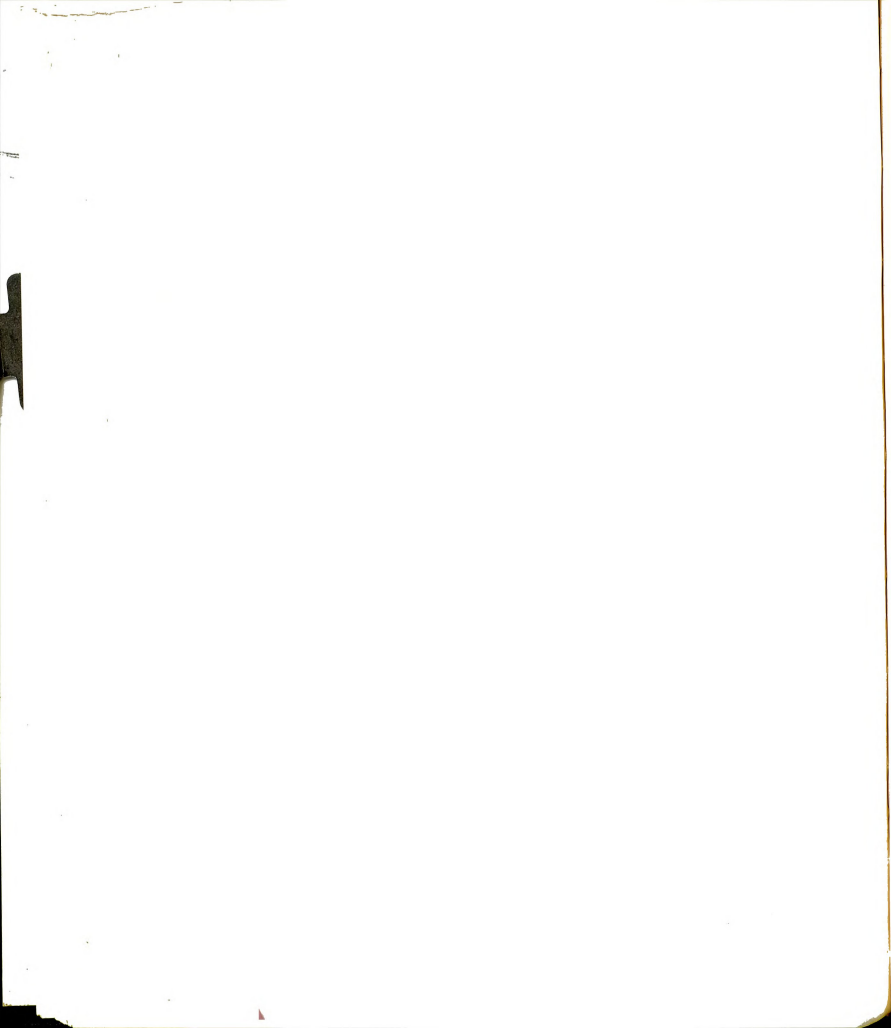
. . . when they opened in the city, no sooner did he see the other men begin to crowd around her beauty than she became this play for him, this success, the thing he came to see when he came to the theater. After a good run it closed just as he was drinking too much and needed someone in the grey days of reaction. They were married suddenly in Connecticut, early in June.⁷

But after the initial passion and excitement of the marriage has dimmed, Bill finds himself still restlessly searching for romance, glamour, and companionship. His insecurities lead him into damaging and humiliating affairs.

Meanwhile, Emmy, in poor health, finds herself ignored and overlooked; slowly, she realizes that she must begin the painful process of emotional and physical rehabilitation alone:

When Emmy was well, physically and mentally, her incessant idea was to learn to dance; the old dream . . . persisted as a bright avenue leading back to first youth and days of hope in New York.⁸

As Bill continues his decline, Emmy regains her health and balance, and the earlier pattern of their relationship is reversed. Bill "had come to lean in a way on Emmy's fine health and vitality. They were always together and if he felt a vague dissatisfaction that he had grown to



need her more than she needed him, there was always the hope that things would break better for him next month, next year."⁹ But as Bill grows more dependent upon her for his emotional stability, Emmy grows stronger and more independent: "for the world of her work, where she existed without Bill, was bigger to her now than the world in which they had existed together. There was more room to be glad in one than sorry in the other."¹⁰

Finally, in choosing to live in the "world of her work," Emmy also chooses to break with her husband. Even though they pretend that the marriage will thrive once Bill is rehabilitated, both know that a split is inevitable. Thus, in the final scene, Bill, now "emotionally bankrupt," leaves New York for the West, while Emmy, now an internationally famous dancer, embarks for a European tour with her tutor-lover.

In these three precursors of Tender Is the Night Fitzgerald's tone is subdued, almost as if he had resigned himself to his personal failure and to the loss of Zelda; he is no longer concerned with capturing the "old dream," but with coping with disillusion by learning to adjust to limitations. As a result, his later heroes like himself are older, more human, and more sympathetic.

II

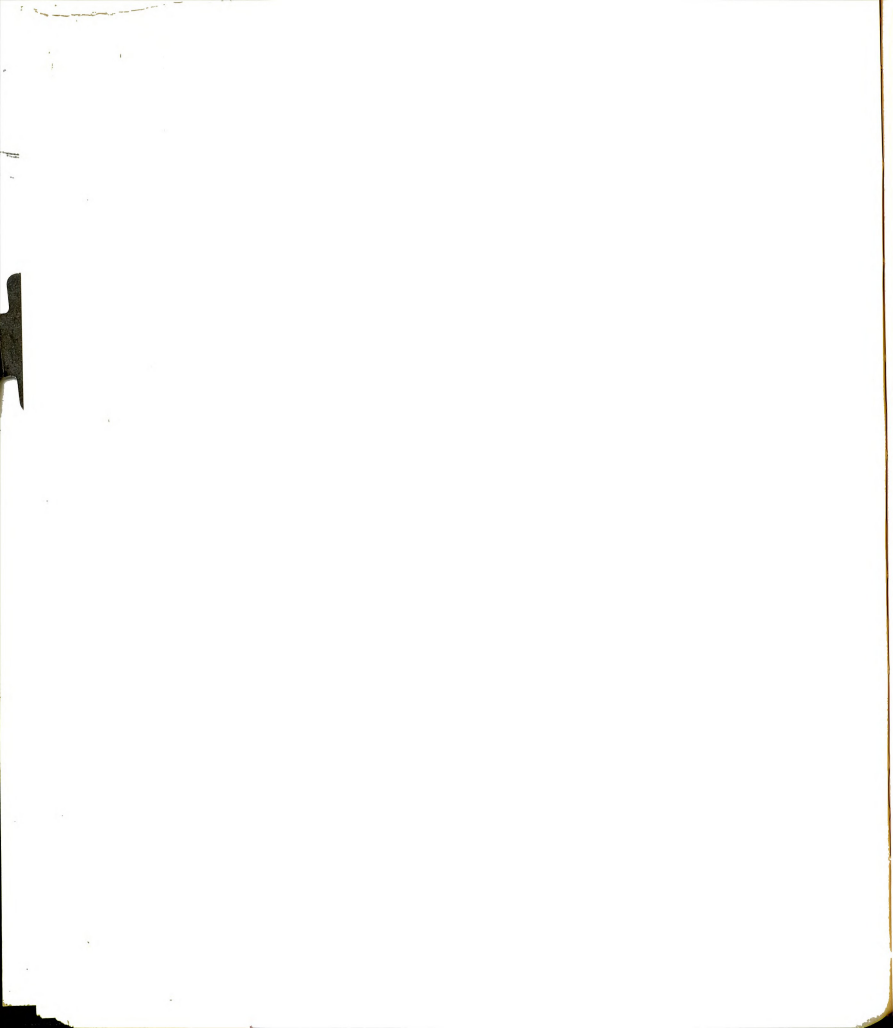
"People are divided into two classes," Fitzgerald said once in conversation. " There are those who think, are sensitive and have some fatal flaw. There are those who are good and unimaginative-- and uninteresting."¹¹ Indeed, Fitzgerald saw himself as sensitive and talented, heroic and noble, and yet flawed by his self-indulgence. "I'm so bad," he said of himself with mock disparagement, "such a lousy

son-of-a-bitch that I have got to do something good--so good in my work--so that it counterbalances the bad. I've got to be good and I can be in my work."12

Because he was so self-conscious of what he romantically termed the "fatal flaw," Fitzgerald was acutely aware of a duality in his personality--his irreconcilable need to achieve greatness and to discipline himself in art and at the same time his deeply human need to be accepted and loved by all those who touched him. Fitzgerald dramatizes this conflicting duality in his own personality through Dick Diver his most human and complex hero. Working on an earlier draft of what was to become Tender is the Night, Fitzgerald writes:

The hero was born in 1891. He is a well-formed rather athletic and fine-looking fellow. Also he is very intelligent, widely read--in fact he has all the talents, including especially great personal charm. This is all planted in the beginning. He is a superman in possibilities, that is he appears to be at first sight from a bourgeois point of view. However, he lacks that tensile strength--none of the ruggedness of Brancusi, Leger, Picasso. . . . He looks, though like me. The faults--the weakness such as social climbing, the drinking, the desperate clinging to one woman, finally, the neurosis, only come out gradually.¹³

In Tender is the Night, Fitzgerald chronicles the decline of Doctor Richard Diver from a promising and idealistic young psychologist to a lonely, bitter, and disillusioned man in the final stages of "emotional bankruptcy" and spiritual ruin. From the outset of Book I, Fitzgerald emphasizes Dick's duality.¹⁴ When he begins his studies at Zurich in the spring of 1917, Dick is "at the very acme of his bachelorhood,"¹⁵ and is free to pursue his dream of becoming a great psychologist. At this point in his life, Dick is dedicated to his dream and to his work;



he lives deeply in his studies and labors without benefit of luxury, diversion, or romance:

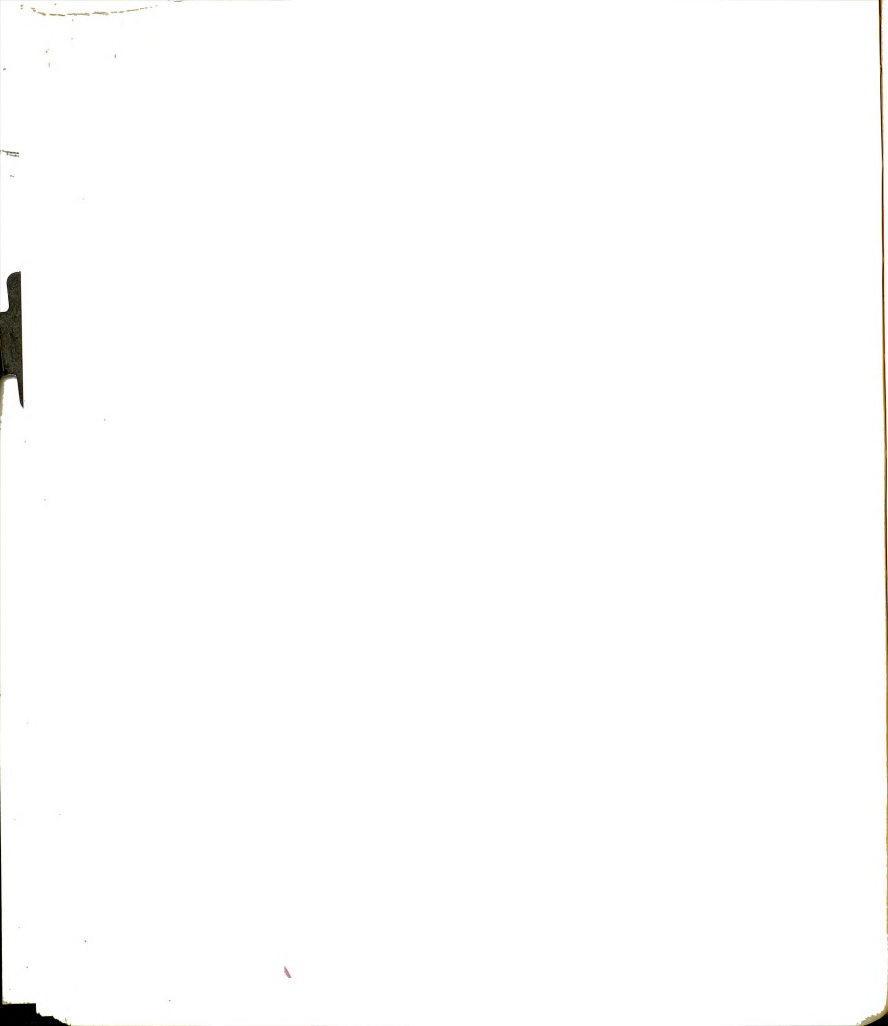
At the beginning of 1917, when it was becoming difficult to find coal, Dick burned for fuel almost a hundred textbooks that he had accumulated; but only, as he laid each one on the fire, with an assurance chuckling inside him that he himself was a digest of what was within the book, that he could brief it five years from now if it served to be briefed. This went on at any odd hour, if necessary, with a floor rug over his shoulders . . .¹⁶

Dick's asceticism is sincere; however, as Fitzgerald notes, asceticism is not necessarily the dominant component of Dick's nature. Still wanting to succeed at his work, Dick senses that there is something infinitely more romantic to life--something unrelated to discipline and restraint:

Dick got up to Zurich on less 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, illusions of a nation, the lies of a generation of frontier mothers who had to croon falsely, that there were no wolves outside the door.¹⁷

While these qualities make Dick charming, Fitzgerald suggests that they are ultimately damaging to a man whose work depends upon detachment, objectivity, and judgment. Early in his career, Dick had been warned of such pitfalls by a young Rumanian intellectual. "You're not a romantic philosopher--" he said. "You're a scientist. Memory, force, character--especially good sense. That's going to be your trouble--judgment about yourself."¹⁸

In pointing to Dick's naivete and his vague yearnings, Fitzgerald is foreshadowing the gradual emergence of what is to develop finally as the dominant strain in Dick's dual nature--his romantic illusions and his need to be admired and loved:



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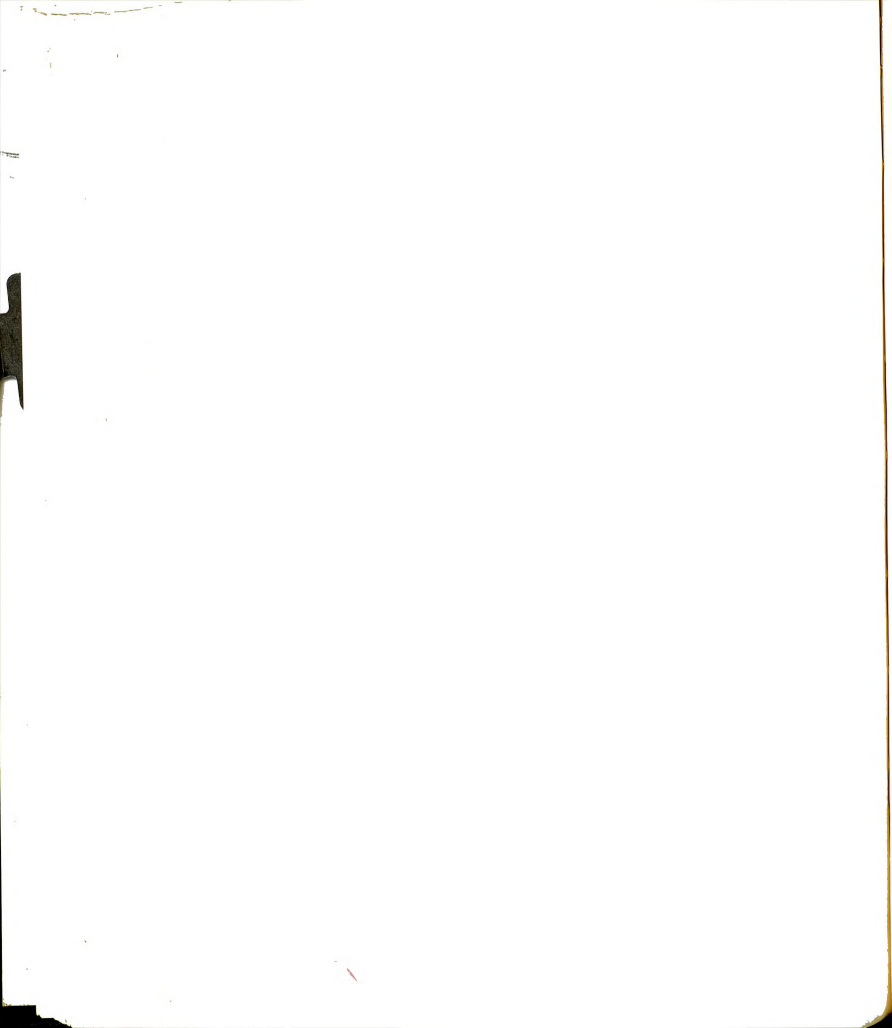
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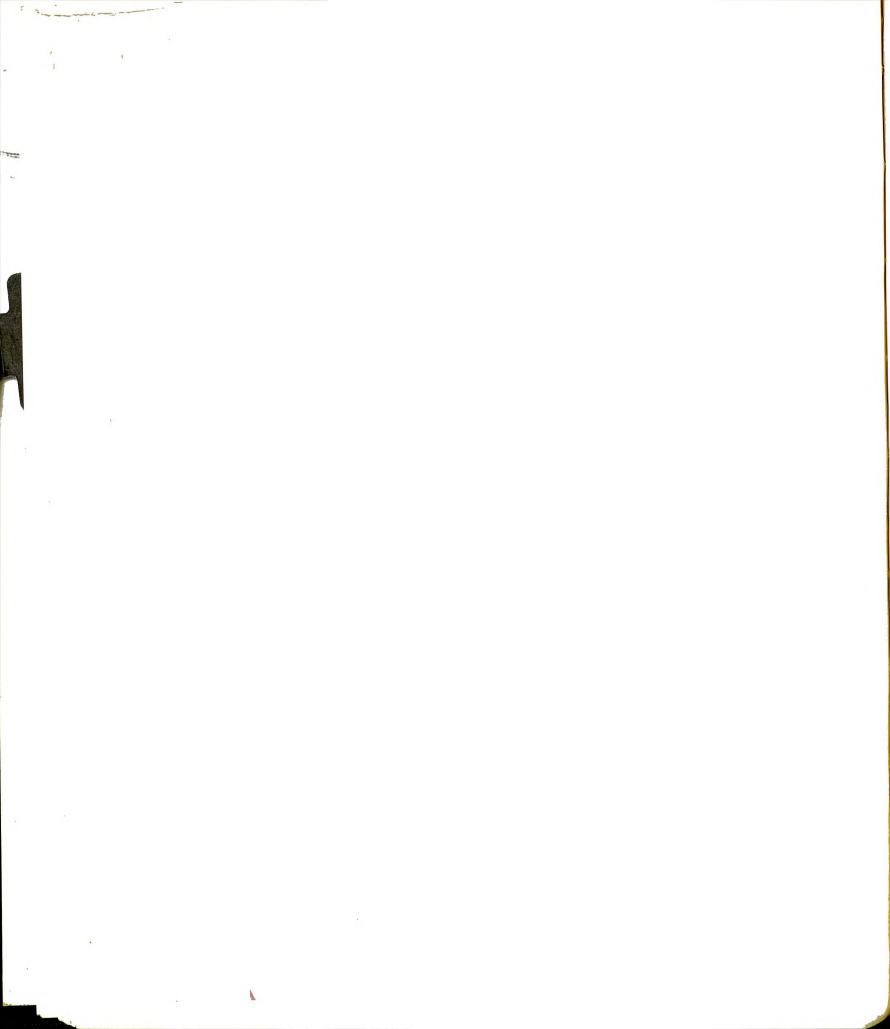


. . . the truth was that for some months he had been going through that partitioning of the things of youth wherein it is decided whether or not to die for what one no longer believes. In the dead white hours in Zurich staring into a stranger's pantry across the upshine of a street-lamp, he used to think that he wanted to be good, he wanted to be kind, he wanted to be brave and wise, but it was all pretty difficult. He wanted to be loved, too, if he could fit it in.¹⁹

He finds love in the person of the beautiful Nicole Warren, daughter of a Chicago millionaire who, as a result of being raped by her father, has become schizophrenic. Initially feeling sympathy for her, Dick had taken an interest in her case, and following his discharge from the army in 1919, he returns to the clinic in Zurich to treat her. Despite repeated warnings from his friend Franz Gregorovious and from the clinic's owner, the highly respected Dr. Dohmler, and despite Dick's own knowledge of the dangers inherent in becoming emotionally involved with his own patient, he soon finds himself helpless in the face of Nicole's charm, allure, and need:

. . . the impression of her youth and beauty grew on Dick until it swelled inside of him like a paroxysm of emotion. She smiled, a moving childish smile that was like all the lost youth in the world . . . there was an excitement about her that seemed to reflect all the excitement in the world.²⁰

Recognizing his situation clearly, Dick tells Franz: "The weakness of this profession is its attraction for the man a little crippled and broken. Within the walls of the profession he compensates by tending toward the clinical, the practical--he has won his battle without a struggle." His perceptions are ironically prophetic, for ultimately, it is his inability to remain "clinical" and "practical" in treating Nicole which causes his downfall.



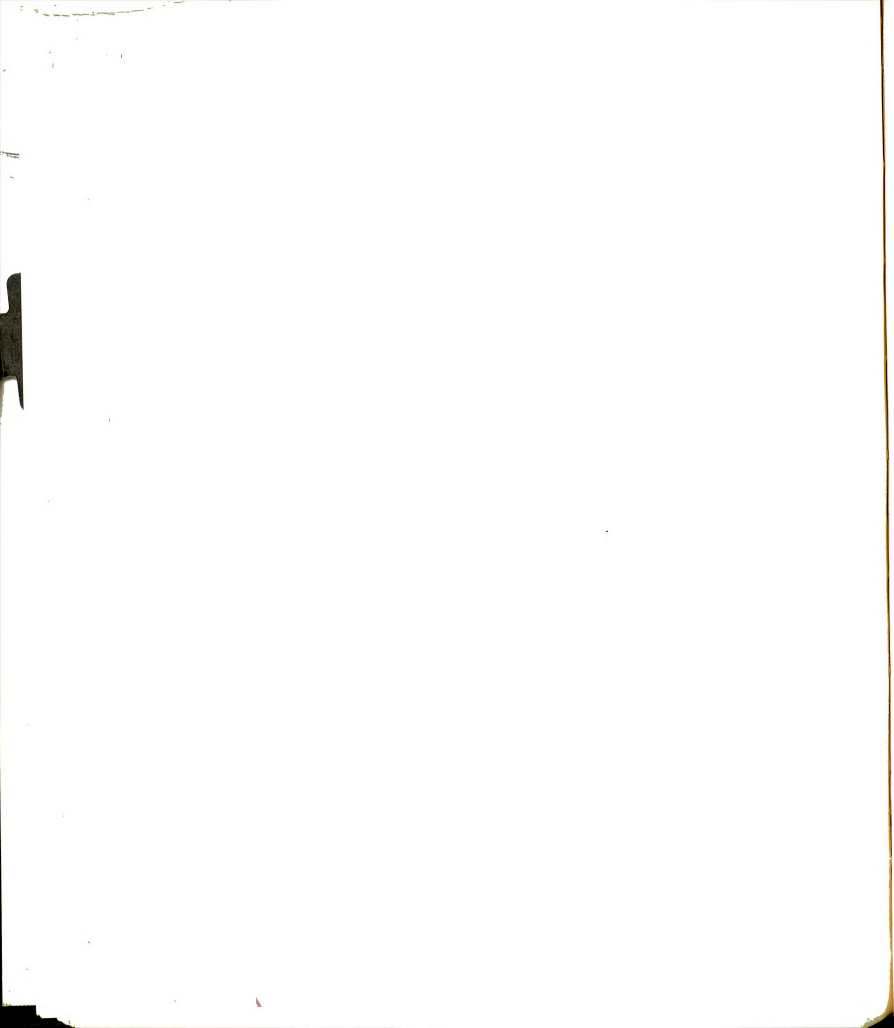
Before encountering Nicole, Dick is reminiscent both of Dexter Green when he was "magnificently attune to life" at the moment before he meets Judy Jones and of Jay Gatsby at the moment before he kisses Daisy and "forever weds his unutterable visions to her perishable breath." But where Gatsby attempts to restore the past and recapture his dream, Dick finds that after committing himself to Nicole:

There were now no more plans than if Dick had arbitrarily made some indissoluble mixture, with atoms joined and inseparable; . . . you could throw it all out but never again could they fit back into atomic scale. . . . As he held her and tasted her . . . he was thankful to have an existence at all, if only as a reflection in her wet eyes.²¹

Thus, when he leaves Nicole at the door of the sanitarium one day, "he knew her problem was one they had together for good now."²²

Dick's decision to marry Nicole, represents, therefore, the initial tangible step in his progressive and inevitable emotional and spiritual decline. For his naïve and impulsive commitment to the contradictory goals of marrying Nicole and of curing her illness ultimately strip him of his "once proud purpose."

In the next six years Dick neglects his studies and practice and ministers exclusively to Nicole. Foresaking his "old asceticism" and his old dream, he also becomes unavoidably caught up in the glittering world of the Warrens. Socializing with the wealthy and pretentious Riviera set, Dick is drawn to the luxury and splendor of villas on the Mediterranean, and lavish, seemingly interminable parties. And, as Fitzgerald suggests, the social whirl becomes increasingly a facade behind which Dick imperfectly conceals his growing "lesion of vitality." All the while he has been



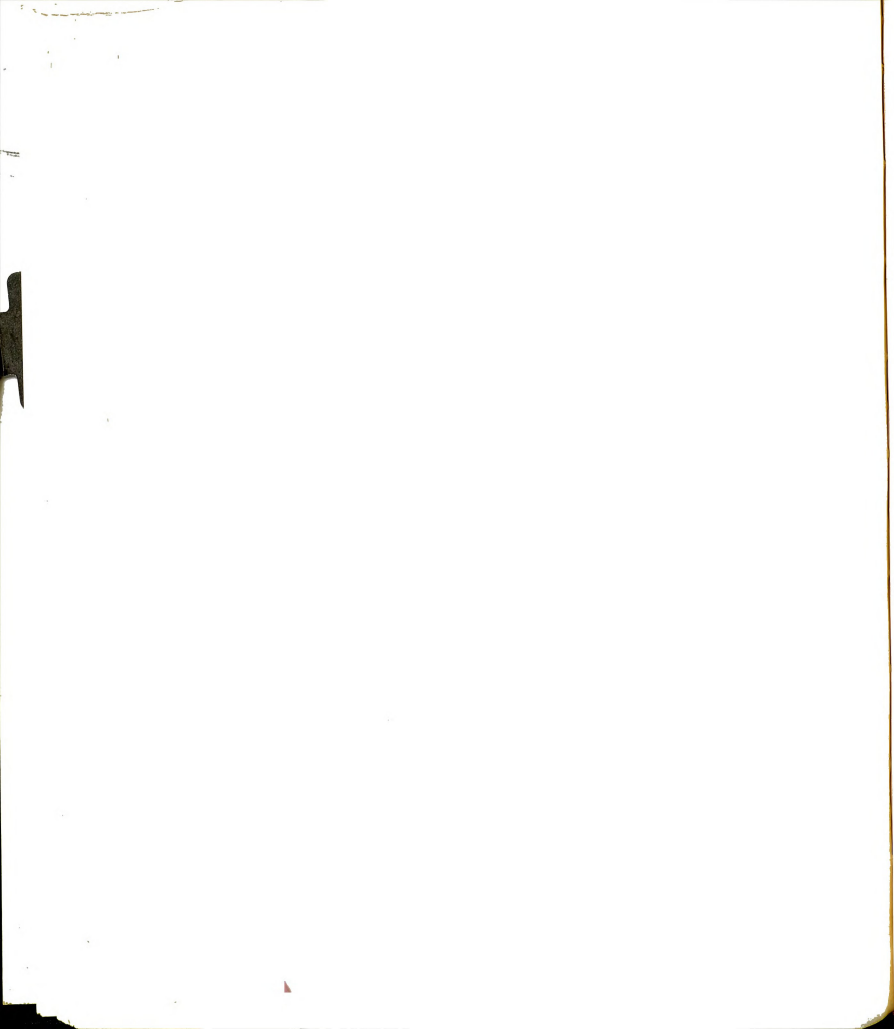
"participating in Nicole's disintegrations," Dick has also been sacrificing himself--willfully giving his energy and vitality in the hope of curing her. It is at this point that Dick meets the young and beautiful American actress, Rosemary Hoyt.

Although she is young, inexperienced, and lacking in perspective, Rosemary's initial impressions of Dick are similar to Nick Carraway's first reactions to Jay Gatsby. When she meets Dick, Rosemary senses that he is "kind of charming--his voice promised that he would take care of her, and that a little later he would open up new worlds for her, unreal and endless succession of magnificent possibilities."²³

Through Rosemary's youthful and romantic eyes, the Divers' universe (presided over by Dick) takes on a transcendent, sparkling radiance. But behind this seeming glamour, Fitzgerald suggests, is a "complexity and . . . lack of innocence" which the starry-eyed Rosemary does not perceive:

Her naivete responded whole-heartedly to the expensive simplicity of the Divers, . . . unaware that it was all a 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 at only through struggles she could not have guessed at. At the moment the Divers represented externally the exact furthestmost 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.²⁴

In viewing Dick through Rosemary's eyes, Fitzgerald creates an ironic double perspective: he presents Dick six years after his marriage bravely struggling to create an outward appearance of health and happiness, while simultaneously attempting to conceal his increasing cynicism and despair.

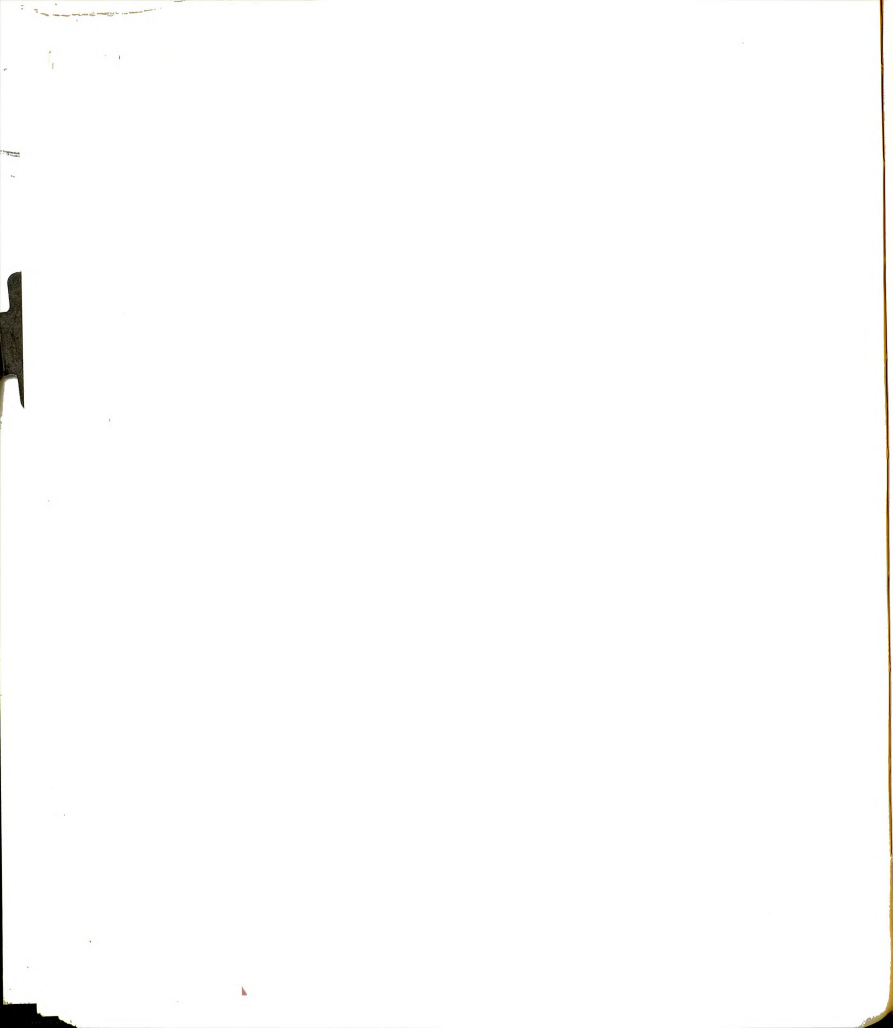


Probing further beneath the facade, Fitzgerald observes Dick through Nicole's point of view. As she observes after a party:

. . . one of his most characteristic moods was upon him . . . his own form of melancholy which he never displayed but at which she guessed. The excitement of things reached an intensity out of proportion to their importance, generating a really extraordinary virtuosity with people. Save among a few of the tough-minded and perenially suspicious, he had the power of arousing a fascinated and uncritical love. The reaction came when he realized the waste and extravagance involved. He sometimes looked back with awe at the carnivals of affection he had given, as a general might gaze upon a massacre he had ordered to satisfy an impersonal blood lust.²⁵

In addition, Dick himself hints at his own increasing decline. During his first meeting with Rosemary, for example, he momentarily drops his guard: "It's not a bad time . . . ," he muses. "It's not one of the worst times of the day."²⁶ His deepening sense of dislocation becomes more pronounced and evident when he takes Rosemary and his friend, the writer, Abe North, to the old World War I battlefield at Thiepval. Mourning the passing of an era to which he once belonged and a value system to which he once subscribed, Dick wistfully tells Rosemary: "All my lovely safe world blew itself up here with a great gust of high explosive love . . . I couldn't kid here . . . The silver chord is out and the golden bowl is broken and all that, but an old romantic like me can't do anything about it."²⁷

Having admitted his dissatisfaction and feelings of dislocation to himself, it is not surprising that Dick now turns to Rosemary in an attempt to renew his self-esteem and his dream of becoming a great psychologist--those things which he has sublimated and sacrificed in caring for Nicole. But realizing "that this impulse was a loss of control-- . . . for the first time it occurred to him that Rosemary had her hand on the lever more authoritatively than he."²⁸ Dick's loss of control becomes even more

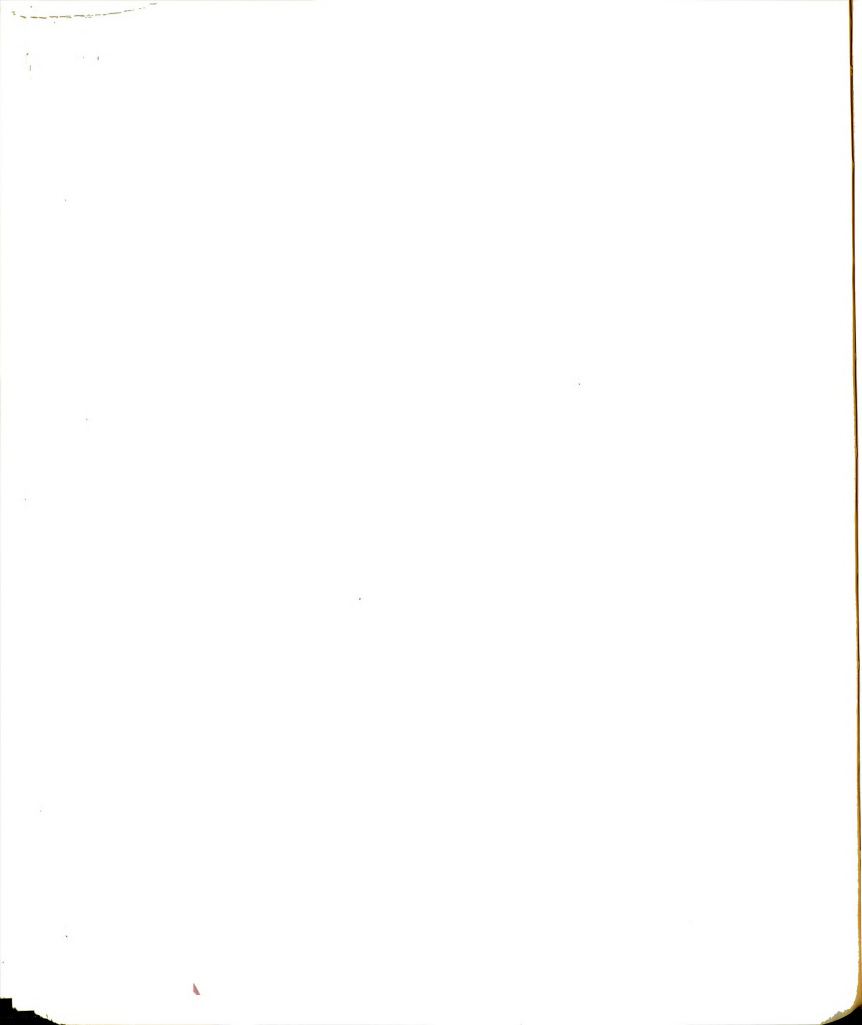


evident when, after a shooting incident in the Paris railway station, Nicole, not Dick, for the first time clearly takes charge of the situation. The impact of this change is not fully perceived by Dick who "had no suspicion of the sharpness of the change; he was profoundly unhappy and the subsequent increase of egotism tended to momentarily blind him to what was going on round him, and deprive him of the long groundswell of imagination that he had counted on for his judgments."²⁹

Following Rosemary's subsequent departure for a movie studio in Paris, Dick tries to regain his balance. But finding himself disturbed and jealous over rumors of Rosemary's alleged past flirtations with a young man, "Dick felt a change taking place within him. Only the image of a third person, even a vanished one was needed to throw him off balance and send him through waves of pain, misery, desire, desperation."³⁰ Acting on an impulse borne of confusion and deep frustration, Dick goes in search of Rosemary. Waiting for her in front of the studio, Dick is alone with his terrible thoughts:

He knew that what he was doing now marked a turning point in his life. It was out of line with everything that preceded it--even out of line with the effect he might hope to produce on Rosemary. . . . But Dick's necessity of behaving as he did was a projection of some submerged reality; . . . Dick was paying tribute to things unforgotten, unshriven, unexpurgated.³¹

Later, "demoniac and frightened, the passions of many men inside him and nothing clear he could see,"³² Dick recognizes that it is urgent for him to return to his work. But having been away from it for so long he finds only more reminders of how much of himself he had wasted in the past six years: "Like so many men he had found out that he had only one or two ideas--that his little collection

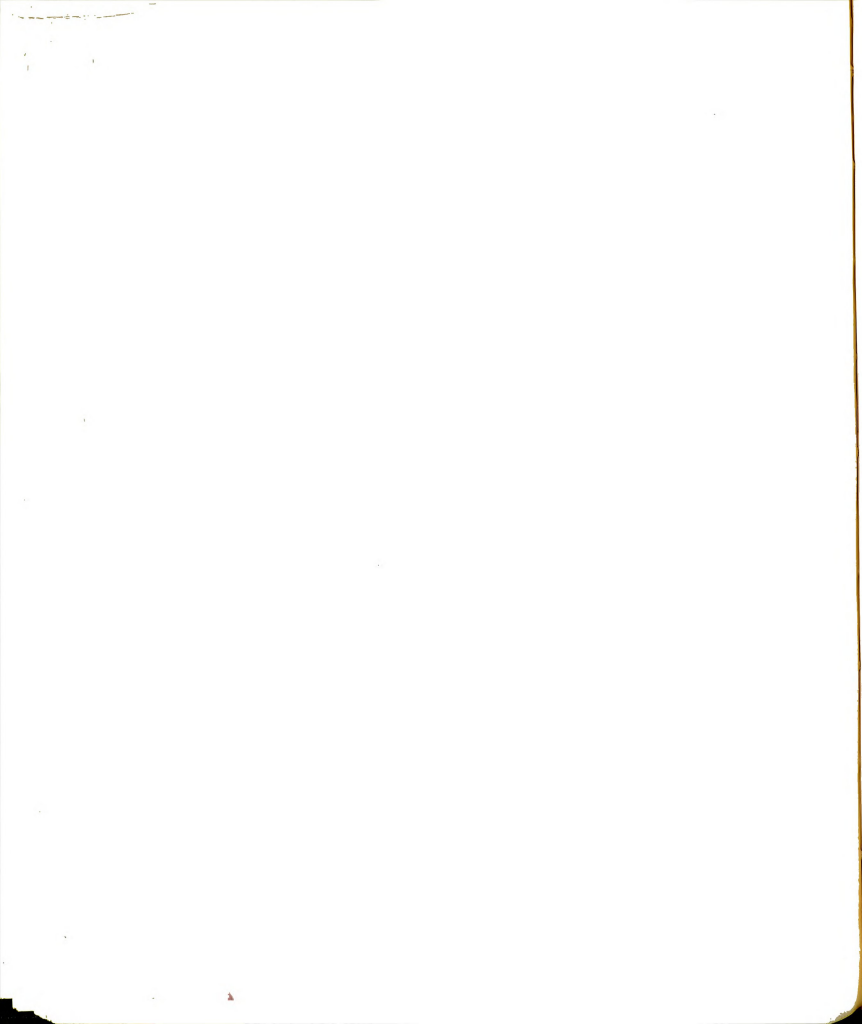


of pamphlets now in its fiftieth German edition contained the germ of all he would ever think or know." ³³

In the novel's final two sections, Fitzgerald probes behind Dick's "manner" to his "cracked" morale, and explains Dick's decline into "emotional bankruptcy" and Nicole's parallel return to health and stability. Book IV opens on a hopeful note. Wanting to redirect his self-indulgent urges and recapture his vitality and dedication, Dick decides to open a clinic with his old friend and colleague Franz. The deal is consummated only after Dick borrows the initial investment capital from Nicole's sister, Baby Warren. This, of course, makes him not free and independent but instead even more indebted to the Warrens: ". . . then it came to him under the form of what Baby had said: 'We must think it over carefully'--and the unsaid lines back of that: full well knowing that, 'We own you, and you'll admit it sooner or later. It is absurd to keep up the pretense of independence.'" ³⁴

For a short time, however, Dick regains some of his old dedication and enthusiasm, but soon the old problems begin to surface again. Blindly jealous and resentful of the time Dick is spending with his female patients, Nicole, in a fit of rage and childish petulance, rolls their car over an embankment and almost kills Dick and the children. It is here that Dick discovers to his horror that "he could not watch her disintegrations without participating in them." ³⁵ And so he decides he must temporarily leave both Nicole and the clinic.

In Munich, he hears from the professional soldier and Nicole's admirer Tommy Barban of Abe North's violent death: "Dick's lungs burst for a moment with regret for Abe's death and his own youth of ten years ago." ³⁶ Further reflecting on his own situation, Dick begins to see more



clearly that:

He had lost himself--and he could not tell the hour when, or the day of the week, the month of the year. Once he had cut through the simplest 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.³⁷

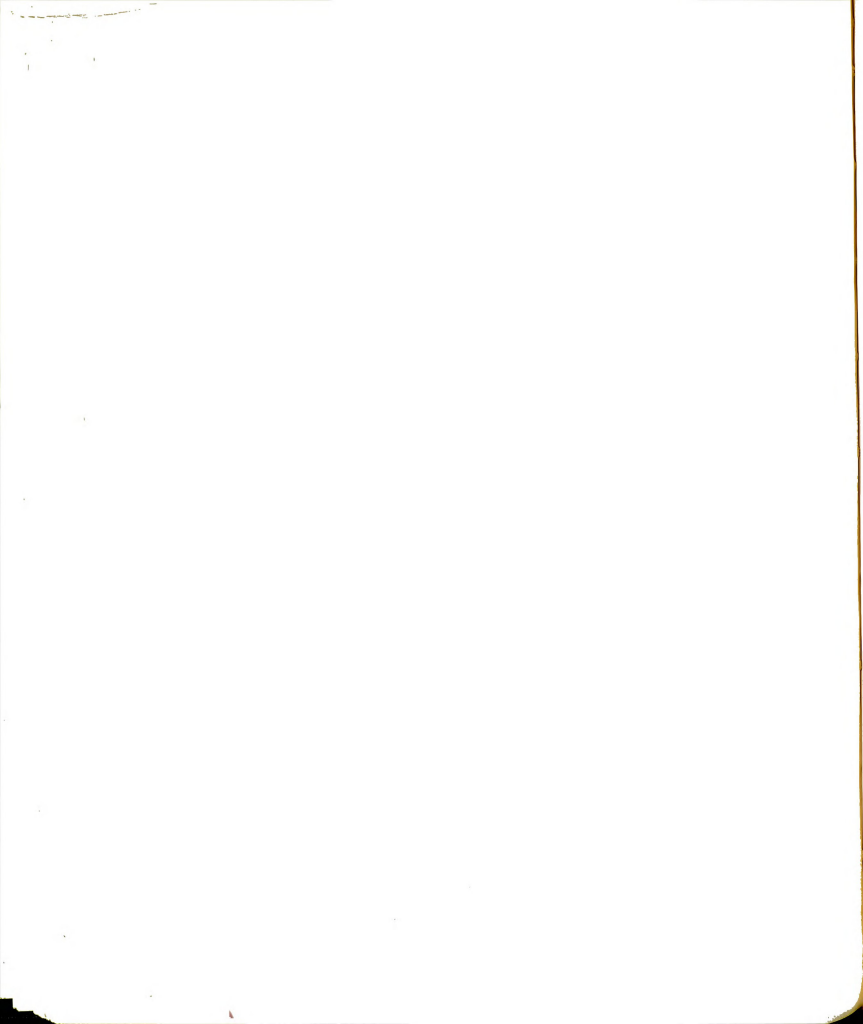
Thinking back to the days before he had pledged himself and his dreams to Nicole, Dick comes to the horrifying recognition that his own vulnerability, his need to be loved and used, has been the source of his decline:

. . . 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 to be locked up in the Warren safety-deposit vaults.³⁸

Aware now that he has wasted valuable time and energy in the service of the Warrens, Dick bitterly resolves that " . . . it isn't over yet. I've wasted eight years teaching the rich the ABC's of human decency, but I'm not done. I've got too many unplayed trumps in my hand."³⁹

But just as Dick is most in need of a moral and spiritual guide, the news of his father's death in America reaches him. In Virginia to pay his last respects, he clearly realizes that a part of his nature which once believed "that nothing could be superior to 'good instinct, honor, courtesy, and courage' had died with his father."⁴⁰

Desperately groping to recapture some semblance of his old balance, Dick returns to the continent. In Rome he accidentally meets Rosemary. Recalling her former adoration of him, he mistakenly believes that he can recapture that magic feeling of four years ago:



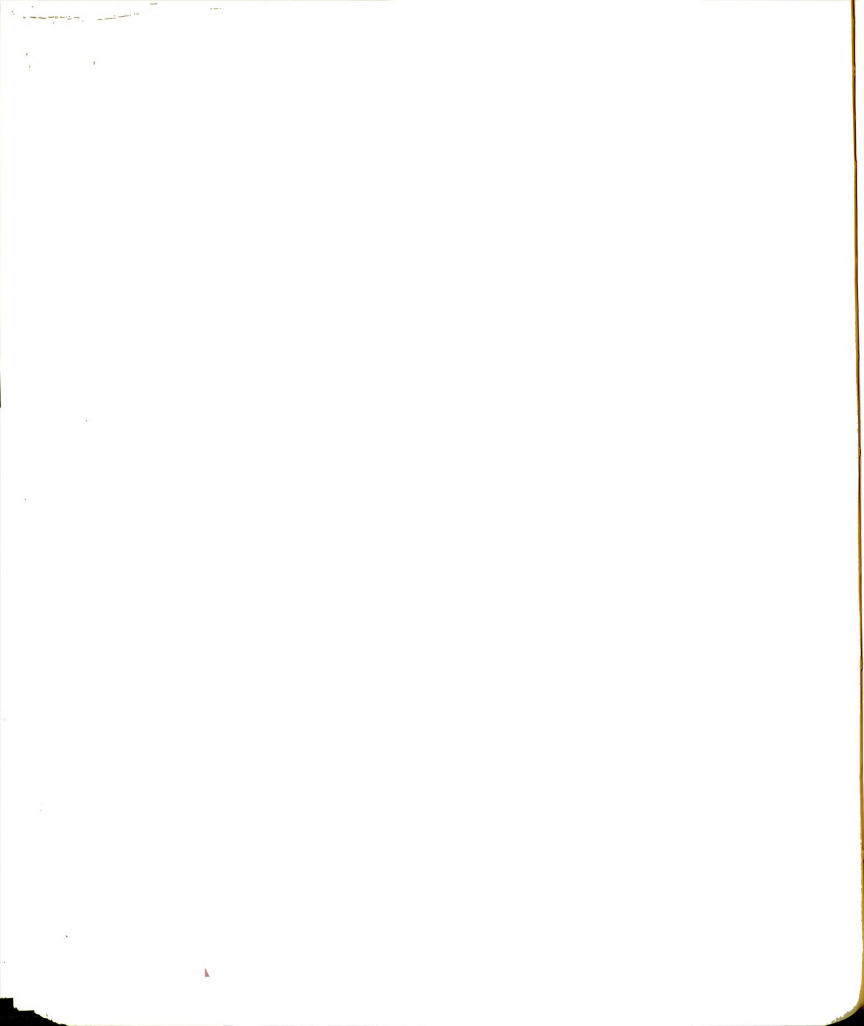
The past drifted back and he wanted to hold her eloquent giving-of-herself in its precious shell, till he enclosed it, till it no longer existed outside him. He tried to collect all that might attract her--it was less than it had been four years ago. Eighteen might look at thirty-four through a rising mist of adolescence; but twenty-two would see thirty-eight with discerning clarity.⁴¹

His attempt to rekindle the old relationship only forces Dick to see, in still another context, how much of his old vitality he has lost. "Why couldn't we just have the memory anyhow?" And Dick pathetically replies: "I guess I'm the Black Death. . . . I don't seem to bring people happiness anymore."⁴²

Empty and despairing, overwhelmed by rage and self-pity, Dick brawls with an Italian cab driver and is subsequently beaten up by a policeman and thrown in jail. Bailed out by Baby Warren, he is finally forced to face the reality that the Warrens "now possessed a moral superiority over him for as long as he proved of any use."⁴³

As Book V opens, a humbled and humiliated Dick returns to the clinic. Having lost his dignity and self-possession, he has only his rapidly deteriorating relationship with Nicole to fall back on. As he becomes increasingly more cynical and contentious, Dick alienates those around him; at the same time, Nicole grows stronger and healthier and sees his decline as both a burden and an obstacle to her own health and struggle for independence. Through an affair with Tommy Barban, she finally achieves her freedom from Dick, and he is left alone to confront the problem he has really struggled with from the very moment he married her:

His love for Nicole and Rosemary, his friendship with Abe North, with Tommy Barban in the broken universe of the war's ending--in such contacts the personalities seemed to press up so close to him that he became the personality itself--there seemed some necessity of taking all or nothing;

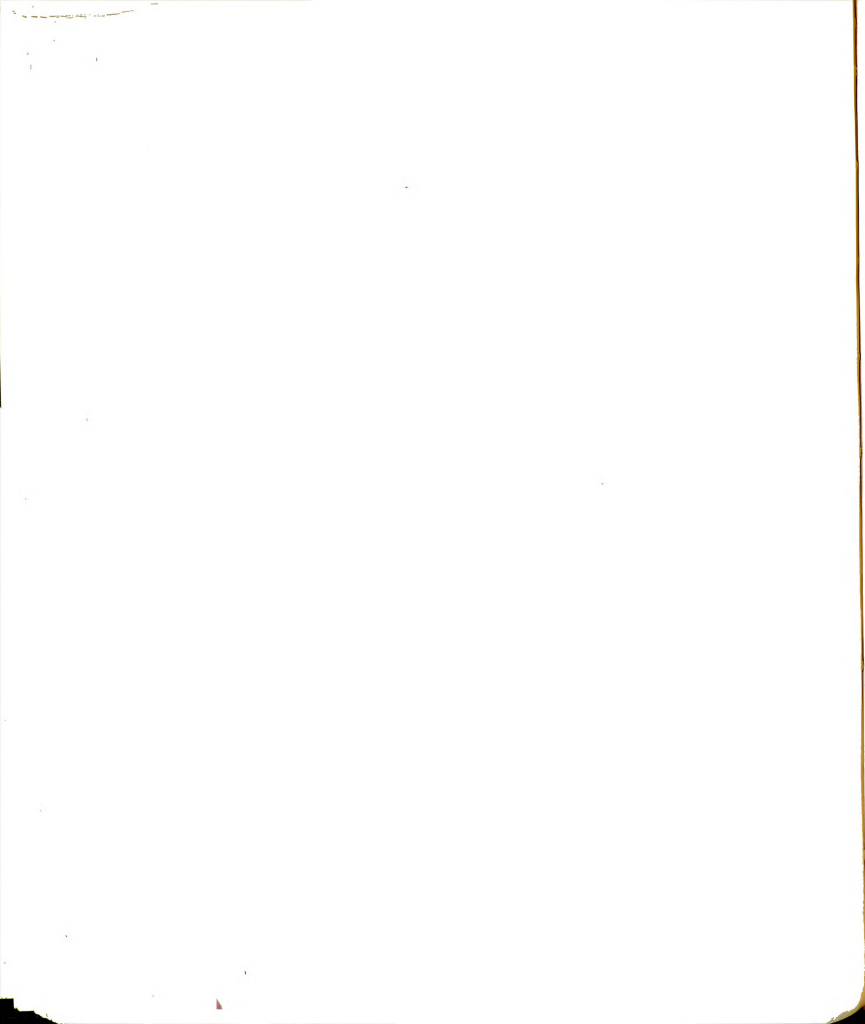


it was as if for the rest of his life he was condemned to carry with him the egos of certain people, early met and early loved, and to be only as complete as they were complete themselves. There was some element of loneliness involved--so easy to be loved--so hard to love.⁴⁴

It is this need, now grown to overwhelming proportions, which finally divorces Dick from his work and strips him of his once-proud purpose: "Not without desperation, he had long felt the ethics of his profession dissolving into a lifeless mass."⁴⁵ Not wanting Nicole's pity, he tells her soberly, "I'm trying to save myself."⁴⁶

Having given in to his deepest human need--to be loved--Dick has participated in his own disintegration. Like Gatsby, he has tied his "incorruptible dream" to a mortal and perishable substance but, where Gatsby was spared the indignity of watching his dream become corrupted by "foul dust," Dick instead painfully endures the ordeal both of watching his hopes and dreams perish and of seeing himself age and decline. By the close of Tender is the Night, he makes the unavoidable recognition that "he was not young any more with a lot of nice thoughts and dreams to have about himself, so he wanted to remember them well."⁴⁷

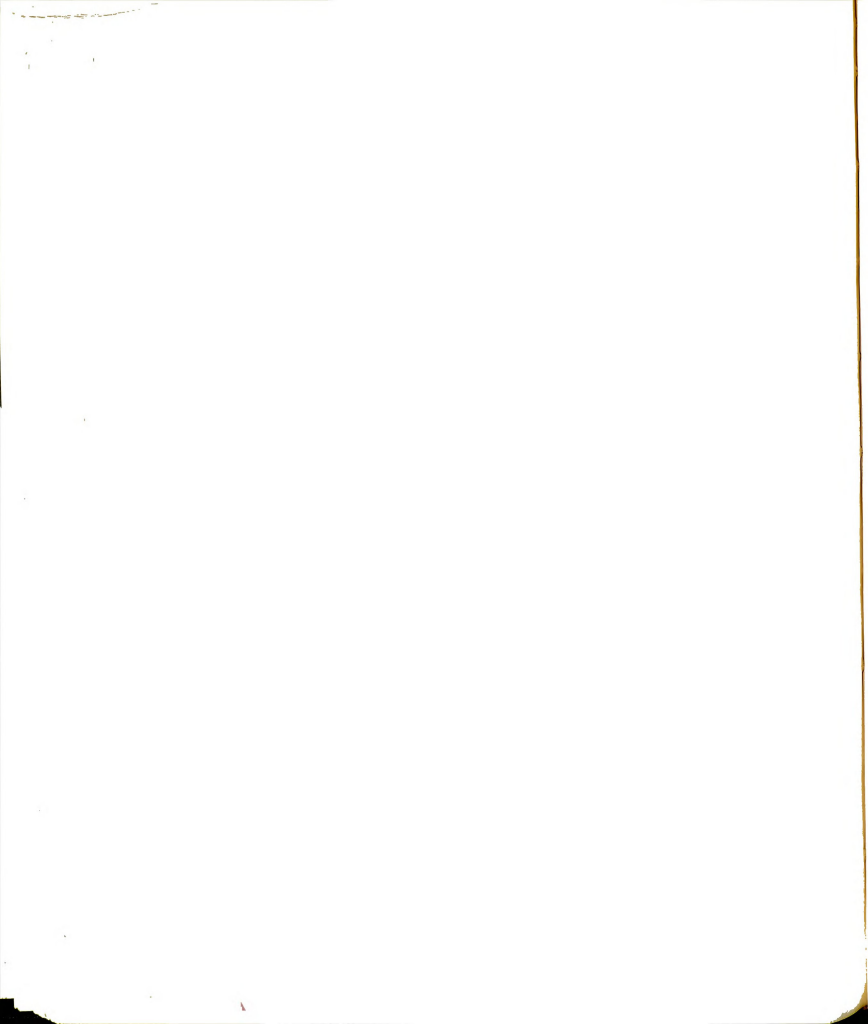
Clearly, then, Dick Diver's "lesion of vitality" is final and irrevocable. And following Tender is the Night through The Last Tycoon, Fitzgerald's moods alternated between despair and self-pity and what he later called "the wise and tragic sense of life," the recognition that "life is essentially a cheat and its conditions are those of defeat, and that the only redeeming things are not 'happiness and pleasure,' but the deeper satisfactions that come out of struggle."⁴⁸ During the last years of his life, Fitzgerald tried to live and write according to this ethic, and in his final work, The Last Tycoon, he was able to incorporate it into his art, specifically in his creation of the strong-willed and self-sufficient character of Monroe Stahr.



XII THE FINAL PHASE: THE CRACK-UP, HOLLYWOOD YEARS AND THE LAST TYCOON

The "crack-up" period, 1934-1937, was the most despairing time of Fitzgerald's life. During these years, Zelda's condition worsened and she attempted suicide, and Fitzgerald was finally forced to give up his waning hopes for her recovery. In addition, the public's rejection of Tender is the Night catapulted him into prolonged depression and uncontrollable drinking. At a time when Fitzgerald's spirits receded to their lowest ebb, however, he produced the three "crack-up" essays (1936) and "Early Success" (1937), as well as the stories "Afternoon of an Author," "Author's House," and "An Author's Mother" (1937). Containing some of his most moving prose and deepest personal insights, these essays and autobiographical sketches reflect Fitzgerald trying to come to terms with his decline into "emotional bankruptcy" and self-pity. And it is in the writing of these pieces that he gains the necessary clear perspective which helps him finally to understand and to cope with his personal deterioration.

In "The Crack-Up," "Handle With Care," and "Pasting It Together," Fitzgerald submits to the rigorous and tormenting process of self-analysis. By confessing his guilts and deepest fears, he undergoes an emotional and spiritual catharsis and emerges from his "dark night of the soul" with a renewed sense of self-irony and self-possession. In "The Crack-Up," Fitzgerald recognizes that in light of his recent collapse he must now re-think his old philosophy that "Life was something you dominated if you



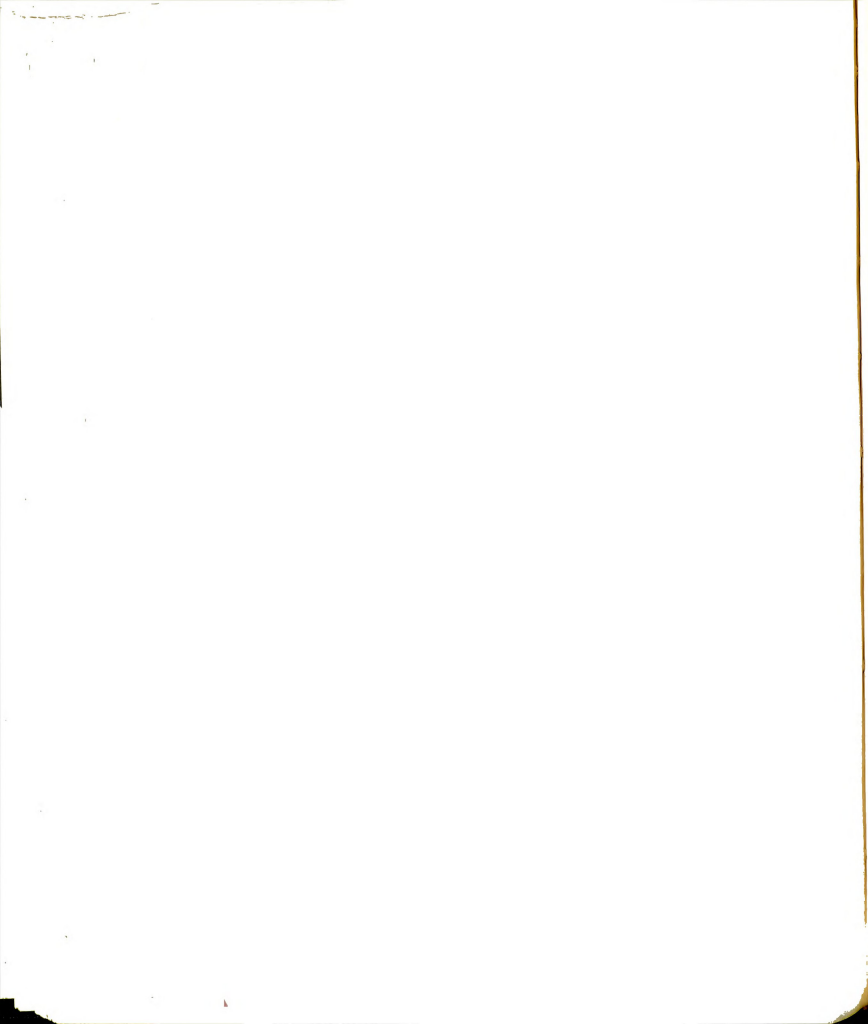
were any good."¹ Formerly, he had escaped his disappointment at not "being big enough (or good enough) to play football in college, and at not getting overseas during war--" by withdrawing into "childish waking dreams of imaginary heroism that were good enough to go to sleep on in restless nights."² In the past, he adds, "the big problems of life seemed to solve themselves, and if the business of fixing them was difficult, it made one too tired to think of more general problems. . . ." But, he states emphatically, "ten years this side of forty-nine, I suddenly realized that I had prematurely cracked."³

In "Handle With Care," Fitzgerald summarizes his career from his disappointment at not becoming a campus leader at Princeton through the failure of Tender is the Night. Sensing that he has become "an unwilling witness of an execution, the disintegration of one's own personality . . .," Fitzgerald finds:

. . . there was not an 'I' anymore--not a basis on which I could organize my self-respect--save my limitless capacity for toil that it seemed I possessed no more. It was strange to have no self--to be like a little boy left alone in a big house, who knew that now he could do anything he wanted to do, but found there was nothing that he wanted to do--⁴

Realizing that "for two years my life had been drawing on resources that I did not possess, that I had been mortgaging myself physically and spiritually up to the hilt," he concludes that "of all natural forces, vitality is the incommunicable one."⁵

Attempting to formulate a more realistic and objective solution to his problem, Fitzgerald develops in the final essay, "Pasting It Together," a philosophy which allows him to re-enter the mainstream of

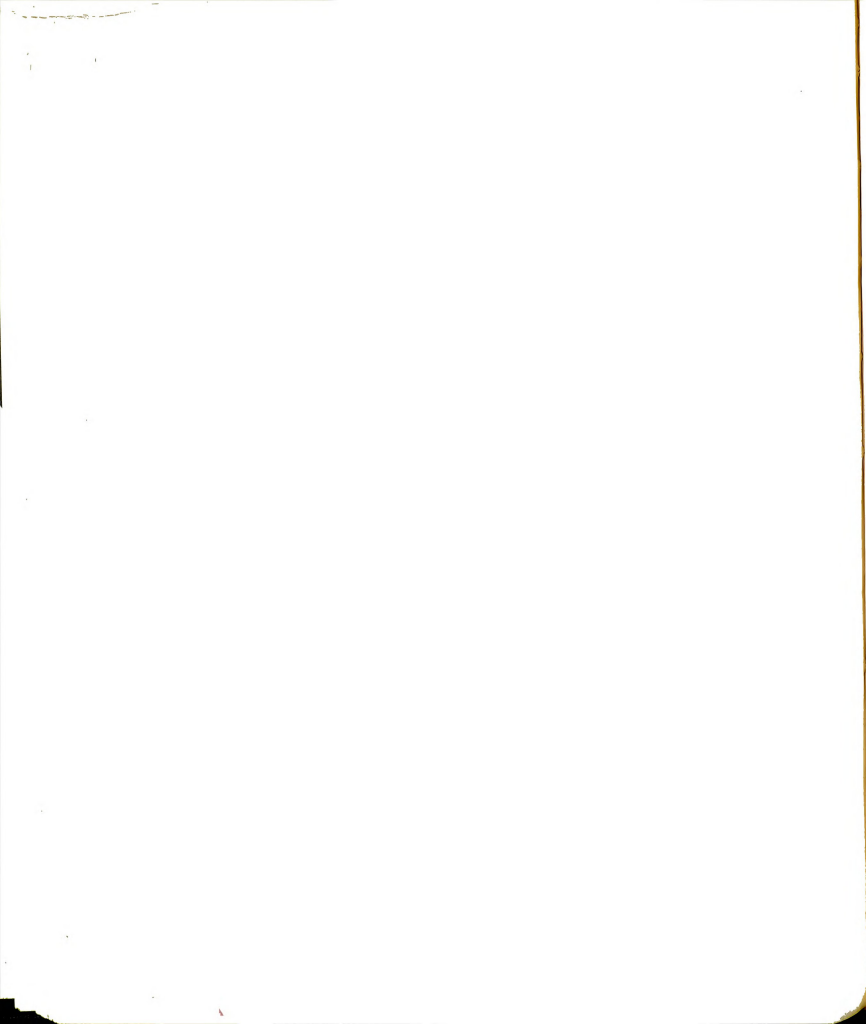


life. Vowing that "the old dream of being an entire man in the Goethe-Byron-Shaw tradition . . . has been relegated to the junk heaps of the shoulder pads worn for one day on the Princeton freshman football field and the overseas cap never worn overseas,"⁶ he determines to make a "clean break" from his past. "I only wanted absolute quiet," he writes, "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."⁷ Concluding that he no longer can escape his dilemma, sadly, yet resolutely, he declares:

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?⁸

Knowing that "there is a price to pay," and that "life will never be very pleasant again,"⁹ Fitzgerald resolves: "There was to be no more giving of myself--all giving was to be outlawed hence-forth under a new name, and that name was "Waste."¹⁰

Though Hemingway and Dos Passos publically criticized him for his excessive self-indulgence in the "crack-up" essays, Fitzgerald was convinced nevertheless that through those pieces he had exorcized his despair and self-pity. As a result, he was able to view himself with irony and detachment. Reflecting on his emotional and spiritual ordeal, he later writes to a friend: ". . . it seems more a spiritual 'change of life'--and a most unwilling one--it was a protest against a new set of conditions which I would have to face and a protest of my mind at having to make the



psychological adjustments which would suit this new set of circumstances . . . "11

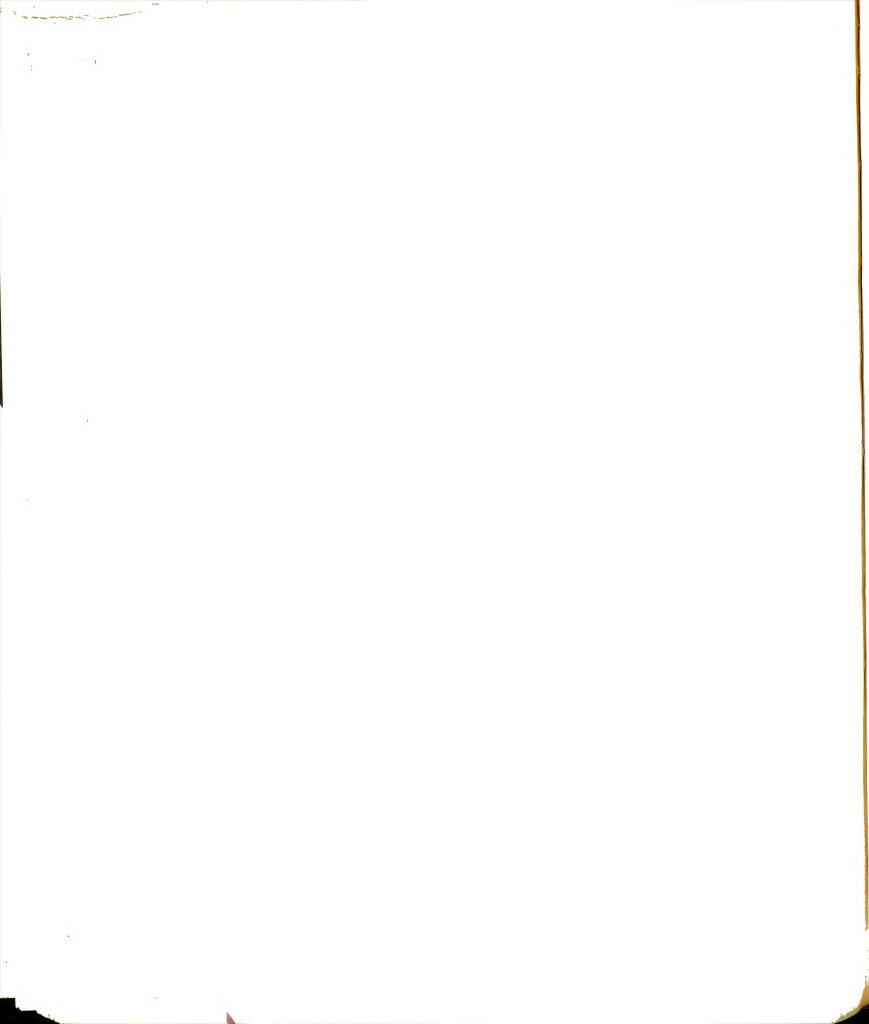
II

During the "crack-up" period, Fitzgerald attempted but failed to complete two fictional series--"The Count of Darkness," (1935) an abortive medieval romance, and the "Gwen" series (1936), which was modeled after his daughter. Looking back on this period several years later, he reflects:

It isn't particularly likely that I'll write a great many more stories about young love. I was tagged with that by my first writings up to 1925. Since then . . . they have been done with increasing difficulty and increasing sincerity . . . I have a daughter. She is very smart; she is very pretty; she is very popular. Her problems seem to me to be utterly dull and her point of view completely uninteresting . . . I once tried to write about her, I couldn't. So you see I've made sort of a turn.¹²

The "turn" to which Fitzgerald refers is toward the more tightly woven and dramatic stories which he wrote for Esquire, the best of which include "Financing Finnegan," (1938) "Design in Plaster," (1939) "The Lost Decade," (1929) and "Three Hours Between Planes" (1941). Perhaps because Esquire's format demanded tighter, shorter, and less romantic stories than those he had written in the past or perhaps because Fitzgerald was determined to write with more detachment and irony, these pieces are more controlled and dramatic, and less sentimental than any of his earlier stories.

Unquestionably in these later pieces, Fitzgerald is experimenting with a "new perspective." His subject is failure: the world which he portrays is bleak; his heroes are men whose dreams and triumphs are in the past. His intention is to maintain distance and control, to reenforce his

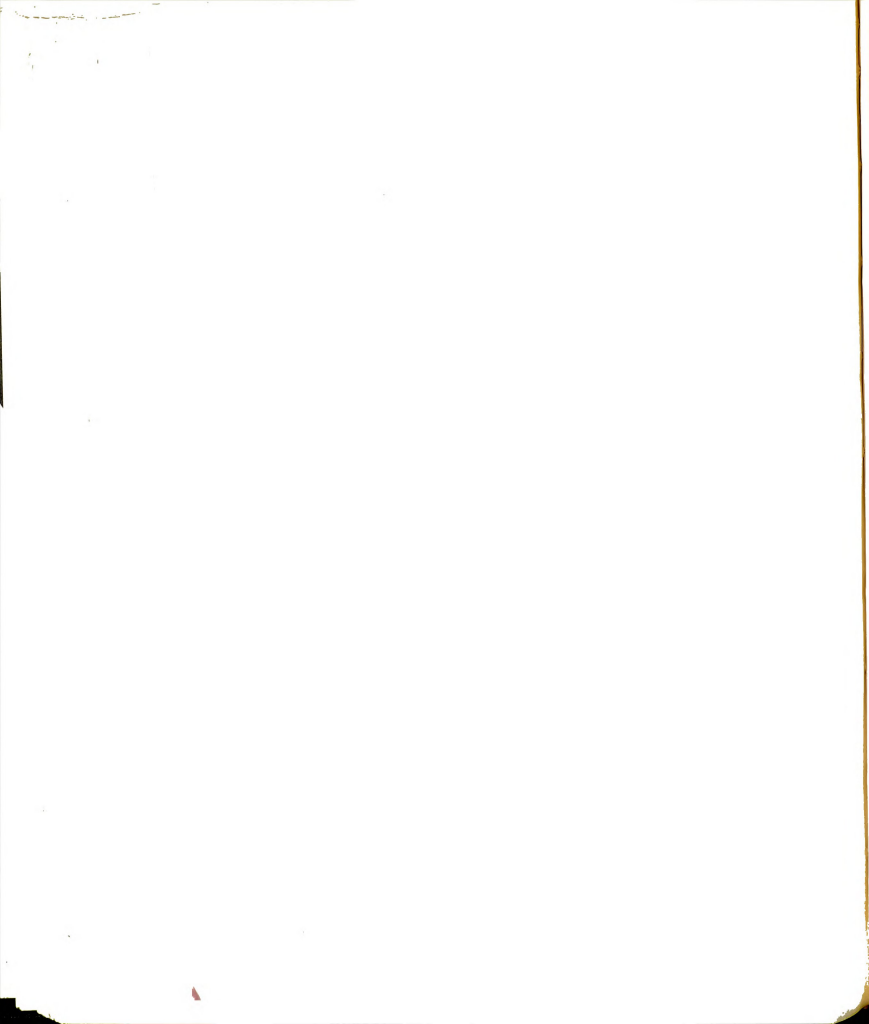


newly-formulated perspective. Specifically, he is trying to accept and adapt to misfortune and the loss of dreams and to keep a tight rein on his emotional excesses and on his tendencies toward despair.

In "Design in Plaster," for example, Fitzgerald portrays the effects of self-pity on his hero. As a result of a diving accident, Martin, his protagonist, is confined to a plaster cast. Because he is alone much of the time he falls prey to a recurring fantasy in which he pictures his wife as having an affair with another man. Desperate, suspicious and full of self-pity, one afternoon he follows her home where he slips and falls, re-breaking his arm. Loathing Martin for his self-pity, his wife in retaliation does decide to take a lover. Thus, because of his inability to control his emotions, Martin ironically precipitates the actualization of his worst fantasies.

In two other stories of this period, Fitzgerald creates characters who are struggling like himself to gain some perspective and self-irony on their personal failure. In "Financing Finnegan," Fitzgerald takes a humorous, ironic look at a once-flamboyant and famous writer who has fallen into debt and is being supported by both his agent and his editor. And in the more delicately crafted "The Lost Decade," he graphically details the return to society of a man who had been an alcoholic for ten years.

In "Three Hours Between Planes," Fitzgerald returns to a familiar theme in his earlier work--a middle-aged man's attempt to repeat the past. Caught between planes in a strange town, Donald Plant visits a girl he was once infatuated with in his youth. She openly confides to him that she is unhappy in her present marriage, but during the conversation he



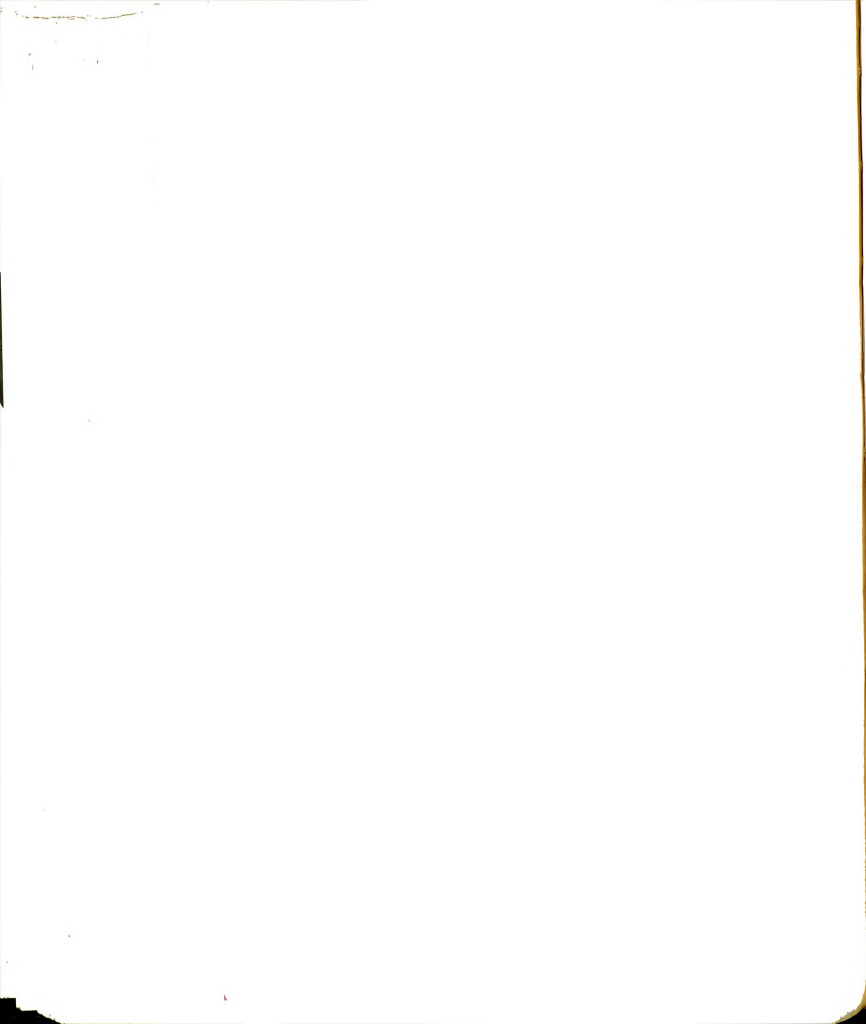
discovers that she has mistaken him for someone else. Disappointed and disheartened, he attempts nevertheless to remain philosophical: "Donald had lost a good deal too in these last hours between planes--" Fitzgerald writes. "But since the second half of life is a long process of getting rid of things, that part of the experience probably didn't matter."¹³ Where earlier heroes were disillusioned by their abortive attempts to rekindle old love affairs, Fitzgerald's protagonist in this story recognizes the need for restraint and irony. In the better short stories of this period, therefore, Fitzgerald strives to accept the loss of his dreams and through his art achieves a more mature and sober understanding of personal failure.

III

In the midst of his struggle to maintain his new ethic and commitment to his writing, Fitzgerald accepted in 1937 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's offer to come to Hollywood and write once more for the screen. Needing the steady income, Fitzgerald also felt a renewed surge of vitality and confidence. As he writes optimistically to his daughter:

I feel a certain excitement. The third Hollywood venture.
Two failures behind me though no fault of mine . . .
I want to profit by these two experiences--I must be very
tactful but keep my hand on the wheel from the start--
find out the key men among the bosses and the most malleable
among the collaborators--then fight the rest tooth and nail
until, in fact or in effect, I'm alone on the picture. That's
the only way I can do my best work. Given a break I can make them
double this contract in less than two years.¹⁴

With characteristic tenacity and desire, Fitzgerald wanted to prove that he was capable of becoming a top-notch screenwriter. But it wasn't long before he realized that screen writing was simply not

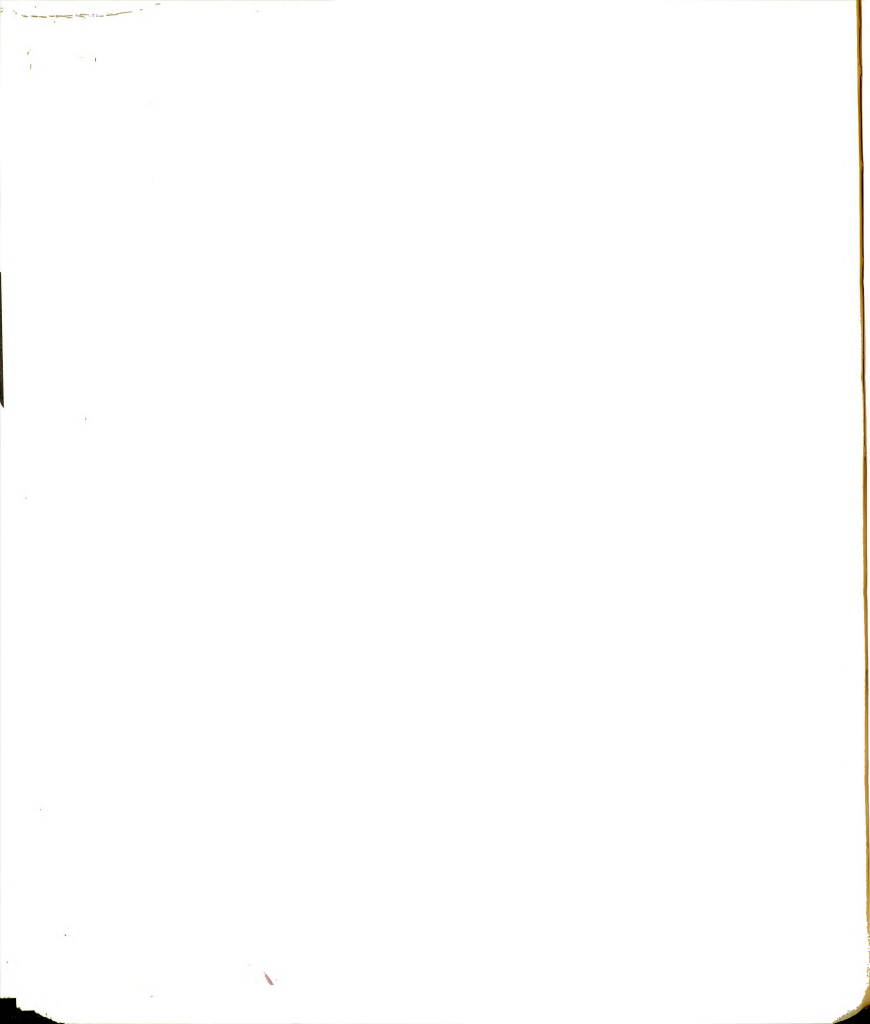


his forte. Referring to his frustrating experience, he writes to Scottie: "You don't realize that what I'm doing out here is the last tired effort of a man who once did something finer and better."¹⁵

Putting his illusions of movie success to rest in 1939, Fitzgerald began work on a new novel. But, failing in health and in debt once more, he found himself forced to return to the old standby--writing magazine stories.

Though disappointing, his Hollywood experience was not entirely wasted. He had temporarily pulled himself out of debt, slowed his drinking, and learned enough about the movie industry to begin using it as material in a new series of stories about a pathetic 45-year-old hack screenwriter desperately trying to regain the glory of his silent-screen past. Having been shunted aside by the success of talkies, Pat Hobby is lost in the "new" Hollywood of the thirties. A misfit, a survivor from another era, Hobby is pathetically holding on to the only trade he knows with the only rationale he understands--duplicity. Possessing neither the talent nor the desire to learn his craft anew, Pat (who Fitzgerald describes as a "complete rat") has no other option but to embrace the hustler's ethic. "Here was that dearest of Hollywood dreams--the angle," Fitzgerald writes in "The Homes of the Stars." "If one got the right angle it meant meals at the Brown Derby, long nights with bottles and girls, a new tire for his old car."¹⁶

Transparent and without "style," Pat is even unsuccessful at deception. His notion of successful script writing is to lift ideas from newspapers and magazines; in "A Man in the Way" and "Teamed with Genius," for example, Pat even steals ideas from his collaborators. And in "Pat Hobby's Christmas Wish," he resorts to blackmail, all without success.



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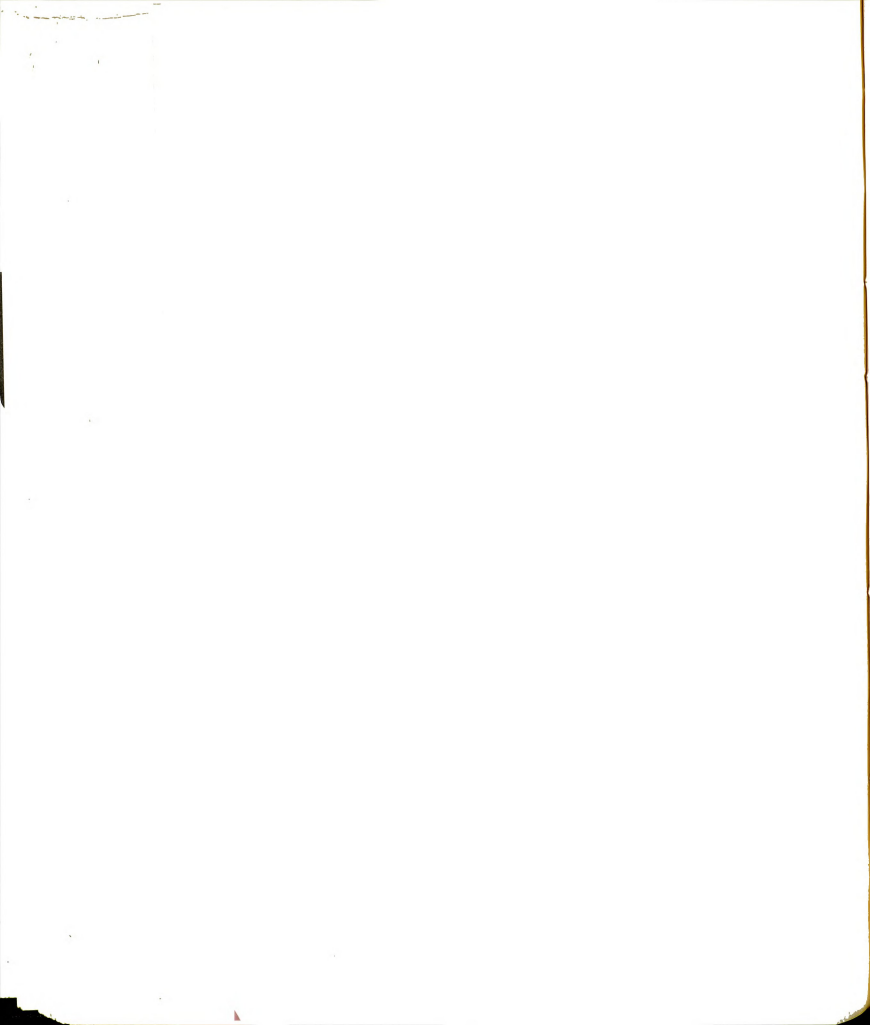
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Although Pat's double-dealing is petty and sometimes cruel, Fitzgerald grudgingly admires his hero's struggle to survive. In fact, he endows Pat with a shabby dignity. Like Willy Loman (and to some extent Fitzgerald himself), Pat is seduced by all the wrong dreams, and his pathos lies in his inability to recognize that his dreams are false and empty.

As the Pat Hobby stories reveal, Fitzgerald was drawn by Hollywood's glitter and allure while, at the same time, the Puritan in him disapproved of the movie industry's cynicism and blatant commercialism. As far back as 1927, Fitzgerald had viewed the movie colony as a metaphor for the nation's tinsel dreams of glamour and romance, but he had also hoped that the motion-picture industry would inevitably mature into an art form which would set a standard of artistic excellence and good taste for the entire nation. Later to form the thematic core of The Last Tycoon, Fitzgerald developed this view first in an earlier story, "Crazy Sunday" (1932). Here, Fitzgerald describes a producer, Miles Kalman, as a man "with an interesting temperament and an artistic conscience."¹⁷ Through his main character, Joel Coles, Fitzgerald portrays Kalman as an artist. And, although he knows of Kalman's personal problems, Joel comments after the producer's tragic death in a plane crash: "Everything he touched he did something magical to, . . . What a hell of a hole he leaves in this damn wilderness-- . . ." ¹⁸

The model for Miles Kalman was MGM's Irving Thalberg. Fitzgerald regarded Thalberg as the first producer to mass produce high-quality Hollywood films. The idea that one man of high integrity and artistry could through his individual will and creativity shape the tastes and values of a nation held an irresistible appeal for Fitzgerald. Thus, it was not surprising that he returned to the Thalberg legend in his unfinished



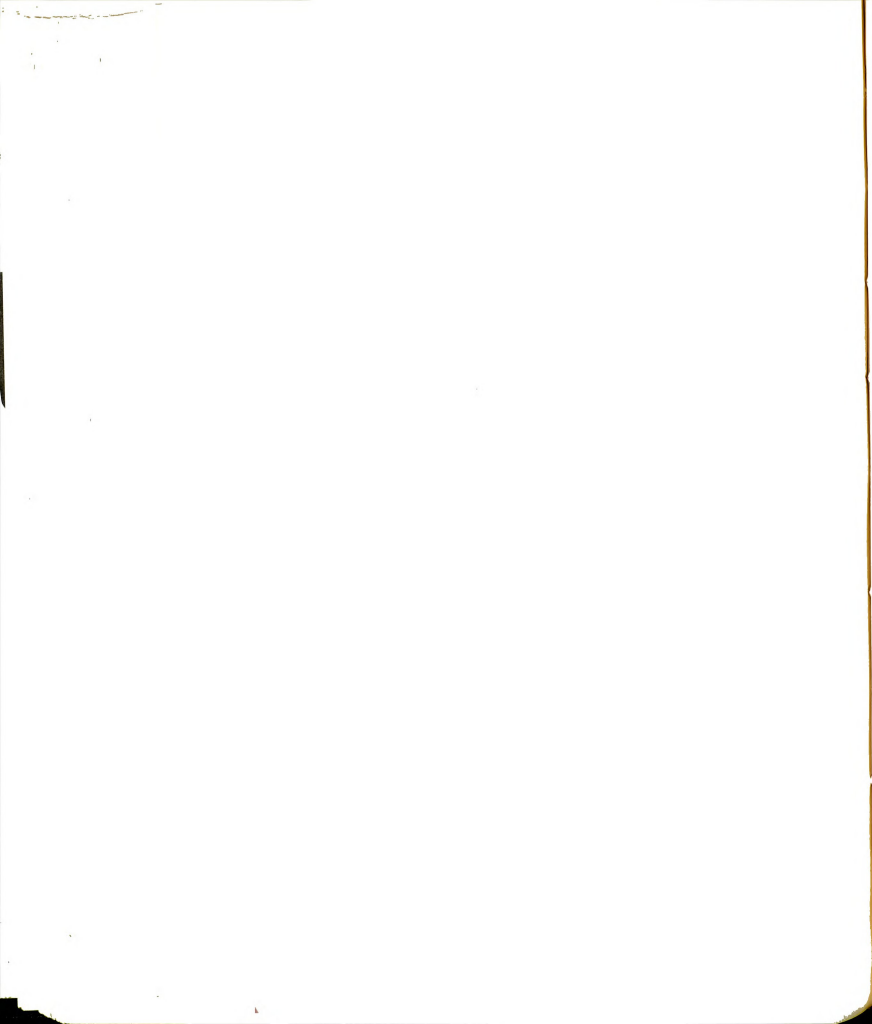
novel, The Last Tycoon, this time with the intention of using Thalberg as a model for his tragic hero, Monroe Stahr.

IV

Depressed by his failure as a screenwriter and his rapidly accumulating debts, Fitzgerald's drinking increased in the latter part of 1939 and early 1940, and once more his health began to fail. While writing the Pat Hobby stories for Esquire and conceiving The Last Tycoon, Fitzgerald made his final attempt to wring money out of the old potboilers and commercial love stories. He turned out "The End of Hate" and "The Last Kiss" for Colliers (the latter not published until 1947) and "On an Ocean Wave," which he submitted to Esquire under the pen name Paul Elgin. But he quickly gave up, admitting: "I can't write these convincingly. It requires a certain ebullience about inessential and specious matters which I no longer possess."¹⁹

Further disheartened by Colliers' rejection of a portion of The Last Tycoon, Fitzgerald went on a final binge. After regaining his balance, he wrote of his experience: "Only in the last few months has life begun to level out again in any tangible way. The movies went to my head and I tried to lick the set-up single-handedly and came out a sadder and wiser man."²⁰

It is with this perspective that Fitzgerald set out in earnest to complete The Last Tycoon. In a letter to his daughter in June, 1940, he writes determinedly: "I wish now I'd never relaxed or looked back--but said at the end of The Great Gatsby: 'I've found my line--from now on this comes first. This is my immediate duty--without this I am nothing.'"²¹

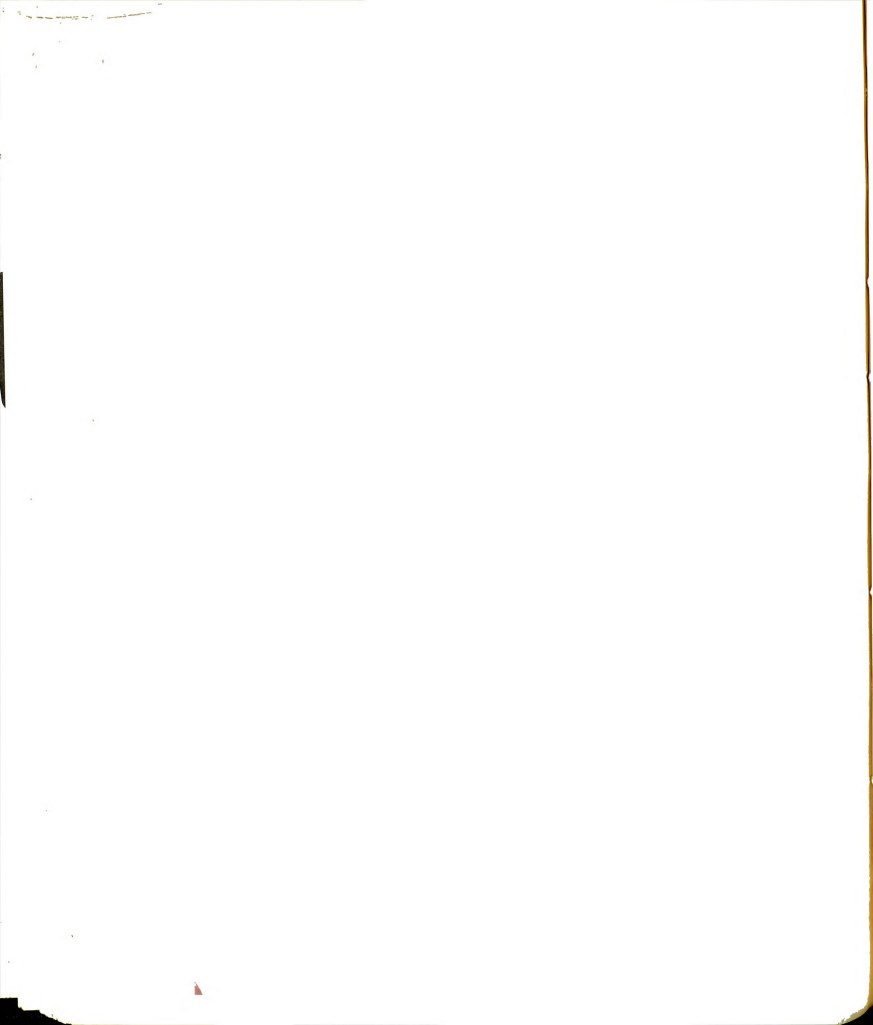


In basing the novel on the strong-willed Irving Thalberg's meteoric rise to power in the Hollywood of the thirties, Fitzgerald had found both a hero and a setting which suited his purposes. As he writes in his notes:

There's nothing that worries me in the novel, nothing that seems uncertain. Unlike Tender is the Night, it is not the story of deterioration--it is not depressing and not morbid despite the tragic ending. If one book could be like another, I should say it is more like The Great Gatsby than any other of my books. . . . I have set it safely in the period of five years ago to obtain detachment, but now that Europe is tumbling about our ears this seems for the best. It is an escape into a lavish and romantic past that perhaps will never come again in our time.²²

Told from the point of view of his narrator, Cecelia Brady, daughter of Stahr's most vicious opponent, The Last Tycoon, traces the absorption of the movie industry into big Eastern corporations and the subsequent decline of power of the individual studio "boss." In addition, it depicts the rise of a new force, organized labor, and its effects on motion-picture production. With this as a backdrop, Cecelia centers on the story of Monroe Stahr's ascent to prominence, his reign over the Hollywood film industry, his love affair with Kathleen Moore and his inevitable fall from power.

In the role of narrator Cecelia performs the same function for Stahr as Nick Carraway does for Jay Gatsby. As Nick interprets Gatsby's quest, so Cecelia interprets the significance both of Stahr's temporary dominance of the Hollywood film industry and of his tragic fall. Born in Hollywood and educated at an exclusive woman's school in the East, Cecelia sees through the pretense and moral corruption of the film colony:



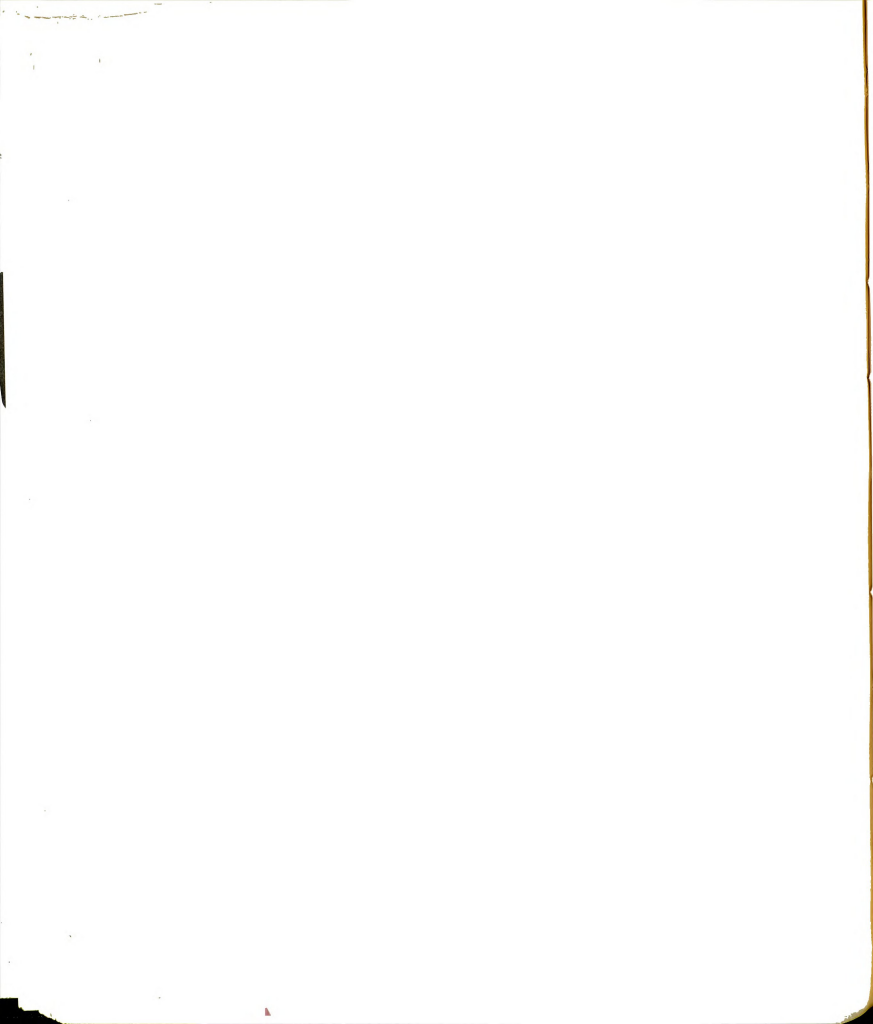
Though I haven't ever been on the screen I was brought up in pictures . . . I put this down only to indicate that even before the age of reason I was in a position to watch the wheels go round. . . . My father was in the picture business as another man might be in cotton or steel, and I took it tranquilly. . . . At the worst I accepted Hollywood with the resignation of a ghost assigned to a haunted house. I knew what you were supposed to think about it but I was obstinately unhorrorified."²³

Because of her unique advantage, Cecelia believes that "you can take Hollywood for granted . . ." or " . . . dismiss it with the contempt we reserve for what we don't understand."²⁴ Singularly unimpressed by its glamour and gaudiness, she admits nonetheless, that "it [Hollywood] can be understood too, but only dimly and in flashes. Not half a dozen men have ever been able to keep the whole equation of pictures in their heads. And perhaps the closest a woman can come to the set-up is to try and understand one of those men."²⁵ For Cecelia, that man is Monroe Stahr.

Clearly infatuated with him, she contends that like Jay Gatsby, he was faithful to his dream until the end:

He had flown up very high to see, on strong wings, when he was young. 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 settled gradually to earth."²⁶

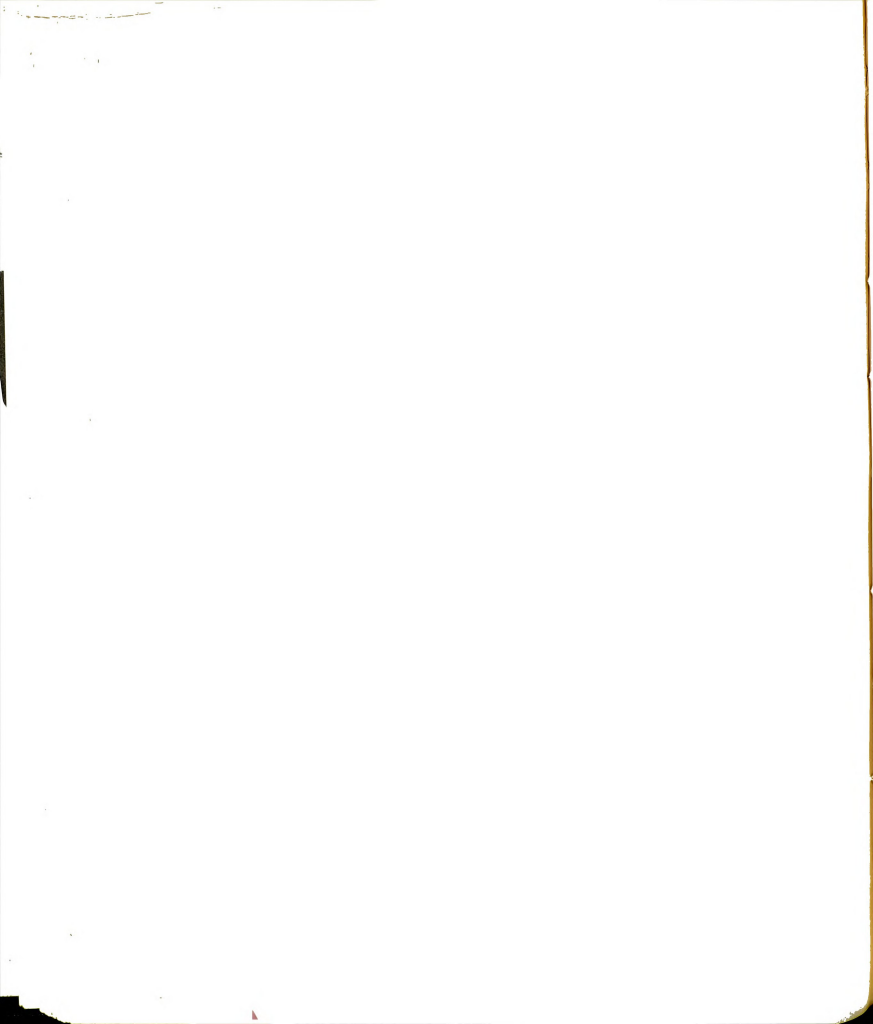
Drawn initially to Stahr's magnetism and charm, Cecelia describes their first meeting:



His dark eyes took me in and I wondered what they would look like when they fell in love. They were kind, aloof, and though they often reasoned with you gently, somewhat superior, it was no fault of theirs if they saw too much. . . . From where he stood . . . he watched the multitudinous practicalities of his world like a proud young shepherd to whom night and day never mattered.²⁷

Clearly a born leader, Stahr seemed fated, destined to establish a standard of excellence for the film industry which had been missed since the days of silent movies. "The studio," Cecelia states, "was where Stahr had come to earth after that extraordinary illuminating flight where he saw where we were going, and how we looked doing it, and how much of it mattered."²⁸ Moreover, she adds: "You could say 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 way of measuring our jerky hopes and graceful rogueries and awkward sorrows, and that he came here from choice to be with us."²⁹ Cecelia suggests that as an artist and visionary, Stahr is the last and the best of the old professionals, a "marker in an industry like Edison and Lumiere and Griffith and Chaplin."³⁰ Stahr was the man who "led pictures way up past the range and power of the theatre, reaching a sort of golden age in the days before the censorship."³¹

Refracted through Cecelia's sensibilities, Fitzgerald's Stahr, unlike his other heroes, is a man who has fulfilled his romantic dreams and for a time has dominated and controlled an empire. Describing him on the lot, Cecelia says:

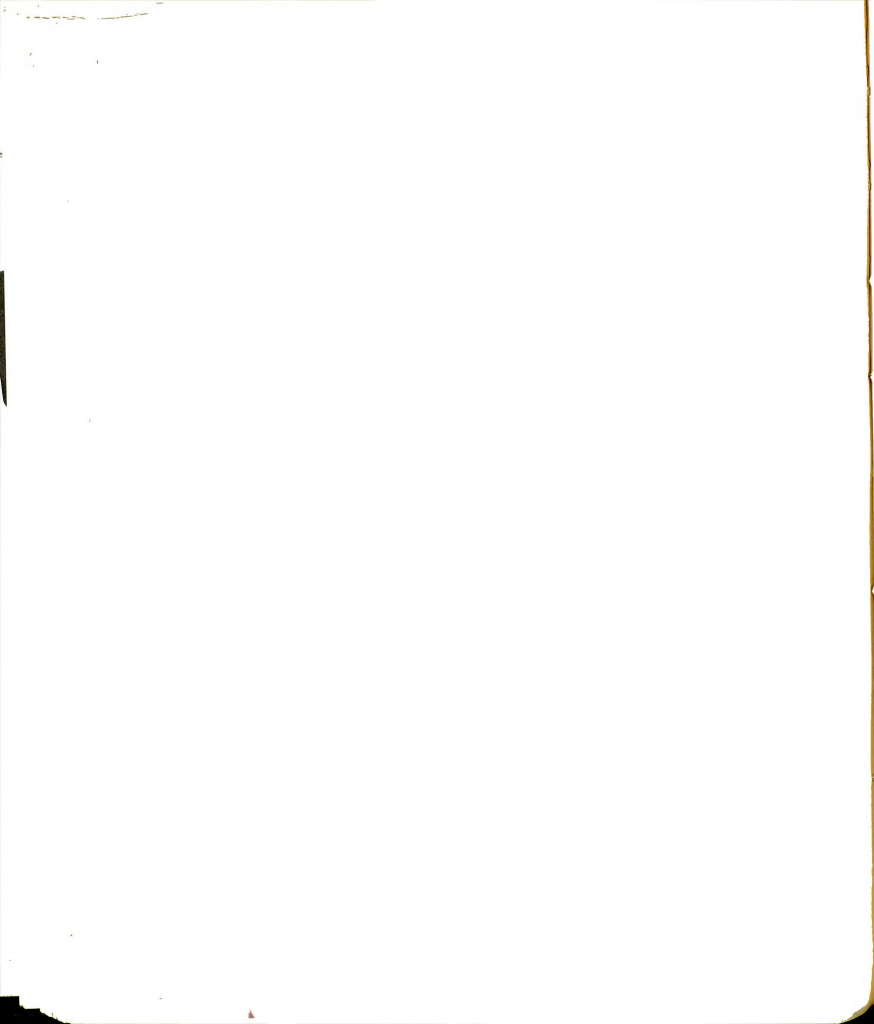


He spoke and waved back as the people streamed by in the darkness, looking, I suppose, a little like the Emperor and the Old Guard. There is no world but has its heroes, and Stahr was the hero.³²

In a succession of quick scenes, Cecelia renders a magnificent close-up of Stahr working tirelessly, patiently, and confidently. First, he restores the self-confidence of a top-notch cameraman wrongfully blacklisted by the industry. Next, he attempts to show a novelist how to write dialogue for the screen. Later, he listens patiently to a "matinee idol" complain of his sexual impotence. Finally, in a conference, Stahr works masterfully to salvage a film marred by an incompetent director and two writers. ". . . but here was Stahr, to care for all of them" thinks Wylie White, one of the writers. "The effect would not wear off . . . not anywhere within the walls of the lot."³³

In the final scene in Chapter III, Stahr sits at the "big table" in the commissary in sharp contrast to the other "money men" of the industry. Unlike them, he combines the "mixture of common sense, wise sensibility, theatrical ingenuity, and a certain half-naïve conception of the common weal . . ."³⁴ Most of these men, Cecelia notes, "owed their success to different and incompatible qualities. But in a group a tradition carried along the less adept and they were content to look at Stahr for the sublimated auditing, and experience a sort of glow as if they had done it themselves, like rooters at a football game."³⁵

The industry's most capable executive, Stahr is its prime mover and its Czar; at his behest she says ". . . dreams hung in fragments . . . suffered analysis, passed--to be dreamed in crowds or else discarded."³⁶ Because he is surrounded "with men who were very far below him in taste and ability,"³⁷ it is Stahr's self-ordained



responsibility to be "right all the time." For example, after listening to a disillusioned and frustrated writer complain that he would like more artistic freedom, Stahr patiently explains:

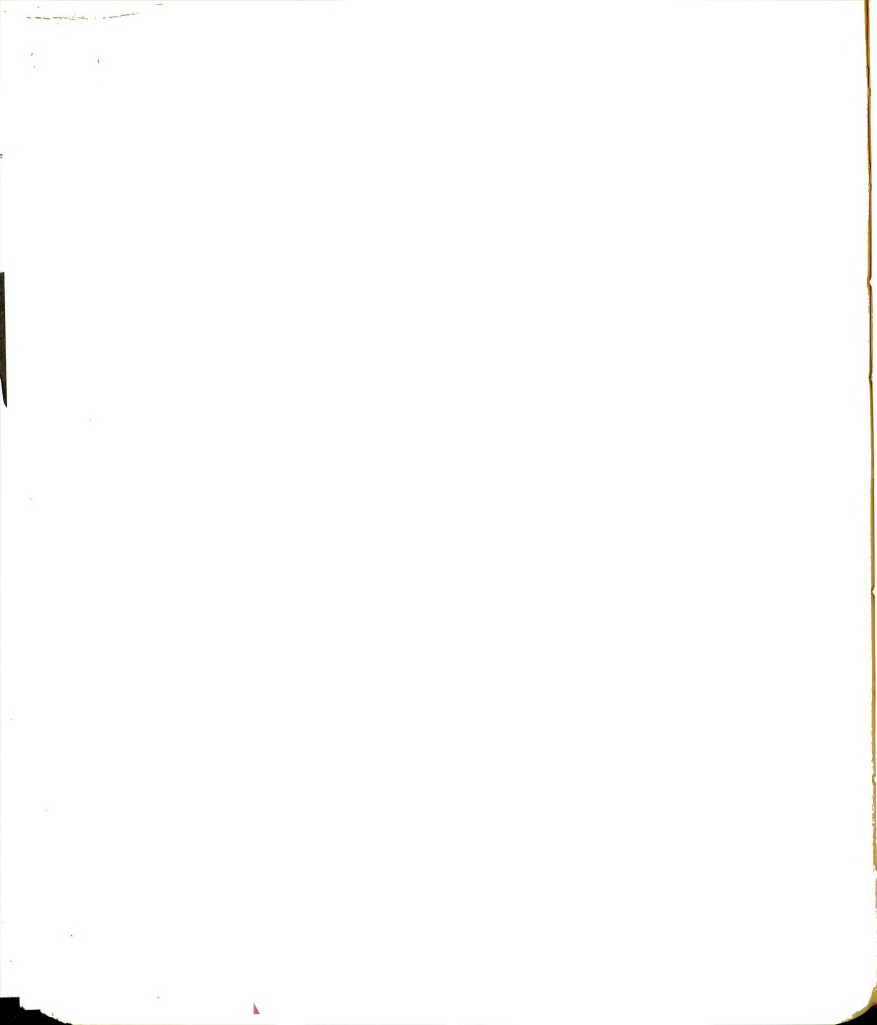
'That's the condition. . . . There's always some lousy condition. We're making a life of Rubens--suppose I asked you to do portraits of rich dopes like Billy Brady and me and Gary Cooper and Marcus when you wanted to paint Jesus Christ. Wouldn't you feel you had a condition? Our condition is that we have to take people's own favorite folklore and dress it up and give it back to them. Anything beyond that is sugar. Won't you give us some sugar, Mr. Boxley?'³⁸

Though she knows that his position and his sense of responsibility demand that Stahr be a tough-minded realist, Cecelia is also fascinated by his sensitivity and his innate romanticism:

Beginning at about twelve, probably, with the total rejection common to those of extraordinary mental powers, the 'See here: this is all wrong--a mess--a lie--and a sham--,' he swept it all away, everything, as men of his type do and then instead of being a son of a bitch as most of them are, he looked around at the bareness that was left and said to himself, 'This will never do.' And so he had learned tolerance, kindness, forbearance, and even affection like lessons.³⁹

Feeling "a certain duty to the public," Stahr is willing, even eager, to make a picture of superior quality even though he knows it will lose money. At a meeting of the moguls, Stahr shocks them when he exclaims: "For two years we've played it safe" he tells them. "It's time we made a picture that'll lose some money. Write it off as good will--this'll bring in some new customers."⁴⁰

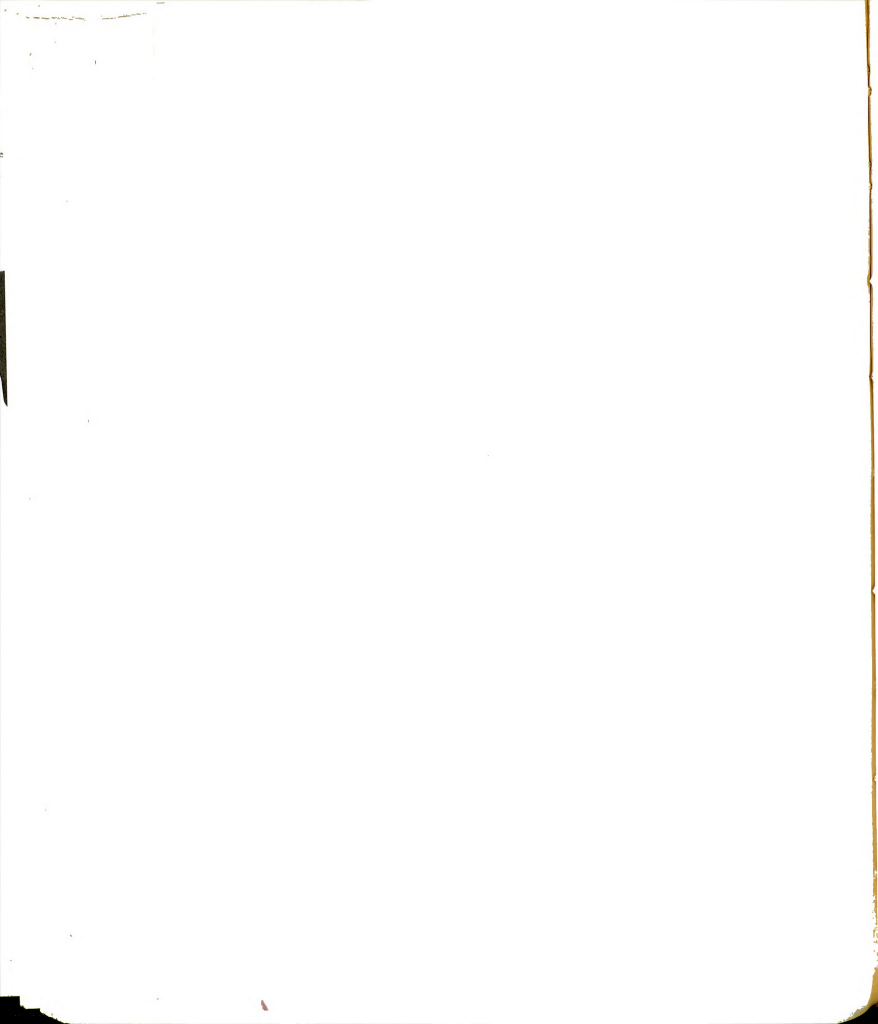
In the past Stahr has been able to dictate his own personal standards of excellence to them, but now things are changing. The New York monied interests are not interested in quality so much as in box office, and Stahr's attempt to impose his personal standard of



excellence on his antagonists serves only to alienate them further. At the same time as he is beginning to meet with corporate resistance, Stahr finds that his health is failing (he is warned by his doctor to slow down lest he risk a heart attack) and that he also faces the threat of a union-organized studio-wide strike of writers, directors, and technicians seeking greater artistic freedom and control of production. Despite his competence and leadership abilities, despite his "interest in the lot, . . . his utter democracy, his popularity with the rank and file of the studio,"⁴¹ Stahr is fighting a hopeless battle on two fronts. Paradoxically, then, Stahr is about to be toppled by the very structure which his own vision and talents have built: "The old loyalties were trembling now, and there were clay feet everywhere; . . ." ⁴²

It is at this point that Stahr, formerly in complete control, is confronted for the first time with the loss of his dream. And his initial disillusion and loss of control takes the form of an abortive love affair. Having described Stahr earlier at the pinnacle of his success as a man who "was born sleepless without a talent for rest nor the desire for it,"⁴³ Fitzgerald, in his notes, depicts Stahr at the moment before he meets and falls in love with Kathleen as "overworked and deathly tired, ruling with a radiance that is almost moribund in its phosphorescence."⁴⁴

Although the love relationship sub-plot is never quite fleshed out, Fitzgerald had it in mind that Kathleen's love would



represent "the heart of hope and freshness," the intoxication, romance, and radiance which has been missing in Stahr's life since his wife's death. Shortly after Stahr first encounters Kathleen, for example, he sees her again at a party. Cecelia notes:

Stahr had expected nothing like this. . . . Immediately things changed. As he walked toward her, the people shrank back against the walls until they were only murals; the white table lengthened and became an altar where the priestess sat alone. Vitality welled up in him, and he could have stood a long time across the table from her, looking and smiling. . . . Her eyes invited him to a romantic communion of unbelievable intensity.⁴⁵

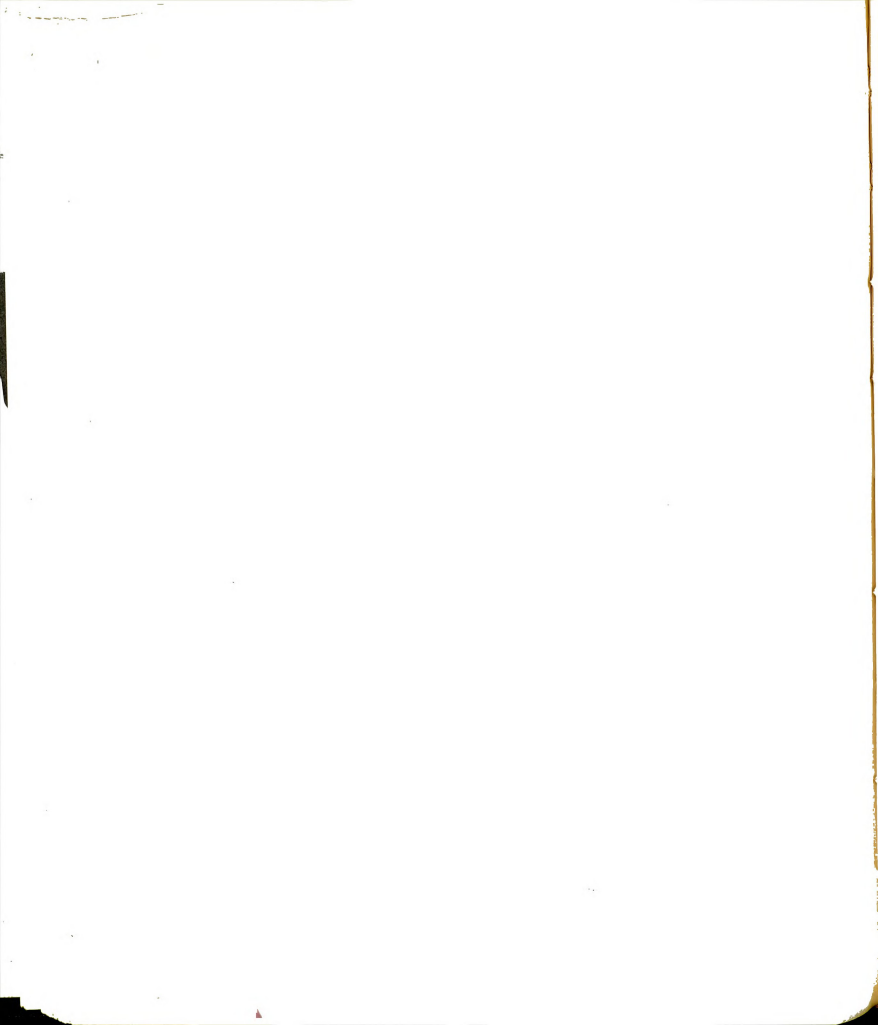
After Stahr's initial encounter with Kathleen, Cecelia says:

He wanted the pattern of his life broken. If he was going to die soon, like the two doctors said, he wanted to stop being Stahr for a while and hunt for love like nameless men, who, had no gifts to give, like young nameless men who looked along the streets in the dark.⁴⁶

As the relationship grows, Stahr senses that he has grown to need Kathleen:

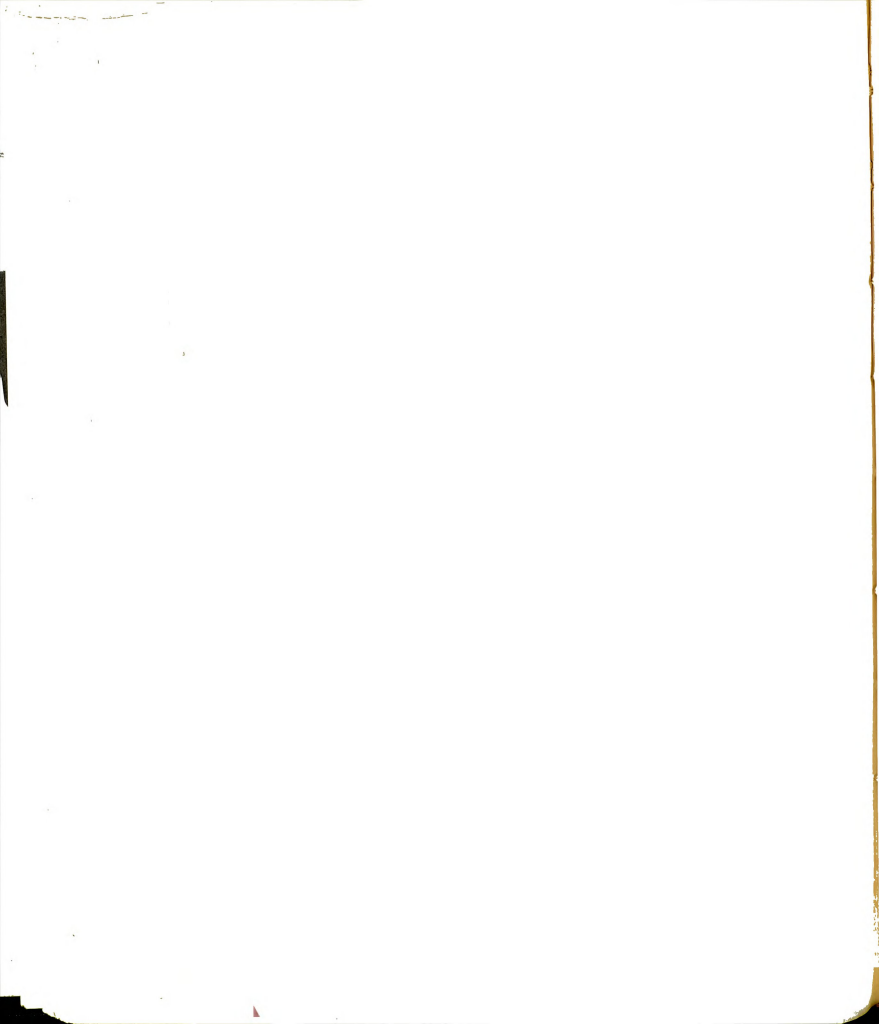
There were only ten years between them, but he felt that madness about it akin to the love of an aging man for a young girl. It was a deep and desperate time-need, a clock ticking with his heart, and it urged him, against the whole logic of his life, to walk past her into the house and say, 'This is forever.'⁴⁷

Knowing that Kathleen is engaged to another man, Stahr hesitates instead of proposing to her. Then, just before he is about to go on a weekend with her he receives a telegram informing him of her marriage. Letting Kathleen go, Cecelia suggests, completes Stahr's disillusion. He loses not only the repose and peace which might have saved him, but begins steadily to lose control of his empire until his accidental death in a plane crash some months later.



Even in unfinished form, Fitzgerald endows Monroe Stahr with a tensile strength, force of will, and integrity which his other major protagonists lack. Stahr is, like them, a dreamer whose dreams are doomed to fail, but he succeeds in dominating and controlling his world for the time he rules. What ultimately brings Stahr down from his "extraordinary illuminating flight" is a combination of outside forces which he cannot control and his own inflexible pride and unwillingness to admit that he too is dependent upon other human beings for love and security. "Like many brilliant men," Fitzgerald writes through his narrator, "Stahr had grown up dead cold."⁴⁸

In temporarily gaining the world of his dreams, Stahr both epitomizes and transcends Jay Gatsby and Dick Diver, the other heroes of Fitzgerald's mature fiction. Gatsby dies preserving his romantic illusions, and Diver dissipates his energy and spirit in his need to be loved. Stahr alone succeeds to an extraordinary extent in at least temporarily imposing his vision and his dreams upon an industry, and, by extension, upon the society which he rules. Had Fitzgerald lived to complete The Last Tycoon, Monroe Stahr might well have been his most resonant fictional character and The Last Tycoon the culmination of his dream-and-disillusion theme.



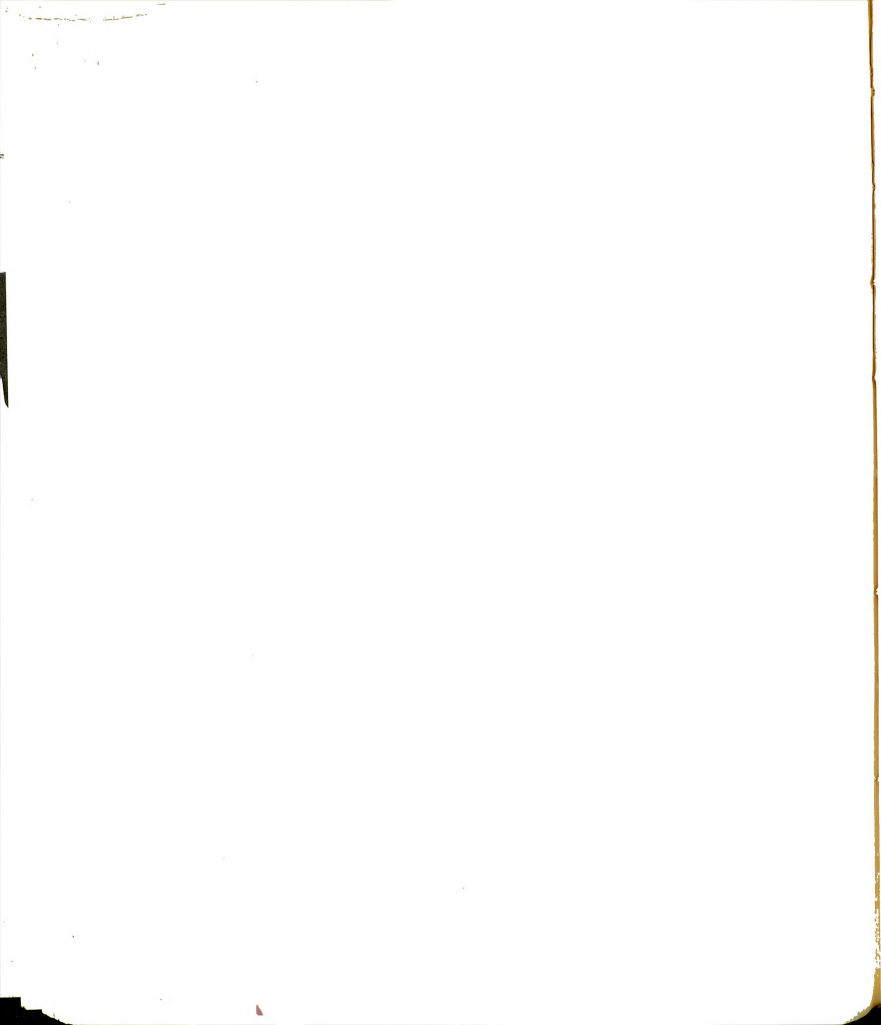
XIII CONCLUSION

In an essay entitled "One Hundred False Starts," Fitzgerald observed:

Mostly we authors must repeat ourselves--that's the truth. We have two or three great and moving experiences so great and so moving that it doesn't seem at the time that anybody else has been so caught up and pounded and dazzled and astonished and beaten and broken and rescued and illuminated and rewarded and humbled in just that way ever before . . . and we tell our two or three stories each time in a new disguise--maybe ten times, maybe a hundred, as long as people will listen.

Most of Fitzgerald's major fiction does indeed retell the same two or three stories time and again, and all are variations of the romantic quest motif, the impossible dream. All bear striking similarities to archetypal fairy tales, stories of knights in shining armor who seek either to retrieve the holy grail or to rescue the beautiful princess. But unlike their models, Fitzgerald's fairy tales don't have the obligatory happy ending. Speaking through John Unger in "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," he says: "There are only diamonds in the world, diamonds and the shabby gift of disillusion."²

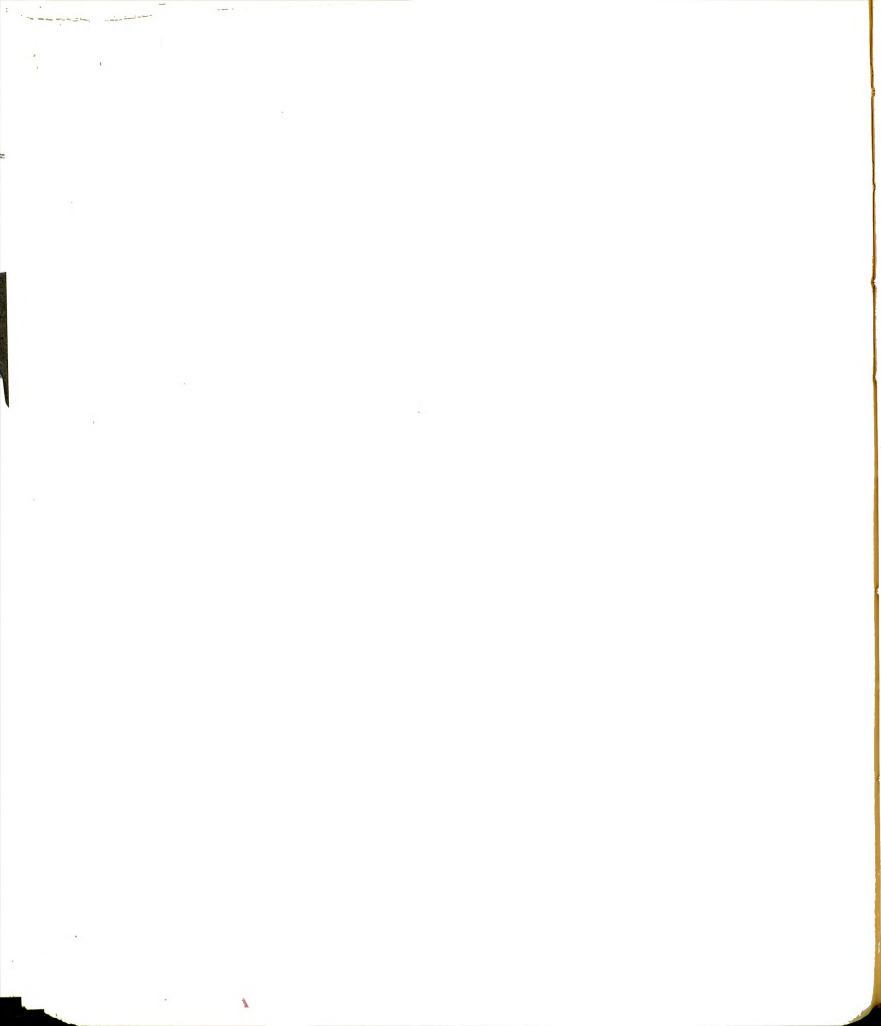
Because he lived all his life with a "great dream" of wealth and success, eternal youth and beauty, Fitzgerald came to understand perhaps better than any other writer of his time how possession of great riches corrupts and dehumanizes its possessor and how age



inevitably and painfully tarnishes youth and beauty. As he writes in "The Freshest Boy," "life for everybody was a struggle, sometimes magnificent from a distance, but always difficult and surprisingly simple and a little sad."³ In his most effective fiction, therefore, Fitzgerald dramatizes the paradox and the sad irony in which men dream of a magical existence they can never fully realize. And it is this tension between dream and disillusion which forms throughout his career the unifying concept at the center of his developing aesthetic.

Because his deepest concern was himself--who and what he was--Fitzgerald's romantic and youthful illusions provided him with the inspiration to write. In some ways all his heroes are frightened little boys playing at being suave, sophisticated, and dashing romantic heroes. While he was indulging these fantasies, however, the other side of his nature, the "spoiled priest," was constantly nagging at him, prodding him to cut down on his excesses and self-indulgent fantasies; urging him to utilize restraint and discipline, and above all, warning him (as the priest warns the young boy in "Absolution,") not to "get up too close or you'll only feel the heat and the sweat and the life."⁴

From the beginning, Fitzgerald's art is concerned with characters who dream or who have lost the ability to dream and with the pursuit of a dream and its incarnation in such temporal, imperfect, and ultimately perishable forms as wealth, youth, beauty, and other people. His earliest heroes are young and hopeful idealists whose quest for such goals invariably bring them disillusion and pain. Their distinguishing characteristic, however, is their youth and

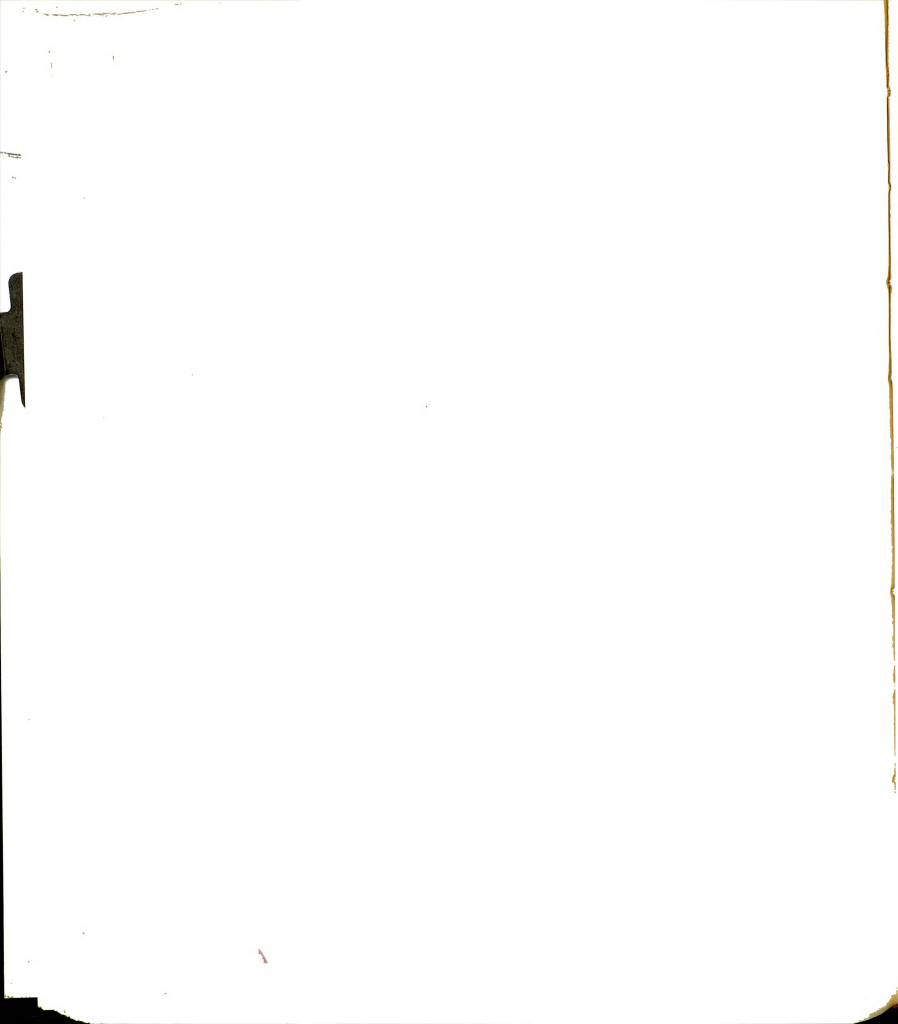


resilience--their ability to struggle back from disillusion and loss to dream once more. Despite the inevitability of their failure, we admire characters like Amory Blaine and Jay Gatsby for their "romantic readiness," their youthful spirit, their "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life," their naïve and hopeful vision of "the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing."⁵

As he grows to maturity and experiences personal and professional setbacks, a quality which he refers to as "a touch of disaster" begins to permeate Fitzgerald's work. As his heroes age, they are confronted like himself with the loss of their youthful romantic dreams, and many, like Gordon Sterrett and Anthony Patch, are unable to struggle against personal hardship.

During the late twenties and through the mid-thirties, Fitzgerald begins to come to terms with this darker side of his nature. Understanding that his dreams of early success are behind him, his stories during this time center on personal loss and domestic conflict; his characters are more human and moving, and he is dealing with more complex human problems. As Zelda's condition worsens and his own reputation diminishes, Fitzgerald writes more openly of his disillusion and his sadness and reflects a darker and more sombre vision, a deepening tragic perspective.

In these last years, Fitzgerald evokes characters who, like himself, must learn how to live without their grand and glorious youthful illusions. As he writes in "The Crack-Up," "I must hold in

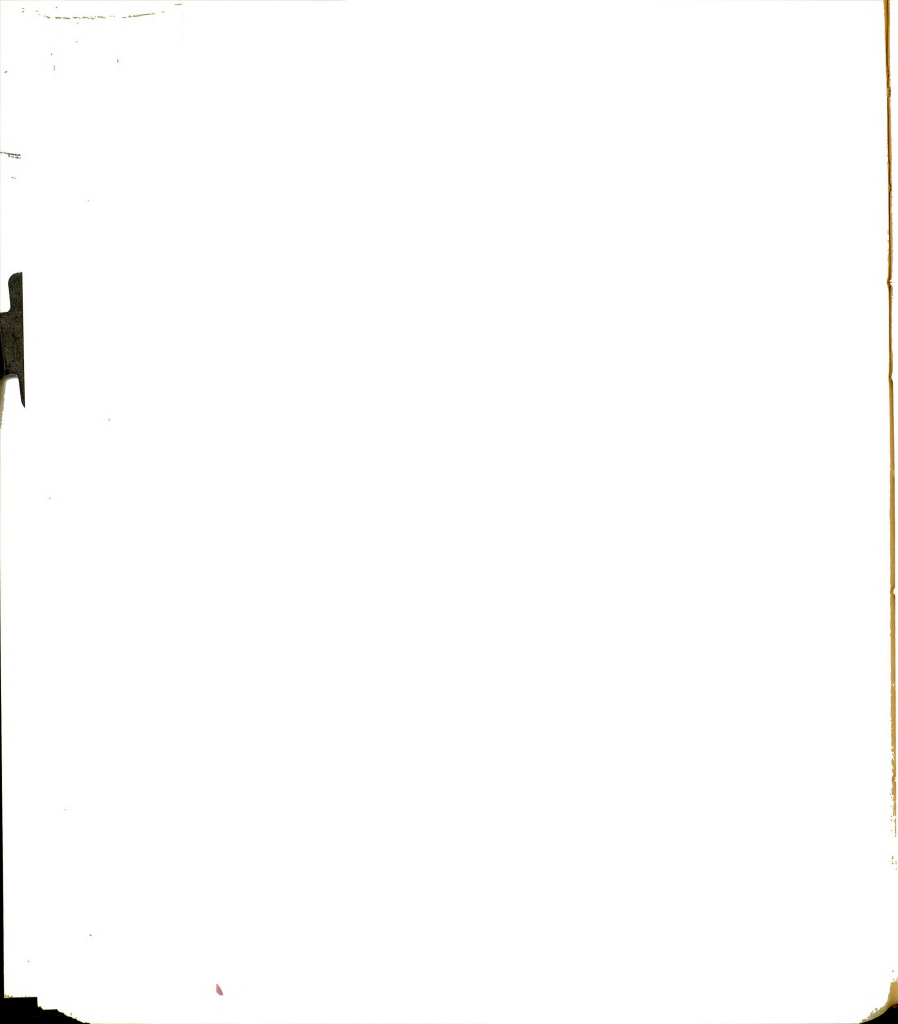


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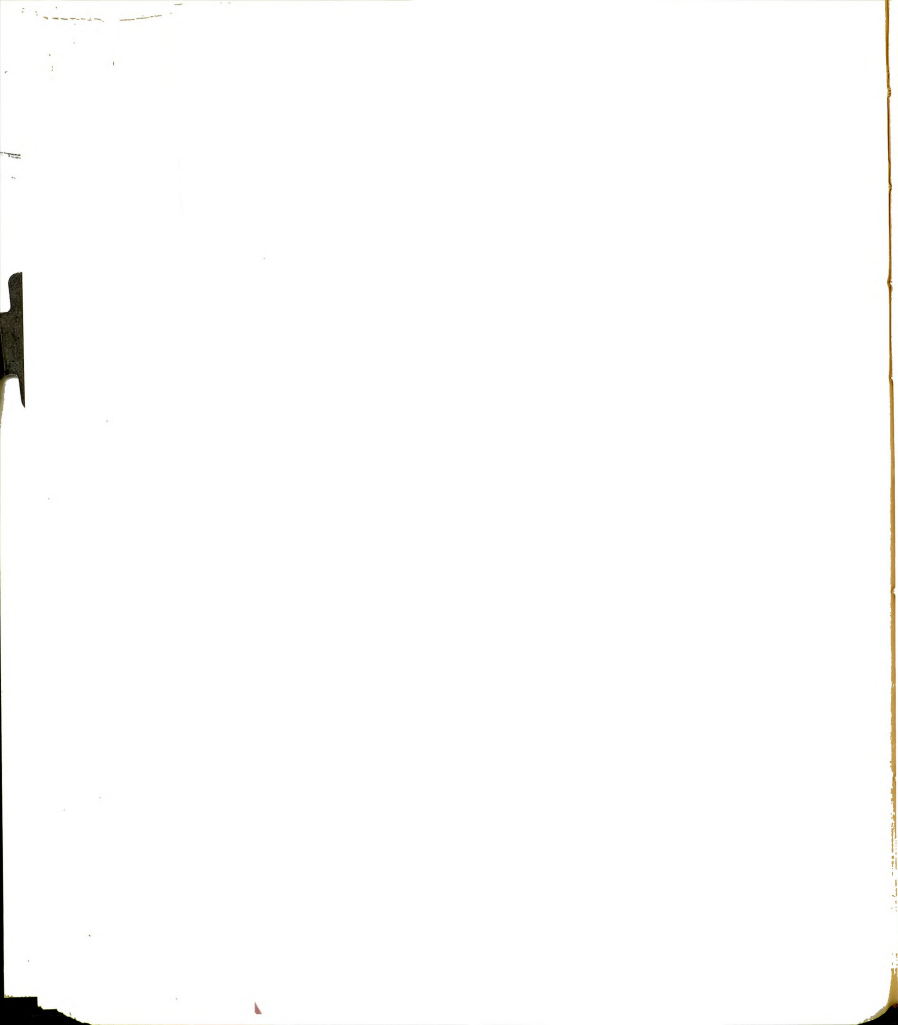
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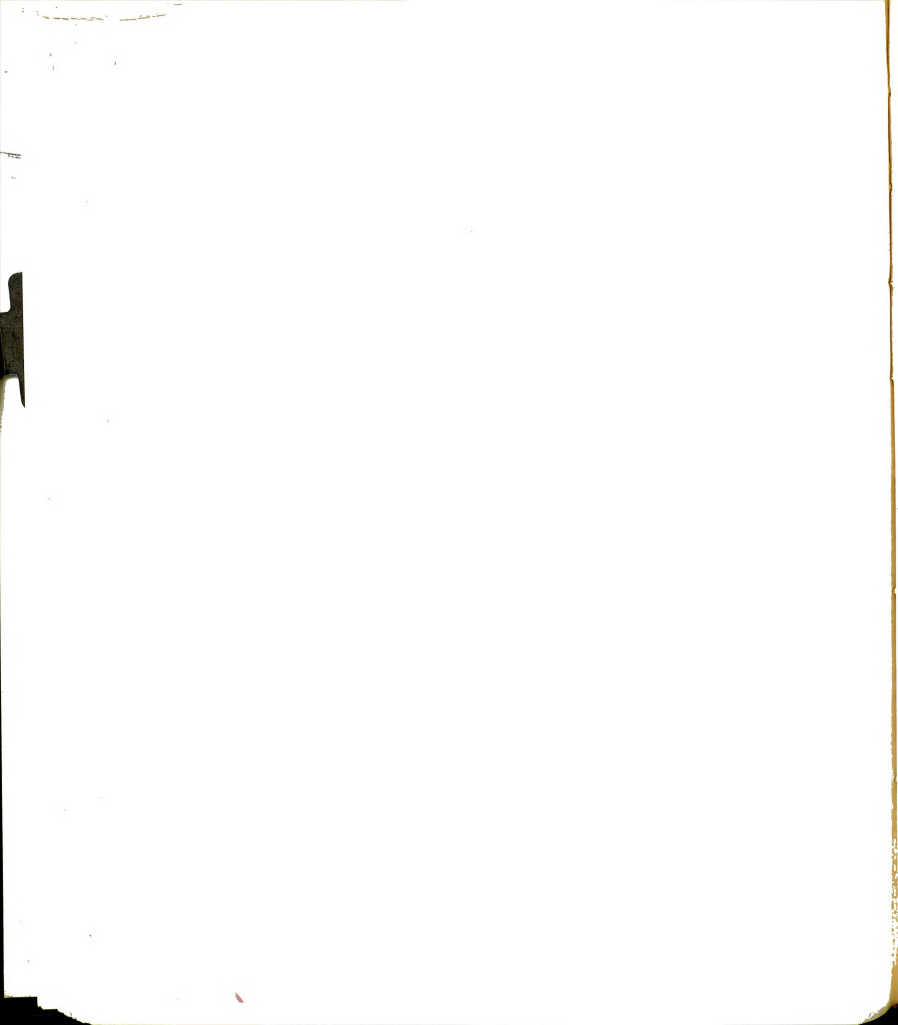
balance the sense of the futility of effort and the sense of the necessity to struggle; the conviction of the inevitability of failure and still the determination to succeed-- . . . "6 No longer is the dream bound up with the old symbols: youth, wealth, and beauty are replaced by Fitzgerald's profound emotional need to become a great and tragic writer.

In this final phase of his career, then, Fitzgerald deepens his major theme to what he calls "the wise and tragic sense of life." As he writes of The Last Tycoon, "There has never been an American tragedy, only great failure."⁷ At the deepest level of his art, he writes both of the inevitable failure of the individual dream and also of the corruption of the American dream and of all human dreams. At the same time, he projects his enduring belief that in spite of such inevitable failure man must continue to invest his life with point, dignity, and meaning. This was Fitzgerald's ethic both as a writer and a man:

If the pilgrimage eastward of the rare poisonous flower of the race was the end of the adventure which had started westward three hundred years ago, if the long serpent of the curiosity had turned too sharp upon itself, cramping its bowels, bursting its shining skin, at least there had been a journey; like to the satisfaction of a man coming to die--one of those human things that one can never understand unless one had made such a journey and heard the man give thanks with husbanded breath. The frontiers were gone--there were no more barbarians. The short gallop of the last great race, the polyglot, the hated and despised, the crass and scorned, had gone--at least it was not a meaningless extinction up an alley.⁸



NOTES



NOTES

Chapter I

¹F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Notebooks," The Crack-Up, ed. Edmond Wilson, (New York: New Directions, 1945), p. 180.

²Arthur Mizener, The Far Side of Paradise, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1959), p. 65.

³Fitzgerald, "Early Success," The Crack-Up, p. 87.

⁴*Ibid.*, "The Crack-Up," The Crack-Up, p. 69.

⁵*Ibid.*, "Early Success," p. 87.

⁶*Ibid.*, "Pasting It Together," The Crack-Up, p. 84.

⁷Mizener, "Introduction," The Far Side of Paradise, p. xvii.

⁸F. Scott Fitzgerald, Afternoon of an Author, ed. Arthur Mizener, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 132.

⁹Budd Schulberg, "The Final Triumph is Fitzgerald's," The New York Times Book Review, 28 Jan., 1951, p. 2.

¹⁰Malcolm Cowley, ed., "Introduction," The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, by F. Scott Fitzgerald, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. xiv.

¹¹Mizener, p. 65.

¹²Fitzgerald, "One Hundred False Starts," Afternoon . . ., p. 137.

¹³*Ibid.*, "Author's House," Afternoon . . ., p. 186.

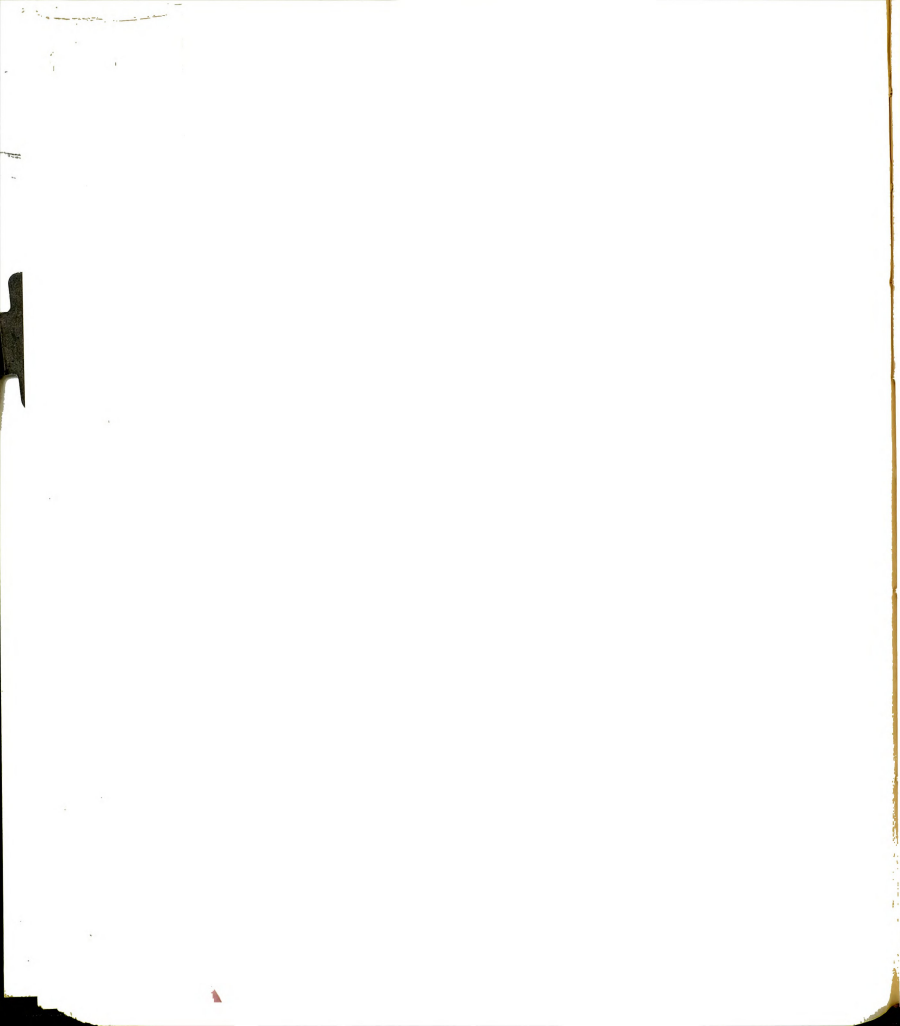
¹⁴Mizener, p. 54.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 45.

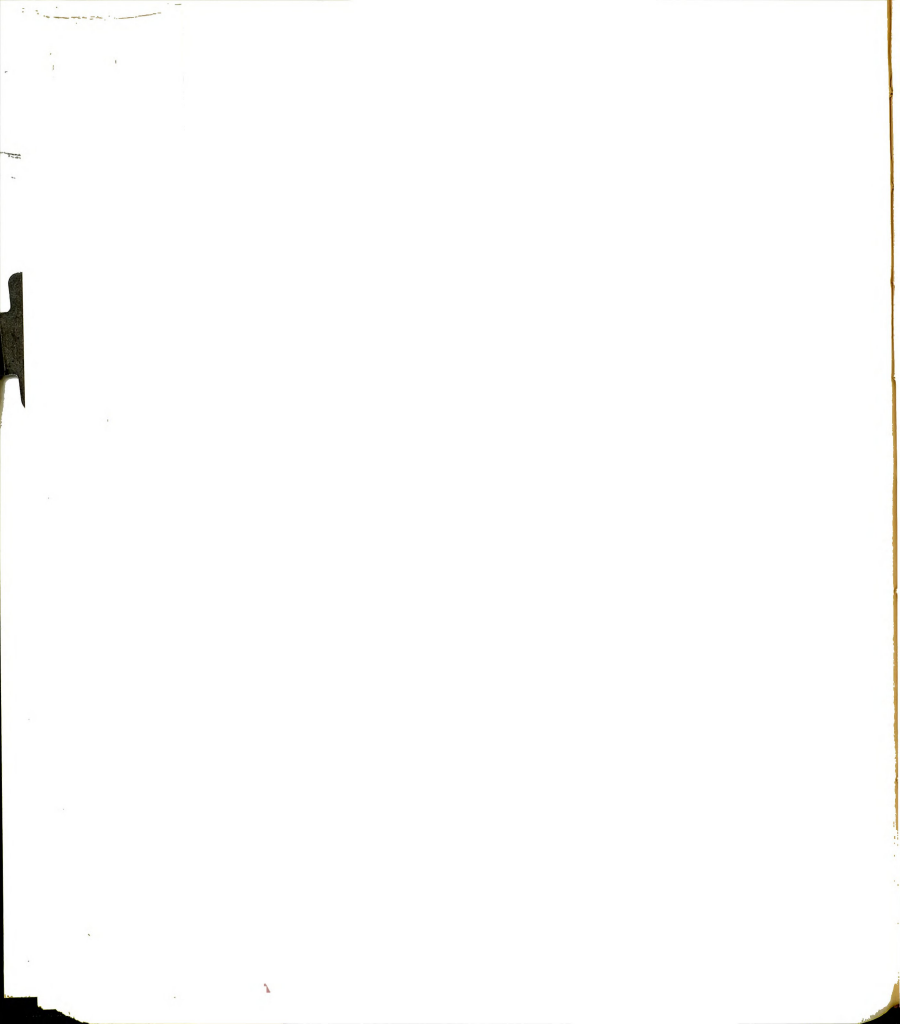
¹⁶*Ibid.*, "Fitzgerald and the Top Girl," The Far Side . . ., p. 68.

¹⁷Fitzgerald, "The Crack-Up," The Crack-Up, p. 70.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, "Handle With Care," The Crack-Up, p. 76.



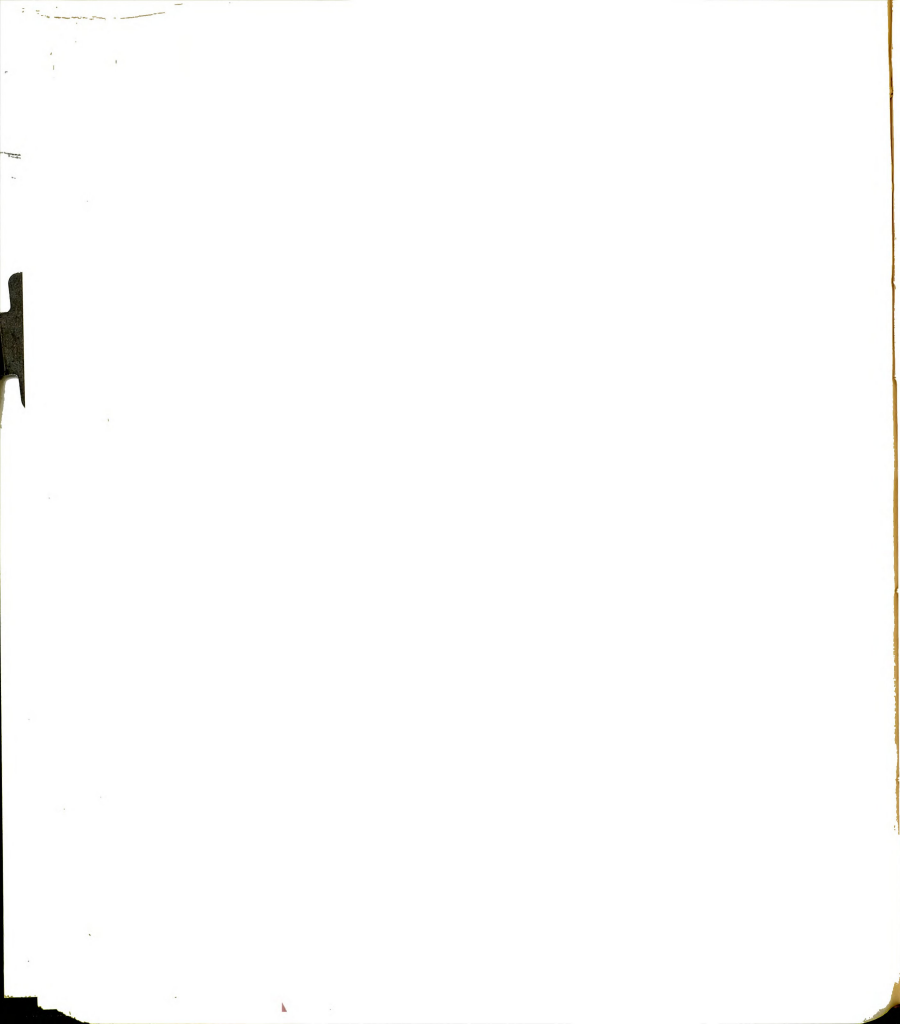
- ¹⁹Mizener, pp. 62-63.
- ²⁰Fitzgerald, "The Crack-Up," p. 76.
- ²¹Mizener, p. 82.
- ²²F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Who's, Who," The Saturday Evening Post, 18 Sept. 1920, reprinted in F. Scott Fitzgerald, Afternoon of an Author, p. 85.
- ²³Mizener, pp. 90-91.
- ²⁴Fitzgerald, "My Lost City," The Crack-Up, pp. 28-29.
- ²⁵To Frances Scott Fitzgerald, July 7, 1938, The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Andrew Turnbull, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 32.
- ²⁶Mizener, p. 223.
- ²⁷To Edmund Wilson, October 7, 1924, Letters . . ., p. 341.
- ²⁸Andrew Turnbull, Scott Fitzgerald, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), pp. 176-77.
- ²⁹Mizener, p. 227.
- ³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 232.
- ³¹Fitzgerald, "The Crack-Up," p. 72.
- ³²*Ibid.*, p. 77.
- ³³*Ibid.*, "Ring," The Crack-Up, p. 35.
- ³⁴*Ibid.*, "Handle With Care," The Crack-Up, p. 84.
- ³⁵Fitzgerald, Afternoon . . ., ed. Mizener, p. 5.
- ³⁶To Frances Scott Fitzgerald, Spring, 1940, quoted in The Crack-Up, p. 291.
- ³⁷Mizener, p. 325.
- ³⁸Fitzgerald, "Pasting It Together," The Crack-Up, p. 81.
- ³⁹To Frances Scott Fitzgerald, June 12, 1940, quoted in The Crack-Up, p. 294.
- ⁴⁰Fitzgerald, "Early Success," The Crack-Up, p. 89.
- ⁴¹Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday, (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 206.
- ⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 208.



- ⁴³Fitzgerald, "Echoes of the Jazz Age," The Crack-Up, p. 13.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., "Early Success," p. 87.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., "Echoes . . ." pp. 19-21.
- ⁴⁶Allen, p. 281.
- ⁴⁷Daniel Aaron, Writers on the Left, (New York: Avon Books, 1965), p. 169.

Chapter II

- ¹Fitzgerald, "The Crack-Up," p. 70.
- ²Fitzgerald's literary career at Princeton can be divided into two phases, the first extending from his entrance [September, 1913] to his initial departure [December, 1915] and the second from his readmittance [September, 1916] to last departure [November, 1917].
- ³"The Debutante," The Apprenticeship of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. John Kuehl, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1965), p. 98.
- ⁴This pattern will repeat itself in later stories such as "Winter Dreams," "The Sensible Thing," and the Basil Lee and Josephine Perry stories. Helen is, in fact, the freerunner of Josephine.
- ⁵Kuehl, "Babes in the Woods," p. 136.
- ⁶Ibid., p. 139.
- ⁷Ibid., p. 140.
- ⁸The young man's spiritual crisis forms the basis for a similar conflict in both "Benediction," (1920) and "Absolution," (1924).
- ⁹Kuehl, "The Ordeal," p. 84.
- ¹⁰Ibid., pp. 86-87.
- ¹¹Ibid., "The Spire and the Gargoyle," p. 106.
- ¹²Ibid., pp. 106-107.
- ¹³Ibid., p. 109.



¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 112-113.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁶ Ibid., "Sentiment and the Use of Rouge," p. 153.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 154.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 158.

¹⁹ Ibid., "The Pierian Springs and the Last Straw," p. 167.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 165.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 168-169.

²² Ibid., p. 171.

²³ Ibid., p. 173.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ In all three cases, possession of the "golden girl" destroys the dream.

²⁶ In The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald uses the same narrative structure. As spoiled priest, Nick Carraway relates and interprets Gatsby's (the romantic young man) story.

Chapter III

¹ Cowley, "Introduction," The Short Stories . . . , p. ix.

² F. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), p. 106.

³ Ibid., p. 104.

⁴ Ibid., p. 9.

⁵ Ibid., p. 26.

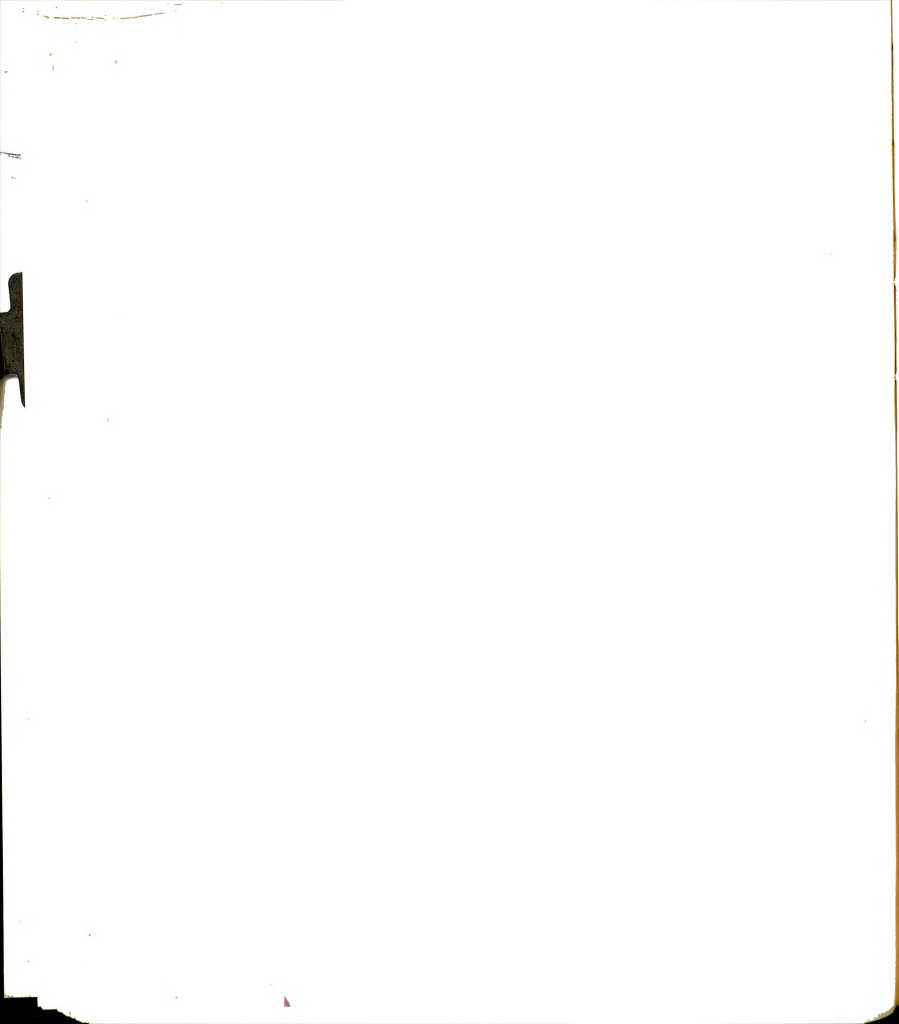
⁶ Ibid., p. 45.

⁷ Ibid., p. 17.

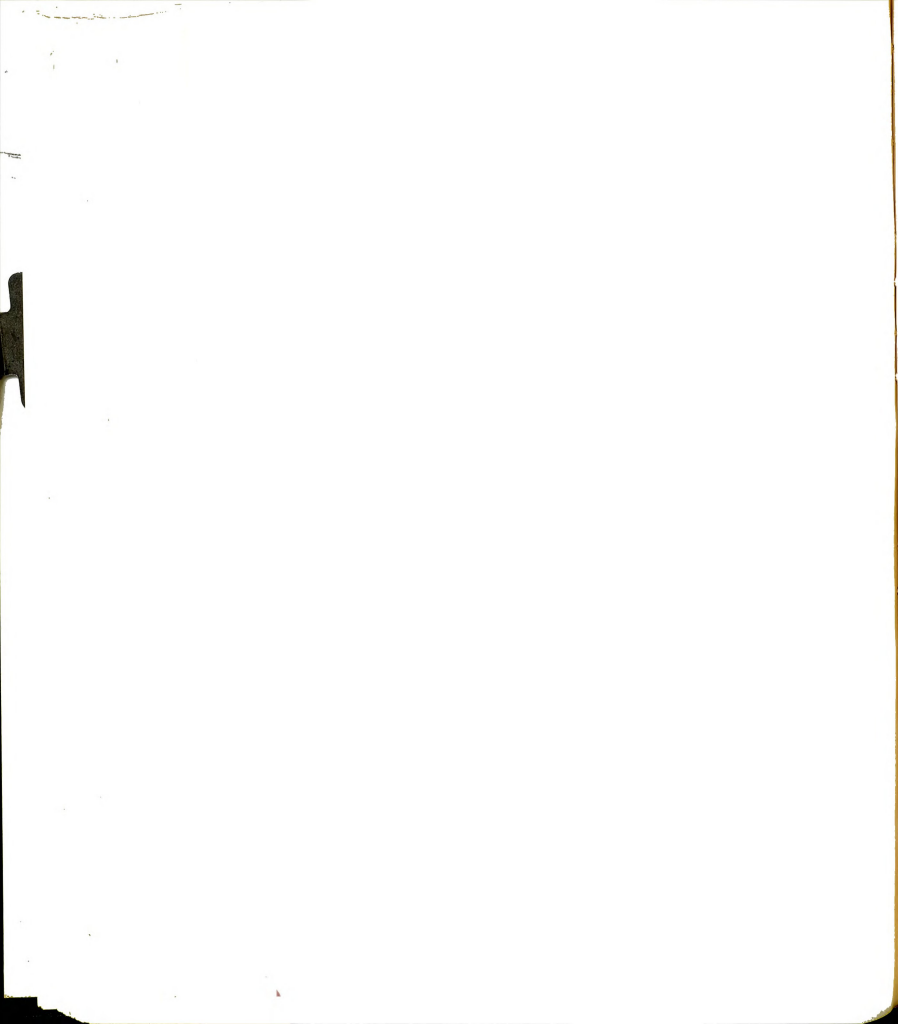
⁸ Ibid., p. 18.

⁹ Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 89.



- 11 Ibid., p. 99.
- 12 Ibid., pp. 86-87.
- 13 Ibid., p. 91.
- 14 Ibid., p. 123.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 122-123.
- 16 Ibid., p. 138.
- 17 Clinton S. Burhans, Jr., "Structure and Theme in This Side of Paradise," JEGP, LXVIII, No. 4, October, 1969, p. 611.
- 18 Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, p. 153.
- 19 Ibid., p. 162.
- 20 Ibid., p. 157.
- 21 Ibid., p. 163.
- 22 Ibid., p. 209.
- 23 Ibid., p. 195.
- 24 Burhans, p. 613.
- 25 Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, p. 280.
- 26 Ibid., p. 280.
- 27 Burhans, p. 618.
- 28 Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, p. 227.
- 29 Ibid., p. 238.
- 30 Ibid., p. 250.
- 31 Ibid., p. 14.
- 32 Ibid., p. 222.
- 33 Ibid., p. 248.
- 34 Ibid., p. 253.
- 35 Ibid., p. 263.
- 36 Ibid.



³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 264-65.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 266.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 272.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 280.

⁴² Ibid., p. 278.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 281.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 282.

Chapter IV

¹ F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Offshore Pirate," Flappers and Philosophers, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 39.

² Ibid., "The Cut-Glass Bowl," Flappers . . . , pp. 100-101.

³ Ibid., p. 101.

⁴ Ibid., p. 111.

⁵ Ibid., p. 114.

⁶ F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Lees of Happiness," Six Tales of the Jazz Age, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), p. 121.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., p. 127.

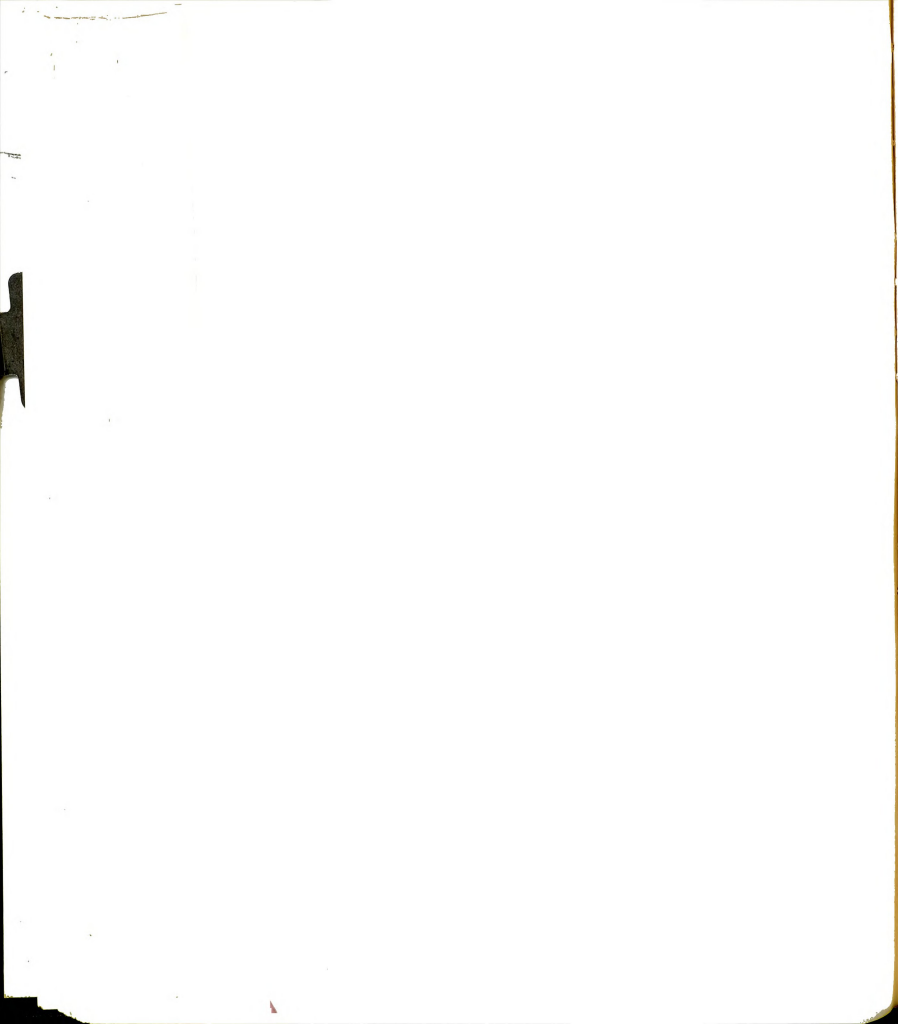
¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 136.

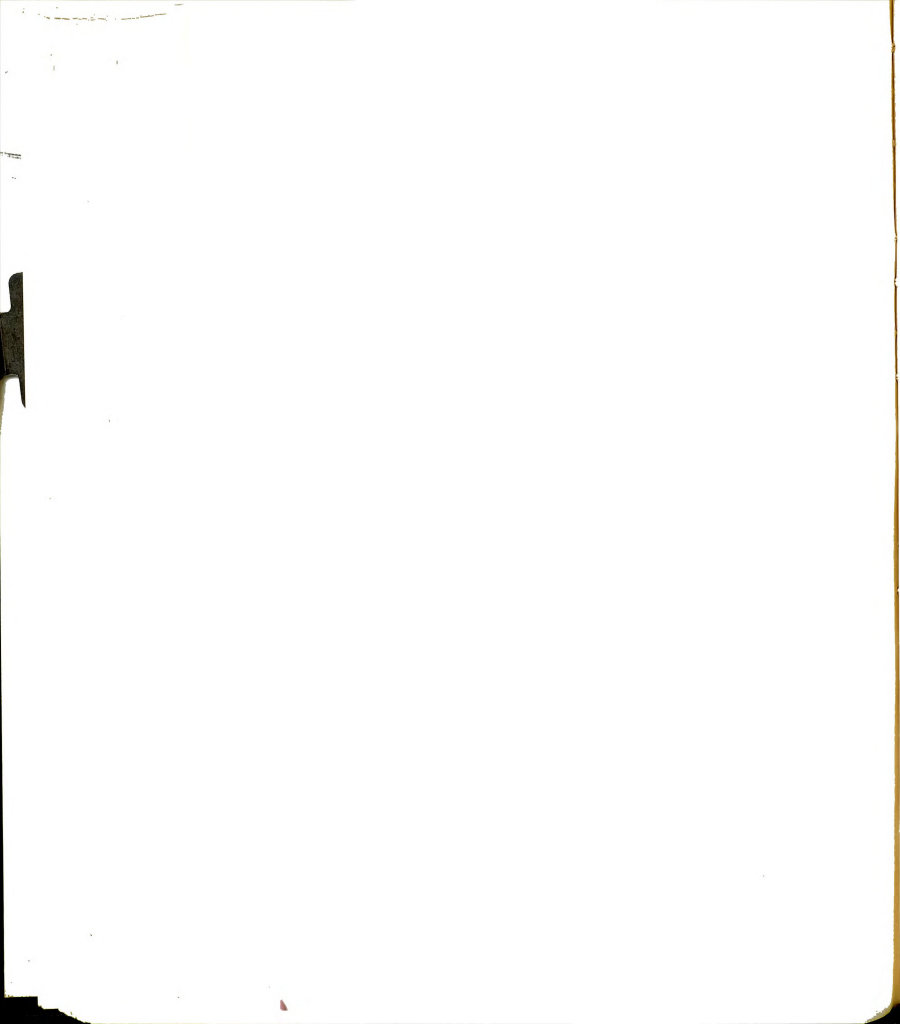
¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., p. 139.

¹⁴ Fitzgerald treats this theme in more depth and realistic detail in "Winter Dreams."



- ¹⁵ Fitzgerald, "'O Russet Witch,'" Six Tales . . . , p. 92.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 116.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-119.
- ²¹ F. Scott Fitzgerald, "May Day," Babylon Revisited, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), p. 25.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- ³⁵ Mizener, p. 84.
- ³⁶ Fitzgerald, "The Ice Palace," Babylon Revisited, p. 1.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.



⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Chapter V

¹ To Charles Scribner II, August 12, 1920, The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. by Andrew Turnbull, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 145.

² F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Beautiful and Damned, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

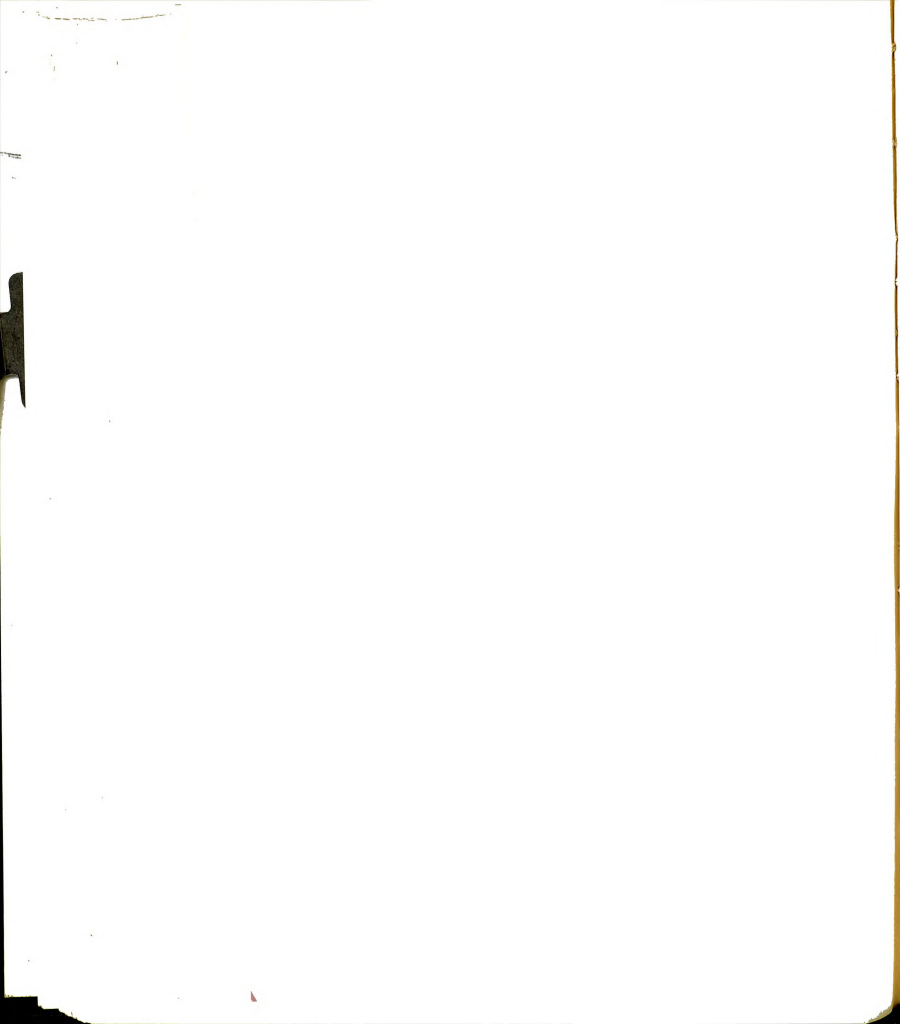
¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 156.



- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 171.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 277.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 282.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 285.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 294.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 371.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 376-377.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 393-394.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 393.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 388.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 443-444.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 448-49.

Chapter VI

¹ James E. Miller, F. Scott Fitzgerald, His Art and Technique, (New York: New York University Press, 1964), p. 78.

² F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Winter Dreams," Babylon Revisited, p. 118.

³ C.S. Burhans, Jr., "'Magnificently Attune to Life': The Value of 'Winter Dreams,'" Studies in Short Fiction, VI, 4, Summer, 1969, p. 411.

⁴ Fitzgerald, Babylon Revisited, p. 119.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

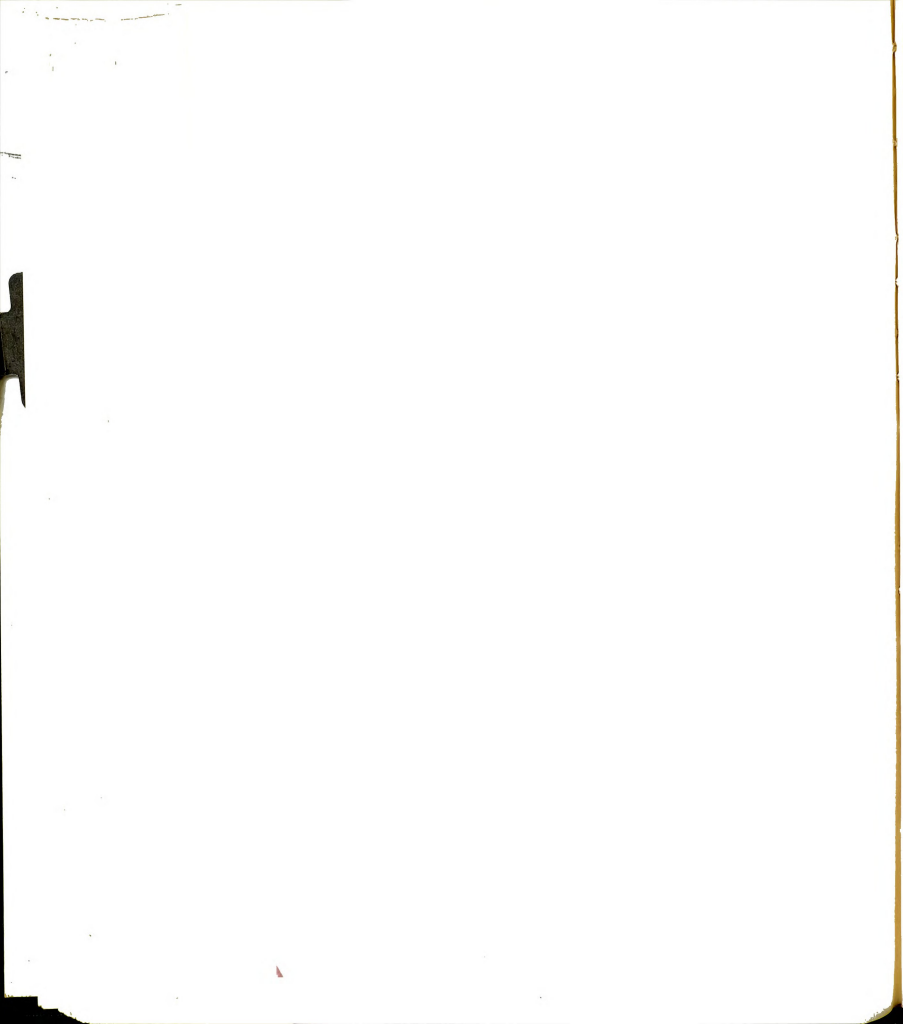
⁶ Burhans, p. 408.

⁷ Fitzgerald, Babylon Revisited, p. 121.

⁸ Burhans, p. 409.

⁹ Fitzgerald, Babylon Revisited, p. 127.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 129.



¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 135.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Fitzgerald, "The Sensible Thing," The Short Stories . . . , ed Cowley, p.154.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 147.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 154-55.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 156.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 158.

²² Fitzgerald, "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," Babylon Revisited, p. 75.

²³ *ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 76.

²⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 78.

²⁸ K. G. W. Cross, F. Scott Fitzgerald, (New York: Capricorn Books, 1964), p. 47.

²⁹ Fitzgerald, Babylon Revisited, p. 82.

³⁰ *ibid.*

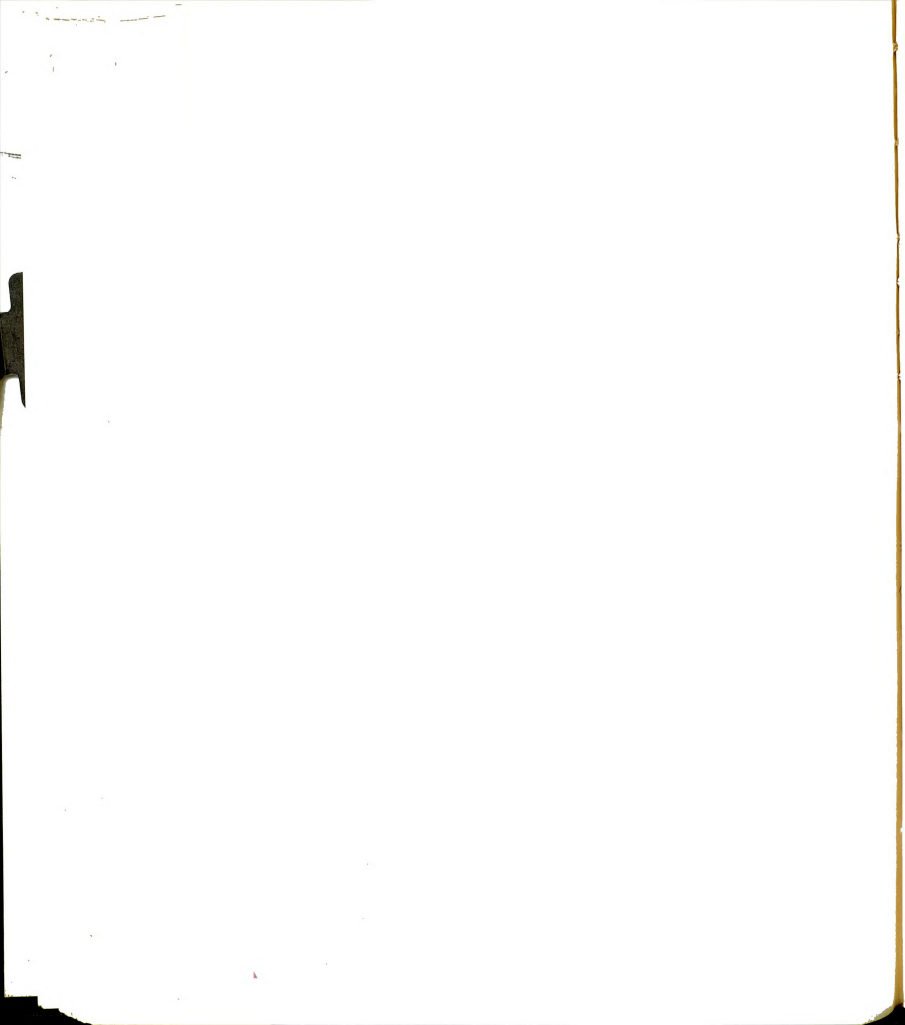
³¹ *ibid.*, p. 83.

³² *ibid.*, p. 93.

³³ *ibid.*, p. 90.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 81.

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 88.



³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁴¹ To John Jamieson, April 15, 1934, The Letters . . ., ed by Turnbull, p. 509.

⁴² Fitzgerald, "Absolution," Babylon Revisited, p. 136.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 146-147.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

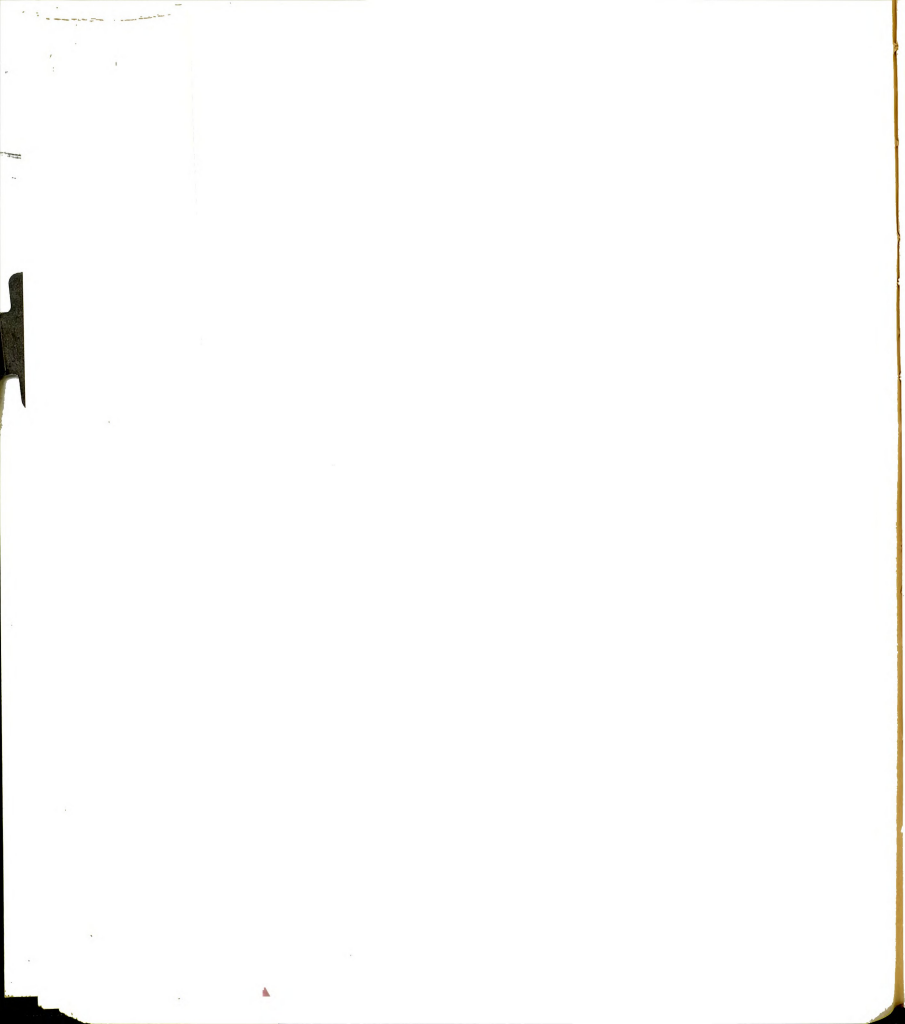
Chapter VII

¹ To Maxwell Perkins, before April 16, 1924, The Letters . . ., p. 163.

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⁵For another treatment of this same quality of life, see "The Rich Boy," (1926).

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¹³*Ibid.*, p. 2.

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¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 1.

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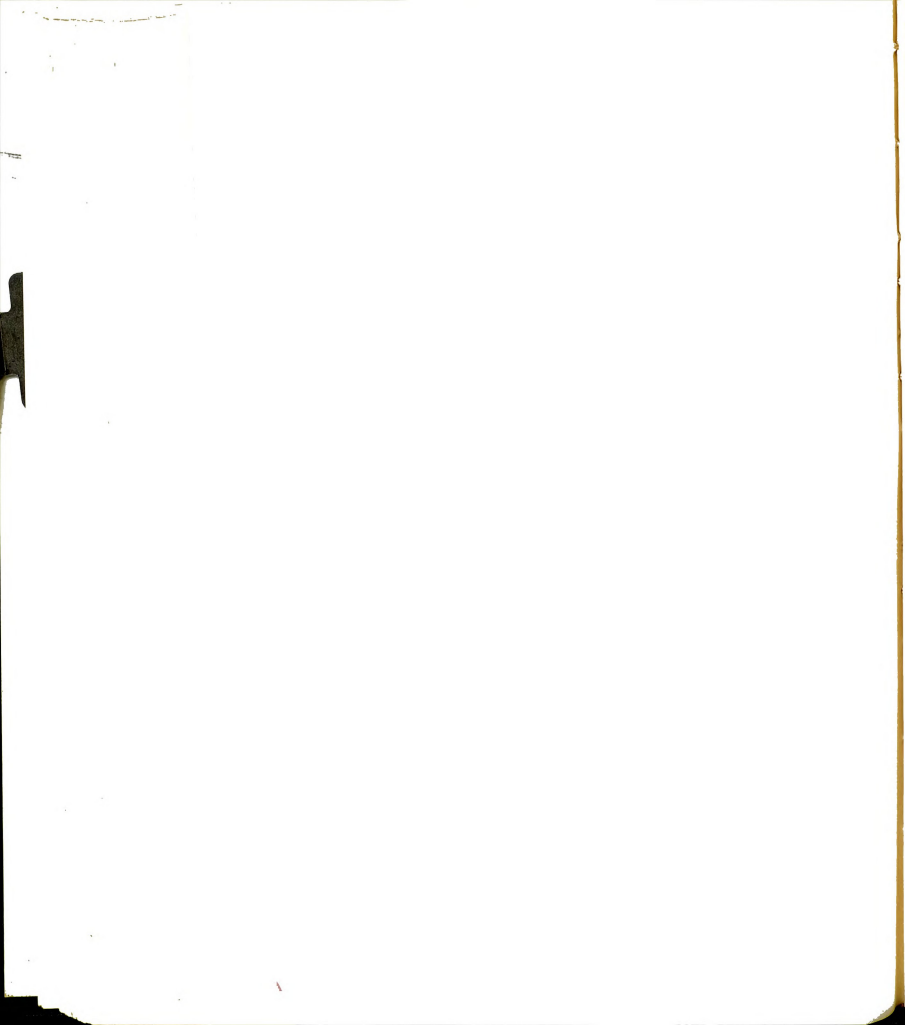
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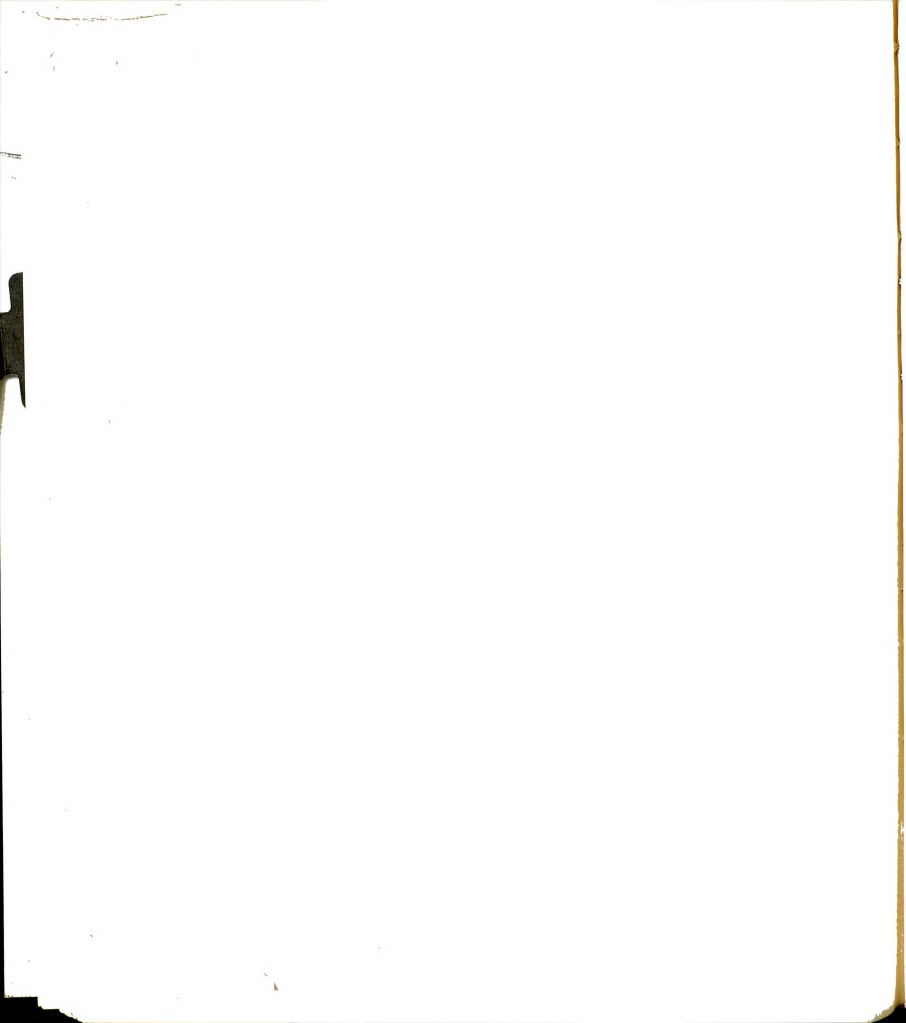


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- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 146.
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³ *ibid.*, p. 57.

⁴ Fitzgerald, "The Love Boat," The Saturday Evening Post, CC 15, 8 Oct. 1927, p. 134.

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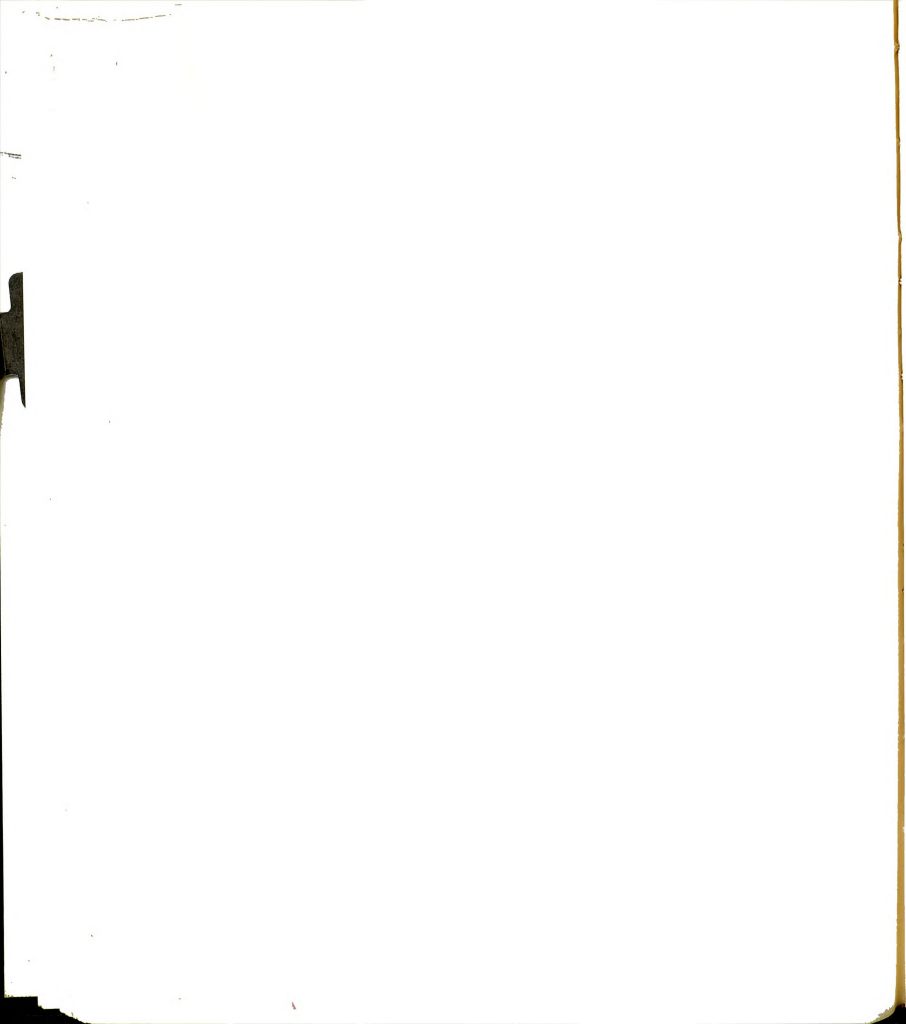
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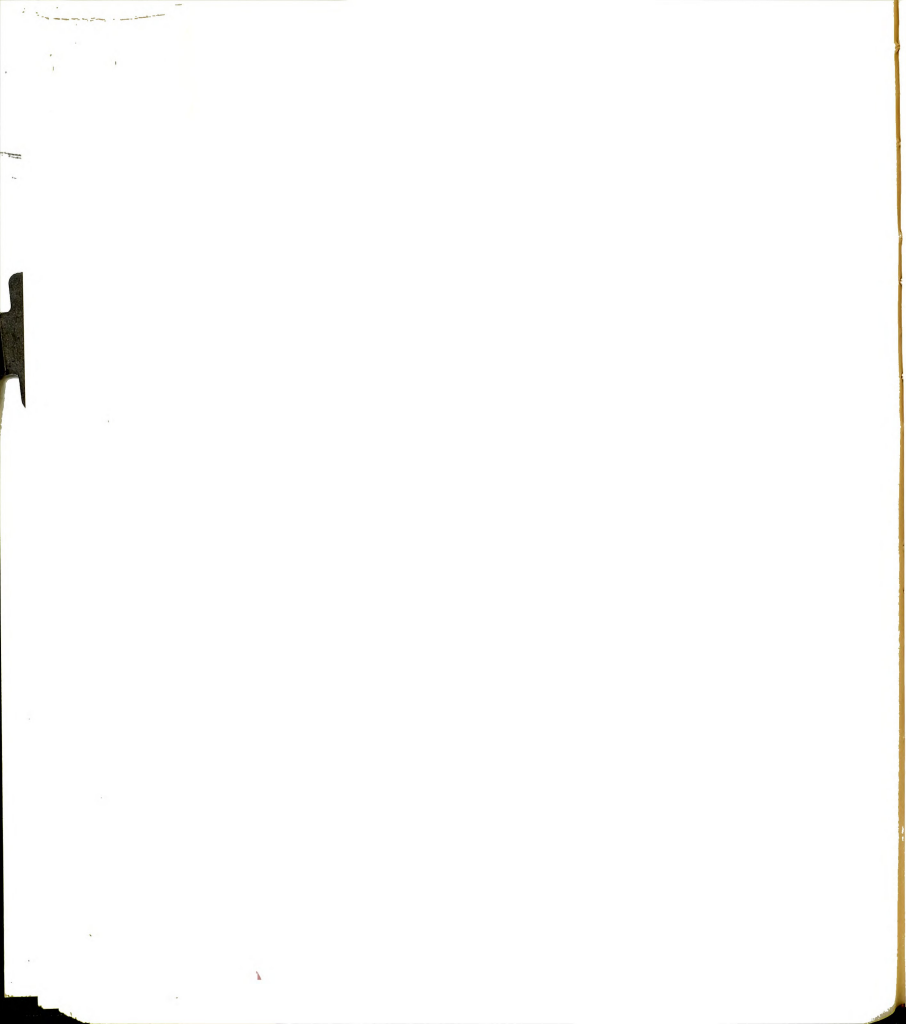
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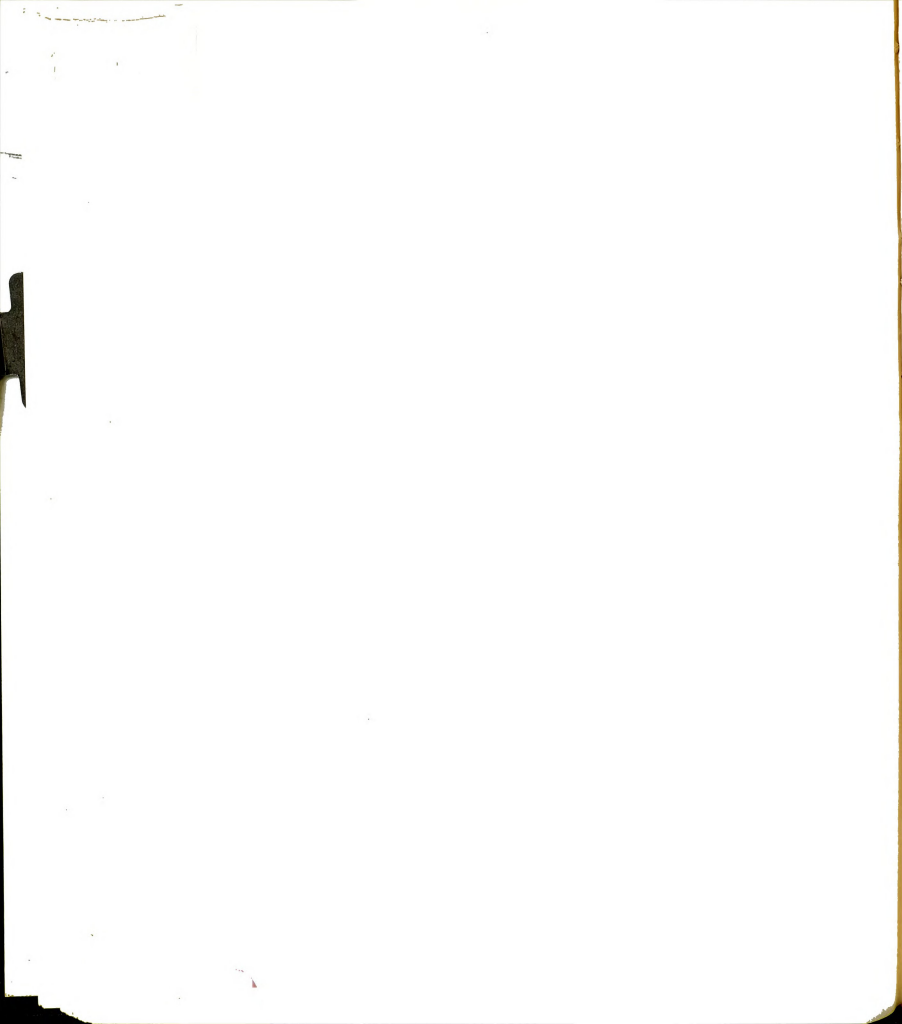
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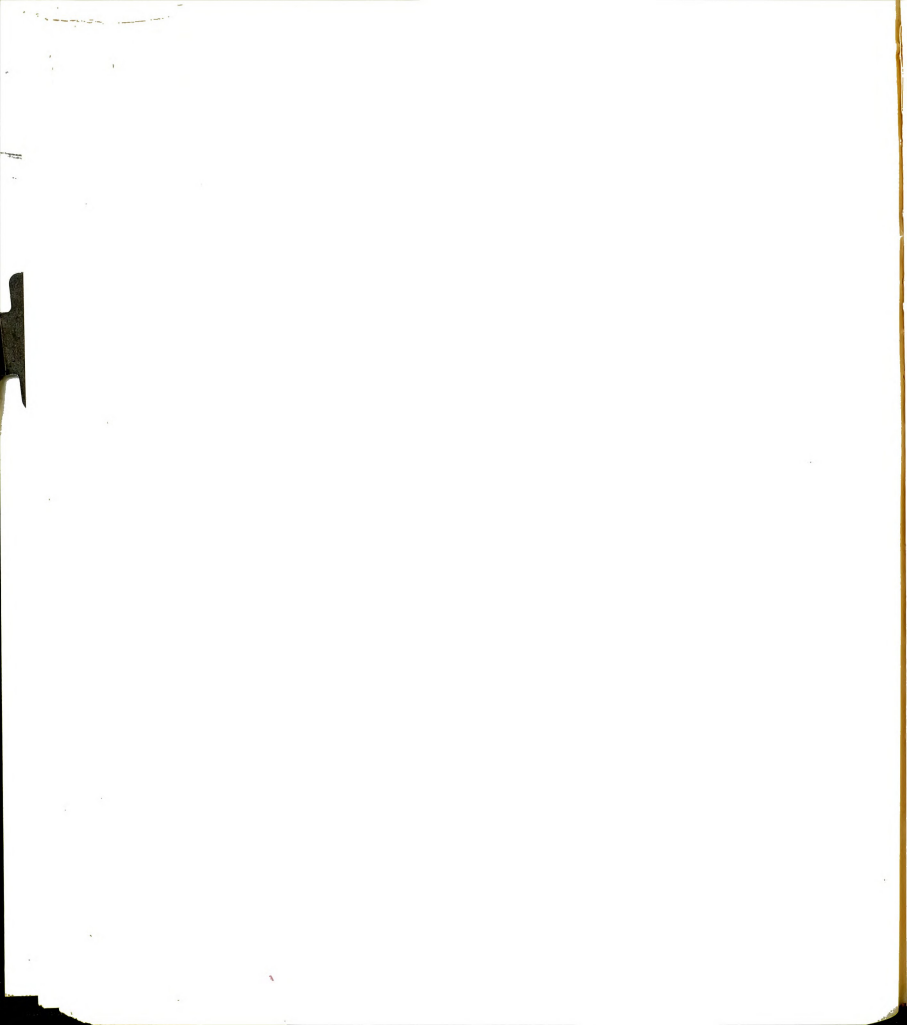
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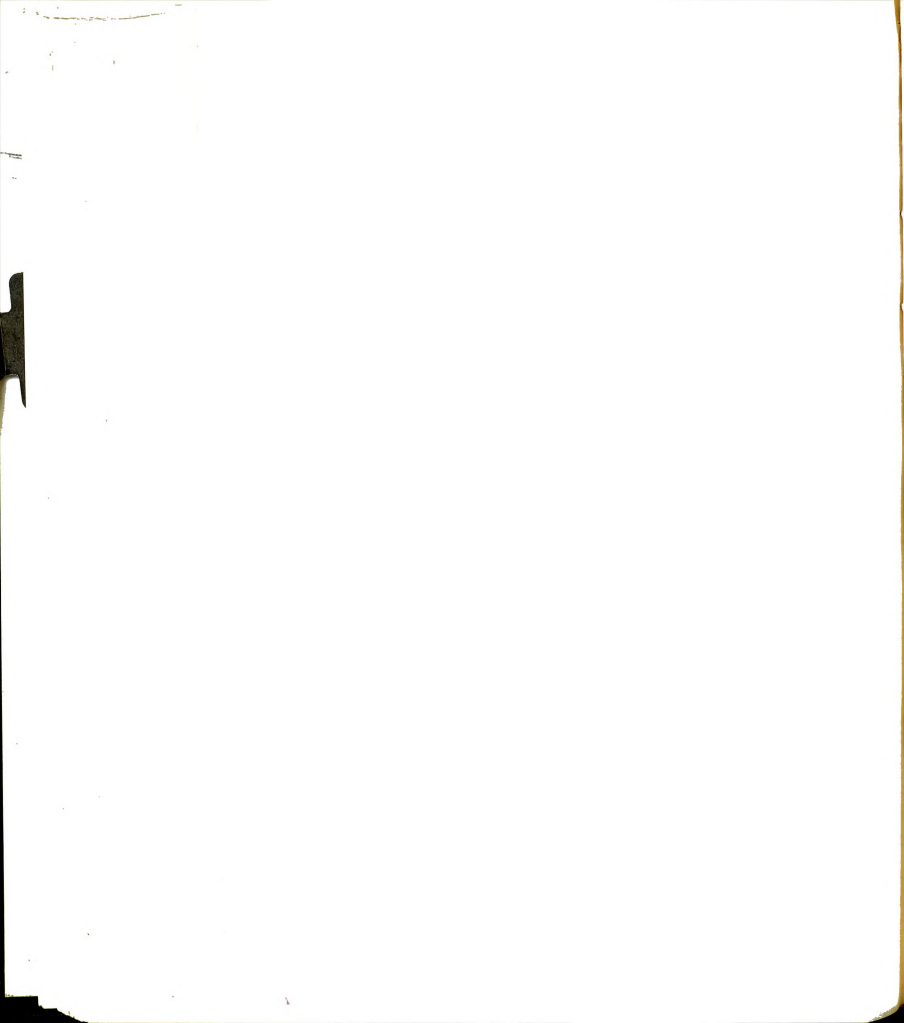
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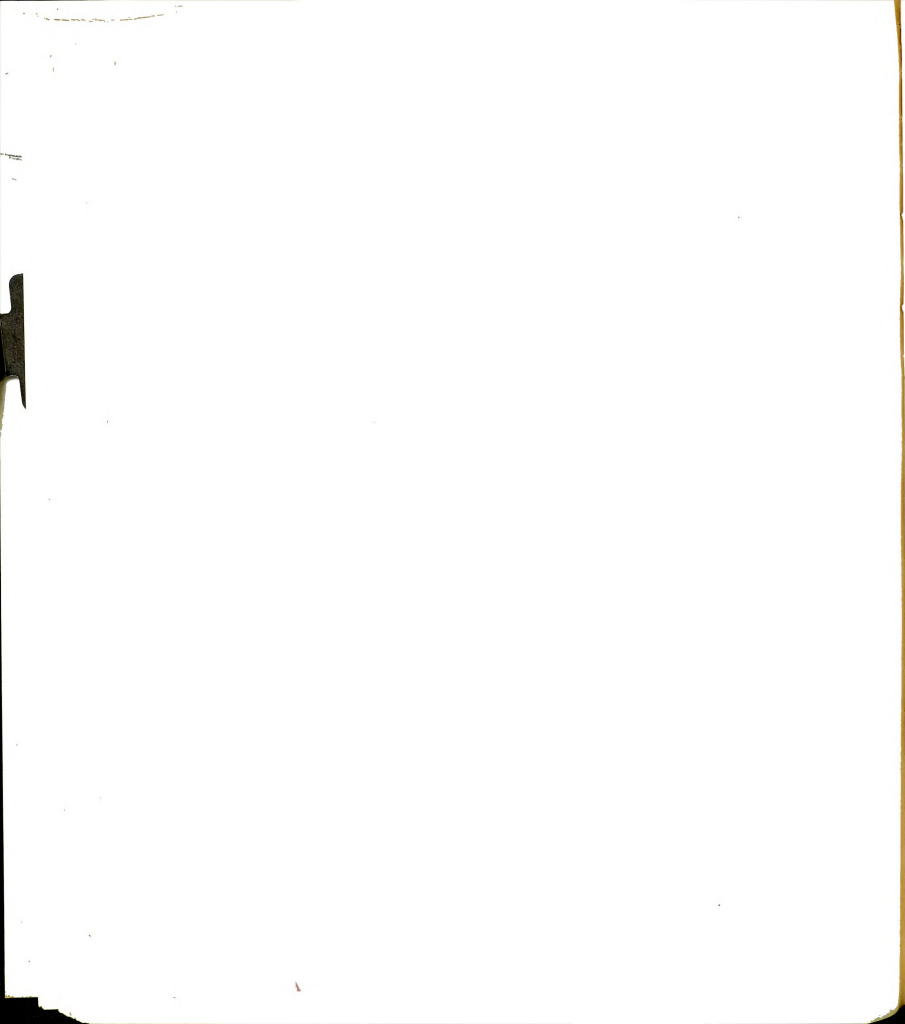
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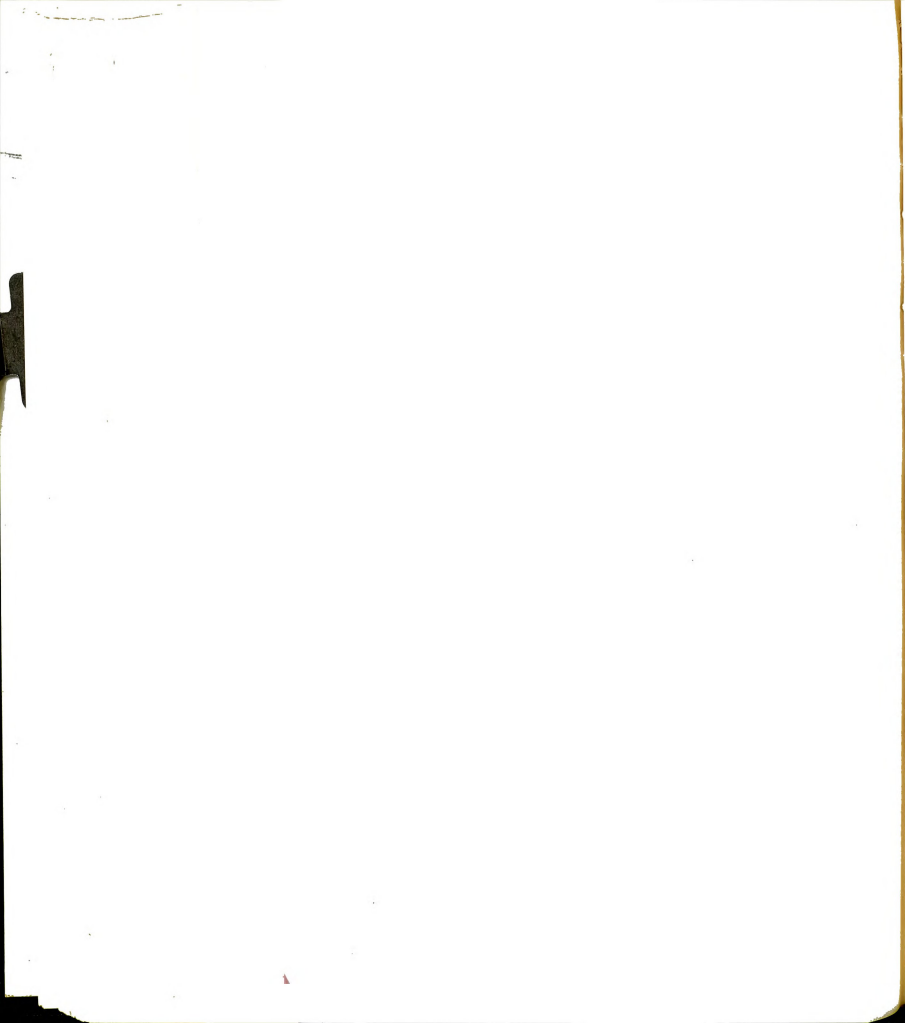
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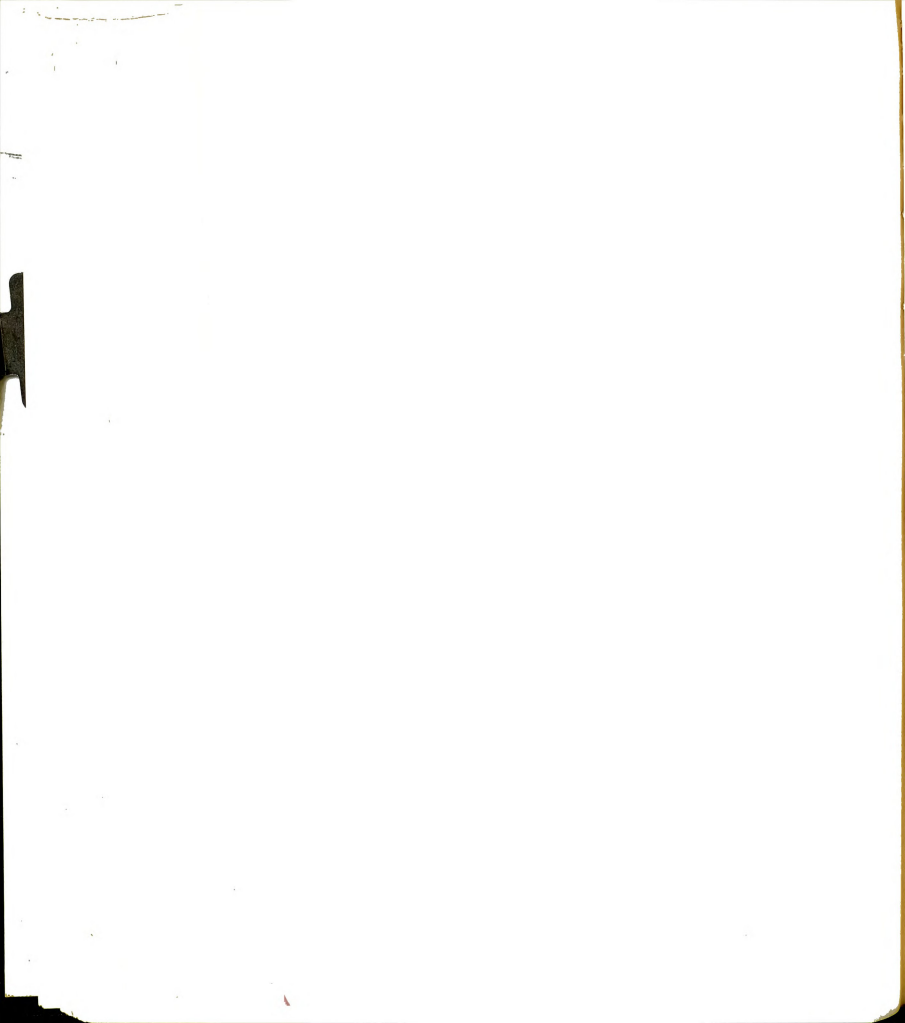
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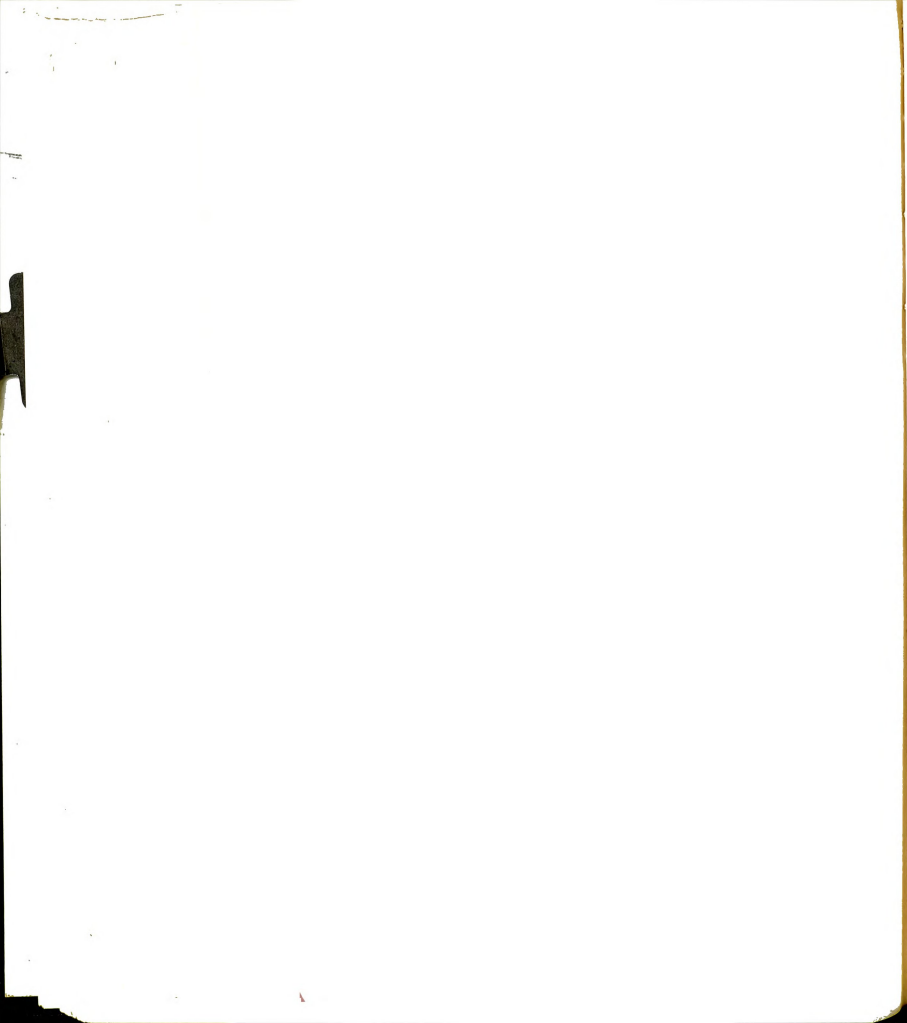
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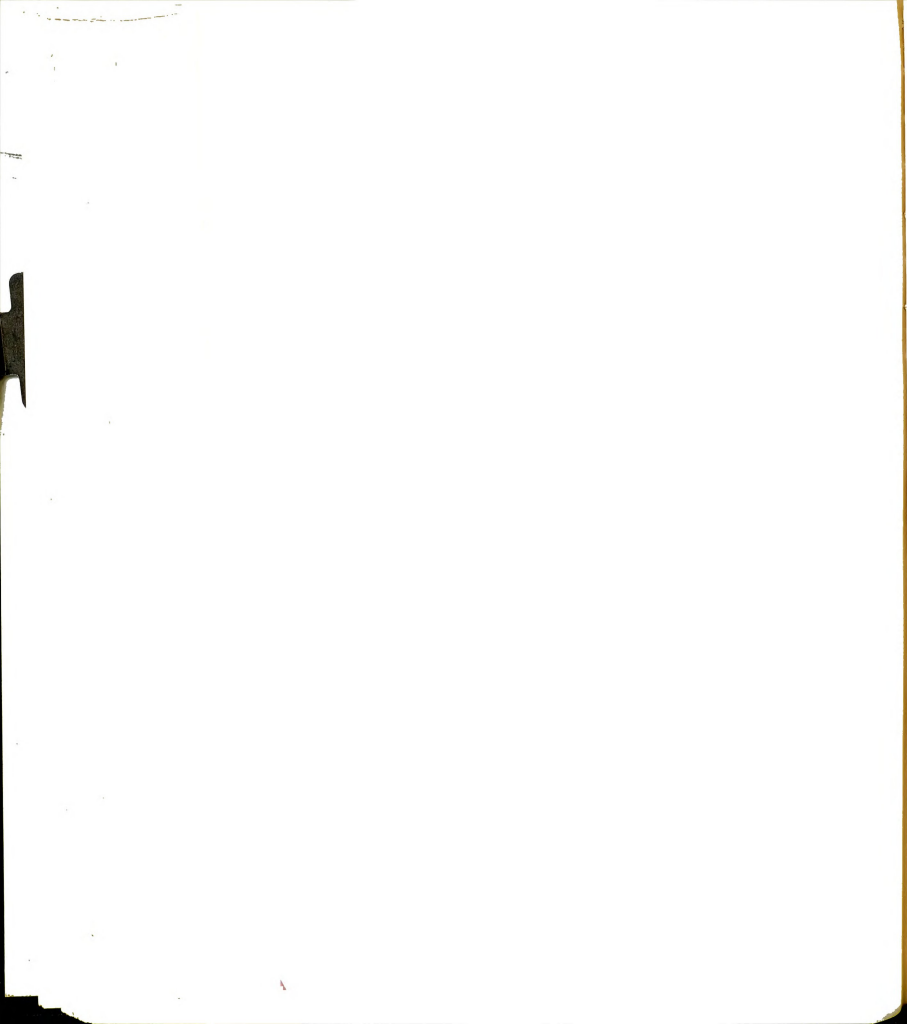
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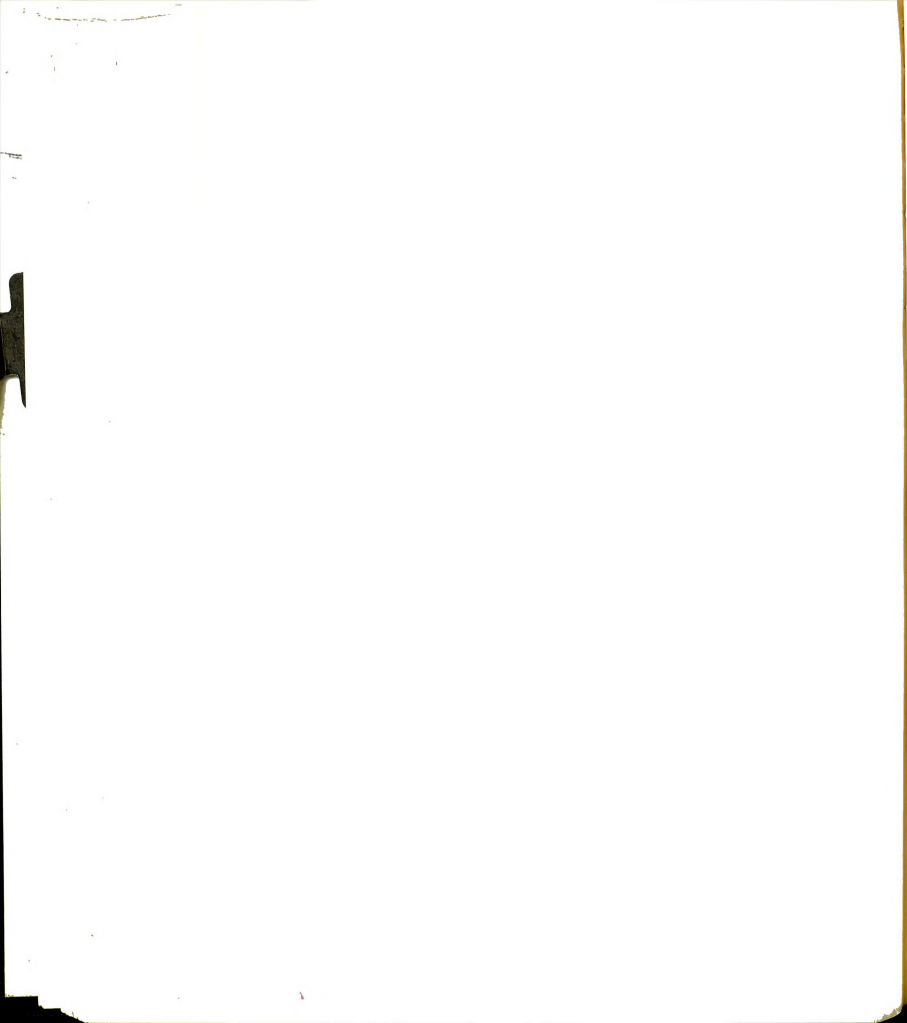
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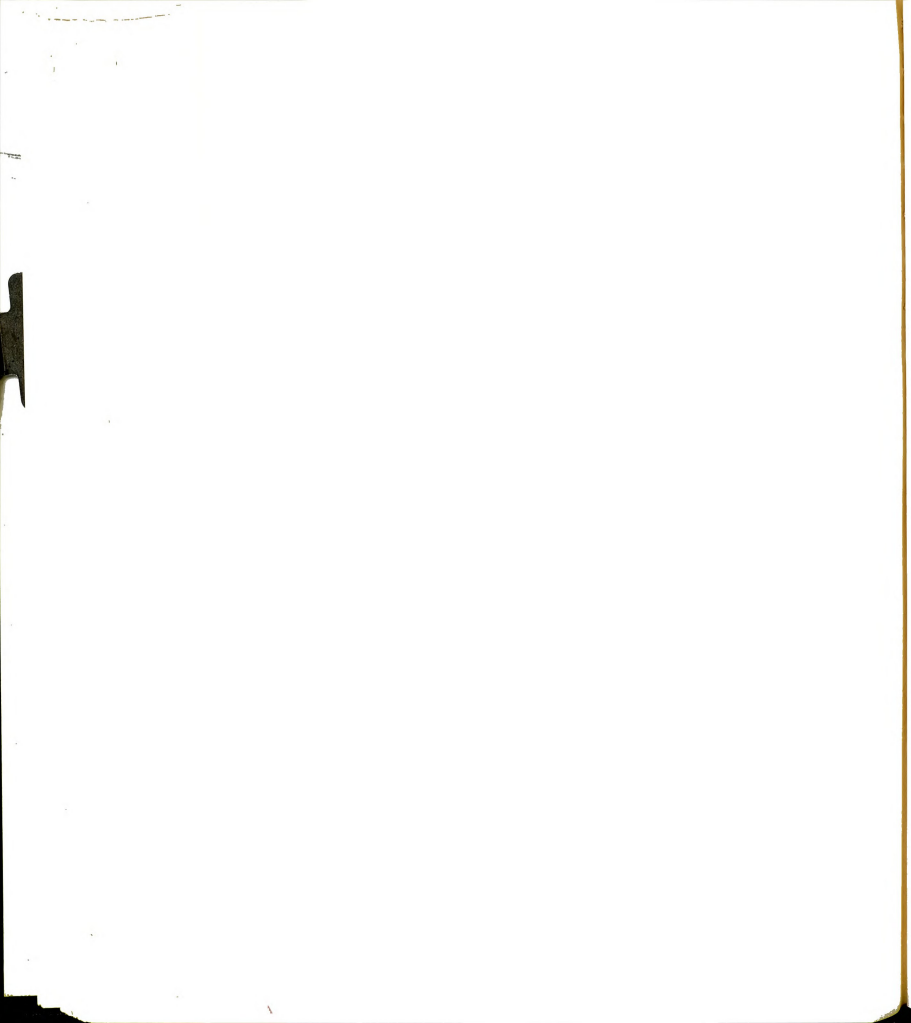


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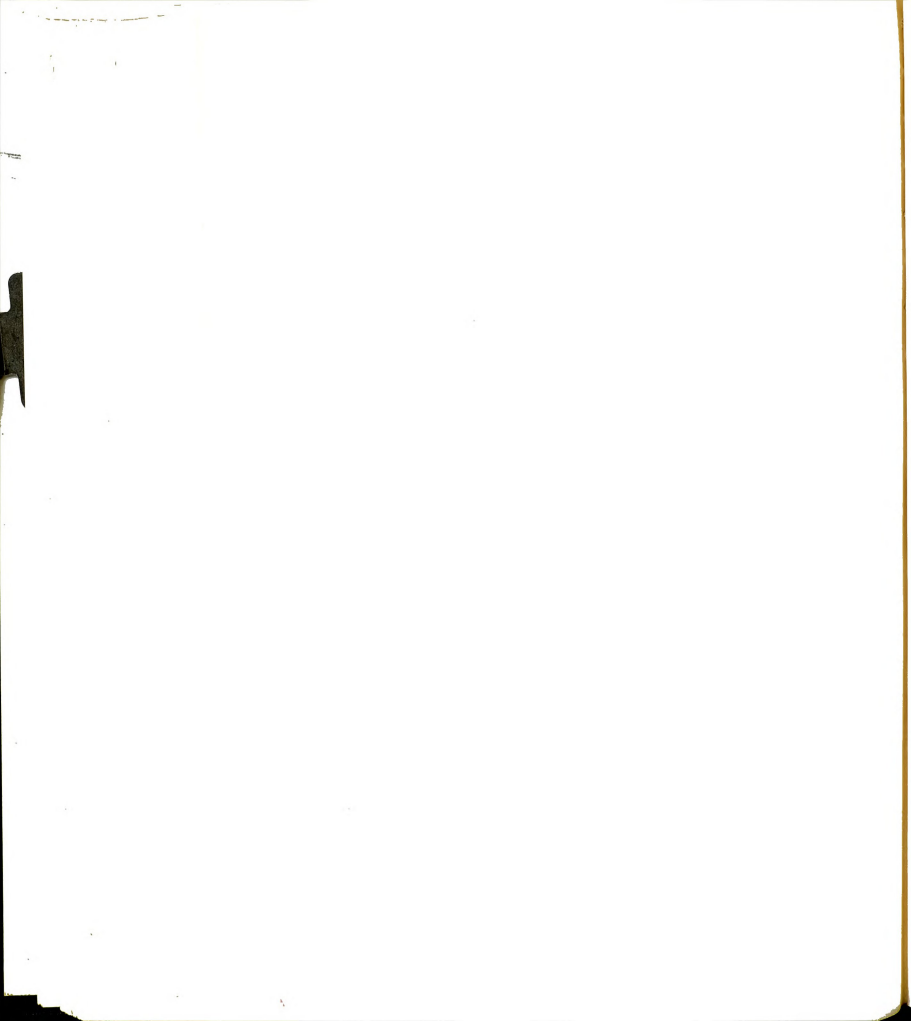
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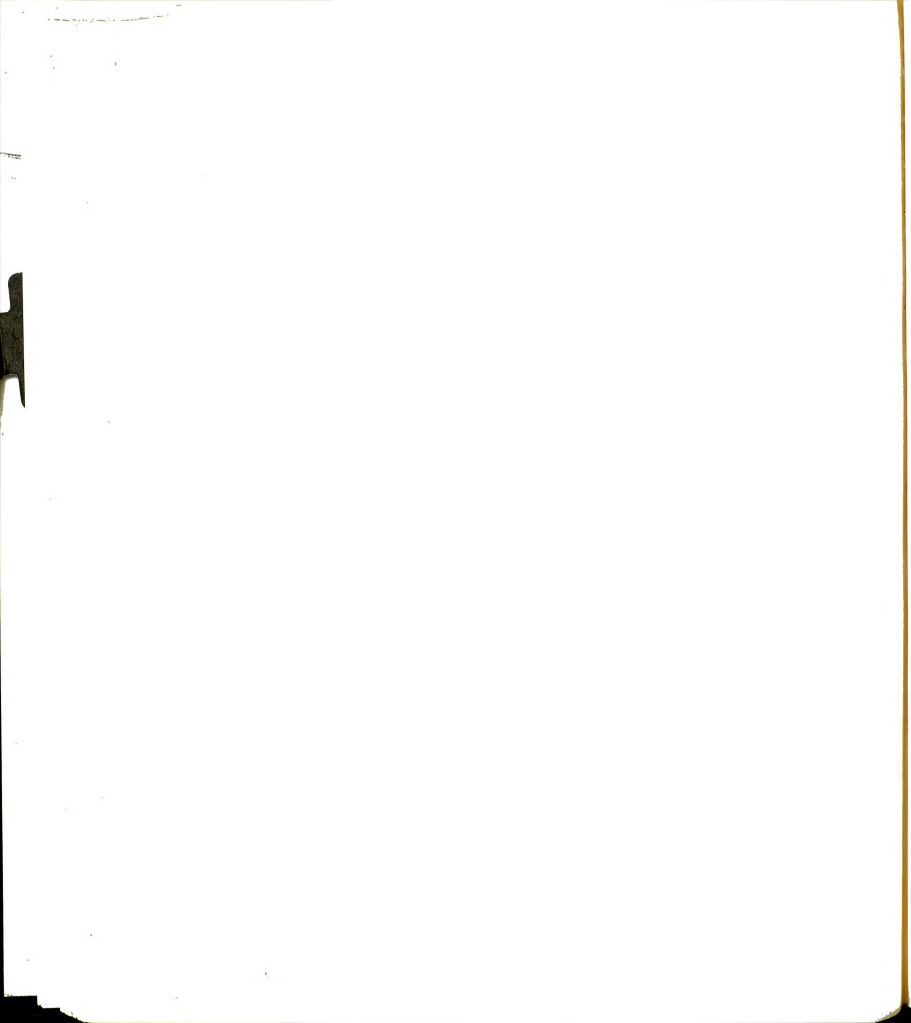
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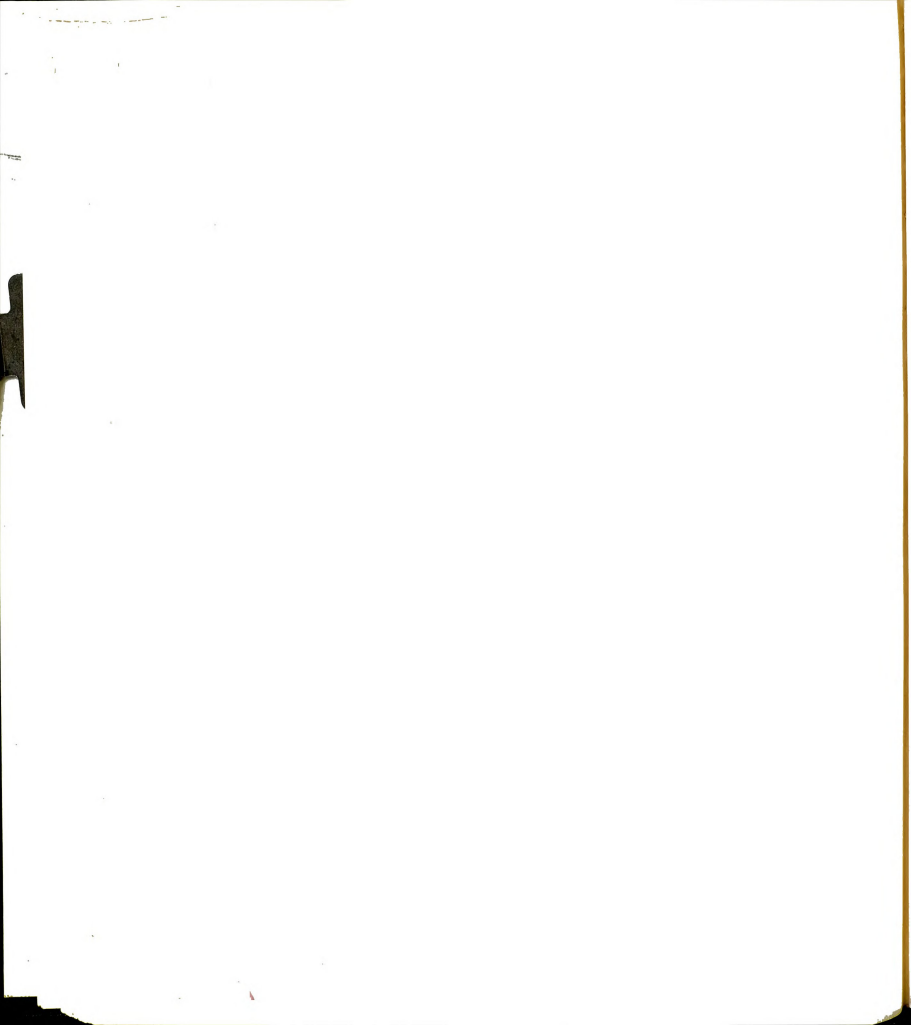
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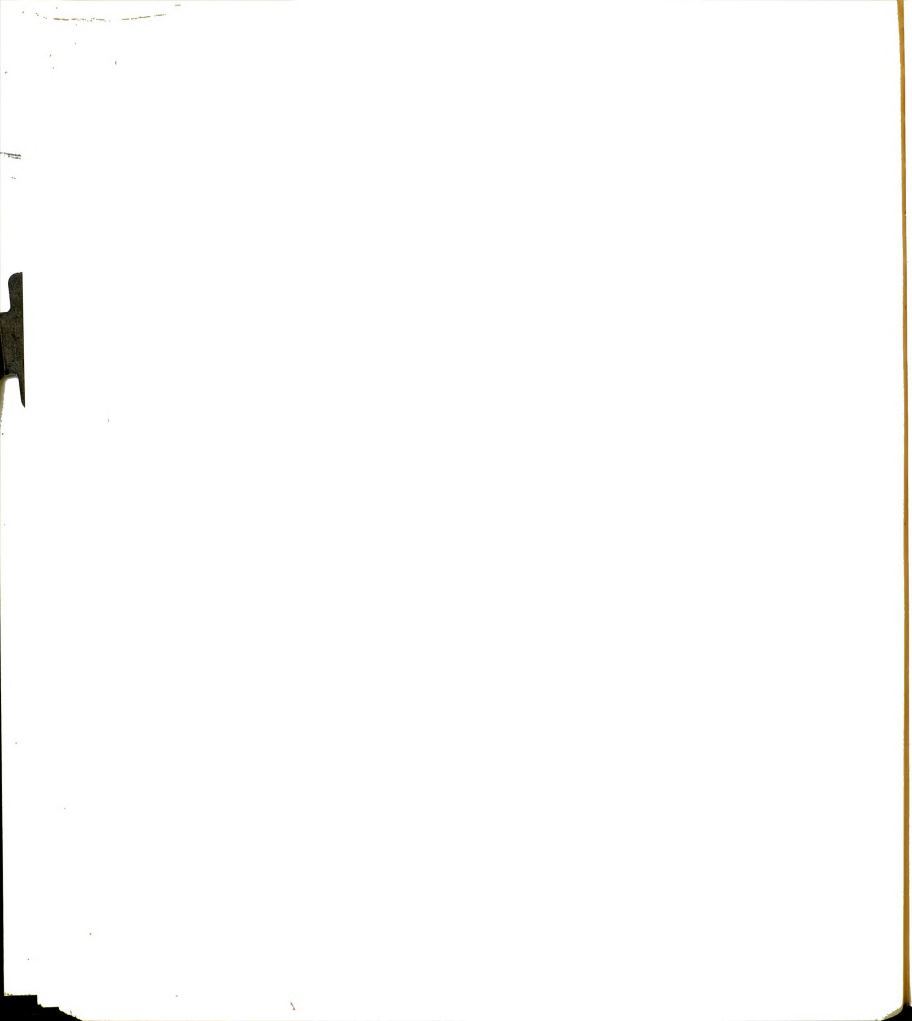
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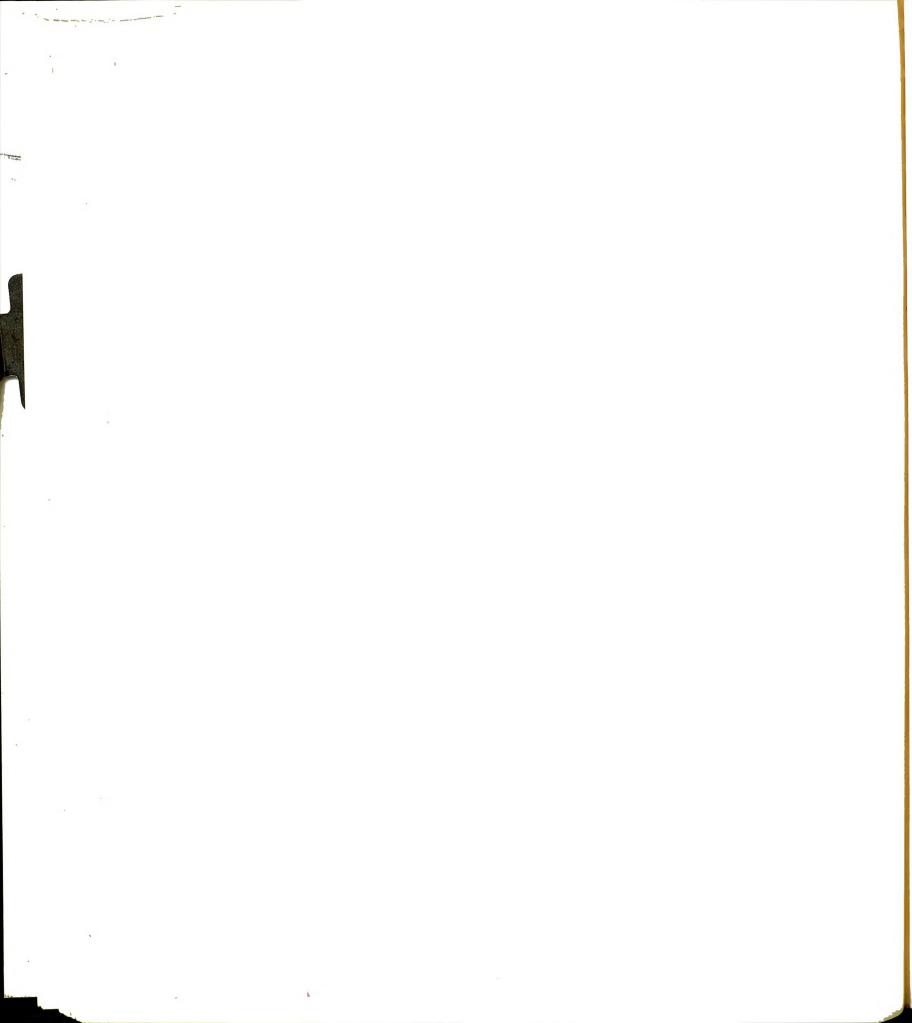
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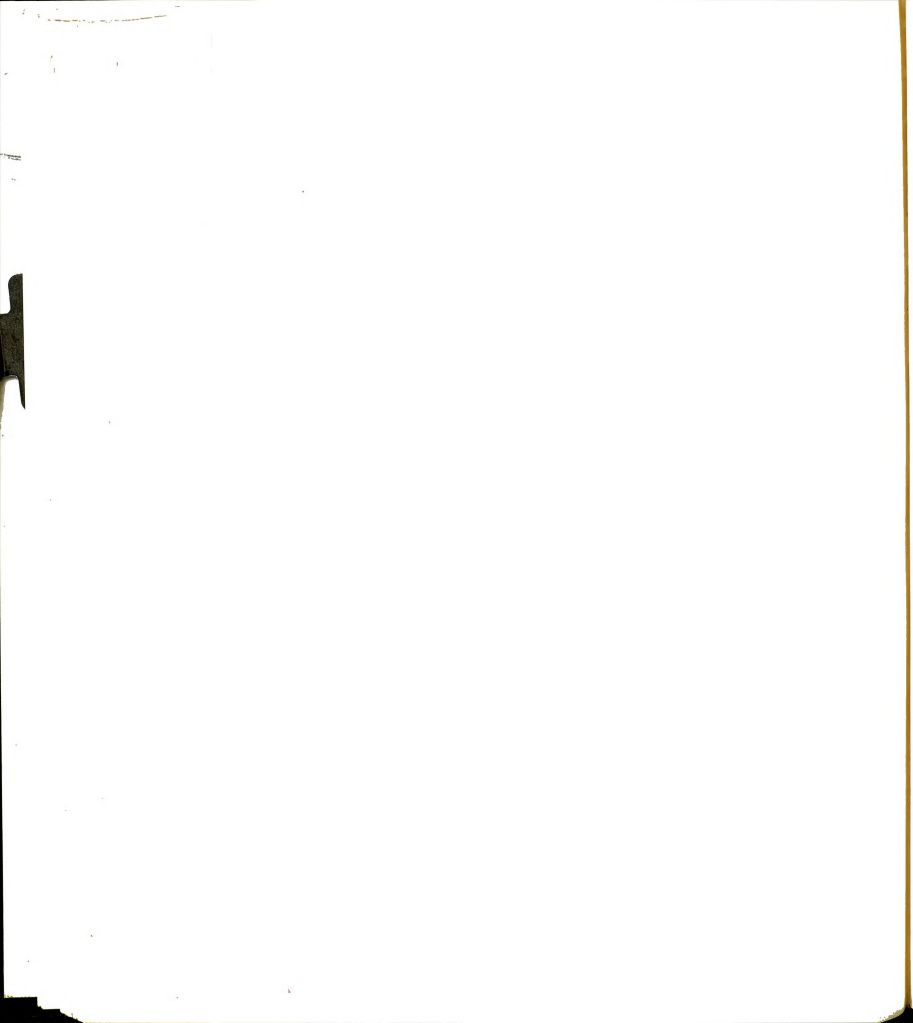
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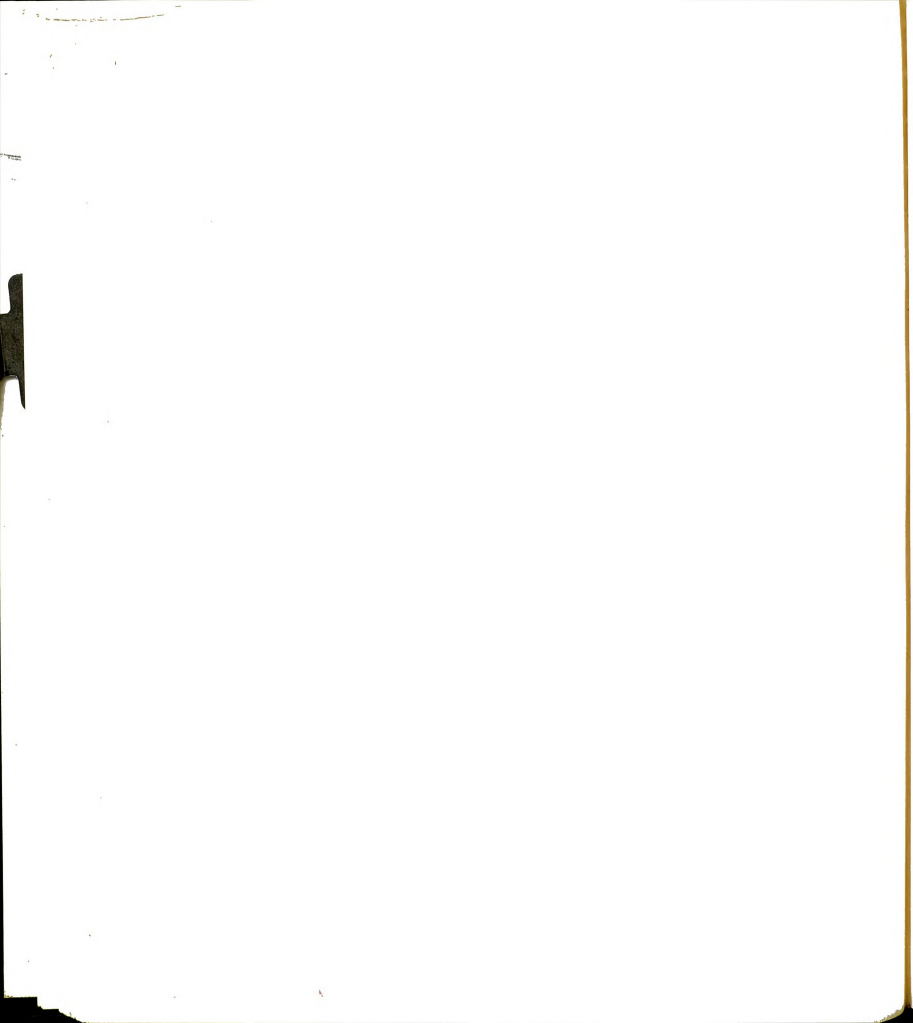
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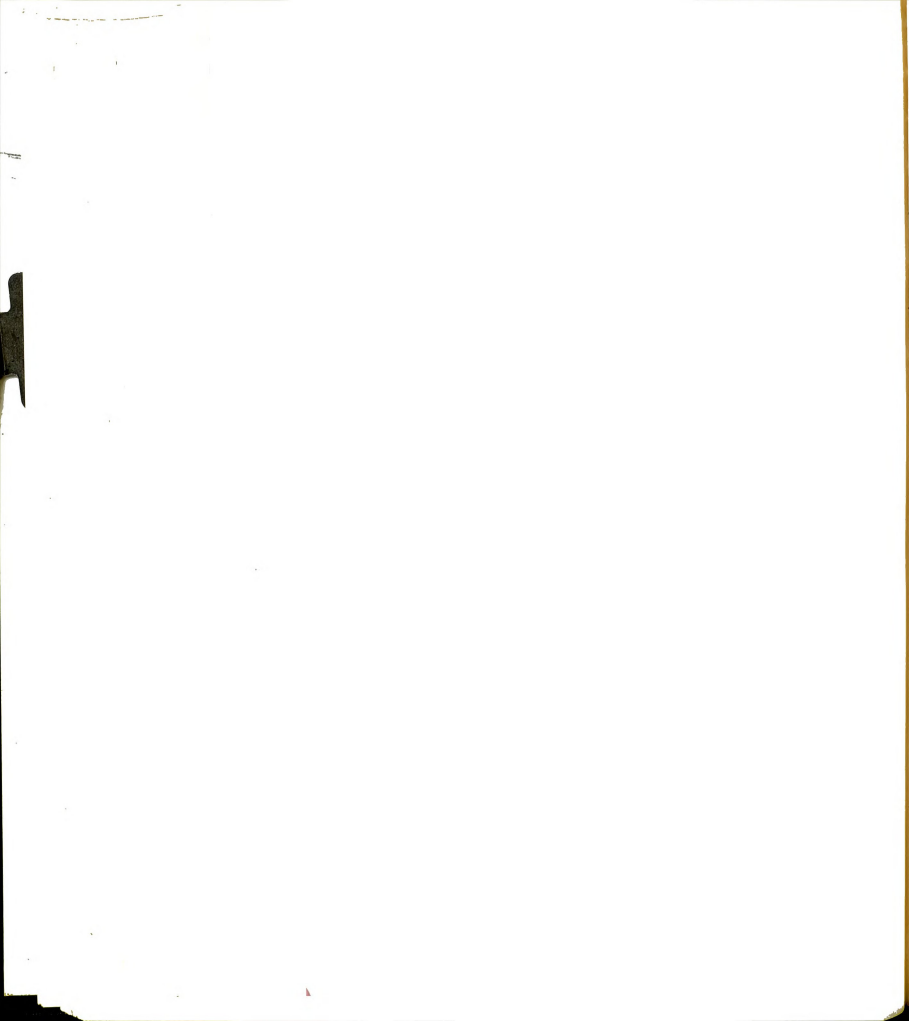
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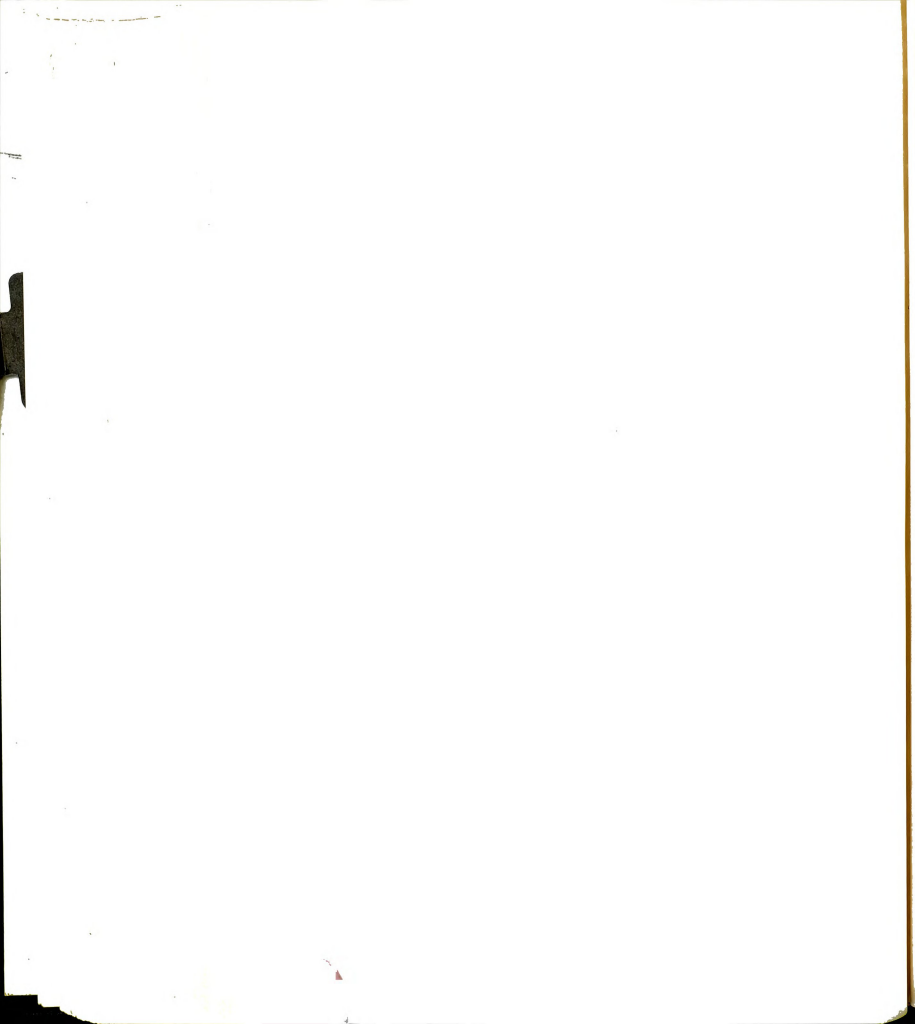
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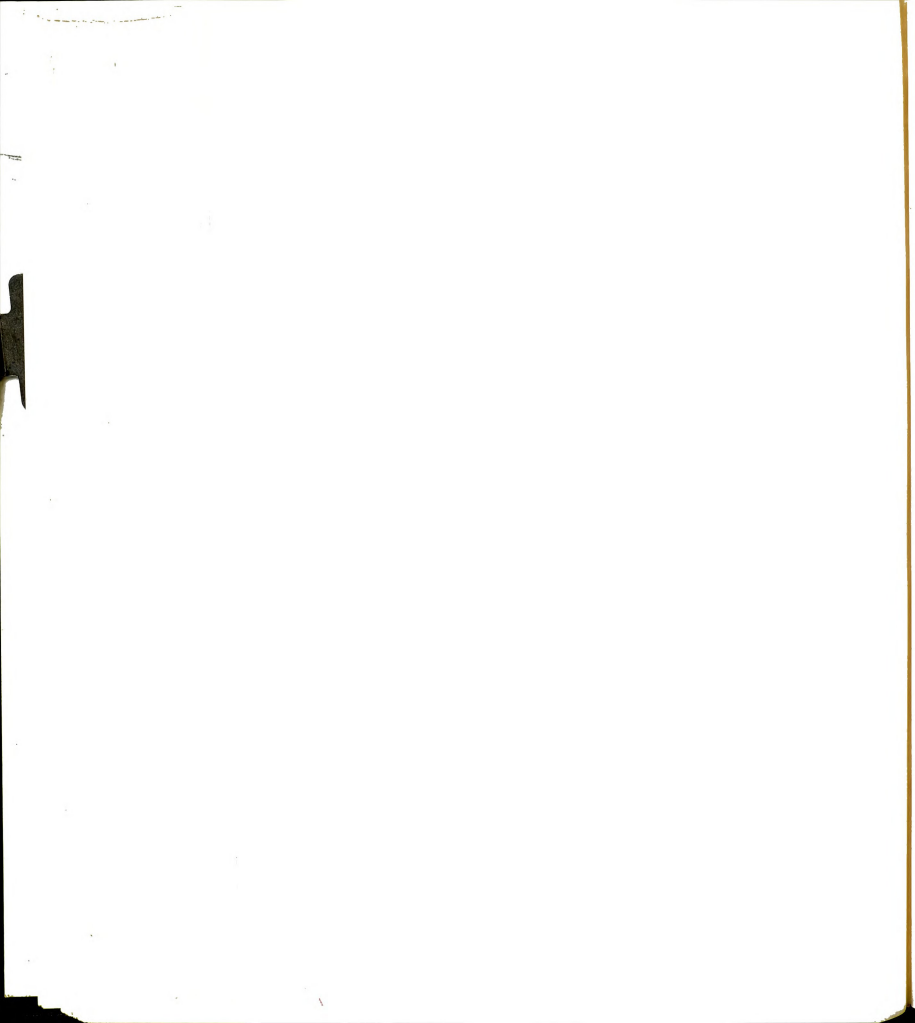
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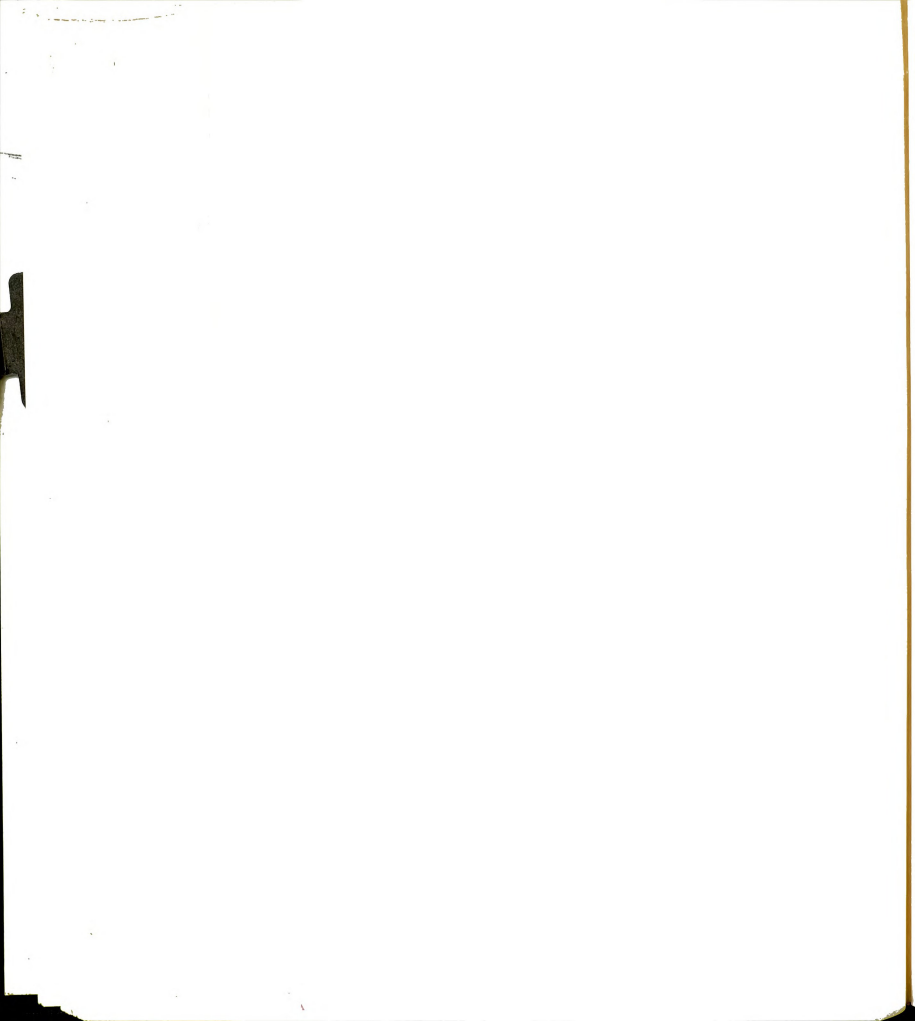


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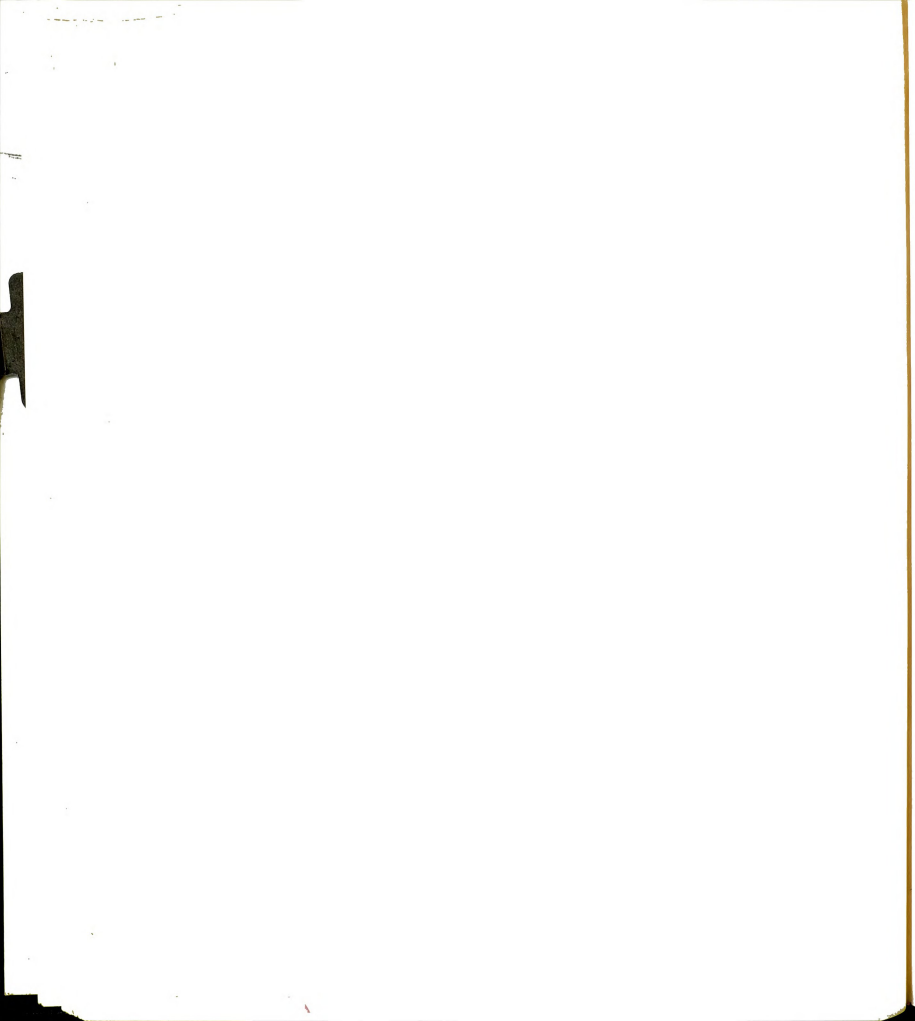
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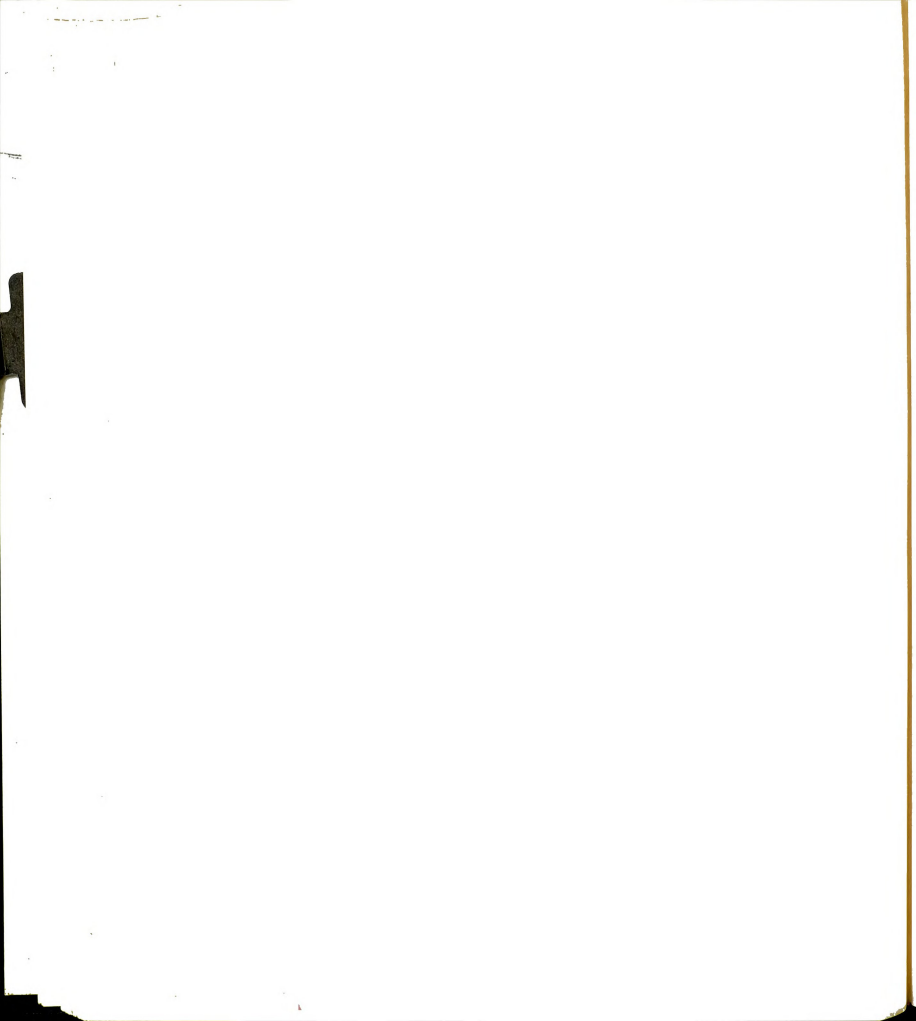
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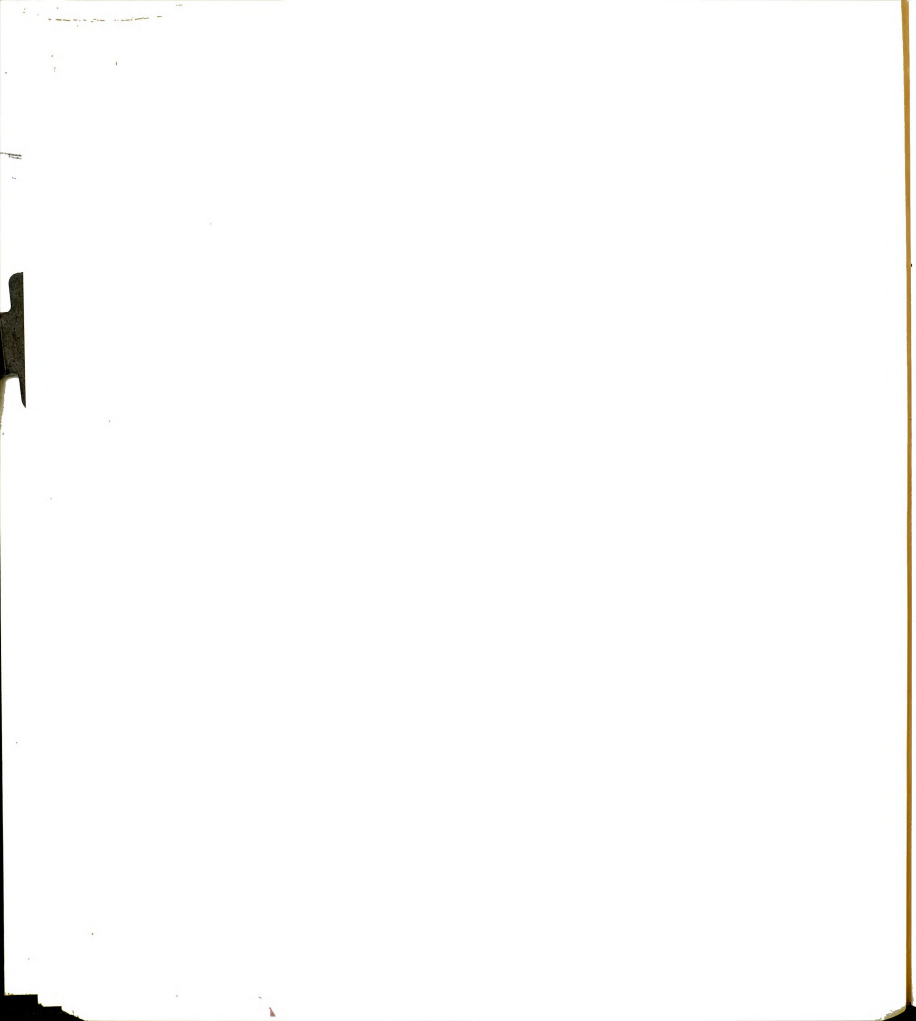
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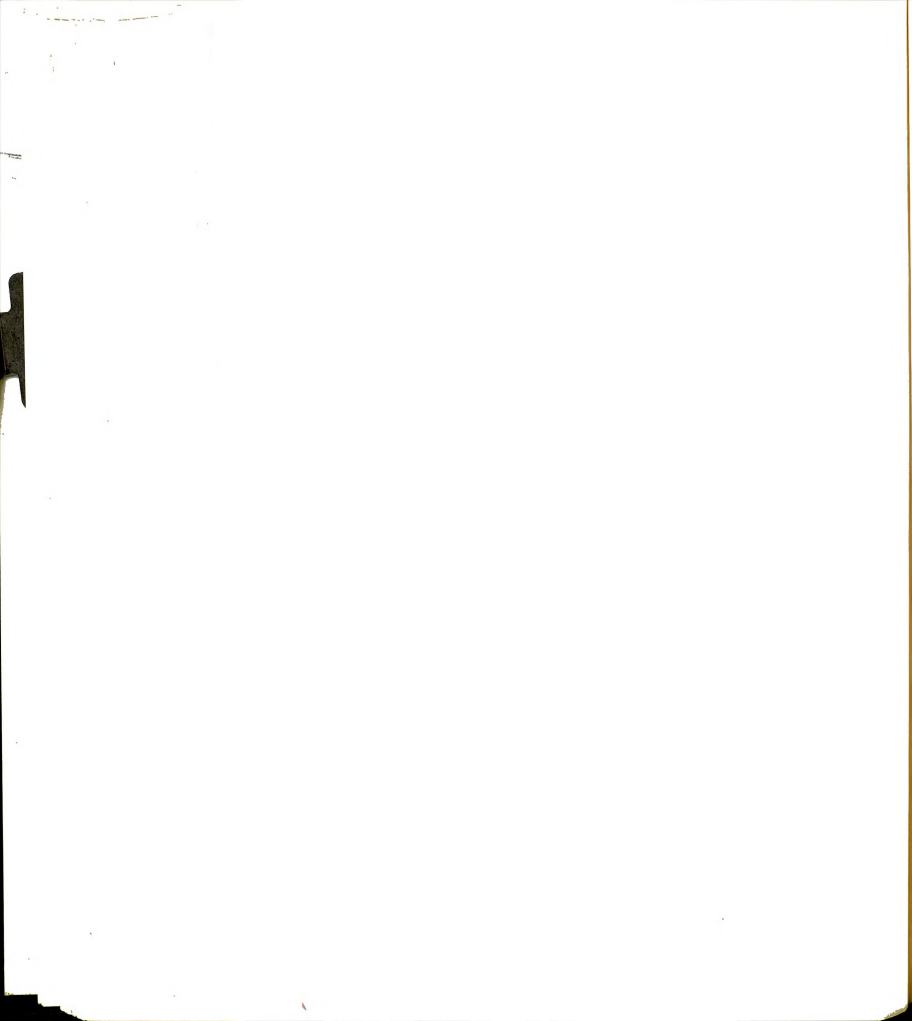
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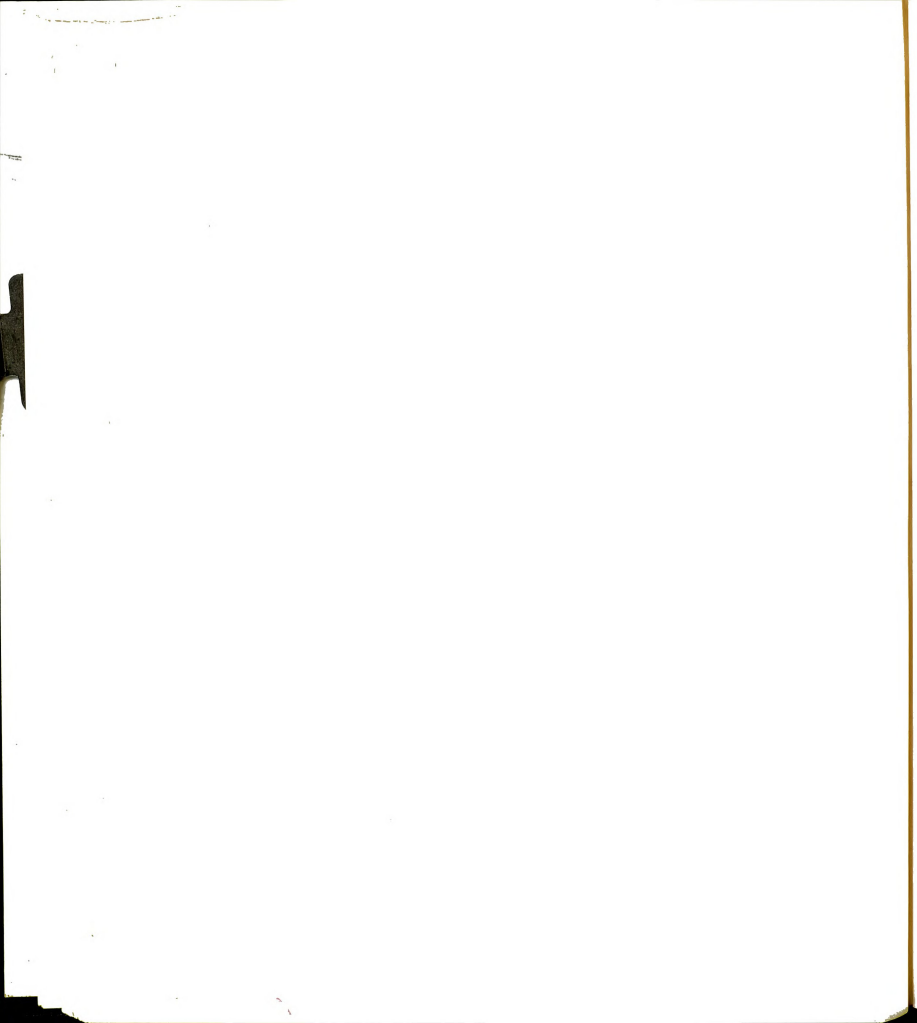
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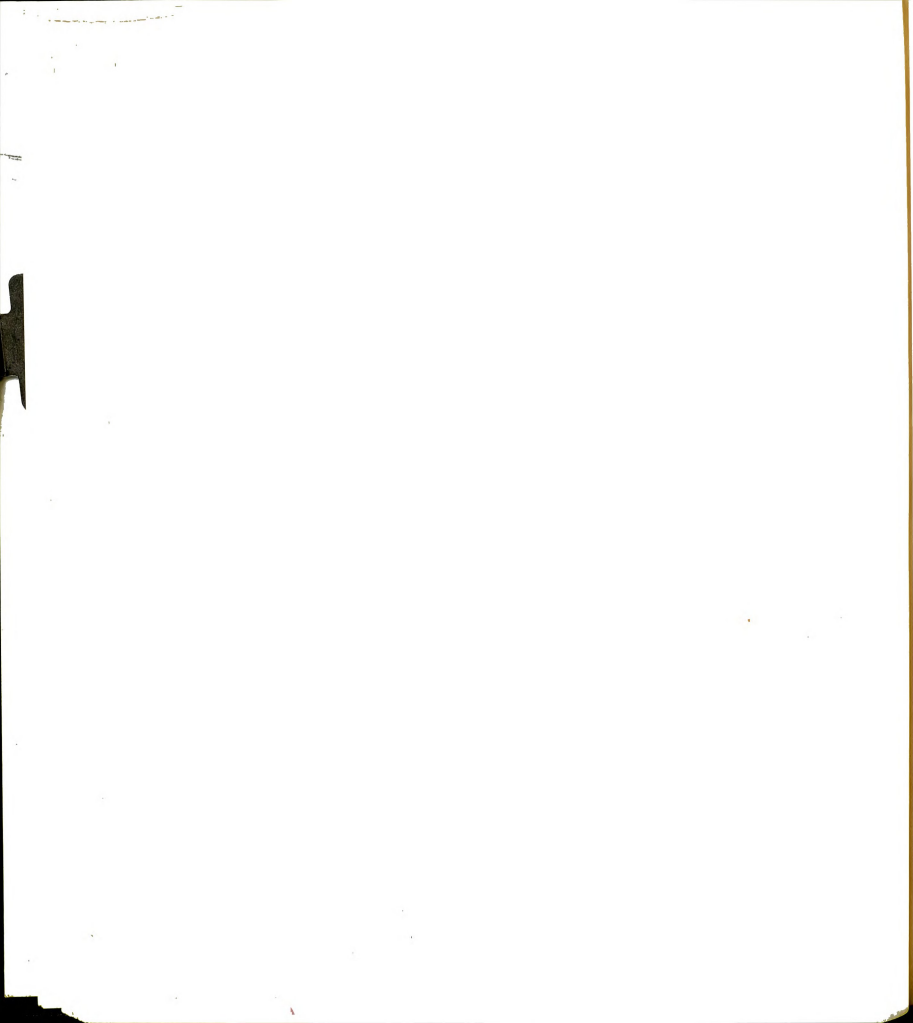
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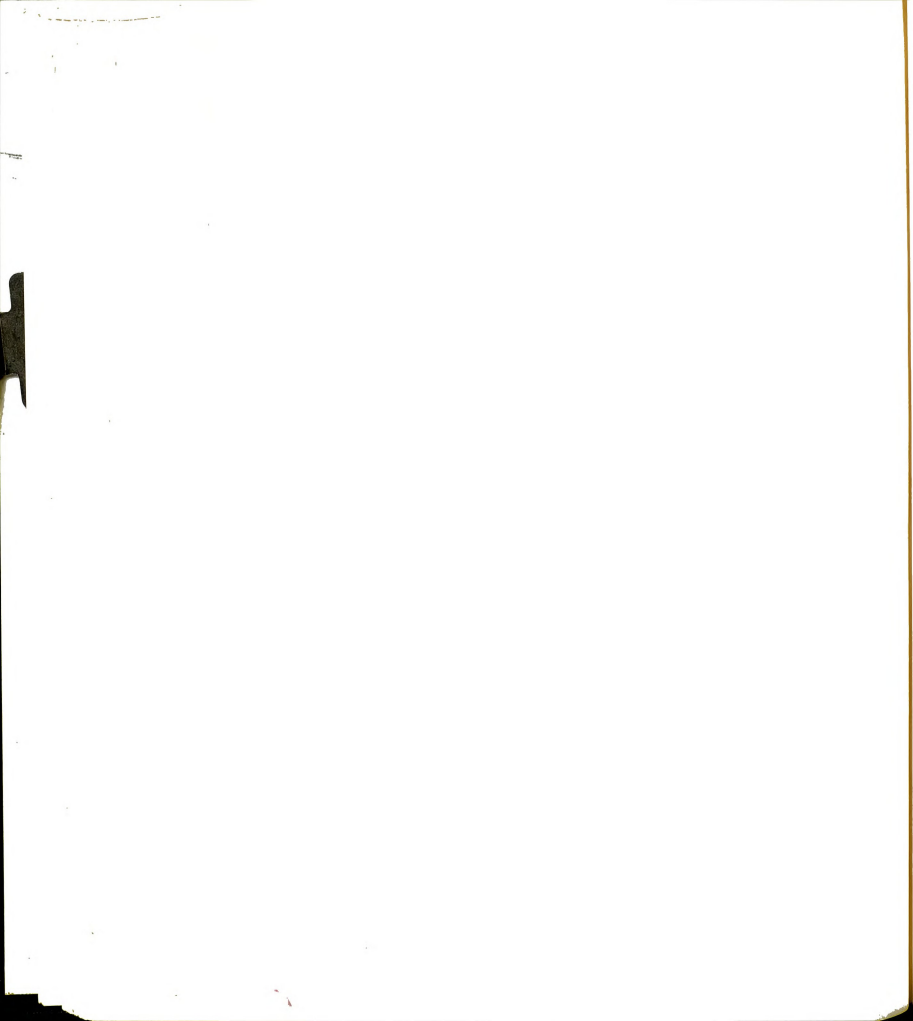
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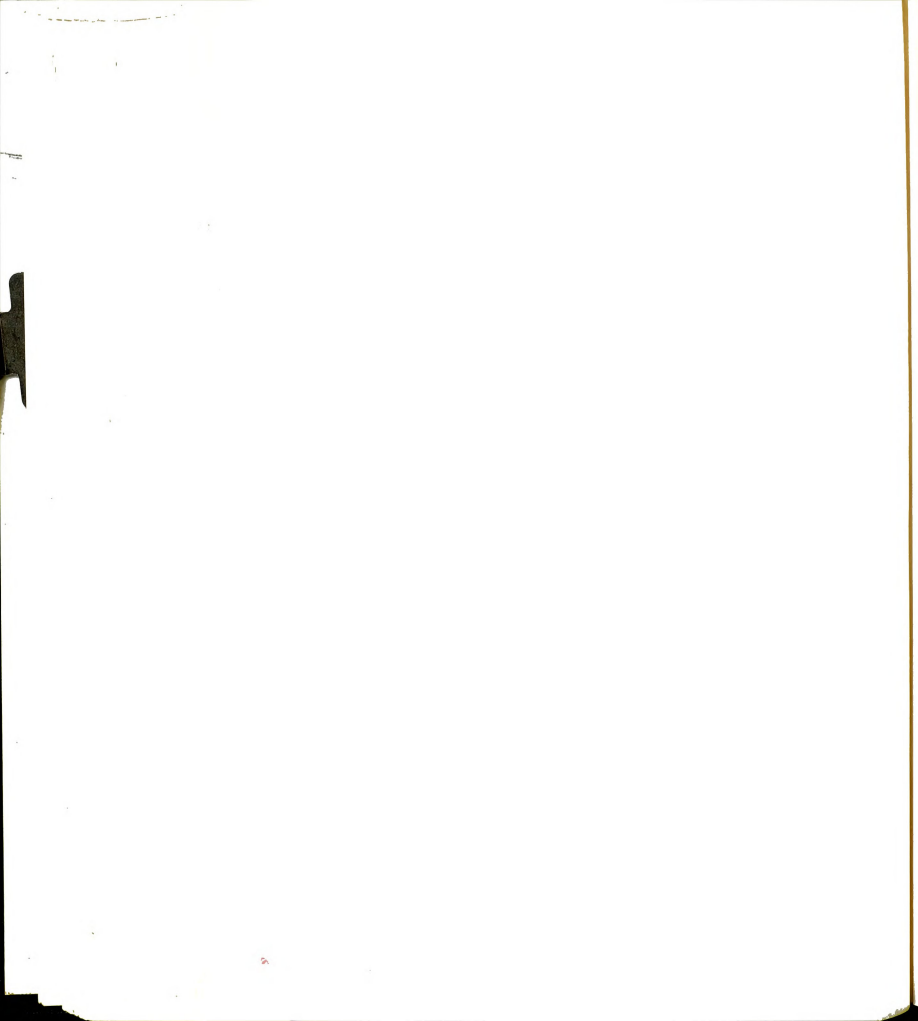
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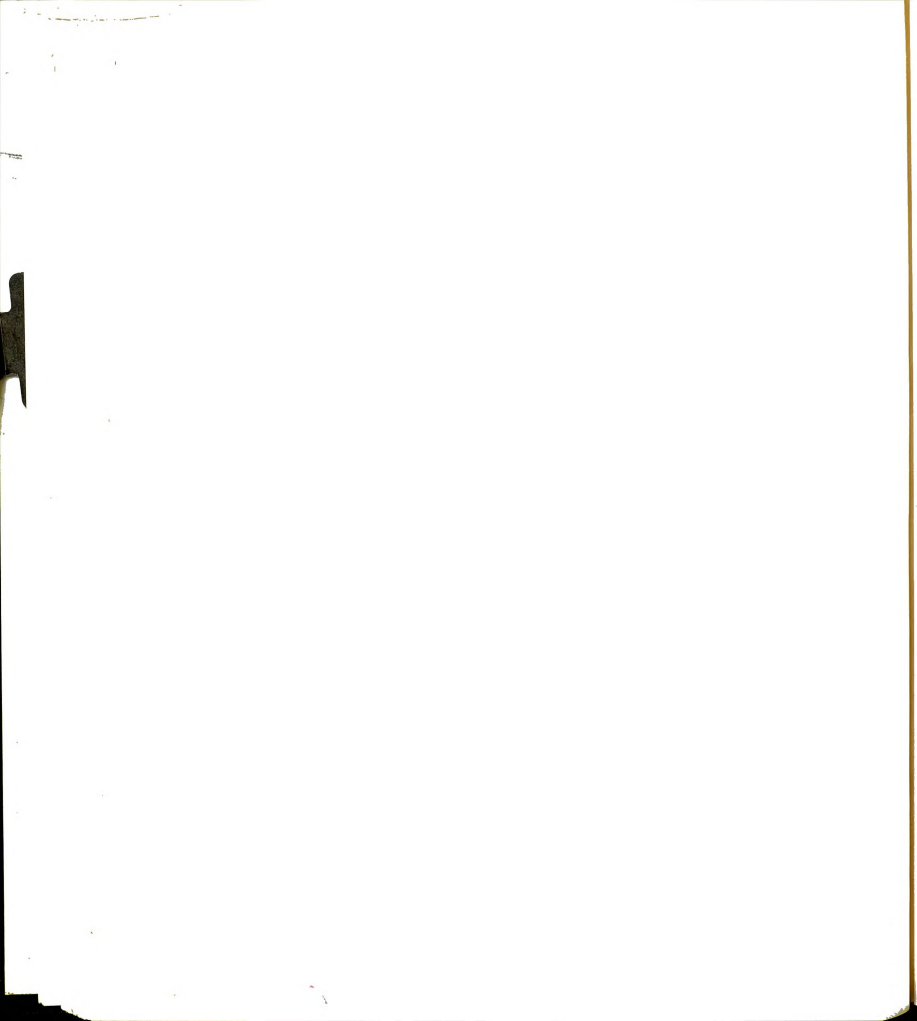
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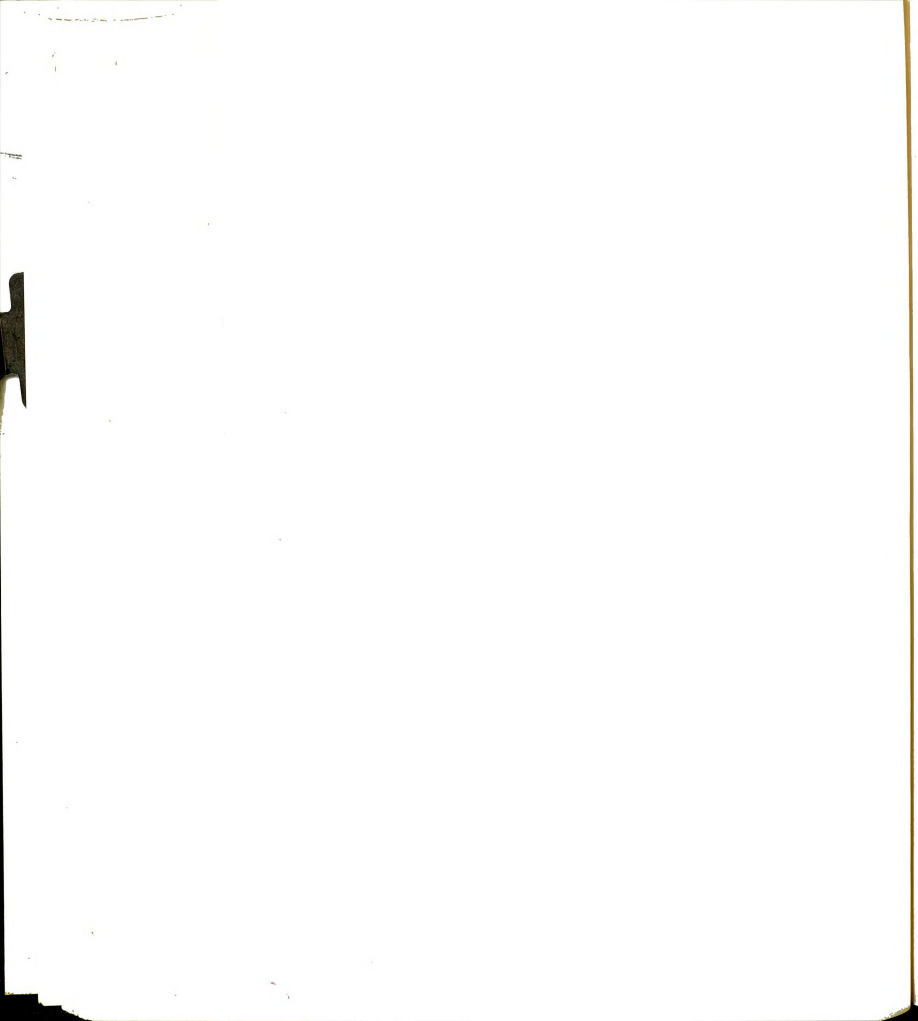
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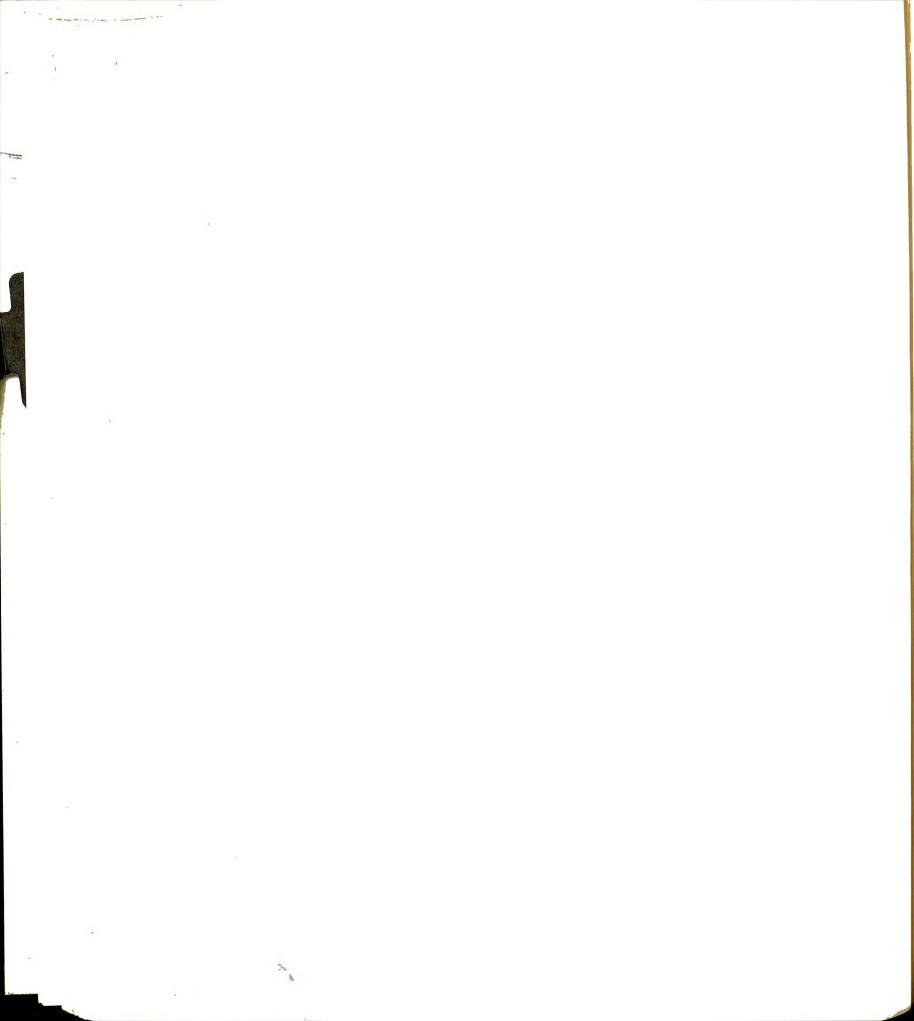
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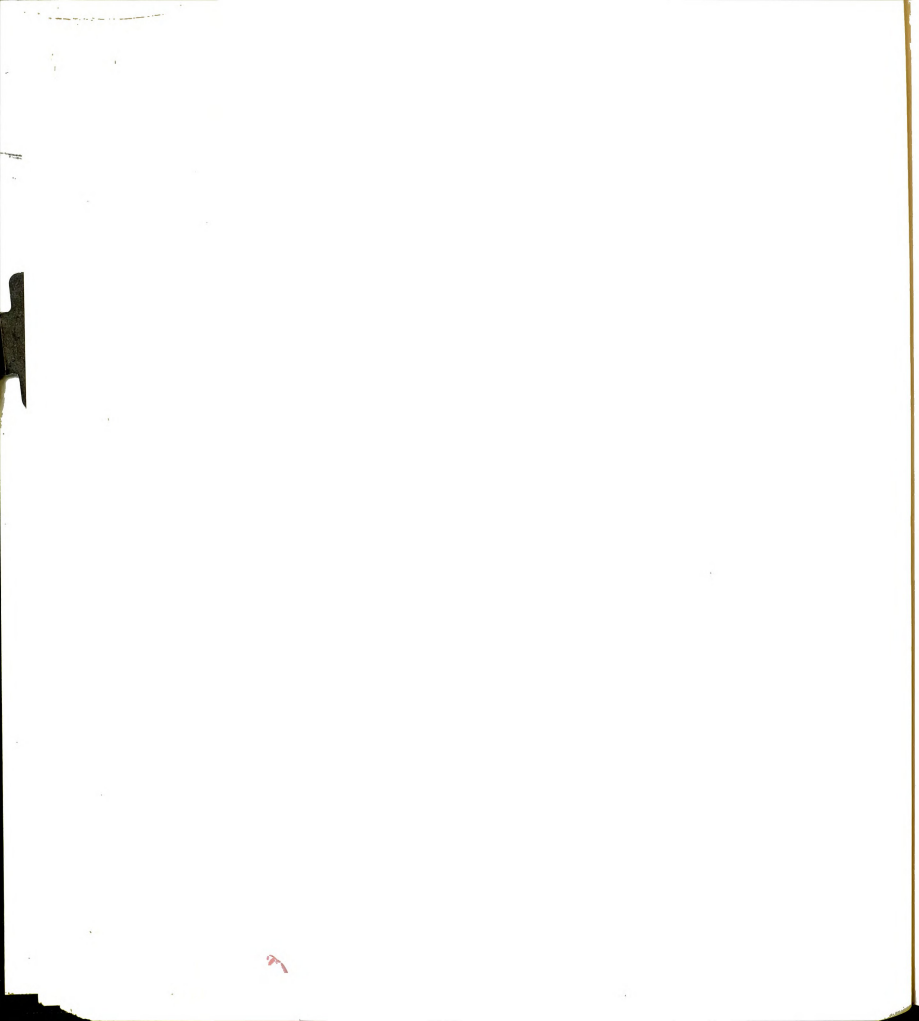
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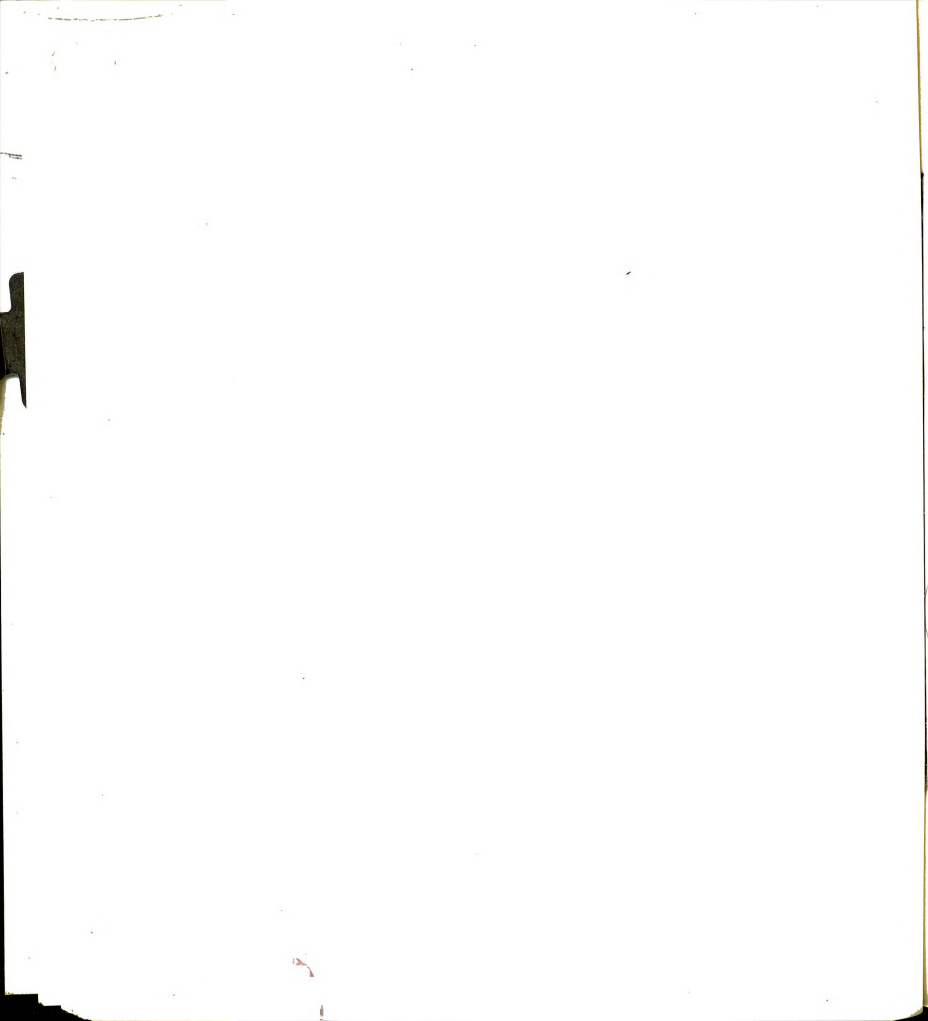
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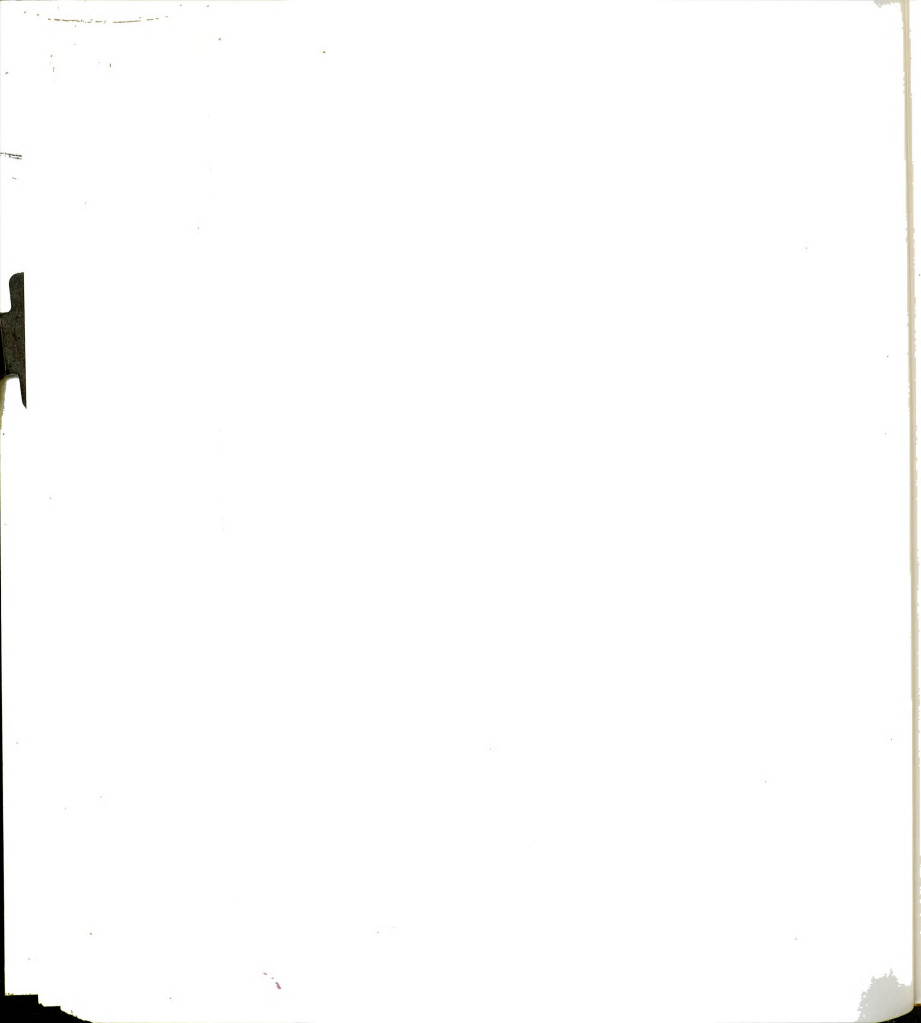
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