UNIVERSITE D'ALGER

INSTITUT DES LANGUES VIVANTES ETRANGERES

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD IN HOLLYWOOD

DIPLOME D'ETUDES APPROFONDIES

PRESENTE PAR

BEDJAOUI Ahmed

DIRECTEUR DE RECHERCHE

MONSIEUR LE DOCTEUR **Rachid BENOUAMEUR**

ALGER 1977

SCOTT FITZGERALD IN HOLLYWOOD

by

AHMED BEDJAOUI

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Institute of Foreign Languages at the University of Algiers, Algeria, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies (D.E.A.) in the Department of Anglo-Saxon and Slavic Languages.

Algiers, 1977

CENTENTS

INTRODUCTION

John Dos Passos is not the only modern novelist who has attempted to use the elements of film-making in his art. Dos Passos' purpose was to reach the effect of immediacy as shown on the screen. The enormous development of the film industry and the tremendous response of the audiences to this new art, all around the world, were the most important social and cultural events in the first part of this century. Although very young, the novel suddenly appeared old and limited. The American novel was still dependent on European literature in spite of Henry James' contribution to adapt the narrative to modern criteria. At the beginning of this present century, the American novel was still naïve and ineffective. Scott F. Fitzgerald was among the writers - if not the first - to give a typical colour and a strong flavour to U.S. literature. Angelo Rinaldi compared 'The Great Gatsby' to 'La Princesse de Clèves' as a starting point for a national tradition: "Gatsby le Magnifique" he said,"mon ment léger, chef-d'oeuvre unique de F. Scott Fitzgerald, résumé amer et brillant de l'autre après-guerre, grâce auquel le littérature d'outre-Atlantique est enfin sortie de la nursery européenne". (1)

Jacques Cabau opens his 'La Prairie Perdue' with a very shrewd remark: "L'Amérique est une découverte du XV^{e} siècle, le roman américain une invention toute récente"(2) Half a century ago, it was generally not accepted that the American novel could exist in its own right. In spite of their contributions to American literature, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Mark Twain and even Henry James were to a large extent regarded as

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(1) Angelo Rinaldi, Gatsby le Magnifique, in L'Express, May 1974, p.9

(2) Jacques Cabau, La Prairie Perdue (Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1960), p.11

part of the English tradition. The American novel seemed immature and devoid of identity, while the European novel had produced such masterpieces as Joseph Andrews, Don Quixote, Werther, Candide, Jacques le Fataliste and more. According to Jacques Cabau, James Fenimore Cooper's The Prairie, Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter, Melville's Moby Dick and Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn are the pioneers in this long conquest of an original and coherent national tradition. Henry James wrote The Turn of the Screw the year when Faulkner and Hemingway were born, and two years after the births of Dos Passos and Fitzgerald.

A new generation was born which was not to achieve confidence until after World War One. In 1900, Theodore Dreiser wrote the first significant American novel, Sister Carrie, which seemed deeply influenced by Emile Zola's Naturalism, though Dreiser claimed he had never read the French author. Dreiser had been bold enough to write about Sex and Poverty and to face Justice and Censorship. It was the first major revolt against American Puritanism and conventional dreams of Liberalism. The second blow is landed by Upton Sinclair, who revealed the scandals of the Chicago Stockyards in Jungle (1906). Jack London called it "the Uncle Tom's Cabin of wage salary." Then came Sinclair Lewis who introduced in Babbit (1922) a hard criticism of the American Way of Life. Lewis is however described by Geoffrey Moore as "a minor twentieth century Dickens sprung out of the Midwest." (3) His fellow Minnesotan, F. Scott Fitzgerald, was a novelist of a quite different order of sensibility, and of importance. Fitzgerald, unlike Dreiser or Sinclair, proposed a vision of the whole twenties and deep reflections on what remained of the American Dream. The Great Gatsby, written in the middle of what historians call the Roaring Twenties, may be considered the starting point of an authentic American novel. It was generally agreed at the time that Dreiser and

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(3) Geoffrey Moore, American Literature (Faber and Faber, London, 1964); p.837

Sinclair were powerful but their lack of achieved form and their clumsiness of style aroused criticism and controversy. Scott Fitzgerald was a magician of words and a particularly brilliant narrator; furthermore, he knew from the outset that he would have a special and tragic fate. As a college boy he already dreamed of cutting a dash in society.

A few months after 'The Great Gatsby' , Fitzgerald wrote (4) to his friend and editor Maxwell Perkins: "I shall be the best American novelist - which is not saying a lot". Two months later, he wrote to the same correspondent: "T.S.Eliot for whom you know my profound admiration - I think he's the greatest living poet in any language - wrote me he'd read Gatsby three times and thought it was the first step forward American fiction had taken since Henry James."(5)And the young, ambitious Fitzgerald added:" ait till they see the new novel!" Still, the writer was ambitious rather than happy for he was unable to separate his task as a writer from his old dream of college boy longing to become a star shining in a dull world. He became notorious, successful and from time to time rich.

But still, just like Gatsby, he felt desperate in spite of his sudden success and wealth: "Sometimes, I don't know whether I'm real or I'm a character in one of my own novels." Fitzgerald was part of his own literary legend, a legend that was his creation and of which he was condemned to become a victim.(6)

He was still very young when his contemporaries acclaimed him as the leader of the rebellious post-war generation, that Gertrude Stein was later to call "the Lost Generation". In fact, he was very conscious of his leading role. His letters to Maxwell Perkins contain many indications on the subject. His wife Zelda,

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(4) Andrew Turnbull, The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald (Charles Scribner and Sons, New York, 1963), p.212
(5) Letters, Op.Cit., p.218
(6) K.G.W. Cross, Scott Fitzgerald (Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1964)

who went mentally insane and had always felt jealous of her husband's success wrote near the end of her life to her daughter Scottie: "I always felt that Daddy was the Key-note and Prophet of his generation and deserves remembrance as such since he dramatised the last post-war era and gave the real significance to those gala and so tragically fated days." (7)

In L'âge du roman américain Claude-Edmonde Magny insists on Hemingway, Faulkner and Dos Passos but ignores Fitzgerald, whom she considers a gifted but minor artist. Jacques Cabau develops a different argument: "Grand Baladin de l'âge du Jazz et martyr de la Génération Perdue, F.S.Fitzgerald n'est pas seulement le romancier des années folles. Il en est l'incarnation." (8)

Fitzgerald was born and had grown up in a most brilliant period of American history. There was the growth of a wealthy nation, there were the Roaring Twenties, and there were the movies. Somebody had to express and dramatise the whole thing; Fitzgerald decided that he was the one among all the other writers who were able to report on the Jazz Age. The First World War seemed to have changed the destiny of the whole world and particularly the New World. Until then, the "Frontier" and "Puritan Tradition" had been the major concern of American novelists. Liberalism and Democracy were associated with these traditions. The growth of Capitalism provoked its own limits and absurdity. The end of Isolationism and the U.S. participation in the Great War meant the end of the American dream as conceived in the nineteenth century. Fitzgerald, like many other artists or writers, expected much from this war. They prepared themselves but did not leave. Fitzgerald missed the war in Alabama and won a princess of the South. Together, they will symbolise the modern, tortured couple of the Twenties.

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(7) Nancy Milford, Zelda, a Biography (Harper and Row, New York, 1970), p.373

(8) Cabau, Op.Cit., p.237

The "stolen" war was to be the basic subject for the outstanding novels at the beginning of the Twenties: Faulkner's 'Soldier's Pay', Dos Passos' 'Three Soldiers',Hemingway's 'A Farewell to Arms'. Hemingway had to wait until the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War to satisfy his sense of adventure and his idea of manhood. As for Fitzgerald, it was his first failure and Anthony Patch's tragedy as described in The Beautiful and the Damned'.

The war had been the end of romance for the Lost Generation, and the confirmation of Evil. As a moralist, Fitzgerald throughout his life lived with Evil, and sought the lost romance.

CHAPTER ONE

THE FITZGERALD REVIVAL

F.Scott Fitzgerald was indeed born and grew up in a most brilliant period of American history. His life and works are definitely linked to the economic "boom" of a wealthy and powerful nation, to the "roaring Twenties" and the glittering movies in their age of innocence. The whole thing had to be expressed and dramatised by someone; Scott Fitzgerald decided he was the one among all able to speak for a whole generation, thus becoming "the spokesman of the Jazz Age." When This Side of Paradise came out in 1920, Scott Fitzgerald was acclaimed as the laureate of a new generation, later to be called by Gertrude Stein " the Lost Generation." For the rebellious post-war generation Fitzgerald seemed to have gone from rags to riches: the twenties were a fairy tale for the author, but without a happy ending.

Fitzgerald's fame was born with the boom and died with the Great Depression, as the hero of Babylon Revisited lost his daughter. The Roaring Twenties were the Age of Babylon, and Hollywood was Babylon, but when Fitzgerald revisited Babylon, he was already considered a failure. While the movies were famous for happy endings, Fitzgerald was rejected as a forgotten hero and there was no place among the glitter for such a sad and brilliant has-been. It was too sad a story to be told to children. Fitzgerald exposed each detail of his tragic fate in an essay published five years after his death under the significant title The Crack-up. "As long past as 1930, I had a hunch that the talkies would make even the best-selling novelist as archaic as silent pictures." (1)

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(1) F. Scott Fitzgerald,

Scott Fitzgerald therefore concluded that there are no second acts in American literature. When he was in Hollywood, his reputation at a low ebb, he used to joke with his editor Maxwell Perkins about the scholarly studies that would one day be written about his life and works. Fitzgerald's prophecy proved to be wrong; twenty years after his death, Arthur Mizener's This Far Side of Paradise (2) started a long series of research which praised the author and established the Fitzgerald revival. Since then, his life and work have been the subject of several plays, films, essays and novels. His reputation is now high, and his notoriety even more widely recognised than it was at the time of This Side of Paradise. (3)

"Few American writers," wrote Robert Sklar in The Last Laocoön (4) " have been so ruthlessly honest as he is in documenting the record of his failures and ignominies. For a long time he was so little respected that few critics bothered to treat him with dignity; later compensating for neglect, critics and biographers threw away critical standards in their efforts to be more than fair."

So Fitzgerald, the author who seemed surprised to hear about himself in the thirties, is still alive and with him the twenties, for which he stands as a symbol. When Hollywood decided at the beginning of the seventies to look for its lost prestige, the producers of the major companies agreed on a series of expensive productions among which was The Great Gatsby--as if brightness and success were definitely linked to the twenties.

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(2) Arthur Mizener, This Far Side of Paradise (Houghton Miffin Boston, 1951)
(3) F.Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise (Ch.Scribner, New York, 1920)
(4) Robert Sklar, F.Scott Fitzgerald--The Last Laocoön (PhD, Harvard University, Oxford University Press, 1967)

The English director Jack Clayton thus made the third and most brilliant version of Fitzgerald's masterpiece, insisting particularly on the parties and the all-singing, all-dancing atmosphere of the twenties. The Great Gatsby fashion was launched once again and everything was done according to the style and rules of "retro". Do the seventies look anything like the twenties or do they need the creativity, the casualness, the brittle happiness and the confidence of the twenties? When the producers used The Great Gatsby for the third time, they were calling on the successful twenties and the crazy years of the burlesque films. The Great Gatsby became the first of a series of ten-million dollar productions designed to put an end to the crisis in the film industry, "a tragic unemployment situation coupled with the increasing needs of those out of work." (5)

One of the major threats to Hollywood came from television. Some major studios are now manufacturing films directly for the new medium, while the television companies have decided to make their own feature films in open competition with the major studios. This has caused a rapid decline in the number of annual productions and in attendance figures: by the end of the twenties, there were 763 films released in America; in 1970, there were only 232. "In 1969, 15 million Americans went to the movies weekly as against 87 million in 1957, a significant date because it was before the advent of television." (6)

On the one hand, some of the major studios are producing films directly for television, and on the other hand, the TV companies are making their own feature films at much lower prices than the film studios. The situation was so critical and Hollywood so bewildered that its new owners decided to fight openly against television, that made films more cheaply, certainly, but with less efficiency or care.

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Instead of reducing the quantity of expensive films, Hollywood producers decided to increase it because audiences all over the world are attracted by super-productions, just as they were in the twenties at the time of D.W.Griffith. Many a multi-million dollar production has been scheduled, among them The Godfather, and the Great Gatsby, both of which are based on a chronicle of the Jazz Age. The more expensive these productions, the more they can be backed by costly casts and advertising. One of the purposes of the advertising consisted of promoting a fashion as well as a way of life which would make the seventies look like the Roaring Twenties.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FIRST WORLD WAR IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

In A Moveable Feast Ernest Hemingway wrote that he and Gertrude Stein were still good friends when she made her remark about the Lost Generation. She had, he remembered, some trouble with her car, an old Model T Ford, but the young man who worked in the garage was unable to repair it. As he had served in the First World War, the owner had said to him: "You are all a génération perdue."

"That's what you are. That's what you all are," Miss Stein said. "All of you young people who served in the war. You are a lost generation."

"Really?" I said.

"You are," she insisted. "You have no respect for anything. You drink yourselves to death." (1)

The War had actually played an important part in the evolution of American literature at the beginning of the present century. E.E.Cummings was born in 1894, Scott Fitzgerald in 1896, the same year as John Dos Passos--and the movies!--Faulkner in 1897, Hemingway in 1899 and Thomas Wolfe in 1900. These men were between 18 and 24 when the First World War ended. For this generation, the War remained a strong common factor, and most of them looked at the conflict in Europe as a starting point for

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(1) Ernest Hemingway, Moveable Feast, Scribner, New York, 1964, pp 27 - 28.

their artistic ambitions as well as their adventurous lives. Until then, the frontier tradition had been the most important cultural tradition; in The Complex Fate Marius Bewley claimed that Hawthorne, Cooper, Melville and James were the greatest American novelists, because they dealt with the major problem that confronted the American artist in the 19th century and still confronts the modern American artist: "the nature of his separateness and the nature of his connection with European, and particularly English, culture."(2)

William Faulkner echoed this in the very first sentence of Ad Astra when he wrote: "I don't know what we were. With the exception of Comyn, we had started out Americans, but after three years, in our British tunics and British wings and here and there a ribbon, I don't suppose we had even bothered in three years what we were, to think or to remember." (3)

Ad Astra is part of a particular cycle in the Saga of Yoknapatawpha County, a cycle which deals with the adventures of Bayard Sartoris' twin grandsons in the Royal Air Force: John was killed and Bayard returns home (in Sartoris, 1929) with the feeling that he too had died on the night of the Armistice. William Faulkner had joined the Royal Canadian Flying Corps in 1918 , and like Jay Gatsby went several months later to Oxford. His first novel Soldier's Pay (1926) mentions a crash in Canada and a stay in Oxford. For this Southerner, "fighting is more important than truth," and war sprang from the limit of the frontier tradition and was a tribute to the European nursery. It was, though, also the end of Isolationism, and the birth of a powerful nation in its own right.

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(3) William Faulkner, Ad Astra, in The Essential Faulkner, edited by Malcolm Cowley, Chatto and Windus, London, 1967, p.411

E.E.Cummings, a former poet, became notorious as a novelist after The Enormous Room was brought out in 1922. In this novel, he told of the conditions of his detention in a French prison during the First World War. He was sent to France as a volunteer but spent three months in jail after a French censor's objection to one of his letters. The style and attitude he adopted in The Enormous Room come sometimes close to anarchy in their criticism of organised society, and Cummings saw in the War a source of deep pessimism for the American writers of his generation. F.Scott Fitzgerald wrote an important article for the May 1926 issue of The Bookman entitled How to Waste Material: A Note on My Generation. This gave Fitzgerald's critical and intellectual opinion on American literature as it appeared after the popular failure of The Great Gatsby. Out of the mass of fiction produced, Fitzgerald wrote, only one book survived: The Enormous Room by E.E.Cummings. (4)

Like Cummings, John Dos Passos joined the Norton Harjes Ambulance Corps in France at a time when the USA were still neutral. His first two novels One Man's Initiation (1920) and Three Soldiers are concerned with the War. Like Cummings' Enormous Room, Three Soldiers is violent and full of hatred. Fitzgerald praised it in The Crack-up in these words: "But because we were tired of great causes there was no more than a short outbreak of moral indignation, typified by Dos Passos' Three Soldiers." (5)

John Dos Passos was mainly concerned with the process of History throughout his works, and insisted strongly on the influence of war on American history; in 1919 there is a passage called The Body of an American.

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(4) F.Scott Fitzgerald, How to Waste Material: A Note on My Generation in Afternoon of an Author, edited by Arthur Mizener, New York, 1958, p.119

(5) The Crack-up, Op.Cit;,p.10

The opening sentence is significant of the grievance in Dos Passos' attitude to war: "Whereas the Congress of the United States by a concurrent resolution adopted on the 4th day of March last authorised the Secretary of State to cause to be brought to the United States the body of an American who was a member of the American Expeditionary Forces in Europe who lost his life during the war and whose identity has not been established. . ." (6)

He learns, however, that this soldier, who had won many medals, had died in Chalons sur Marne and that his name was John Doe. The last sentence of the chapter announces: "Woodrow Wilson bought a bouquet of poppies."

Although he used a very different technique from Fitzgerald's, John Dos Passos also offered a chronicle of the twenties in his famous trilogy The 42nd Parallel (1930), 1919 (1932) and The Big Money (19). He gave a social, political and economic analysis of American society at the turn of the century, through short 'biographies' of famous people like the businessmen Ford or Morgan, radical leaders like Eugene Debs, critics like Thorstein Veblen or filmstars like Rudolph Valentino. Dos Passos expressed in his works the tremendous impact of the moving-picture techniques on literature and the popular audiences. He introduced News Reel and the Camera Eye sections; the former provide the atmosphere and content of the event through headlines and fragments of popular songs, while the latter are designed to focus on the main events of the period such as the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti. All these techniques have been remarkably dealt with by Claude-Edmonde Magny in L'Age du Roman Américain. (7)

Although Cummings, Faulkner, and Dos Passos had lived the experience of the First World War, no other novelist has been

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(6) In Geoffrey Moore, American Literature, Op.Cit., p.1126

(7) Le Seuil, 1948

so deeply influenced, even hurt, by this war as Ernest Hemingway. Charles A.Fenton's The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway (8) explained the author's disillusionment by his early initiation into life. This initiation was completed at the age of eighteen when, at Fossala in Italy, where he joined the Army Ambulance Corps during the War, he received 227 separate wounds from a mortar shell and was simultaneously hit in the leg by machine gun fire. He recalled these critical circumstances in A Farewell to Arms published at the end of the twenties. The brutality of his experience led him to make a clear distinction between the world of honesty and the world of corruption. "In the uncompromising severity of his clear and simple view of life he seems typical of the American Puritan who, from Cotton Mather to John Foster Dulles, persisted in seeing the world in terms of black and white." (9)

A Farewell to Arms should have been Hemingway's first rather than second novel. As early as 1922, he began to write a story about a young American ambulance-driver on the Italian-Austrian front during the First World War. It is this version which Hemingway probably lost in Paris one winter afternoon: "When I had written a novel before, the one that had been lost in the bag stolen at the Gare de Lyon, I still had the lyric facility of boyhood that was as perishable and deceptive as youth was. I knew that it was probably a good thing that it was lost." (10)

As for A Farewell to Arms, "he was also succeeding in following a piece of advice he had once offered to his friend and fellow-writer F.Scott Fitzgerald. If something has hurt you

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(8) Charles A. Fenton, The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway, N.Y. 1954

(9) Geoffroy Moore, American Literature, Op.Cit.

(10) Ernest Hemingway, A Moveable Feast, Scribner, New York, 1964, P.

badly, he argued, you must find a way to use it in your writing. You had better not moan and complain about past or present difficulties or personal misadventures. Instead, you must see your misfortunes as materials of fiction." (11)

Fitzgerald, in a newspaper interview he gave in 1935, tried to distinguish several generations in the twenty years since the War. For his own generation, which was the War generation, he referred to Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms. (12) The generation of the Crash was similar to the generation of the War: "The blow had given it dignity." (13)

"Whatever Hemingway's future reputation, A Farewell to Arms will surely stand for another forty years as the best novel written by an American about the First World War." (14)

As a reporter, Hemingway went to the Graeco-Turkish War, then fought in the Spanish Civil War as a volunteer in the Republican militia. During this war, he made simultaneously a film documentray with Joris Ivens, Lillian Hellman and Archibald MacLeish. At that time, Scott Fitzgerald was again in Hollywood, where he was to stay until his death in 1940. In the summer of 1937, Hemingway came to Hollywood to raise money for the Spanish Republic and especially to finish the film, which was entitled Spanish Earth. The movie was run off for the rich Hollywood community and its producers raised $ 13,000 to buy ambulances for Spain. Fitzgerald attended the screening, diminished and scared in his crack-up by the man who was once his closest friend, and who now stood both physically and morally as a giant.

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(11) Carlos Baker, article in The American Novel Forum Lectures, V.O.A.
(12) Anthony Buttita ,Fitzgerald's Six Generations, 'The News and Observer', Raleigh, ,Sept.1st 1935, p.3.
(13) Quoted by Sklar, Op.Cit.,p.306.
(14) Carlos Baker, Op.Cit.,p.146

After the screening, he asked Lillian Hellman if she would ride with him to Dorothy Parker's, where some of the guests were to toast their success. Lillian Hellman wrote later: "I had met Scott Fitzgerald years before in Paris, but I had not seen him again until that night, and I was shocked by the change in his face and manner. My admiration for Fitzgerald's work was great, but I looked forward to talking to him alone. But he didn't talk: he was occupied with driving. . ." Fitzgerald was very nervous, and he explained his state in this way: "You see, I'm on the wagon. I'll take you to Dottie's, but I don't want to go in. . . It's a long story, Ernest and me." As Miss Hellman was insisting, Fitzgerald replied: "I'm scared of Ernest, I guess, scared of being sober when. . ." (15)

Nevertheless, Fitzgerald entered the house with Lillian Hellman but disappeared after a few minutes without having spoken to Hemingway. The next day, Fitzgerald sent a cable to the rival he couldn't face that "the picture was beyond praise and so was your attitude." (16)

Relating the incident, Maxwell Perkins, his editor and formerly Hemingway's, received the following explanation: "Ernest came in like a whirlwind, put Ernst Lubitsch the great director in his place by refusing to have his picture prettied up and re-made for him à la Hollywood at various cocktail parties. I feel he was in a state of nervous tensity, that there was something almost religious about it." (17)

In fact, the Spanish war was another war that Hemingway fought and Fitzgerald missed. For Fitzgerald, Hemingway was what he had not succeeded in being, the artist of complete integrity as man of art and man of action together.

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(15) Lillian Hellman, An Unfinished Woman, Little and Brown, Boston, 1969, pp.67-8.
(16) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.40
(17) Letters, p.294

Hemingway's growing reputation was overshadowing him, and Fitzgerald felt diminished, having lived almost from the start with a copmlex that Hemingway often exploited. Until A Farewell to Arms, Fitzgerald was convinced that he was the best American novelist. By 1929, he had become far less confident: "Your analysis of my inability to work is too kind," (18) he wrote to Hemingway in September 1929.

It is true that Fitzgerald never went to Europe during the First World War. Although he tries his best to join the battle, he never succeeded and this failure was to become a bitter disillusionment and a cause of the crack-up he suffered at the end of his life. "As the twenties passed," he wrote later, "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 imaginary heroism that were good enough to sleep on restless nights." (19) Fitzgerald was in Princeton when the war fever gripped his generation. In June, he had already agreed to accompany Monsignor Fay, who had taken him up at Newman and had a predominant influence on him, to Russia to assist the Catholic Church during the Kerensky Revolution. A new upsurge on the Russian front sent young Fitzgerald to Princeton, but not for long, and on November 20th he left for Fort Leavenworth after receiving the army commission he had applied for. He noted his feelings in a letter to his mother: "About the army please let's not have either tragedy or heroics, because they are equally distasteful to us.

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(18) Ibid., p.326
(19) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.10

I went into this perfectly cold-bloodedly, and don't sympathise with the 'Give my son to country,etc; or hero stuff etc.' Because I just went and purely for social reasons. . .To a profound pessimist about life, being in danger is not depressing. I have never been more cheerful." (20)

Since the time he was a college boy, Fitzgerald had always longed for a brilliant career and dreamed of cutting a dash in society. His dream can be summed up through his three failures: first, as a player of American football, then as the genteel hero of the First World War and last but not least as a screenwriter in Hollywood. Later he documented the record of his failures and compromised with ruthless honesty in The Crack-up: "Life was something you dominated if you were any good. . .It seemed to be a romantic business to be a successful literary man. You were not ever going to be as famous as a movie-star but what note you had was probably longer-lived." (21)

Robert Sklar has commented that "of important American novelists F.Scott Fitzgerald was the last to grow up believing in the genteel romantic ideals that pervaded late nineteenth century American culture" (22) and he added "In the genteel American vocabulary, self-sacrifice meant giving up life to preserve morality." (23) In an early story published in the Nassau in 1917, called Sentiment--and the Use of Rouge the hero meets Eleanor, the fiancée of his brother who was killed in the War. She seduces him, or tries to, but he resists. "It is this," she says, "self-sacrifice with a capital S. Young men going to get

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(20) Letters,Op.Cit.,pp.471-2
(21) The Crack-up,p.39
(22) The Last Laocoön, Op.Cit.,p.3
(23) Ibid.,p.24

killed for us. We would have been their wives--we can't--therefore we will be as much as we can." (24) Clay returns to the front, where, mortally wounded, he uses a curious image: "Blood on an Englishmen calls rouge to my mind. . .I may be killed for the flag but I'm goin' to die for myself." (25)

If it was difficult to shine as a movie-star in the limelight, the young Fitzgerald wanted at least to glitter on the battlefield, so he left the University for Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for officer's training. The Captain who commanded his unit was a West Point officer called 'Ike' Eisenhower. ≠Fitzgerald was commissioned as a second lieutenant but achieved nothing more than becoming an aide-de-camp to General Ryan. In October 1918 Fitzgerald's division was ordered across the Ocean, but there was a counter-order and finally the Armistice was signed. Scott Fitzgerald had definitely missed his war. In The Last of the Bells published at the end of the twenties just before the Crash he writes: "Our detachment started for Camp Hills next day, but I didn't go to France after all. We passed a cold month on Long Island, marched aboard a transport with steel helmets slung at our sides and then marched off again. There wasn't any more war. I had missed the war." (26)

And thus the army proved to be as great a disappointment for Scott Fitzgerald as Princeton. "He didn't get over" (27) and instead received another blow from failure. "The old dream of being an entire man in the Goethe-Byron-Shaw tradition, with an opulent American touch, a sort of combination of J.P.Morgan, Topham Beauclerk and St Francis of Assisi, had been relegated to the junk

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(24) F.Scott Fitzgerald, Sentiment--and the Use of Rouge, in the Apprentice Fiction, Nassau Literary Magazine, June 1917, pp.154-5

(25) Ibid., p.257

≠ Note: he was later to become President of the United States.

(26) The Last of the Bells, The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.103

(27) F.Scott Fitzgerald, He Didn't Get Over, in

heap of the shoulder-pads worn for one day on the Princeton freshman football field and the overseas cap never worn overseas."(28)

Unlike Fitzgerald and the hero of the Last of the Belles Amory Blaine succeeds in 'getting-over' although he seems indifferent to the War and blames "the ancestors of his generation" for it. In spite of his grievance, Fitzgerald had not lost everything during his fifteen months' service in the training camps, since he had succeeded in writing a novel called The Romantic Egotist which was, however, rejected by Scribner's. Later, he sent a corrected copy called This Side of Paradise in which we realise that the War had contributed to Amory's emergence as a character. The War in This Side of Paradise is a transitory period between pre-war and post-war generations. It provides Amory Blaine with the complementary experince of life, but does not alter him. Much more important is the change that affected American society during the "Interlude May 1917 - February 1919." (29)

During the War, Amory's mother died and so did the precarious family fortune from "speculation, extravagance, the democratic administration and the income tax." (30)

Amory Blaine, just like Fitzgerald,"is now a poor relation of the genteel world who must work for his living, with no prospects of wealth ahead." (31) Not only must he earn his living, but in addition, he must deserve the girl of his fancy.

Before the War, he would have conquered her just by being a genteel romantic hero; but on his return from the front, he realises what Mrs Connage says to her daughter: "Rosalind, you've been a very expensive proposition." (32)

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(28) The Crack-up,Op.Cit.,p.84
(29) This Side of Paradise, Op.Cit.,pp.144-9
(30) Ibid.,p.162
(31) Sklar,Op.Cit.,p.51
(32) This Side of Paradise,Op.Cit.,p.177

The hero's cleverness is no longer enough to win the girl; he must add wealth to his romanticism. "I can't be shut up," she says, "from the trees and flowers, cooped up in a little flat waiting for you." (33) When he wrote this, Fitzgerald thought of Zelda Sayre, hoping that his novel would make him rich enough to be able to marry her. "It was," he later recorded,"one of those tragic loves doomed for lack of money," and he added,"If I stopped working to finish the novel, I lost the girl." (34)

(33) This Side of Paradise, Op.Cit.,p.188
(34) The Crack-up,Op.Cit.,p.57

CHAPTER THREE

THE POST-WAR ERA AND THE ROARING TWENTIES

Like the young writers of his generation, Scott Fitzgerald lost his innocence but without "getting over" and thereby differs from his contemporaries. He had lived the 'interlude' in the USA and felt the gap created by the War in the genteel tradition that had dominated American literature for half a century. "In the circumstances of the First World War," wrote Robert Sklar, "as the genteel romantic hero attained his apotheosis on the battlefield, the influence of the genteel tradition on American literature reached a climax and died. Writers who ewperienced the War, writers who experienced the atmosphere at home, were faced more distinctly than ever before with the decision of whether to celebrate or to oppose the values of their society. . .to write as a propagandist or to stand separate and alone as an artist." (1)

Some of the American writers like Dos Passos, Cummings and sometimes Hemingway decided to act and write as propagandists, while others, among them Faulkner and Fitzgerald, chose to stand separate. Fitzgerald preferred to express his disappointment and the disillusionment of all his generation, which saw in him a spokesman especially after the tremendous success of This Side of Paradise. "If goose-livered businessmen had this effect on the government, then maybe we had gone to war for J.P.Morgan's loans after all. But because we were tired of Great Causes, there was no more than a short outbreak of moral indignation, typified by Dos Passos' Three Soldiers. Presently we began to have slices of the national cake, and our idealism only flared up when the newspapers made melodrama of such stories as Harding and the Ohio Gang or Sacco and Vanzetti." (2)

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(1) Robert Sklar, Op.Cit.,p.20
(2) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., Echoes of the Jazz Age, p.9

For Fitzgerald, the ten-year period known as the Roaring Twenties began with the May Day riots in 1919, when "the police rode down the demobilised country boys gaping at the orators in Madison Square." (3) The author attempted in May Day to capture "the general Hysteria of that Spring which inaugurated the Age of Jazz," (4) and immediately followed the Armistice. Although sceptical and disappointed, Fitzgerald remembered later that "the events of 1919 left us cynical rather than revolutionary, in spite of the fact that we are all wondering where the hell we left the liberty cap--I know I had it--and the moujik blouse. It was characteristic of the Jazz Age that it had no interest in politics at all." (5)

It is strange that on the same page Scott Fitzgerald mentioned Dos Passos and Sacco and Vanzetti, knowing that the former used the famous trials of the latter in his Camera Eye and Newsreel technique. Curiously, Fitzgerald had experimented with this technique in 1920 in May Day many years before it made Dos Passos famous world-wide. "The splendours and miseries of post-war New York are presented by following the diverse activities of seemingly unrelated groups of characters whose paths accidentally intersect and whose destinies are inextricably interwoven. It was a technique that Fitzgerald used only once, but it was later developed and used effectively by John Dos Passos and others." (6)

This Side of Paradise ends almost in the way May Day opens: the last page of Fitzgerald's first novel introduces the new generation of the post-war era--"Here was a new generation, shouting the old cries, learning the old creeds, through a reverie

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(3) Ibid., p.9
(4) Ibid., p.8
(5) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., Echoes of the Jazz Age, p.10
(6) K.G.W.F.Cross, F.Scott Fitzgerald (Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh, 1964), p.43

of long days and nights; destined finally to go out into that grey turmoil to follow love and pride; a new generation dedicated more than the last to the fear of poverty and the worship of success; grown up to find all God's dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken." (7)

May Day had been brought out the same year as This Side of Paradise. This may well explain the similarities between the former quotation and the first sentence of the novelette: "There had been a war fought and won and the great city of the conquering people was crossed with triumphal arches and vivid thrown flowers of white, red and rose."

The presidential election of 1920 took place in a war-weary and disillusioned America. The country had abandoned the enlightened Progressivism which had marked the nineties for a long quest for 'normalcy'. During the First World War, Woodrow Wilson had succeeded in channelling the energies of Progressivism into an imperious aspiration for world peace and for "a world safe for democracy." However, with the War ending, peace seemed a dubious victory, and to Wilsonian idealism, Americans preferred Harding's isolationism. In the meanwhile, they had got rid of the burdens of internationalism, New Freedom and social experimentation. Harding had promised "not heroics, but healing; not nostrums, but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration; not experimentation, but equipoise."

1920 was a year of uncertainty, weariness and dissatisfaction. Thousands of hastily-demobilised soldiers had returned home to find not a home fit for heroes but open competition.

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(7) This Side of Paradise. Op. Cit.

The coloured soldiers wondered whether they had fought for Democracy or Segregation and expressed their dissatisfaction on many occasions in 1919, when they took part in violent race riots, particularly in Chicago, Omaha and Elaine (Arkansas). These riots marked the beginning of the boisterous, roaring twenties, "the ten-year period that, as if reluctant to die outmoded in its bed, leaped to a spectacular death in October 1929, began about the time of the May Day riots in 1919. When the police rode down the demobilised country boys gaping at the orators in Madison Square, it was the sort of measure bound to alienate the more intelligent young men from the prevailing order." (8)

It was undoubtedly a glorious homecoming. There were parades everywhere from Broadway to provincial Main Streets. "There had been a war fought and won. . ." (9)

Woodrow Wilson had achieved a clever balance between labour and capital in time of war but the prosperity of this period vanished with the Armistice. It was the time of the post-war blues. "A returned batallion of the National Guard paraded through the streets with open ranks for their dead, and then stepped out of romance for ever and sold you things over the counters of local streets." (10)

The soldier was expecting glory, while the merchants "turned their white, bunched faces gravely upon the passing batallions. Never had there been such splendour in the great city for the victorious war had brought plenty in its train." (11)
Both the merchant and the soldier were wrong, for there were to be two years of depression before the economy could adapt itself to peace. Five million people--most of them idle soldiers--were out of work.

(8) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., Echoes of the Jazz Age, p.9
(9) May Day in Tales of the Jazz Age, Scribners, New York, 1922, p.31
(10) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., The Last of the Belles, p.103

" 'What have you got outa the war? Are you rich?' asked the little Jew who was haranguing the crowd on this May Day. 'Who got anything out of it except J.P.Morgan an' John D. Rockefeller?' At this point, the little Jew's oration was interrupted by hostile cries of disapproval and someone cried 'God damn Bolsheviki! We're going to show them!' " (11)

It was the beginning of the riotous, lawless decade; "The American businessman," said Frderick Lewis Allen, "was quite ready to believe that a struggle of American labouring men for better wages was the beginning of an armed rebellion directed by Lenin and Trotsky." (12)

So the festival of homecoming had ended with the Big Parade, the race riots in Chicago and the rebirth of the Klan in the South. The victory of Harding established the policy of laisser-faire and isolation which was to dominate the political life of the twenties. "Le coup de barre à droite donné par la nation en 1920 était brusque et vigoureux." (13) The twenties were hysterical and intolerant but could not destroy completely the American tradition of liberal protest as expressed by Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos and H.L.Mencken. This latter, often praised by Scott Fitzgerald, had directed his attacks on American patriotism, puritanism and middle-class values, and expressed the mood of rejection that young intellectuals after the war felt towards American society.

In a letter to Shane Leslie, Fitzgerald promised that his second novel would be "much more objective" than his first, and using what Robert Sklar called " a pure Menckenese", he warned: "But the bourgeoisie are going to stare." The threat proved to be somewhat exaggerated though The Beautiful and the Damned is full

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(11) May Day, Op.Cit., p.16
(12) Quoted by Paul Sann, The Lawless Decade: A Pictorial History of the Twenties (Fawcett, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1971)
(13) André Maurois, Histoire du Peuple Américain, Editions Littéraires de France, Paris, 1956

of observations on American life. The novel moves from pre-war days through the First World War into the first years of the Roaring Twenties. All the central characters yearn for wealth and conventional success, while Joseph Bloeckman, the Jewish film producer, represents entertainment conceived as a job, and whose life consists of giving pleasure to others.

During the twenties, radicalism developed very fast and authors like Sinclair Lewis and John Dos Passos openly attacked traditionalism in literature and politics. In Main Street (1920) and Babbit (1922) Sinclair Lewis attacked materialism through the portrait of a small businessman and gave a successful description of the limitations of the average American. H.L.Mencken offered a sharp criticism of the American way of life. Even the propaganda novel spread at the end of the twenties with the progress of radicalism. While the large majority of Americans had made a clear choice for 'Normalcy' and laisser-faire, novelists like Dos Passos, Richard Wright and Dashiell Hammet joined the American Communist Party in the most confused political situation.

Jacques Cabau draws a transition line between the prairie tradition and the urban civilisation of the start of the century. The First World War had put an end to the age of innocence, and the skyscraper replaced the endless prairie. Jacques Cabau compares the Chicago, New York and Los Angeles conurbations to Fritz Lang's Metropolis (1925) and the vision of Charlie Chaplin's Modern Times (1932). Praising L'Age du Roman Américain [14] Cabau asserts that the author made a fundamental mistake when she overestimated Dos Passos and the formal revolution in literature but neglected Fitzgerald because he did not correspond to her theories.

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(14) Claude-Edmonde Magny, L'Age du Roman Américain (Le Seuil, 1948)

"Or rien ne nous paraît aujourd'hui plus daté que Dos Passos, et rien plus neuf que Fitzgerald." (15) At the beginning of the twenties Fitzgerald had, for the literary world, a fixed place in the political spectrum. He was assimilated to Hencken's group by Carl Van Doren who remarked in The Nation after the appearance of The Beautiful and the Damned "He has trusted, one suspects, his doctrine rather than his gusto." Yet Fitzgerald is widely famous for his attraction to wealth and to rich people and by his being "cynical rather than a revolutionary." In 1931, he recalled that "It was characteristic of the Jazz Age that it had no interest in politics at all", and Cabau's theory is that "Fitzgerald par son indifférence aux idéologies et sa fascination pour la richesse, annonce la société d'abondance, même quand son talent le trahit." (16)

It was typical of the twenties that the majority of people would yearn for 'Normalcy' while some intellectuals clung to radicalism; but when the Boom was over, Dos Passos turned increasingly from being a radical to a conservative point of view, just as Steinbeck did. Radicalism was a product of the Jazz Age on the same level as cars, sports and aircraft. Fitzgerald was the spokesman for this generation and the witness of a social revolution in the fields of morality, economy and politics. This Side of Paradise, his first novel, has been acclaimed as the record of the beginnings of a social revolution. Fitzgerald succeeded in creating a new image of individualism different from the rugged version of a Herbert Hoover, but also in contrast to that of the nineteenth century tradition. The characters in This Side of Paradise plead for a greater committment to a social order. Amory Blaine is struck by the ugliness of poverty when he says:"I detest poor people. I hate them for being poor"; but at the same

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(15) Jacques Cabau, La Prairie Perdue: Histoire du Roman Américain, (Ie Seuil, 1966) p.37

(16) Ibid., P;38

time, "Amory felt an immense desire to give people a sense of security." (17) Amory sees in Socialism a way to reach this security, and often expounds it in his doctrines. Expressed in the context of the Palmer Anti-Red Campaign and the arrest of Sacco and Vanzetti, Amory's radicalism has personal motives: "I'm sick of a system where the richest man gets the most beautiful girl if he wants to." (18) One cannot forget that Zelda Sayre, "the beautiful lady without mercy" (19) had refused to marry Fitzgerald until he became rich and famous.

The personal motives and the acute observation go to explain the ambiguity of Fitzgerald's political committment. "I'm a product of a versatile mind in a restless generation--with every reason to throw my pen in with the radicals." (20) In a letter to his publisher Maxwell Perkins dated June 1925 he noted "the curious advantage to a radical writer in being published by what is now an ultra-conservative house". The author reproached Scribner's with some of their publishing ideas which, he said, "were evolved under the pre-movie, pre-high-literacy-rate conditions of twenty or thirty years ago." (21) In 1934, he sent a letter to his cousin Mrs Richard Taylor in which he announced that he had given up politics. "For two years I've gone half haywire trying to reconcile my double allegiance to the class I am part of, and the Great Change I believe in. . .I have become disgusted with the party leadership;" (22) and as if this was to remain a secret, he added "this is confidential, of course."

Fitzgerald's political contradictions are only part of the author's tragedy. Fitzgerald's dilemma was that he was never

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(17) This Side of Paradise, Op.Cit., p.255
(18) Ibid., p.265
(19) Fitzgerald's first title for The Beautiful and The Damned
(20) This Side of Paradise, Op.Cit., p.266
(21) Letters, p.203
(22) Letters, p.437

able to separate his professional career from his college-days longing "to cut a dash in society". (23) At the end of his life the crack-up he suffered and which became legendary was without doubt linked to his difficult apprenticeship as a screenwriter in Hollywood. These difficulties had pushed him to think of himself as a 'Marxian' when he wrote to his daughter: "Most questions in life have an economic basis, at least according to Marxians." (24) However, most of his contemporaries considered him a conservative especially Ernest Hemingway, once his closest friend. Hemingway reproached Fitzgerald with being fascinated by the Rich in a controversy which has since become famous. In The Snows of Kilimandjaro published in Esquire in 1936, he made his hero muse: "The rich were dull, and they drank too much . . . and they were repetitious. He remembered poor Scott Fitzgerald and his romantic awe of them and how he started a story once that began 'The very rich are different from you and me'. And how someone had said to Scott, 'Yes, they have more money.' But that was not humourous to Scott. He thought they were a special, glamorous race." (25) In August 1936 Fitzgerald wrote a letter to Hemingway asking him "Please lay off me in print," adding "Riches have never fascinated me, unless combined with the greatest charm or distinction." (26)

The sentence Hemingway referred to was taken from the Rich Boy which counts among the most profound explorations of the upper classes in American society. The full quotation is: "Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me." Hemingway failed to understand the real meaning of this statement. His rejoinder, though celebrated, misses the point.

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(23) Moore, Op.Cit., p.837
(24) Letters, p.62
(25) Ernest Hemingway, The Snows of Kilimandjaro, first published in Esquire magazine, August 1936
(26) Letters, p.331

Young Anson Hunter is an "anatomisation of American 'aristocracy'" (27) which is the nearest thing that riches could offer. "The only way I can describe you young Anson is to approach him as if I were a foreigner and cling stubbornly to my point of view. If I accept him for a moment I am lost. I have nothing to show but a preposterous movie." (28)

The movies here are used as a contradictory cultural reference to the gilded age. Fitzgerald describes himself as that one of Anson's friends who, ten years later, "was in Hollywood writing continuities for pictures that Anson went faithfully to see." (29) Ten years after The Rich Boy was published, Scott Fitzgerald actually arrived in Hollywood to write film scripts. "Anson's corruption blights more lives than his own," concludes Robert Sklar. (30)

Anson is corrupted by the false values of an aristocracy based on money. In Fitzgerald's concention, money is opposed to radicalism, but he was never able to separate these two elements in his own life. He is like Jay Gatsby in The Great Gatsby, (31) "within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life." Gatsby, taken between his corruption and the dream he lives for stands for the author's own ambivalence: "Foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams." (32) Fitzgerald always longed to be rich. In short stories like The Rich Boy or A Diamond as big as the Ritz he is the rich boy's poor companion, just as he is the Gordon Sterett of May Day, the victim of poverty and social order. This position gives him the opportunity to replace the camera eye and in this way to look objectively at the very rich. This is probably why he conceived

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(27) K.G.W.Cross, Op.Cit.,p.71
(28) F.Scott Fitzgerald,The Rich Boy, in All the Sad Young Men (Scribner, New York, 1926), p.140
(29) Ibid;,p.172
(30) Op.Cit.,p.72
(31) F.Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Scribner, New York,1925), p.152
(32) Ibid.,p.126

his works as realistic. Fitzgerald's realism is a result of the cinematic technique he always used. Like many other critics, Hemingway failed to get the meaning of the opening shot of The Rich Boy when he thought it was impressionistic. The end of the throws a light on the whole passage and gives it its real significance: "I have nothing to show but a preposterous movie."

Fitzgerald had to be a success if he was to marry Zelda. We have seen how he remembered it as "one of those tragic loves doomed for lack of money." On March 26th 1920 This Side of Paradise was published; Fitzgerald married Zelda on April 3rd. The book was an immediate success, Fitzgerald was famous and he had his 'top girl'. These two events seem to move with the jerkiness of an early film, edited simultaneously: "All in three days I got married and the presses were pounding out This Side of Paradise like they pound out extras in the movies." (33) Fitzgerald was successful, but would never be rich although he happened to earn a lot of money. Many times he fell heavily into debt. He was actually attracted to the new medium, but the motion pictures were confusedly linked in his conception to the vast sums of money he needed to remain the archetype of the character he contributed to creating in the twenties. Less than one year after his marraige he wrote to James Branch Cabell: "Having finished my second novel . . .I am about to sell my soul. . .and go to the Coast to write one moving picture." (34)

Nothing came of these plans, but Fitzgerald's interest in the motion picture and particularly in writing for the screen revived many times until his death, which occurred in Hollywood in December 1940.

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(33) The Crack-up, p.60
(34) Letters, p.488

Fitzgerald's attraction to films was not founded only on money as he often claimed but on his own definition as an entertainer. Instead of being an artist for the élite, Fitzgerald preferred being an entertainer and a spokesman for a whole generation. As a popular writer, he could not neglect the most popular form of expression among all art forms. "Dos Passos, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Caldwell, Hemingway même font de la comédie humaine," writes Jacques Cabau, "Leur roman américain n'est pas une révolution, mais l'aboutissement, l'apothéose du roman du XIX^{e} siècle avec ses types sociaux, son réalisme pittoresque, son idéologie et son intrigue mélodramatique. Scott Fitzgerald, et surtout Virginia Woolf, sous des formes plus classiques, proposent en fait au roman un contenu combien plus neuf!" (35)

If Gatsby had sprung from the platonic conception of himself, Fitzgerald has sprung from the cinematic conception of his time! Because he had chosen the other side of the paradise, he became the hero for all the sad and lost young men. "C'est lui qui fut 'le roi de la jeunesse américaine',le James Dean d'une époque," concludes Cabau.(36)

Fitzgerald had been the promoter, the witness and the consummate actor of the Roaring Twenties. Above all, he was the director of "the most expensive orgy in history" (37). When This Side of Paradise was published, Fitzgerald was acclaimed as the Laureate of the Age of Jazz. In spite of its immaturity, the novel remains one of the most important social documents on the Jazz Age. The boom was in the air and young Americans were "dedicated more than the last to the fear of poverty and the

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(35) Jacques Cabau, Op.Cit., p.38
(36) Ibid;, p.239
(37) The Crack-up,Op.Cit.,Echoes of the Jazz Age,p.18

worship of success." (38) They were aware of their being part of "the most powerful nation. Who could tell us any longer what was fashionable and what was fun?" (39) The first aspect of the revolution which occurred at the beginning of the twenties was sexual and moral--" the American puella is no longer naïve and charming; she goes to the altar of God with a learned and even cynical glitter in her eye," wrote H.L.Mencken in 1916. (40) While the boys were on the battlefield, the girls were completing the process of moral emancipation. It was so fast and so efficient that it came as a revelation; "None of the Victorian mothers--and most of the mothers were Victorians--had any idea how casually their daughters were accustomed to be kissed." (41)

As a spokesman for his generation, Fitzgerald dared to question the Victorian morals of the established order and made Amory Blain an idealised projection of himself. Rosalind and later, Gloria are the archetypes of the flappers and models of the post-war debutante. Rosalind rejects Amory's love because he is not rich: "I can't be shut away from the trees and flowers cooped up in a little flat, waiting for you. You'd hate me in a narrow atmosphere." (42) In her novel Save me the Waltz Zelda remembers the terms used by David Scott: "Oh my dear, you are my princess and I'd like to keep you shut for ever in an ivory tower for my private delectation," to which Alabama replies: " The third time he wrote that about the princess, Alabama asked him not to mention the tower again." (43)

Above all, the post-war debutante is devoted to her recently-conquered freedom. The flappers modelled on the audacious

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(38) This Side of Paradise, Op.Cit.,p.270
(39) Ibid;p.10
(40) Quoted by Paul Sann,The Lawless Decade,Op.Cit.,p.14
(41) This Side of Paradise,p.65
(42) Ibid.,p.188
(43) Zelda Fitzgerald,Save me the Waltz.(Signet Books,New York,1968) p.48

Zelda have the boldness and the charm of the Jazz Age. "For Fitzgerald, the flapper, beautiful, sophisticated and rich, was less a symbol of post-war emancipation than the quintessential principle of golden youth," thinks Robert Sklar. (44) When Fitzgerald's first novels appeared, the movies were still naïve and limited by the censorship; nevertheless, This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and the Damned could have been continuities for modern films. They reflect the present tendency among modern directors like Luchno Visconti or Joseph Losey to represent life according to literary criteria. Just like any recent film, these two novels are attempts to catch a whole world in evolution and revolution on the different planes of social, economic, moral and cultural aspects. If This Side of Paradise could have been a film, it would have continued in the daily life. It is widely known that in any good art, Reality often transcends Fiction. To their own surprise and delight, the Fitzgeralds discovered that they were being heralded as models in the cult of youth. Everybody was wearing the same suit and the same skirt as those designed by Fitzgerald in his works. It is easy to imagine a film for which the costumes have been designed and cut before the shooting. The old cotton undergarments gave way to the much sexier, more feminine silk. Skirts went up six inches from the ground to reach the knees and even above, when the band turned on a hot tempo. (Four more decades were necessary before skirts climbed six inches more and became the Mini!) Long locks of hair down the back gave way to the bobbed hairstyle, which served as a model for the 1920 short story Bernice Bobs Her Hair (45). "This was the generation whose girls dramatised themselves as flappers, the generation that corrupted its elders and eventually overreached itself less through lack of morals than through lack of taste." (46)

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(44) Sklar, Op.Cit., p.32

(45) In Players and Philosophers (Scribner, New York, 1920)

(46) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., Echoes of the Jazz Age, p.11

The young girl was a flapper now, ready even for a speak-easy in the course of the so-called Dry Decade, although there was nothing dry about the twenties. When the Eighteenth Amendment went into effect at 12.00 on July 16th, 1920, the final note was adjusted on the stage dedicated to the Roaring Twenties.The whole country became divided into the wet and the dry. While the wet wept in their drinks, the dry paraded and Rev.Bill Sunday from Norfolk, Virginia proclaimed: "The reign of tears is over." People who were perfectly honest and sincere went on: "There's a whole generation growing up that will never know the taste of liquor." Meanwhile, added Fitzgerald,"their granddaughters pass the well-thumbed copy of Lady Chatterley's Lover around the boarding school and if they get about at all, know the taste of gin and corn at sixteen." (47)

The Eighteenth Amendment was the result of numerous other attempts to dry America that had been made since colonial times. None of the laws were very effective, including this latest one. "Instead," remembers Fitzgerald, "there were the speak-easies. . . Back in 1920, I shocked a rising young businessman by suggesting a cocktail before lunch."(48)

A few years later, says Fitzgerald, "there was liquor in half the downtown offices and a speak-easy in half the large buildings. . .One was increasingly conscious of the speak-easy."(49) The speak-easies opened as fast as the doomed saloons closed in spite of the efforts made by the federal raiders to demolish the illegal establishments. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald christened the Jazz Age using a bathtub full of gin, and "the hangover became a part of the day as well allowed-for as the Spanish siesta." (50)

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(47) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., Echoes of the Jazz Age,p.12
(48) Ibid.,p.28
(49) Ibid.,p.
(50) Ibid.,p.28

He continues, "Most of the friends drank too much. The more they were in tune, the more they drank." The Beautiful and the Damned deals with prohibition more than This Side of Paradise. Antony Patch is secure in his conviction that he is to inherit his grandfather's huge fortune. Incapable of working and making money, he detests his grandfather who is campaigning for the suppression of "liquor, literature, vice, art, patent medicines and Sunday theatres." (51)

Fitzgerald seems to admire Adam Patch's money, while loathing the making of it. Antony's wife Gloria is concerned only with her youth, her beauty, and her need to be entertained. One day, when the old man pays an unexpected visit, he arrives at the climax of one of the young peoples' wild parties. Outraged by the amount of drinking and the moral decline of the couple, he cuts Antony from his will. Without money, Antony and Gloria plunge into poverty and alcoholism which provoke their physical and mental decay. Later, even the elders tired of watching and finally joined the party when they discovered that " young liquor will take the place of young blood and with a hoop, the orgy began. (52) A whole race going hedonistic deciding on pleasure. The precarious intimacies of the younger generation would have come about with or without prohibition." However, the racket and the bootlegger could not have existed without prohibition. The absurdity of the Eighteenth Amendment and the moral and intellectual difficulties it caused opened the way to the bootlegger, the first kind of gangster the American citizen ever accepted to deal with--and the bootlegger is heir to the Western adventurer.

Fitzgerald's works are also a documentary account of the corrupt world of illegal money-makers, symbolised by Jay Gatsby himself.

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(51) The Beautiful and the Damned, Op.Cit., p.12
(52) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., Echoes of the Jazz Age, p.11

When Howard Hawks directed in 1931 a film called Scarface most people received it as a gangster film, failing to seize its social and moral aspects. Melvyn Le Roy's Little Caesar, based on the novel by W. Burnett met the same kind of response. Many years before that, Fitzgerald had made his own gangster-social film, except that it was a continuity for a much more recent film--the kind of film that would be made in the sixties or the seventies. Fitzgerald builds a character who is the product of his time, and suggests that he is linked to the general atmosphere of criminal rackets and corruption. Gatsby stands as a symbol for this new brand of hero. Prohibition and laisser-faire had produced Al Capone ≠ and his sovereignty over Chicago. It was the beginning of organised crime based on the speak-easy, the hip-flask and the rum-runner. Even on the political level, a series of financial scandals, to which high-ranking officials of the Harding administration were linked, reflected the moral bankruptcy in both public and private sectors of American life. Charles Forbes, the chief of the Veteran Bureau ## was one of Harding's closest friends. He used to sell the War-stocks for less than 20% of their real price. The Secretary of State for domestic affairs, Albert Fall, had rented the Teapot Dome ### oil reserves to his friend H.F.Sinclair. When Fall and Forbes were arrested, it clearly showed what Harding meant when he wished that the time would come when

there would be "less government in business and more business in government."

In The Great Gatsby, one of the guests is called P. Jewett, who "was once head of the American Legion ≠."(53) Wolsheim requires Gatsby to join the Legion: " I got him to join the American Legion and he used to stand high there." (54) Gatsby reveals incidentally: "I was in the drug business and then I was in the oil business." (55) John H. Randal III established a link between the Teapot Dome Scandal and Gatsby's fortune in a study significantly called Jay Gatsby's Hidden Source of Wealth. (56)

While Scarface Al Capone organised the crime association in Chicago, Arnold Rothstein made of the New York underworld his own empire. It is easy to guess that Rothstein and Mayor Wolshiem are the same person. Rothstein, who was assassinated in 1928, three years after the publication of The Great Gatsby, was the symbol for the rackets and corruption of his time. One of his biggest and best-known swindles is the Black Sox Scandal.## It was also a golden age for sport and especially for baseball, which attracted millions of people. "It never occurred to me that one man could start to play with the faith of fifty million people." (57) This man was Rothstein-Wolfshiem: "He's the man who fixed the World's Series back in 1919." (58) Wolfshiem's cufflinks are made of human molars. Gatsby himself seems to have been portrayed on the model of Edward Fuller, one of Fitzgerald's neighbours in Great Neck.

≠ See Glossary

(53) The Great Gatsby, Op.Cit.,p.63
(54) Ibid;,p.172
(55) Ibid.
(56) In Modern Fiction Studies (Sumner, 1967), pp.247-57
See Glossary

(57) F; Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Scribner, N.Y.,1925) p.21
(58) Ibid., p.79

Fuller and Mc had been associated with a big scandal on the Stock Exchange. In December 1924, Fitzgerald wrote to Maxwell Perkins: " Anyhow; after careful searching on the files (of a man's mind here) for the Fuller-M case and after having had Zelda draw pictures until her fingers ache, I know Gatsby better than I know my own child." (59)

Fifty years before Europe, the whole country was living on credit and people had discovered what the word 'consumption' meant. "Factories could not turn out automobiles, refrigerators,, radios, vacuum cleners and oil burners fast enough to keep up with the insatiable demand for new gadgets." (60) In Echoes of the Jazz Age (61) Fitzgerald writes: " As far as 1925, the unchaperoned young people of the smaller cities discovered the mobile privacy of that automobile given to young Bill to make him self-reliant." In 1920, the number of cars on the road was nine million, but reached twenty-three million before the Crash. One of these cars is Gatsby's coupé, a yellow car also called by the newspapers the "death car." (62)

Sex, crime, wealth, dancing and drinking--these were the new components of the Social Revolution taking place over the world's most powerful nation, growing in population and wealth. "America was going on the greatest, gaudiest spree in history and there was plenty to tell about it." (63) Fitzgerald actually told a lot about the Roaring Twenties and their tumultuous parties. He even played the key role in the film he meant to make. He was the star, and he remembers that nobody was as famous as a film-star. When he first came to the big 'Metropolis' it adopted him, to his surprise,

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(59) Letters; Op.Cit., p.192
(60) Allan Nevins and H.S.Commager, A Pocket History of the U.S. (Washington Square Press, New York, 1972)
(61) Op.Cit., p;10
(62) The Great Gatsby, Op.Cit., p.144
(63) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., Early Success, p.59

" as the archetype of what New York wanted" (64) even if he did not know exactly what it expected from Zelda and himself. But the restlessness of New York "approached hysteria. The parties were bigger. . .the shows were broader, the buildings were higher, the morals were looser and the liquor was cheaper." (65) As he had to apologise, Fitzgerald recognises that all the stories which ensued had a touch of disaster in them: young and lovely creatures going to ruin, mountains of diamond blowing up, beautiful but damned millionaires. The two major themes of the Jazz Age, licence and intolerance, were utterly self-contradictory, but as Fitzgerald wrote: "It plays a part in my own movie of New York. . .The offices of editors and publishers were open to me, impressarios begged plays, the movies panted for screen material." (66)

The soundtrack of Fitzgerald's film on the Get-Rich-Quick twenites is very hot; "the word Jazz in its progress towards respectability has meant first sex, then dancing, then music." (67) The twenties will be remembered as the Golden Age of the silent pictures, until 1927 when sound recording taught the movies to talk and sing. In the winter of 1927, the sound of jazz burst upon a completely unprepared audience. The first man to break the 'sound barrier' was Al Jolson in the Jazz Singer, a feature-length dramatic film. Fitzgerald's film was already "all-talking, all-dancing, all-singing". It began with the sound of "Yes, we have no bananas". Three months after the Eighteenth Amendment came the first broadcast released by the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company on the presidential elections of 1920. The birth of the radio proved to be an event of paramount importance. You didn't have to leave your home to be entertained.

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(64) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., My Lost City, p.24
(65) Ibid., p.28
(66) Ibid., p.23
(67) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.12

The receiving sets were pounding out the jazz tunes as heavily as the virtues of the Model T Ford, or cigarettes or goods of any kind. It was the starting point of a popular culture and radio changed but standardised it, as well as the middle-class way of life. The radio industry exploded and rapidly grew to be a threat to Hollywood. By 1922, three million homes had a radio set and by 1925, the listening audience was estimated at fifty million, listening to the Dempsey-Carpentier fight, the World Series between the Giants and the Yankees, songs by the Cliquot Club Eskimos, Al Jolson. . . But the predominance of jazz was even more impressive. Rudy Vallee was the successful crooner of the time and Paul Whiteman was the King of Jazz. There were also Peter Arno and his collaborators who perhaps had " said everything there was to say about the boom days in New York that couldn't be said by a Jazz Band." (68)

Everybody was now dancing, and tired of watching " the people over thirty, the people all the way up to fifty, had joined the dance." (69) Music "was associated with a state of nervous stimulation" (70) and later, licence entered the world of music while censorship controlled the films. " For a while, bootleg negro records with their phallic euphemisms made everything suggestive and simultaneously came a wave of erotic plays." (71)

As the twenties progressed towards the Crash, the whole race was " going hedonistic, deciding on pleasure;" (72) the parties became wilder and by 1927"a widespread neurosis began to be evident." (73) Fitzgerald once told the story of one of his friends sending a letter in which he urged his correspondent to come home and get " revitalised by the hardy, bracing qualities of the native soil." It was a very moving letter, except that it was " headed

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(68) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., My Lost City,p.28
(69) Ibid., p.12
(70) Ibid.
(71) Ibid.
(72) Ibid.
(73) Ibid., p.16

from a nerve sanatorium in Pennsylvania." (74) Later, Fitzgerald was to describe this neurosis in Tender is the Night as a result of the forces of disintegration that developed during the twenties. Abe North's character is a composite portrait of Fitzgerald's friend, Ring Lardner, and is destroyed by drunkenness; Rosemary, a movie actress, by her being catapulted from " the middle of the middle class" to the " uncharted heights" of Hollywood, where dreams are translated into shadows. Beautiful but insane, Nicole stands as a symbol of America in the boom.

For his part, Dick Driver is the living representative of Fitzgerald's dilemma of whether to celebrate or to oppose the values of his society. Tender is the Night"is Fitzgerald's attempt to diagnose the sickness that money breeds" thinks Robert Sklar. (75) It is also an image of America r pidly moving towards depression on various levels. By this time, violence was beginning to spread dangerously over the whole society and Fitzgerald gives examples of acts of violence against people he knew very well disappearing into " the dark maw of violence. These things happened not during the depression, but during the boom." (76) But with other economic factors, they contributed to hastening the big Crash, caused primarily, says Fitzgerald, by " the illusion of eternal strength and health" (77) and the corruption of the American Dream to which he was fully committed.

The Great Depression coincided with the author's Crack-up: "Somebody had blundered, and the most expensive orgy in History (78) was over." Zelda and Scott were somewhere near Biskra in Algeria when they heard " a dull distant crash, which echoed to the farthest wastes of the desert." (79)

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(74) The Crack-up,Op.Cit., Echoes of the Jazz Age,p.16
(75) Sklar, Op.Cit.,p.79
(76) The Crack-up,Op.Cit.,Echoes of the Jazz Age,p.16
(77) Ibid.,p.
(78) Ibid.,p.18
(79) The Crack-up, Op.Cit.,My Lost City,p.29

Fitzgerald's film on the twenties is over. In 1957, Buster Keaton was interviewed for a Paramount Film called The Buster Keaton Story: "I tried to tell them that things weren't like that in the twenties, but they wouldn't listen. I remember the assistant, a young guy. He said to me, 'Look, why don't you go away. Times have changed. You're an old man. The parade's gone by.' " (80) For Fitzgerald also, the parade had gone by. " I have lost my splendid image. The shadows have vanished, and the lights are back in the theatre. Come back, come back, O glittering and white."

The stories of Fitzgerald and Gatsby could be compared to Edwin Arlington Robinson's Richard Cory; he was:

" a gentleman from sole to crown. . .
he was rich, yes, richer than a king.
. . .So on we waited, and waited for the light
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night
Went home and put a bullet through his head." (81)

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(80) Quoted by Kevin Brownlow, The Parade's Gone By (Martin, Secker and Warburg, London, 1968)
(81) Moore, Op.Cit., p.856

CHAPTER FOUR

EARLY SUCCESS

When Lumière's train arrived at La Ciotat station on the last day of 1895, it seemed to be hurtling out of the screen. The train introduced a new art dedicated to a brilliant and unexpected future.

In America, Edison presented his 'Vitascope' at Koster and Bial's Music Hall. The film shown was called Sea Waves and the audience cheered wildly then fearfully as the sea came rushing towards them. The movies were born, and it happened in April 1896. The same year, in September, F. Scott Fitzgerald was born in St Paul. He grew up with this new popular enetrtainment and became a novelist when the movies turned into an art and, or perhaps we should say but, an industry. The new medium was to play an important part in the mental and social evolution of the nineties. Even if the upper classes despised the movies and considered them a vulgar and barbarian entertainment, the black and white shadows conquered more and more people. Adults reacted like children, and during the primitive years the movement on the screen fascinated the audience. By the turn of the century, the dream was starting to waver until the Kinetoscopes were converted into projection machines and penny arcades transformed into picture theatres. Yet few could take the exhibitions seriously, until a French magician named Georges Melies managed to tell a story with a film.

Melies' camera recorded the theatrical mid-long-shot from the front seat of the stalls and the frame was that of the stage. Edwin S. Porter, a cameraman and director of the Edison Company, was deeply impressed by Melies' pictures. Porter came to the conclusion that since the one-shot films were beginning

to bother the audiences, maybe the straightforward telling of a story would attract them. Porter made his Great Train Robbery in 1903. It came as a revelation, even if it did not go far, but it inaugurated a new kind of entertainment which was destined for a brilliant future: the Western. In 1906, Marcus Loew, later to be known as the founder of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) introduced the first projectors in his New York Penny Arcade. At that time, Fitzgerald was ten, and living in Buffalo. He met the well-known actor Dustin Farnum who frequently gave him entry tickets for the shows in which he acted for the Buffalo summerstock company. Fitzgerald noted in his ledger that he " used to go to the Wild West movies and the Tech Stock Company." (1)

Fitzgerald's games often consisted of competing with his local friends in presenting dramas. One day, "Gus Shy's play put him temporarily in the shade," but "finally, the moving-picture machine Lucky's uncle gave him eclipsed Gus Shy." (2) ≠

In 1908, the Fitzgeralds moved to St Paul, and by the time they moved, they were living the first of a series of their so-called mortal crises. When Fitzgerald left St Paul for the Newman School, the crisis was over and the moving picture industry was on the move. The great changes that took place were attributed to David Wark Griffith, an unsuccessful playwright who kept trying to sell stories to film makers.

Film lovers look back to The Adventures of Dollie (1908) An Unseen Enemy and The Musketeers of Pig Alley. When these films were made and presented to the audience, they were received like any other films. Although Griffith had directed more than four hundred short films before The Birth of a Nation, few people realised that he was changing the whole course of American cinema.

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(1) Quoted by Aaron Latham, Crazy Sundays (Secker and Warburg, London, 1972) p.27

(2) Ibid.

≠ Fitzgerald's ledger conserved in the Princeton University Library reports on the author in the third person.

Fitzgerald himself paid more attention to InaClaire in The Quaker Girl in New York and Gertrude Bryan in Little Boy Blue when he made a movie outing to his "lost city". "When I was fifteen, I went into the city from school to see Ina Clair in The Quaker Girl and Gertrude Bryan in Little Boy Blue. Confused by my hopeless and melancholy love for them both, I was unable to choose betweenthem, so they blurred into one lovely entity, the girl." (3) " The girl for romance didn't have wings but audiences generally agreed that she didn't need them." (4)

The genteel tradition had dominated American literature for half a century. Fitzgerald's genteel romantic heroine sprang from the nineteenth century and the screen as well. She is a star inspiring love in the hero and destroying his capacity for heroism. This heroine is a vamp.

As a young man, Fitzgerald had begun early to think of himself as an artist. The first time he had had the opportunity to express his dreams and talents was in St Paul where his parents lived. At the age of eleven, he organised theatrical ceremonies for their friends. While in St Paul, he wrote, produced and five plays for his boyhood club. His prep-school teacher later recalled: " I imagined he would become an actor of the variety type." (5)

In 1912, he wrote his first full-length play The Captured Shadow. Fitzgerald cast himself as the author, director, producer and leading actor of the play, which was about a cat burglar. Performed at Mrs Backus' School on August 23rd 1912, the play gave rise to the first account of Fitzgerald's works.

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(3) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., My Lost City, p.20
(4) In Flappers and Philosophers, Op.Cit.,p.73
(5) Andrew Turnbull, Scott Fitzgerald (Robert Laffont, Paris, 1964), p.28

The next day, und the title Play Helps Babies the St Paul Pioneer Press reported: " Much favourable comment was elicited by the young author's cleverness as well as by the remarkable amateur work accomplished by the others of the cast." (6) The ambitious author noted in his scrapbook all the reviews, and commented in block letters: " ENTER SUCCESS ". (7) Later, he wrote a short story also called The Captured Shadow about the writing of a play.

On October 26th 1938, Fitzgerald, who was in Hollywood, wrote a letter to Edwin Knopf, story-editor at MGM, proposing that they let him write a script called The Captured Shadow which would be about " the Impressario in the Days of his Youth." Looking back in nostalgia, Fitzgerald added that the plot would be based on the author's discovery that he should compromise "by reducing his ideas (just as we have to do in pictures)". (8) The project, like so many others, was never to be acries through. During the summer of 1913, Fitzgerald wrote The Coward, a drama about the Civil War. The author directed and produced the play in which he starred himself as the Southerner who turns from a coward into a hero. The Coward was staged by the Elizabethan Dramatic Club, run by Elizabeth Magoffin. In his scrapbook, the young playwright underlined a review sentence which said: "Scott Fitzgerald, the author, played the part of Lieut. Charles Douglas with great success." (9)

The ambitious writer had started his long quest for success and fame but he had to enter Princeton if he wanted to achieve anything concrete. The same year in September he was accepted, and wired to his mother: "Admitted. Send Football Pads and shoes immediately."

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(6) St Paul Pioneer Press, August 24th, 1912, p.9
(7) Fitzgerald's scrapbook in Princeton University Library
(8) Unpublished letter in Princeton University Library
(9) Turnbull, Op.Cit., p.49

When Fitzgerald entered Princeton, the football team and the Triangle Club were the top levels of social distinction and success. One of Fitzgerald's permanent juvenile regrets was " at not being big enough (or good enough) to play football in college." (10) If he did not succeed as a football player or as a student, Fitzgerald spent most of his time working for the Triangle Club. The year 1913 was that in which a young immigrant named Charlie Chaplin entered the Keystone studio.

Having been dropped from freshman football from the beginning, Fitzgerald spent his entire freshman year writing an operetta for the Triangle Club. He failed in almost everything else, but as he stated himself: " the Triangle Club accepted my show", (11) and by the end of his second year in Princeton he had become a successful figure and finally the President of the Triangle Club. His ledger is full of reports bearing the Club symbol: " Feb (1914)--began play"; " Sept--play accepted"; " Feb (1915)--Secretary of Club on 26th"; " April--New York show".

This last play, that the Club accepted and took on a tour to New York was entitled Fie! Fie! Fi-Fi! and was the story of a Chicago gangster invading Monaco, but foiled after his wife sided with the Monacans. The show received good reviews and the Brooklyn Citizen wrote: " This delicious little vehicle was announced as a musical comedy and the name can only be disputed to the extent that it is also given to innumerable Broadway productions that possess less vitality, less sparkling humor, and less genuine music." (12) The Traingle Club, founded by the successful playwright Trakington " over the years has started a number of Princeton men toward stage and motion picture careers."(13)

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(10) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.40
(11) K.G.W. Cross, Scott Fitzgerald (Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, 1964), p.8
(12) Turnbull, Op.Cit., p.62
(13) Robert Sklar, F. Scott Fitzgerald--The Last Laöcöon (Oxford University Press, New York, 1967)

As Fitzgerald's abilities as a playwright increased, so his academic ones decreased, and he was finally declared "ineligible for extra-curricular activities." (14) The young artist faced his first failure as a social figure. "Twenty years ago, when I left Princeton in junior year," wrote Fitzgerald in the Crack-up, "I had losr certain offices, the chief one being the presidency of the Triangle Club, a musical comedy idea, and also I dropped back a class. To me the college would never be the same. There were to be no badges of pride, no medals, after all." (15)

Back home convalescing, the young dramatist wrote a play which was rejected by the Club. He then realised that he had to abandon "the old dream of being an entire man in the Goethe-Byron-Shaw tradition." (16) Instead he had to learn the job of writing and try to make a living from it. In September 1917 he sold his first poem for two dollars. The young man who yearned to become as "famous as a movie-star" (17) had surely heard of Charlie Chaplin signing a one-million dollar a year contract with First National, in much the way John Dos Passos would have told the story using a 'newsreel' sequence.

While Fitzgerald was at Princeton, the movies were rapidly growing into an art and a big industry at the same time. Griffith's experiments had hastened the process; in 1913, the Biograph Company took an advertisement in the New York Dramatic Mirror:

> "D.W.Griffith: Producer of all the great Biograph successes, revolutionising the Motion Picture Drama, and founding the modern technique of the art.
>
> Included in the innovations which he introduced and which are now generally followed by the

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(14) K.G.W.Cross, Op.Cit., p.9
(15) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.46
(16) Ibid., p.55
(17) Ibid., p.39

most advaned producers are: the use of large close-up figures, distant views as reproduced first in Ramona, the 'switchback', sustained surprise, the 'fade-out', and restraint in expression, raising motion picture action which has won for it recognition as a genuine art." ≠ (18)

Many directors imitated Griffith and used the effects he had discovered almost accidentally: close-ups, travelling shots, high angles. . ."Suppose I had patented the fade-out," declared Griffith in 1926 to a reviewer. "I would be drawing at least a million a year in royalties." ≠ (19)

Griffith's discoveries depended on a general evolution of the moving pictures and corresponded to an age in which technical and artistic progress was going forward very fast. The movies were growing into an art. Finding and using some effects before other people made D.W.Griffith lead the motion picture to a cinematic revolution. The Birth of a Nation was the first feature film to be made in the same way that pictures are made today. It was the first to break completely with the years of experiment. It established and fixed for a long time the rules for the narrative adapted to the screen, even if this may today seem dated. With the success of Birth of a Nation three outstanding figures of the film industry, D.W.Griffith, Mack Sennet and Thomas Ince joined to found the Triangle Corporation. With the arrivals of Cecil B. De Mille and Zukor, Hollywood was becoming the centre of the film industry. The Birth of Hollywood is generally linked to these events, even if the first

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≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms

(18) New York Dramatic Mirror, Dec.3rd, 1913. Quoted by Brownlow, The Parade's Gone By, Op.Cit., p.25

(19) Photography, Dec. 1926, p.30

studio had opened in October by the Nestor Company, to be absorbed in 1912 by Universal.

The Birth of a Nation marked the end of the movies' childhood. The years of innocence were over, and were giving way to genteelness. The modern picture was born. So was the new century with the War putting an end to the literary tradition of the nineteenth century. Scott Fitzgerald was eighteen and completing his apprenticeship as an entertainer. The controversy that developed around The Birth of a Nation had reached the young man, who saw the film and thought of what Woodrow Wilson had said about its being "like writing history in lightning." (20) In a letter written on September 29th 1939, Fitzgerald explains the character of Cecilia ≠ : "She was probably born the day 'The Birth of a Nation' was previewed and Rudolph Valentino came to her fifth birthday party." (21)

As for Monroe Stahr, "up to his arrival, the director had been kingpin in pictures since Griffith made 'The Birth of a Nation'." (22) Like many other people, Fitzgerald considered Griffith's film the starting-point for the modern film industry as well as the birth of Hollywood. Once a simple gadget, the movies had won their title as the Seventh Art. In 1920 after the publishing of This Side of Paradise and its author thrown into the spotlight with other celebrities, "dancing elbow to elbow with Marion Davies", Fitzgerald visited Griffith's studio on Long Island and "trembled in the presence of the familiar faces of the 'Birth of a Nation'." (23) In a letter dated February 8th 1936, written to Harold Ober, Fitzgerald recalls: "In 1920, I tried to sell D.W.Griffith the idea that people were

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(20) F.Scott Fitzgerald, The Last Tycoon (Scribner, New York, 1941) p.110

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(21) Ibid; Two Outlines, p.166

(22) Ibid., p.176

(23) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., My Lost City, p.25

so interested in Hollywood that there was money in a picture about that and romance in the studio." (24) After the Beautiful and the Damned was published, Fitzgerald anxiously asked his friend John Poale Bishop: "If you think my 'Flash-back in Paradise' in Chapter I is like elevated moments of D.W.Griffith, say so." (25)

Griffith was now at the height of his career. After the controversy that raged about the use of negro stereotypes and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, the film profoundly affected audiences in many countries. Griffith, who was himself a Southerner, had based The Birth of a Nation on Thomas Dixon's The Clansman. However, Griffith's career did not end with his masterpiece. Intolerance (1916) was even bolder than the earlier film. The set built for The Fall of Babylon was massive. The walls were ninety feet high, and the overall height was between a hundred and a hundred and fifteen feet. These walls, built along Hollywood Boulevard, were several miles long and their cost was equally incredible. Intolerance proved a financial failure, and Griffith found himself faced with enormous debts; but the Babylonian set remained as a model for Hollywood's attitude toward films. Hollywood was a kind of Babylon revisited.

While Fitzgerald was presenting the manuscript of his first novel, Griffith was finishing the poignant Broken Blossoms before despising Hollywood and moving to New York. Fitzgerald discovered the stirring effect of a close-up of Lillian Gish's face and managed to make her acquaintance. H.L.Mencken, co-editor of the American Mercury, invited Lillian Gish who found there the Fitzgeralds "drinking their whiskey as if it were water." (26)

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(24) Letters, p.423
(25) Letters, p.373
(26) Lillian Gish, The Movies, Mr Griffith and me, (Prentice Hall Inc., New Jersey, 1969) p.274

The star added: "Two of my good friends in that period were Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald." (27) Lillian Gish was fascinated by the period after World War I which had produced, she thought, the greatest writers of the century--Scott Fitzgerald among them. And yet, the War had been as great a disappointment for Scott Fitzgerald as University. The only conquest he made, albeit a major one, was Zelda's love. She made him work hard, even if Ernest Hemingway accused her of interfering continuously with his work in Hawks do not Share. (28)

"I had one hundred and twenty rejection slips pinned in a frieze about my room. I wrote movies. I wrote some lyrics." While waiting for This Side of Paradise to be published, Fitzgerald sold several stories to the 'smart set', Scribner's magazine and in 1919 to the Saturday Evening Post for a thousand dollars. In Januray 1920, he wrote to Maxwell Perkins: "I've just sent 1,000 dollars' worth of movies to the Metro People." (29) "The metamorphosis of amateur into professional began to take place." (30) Fitzgerald was in despair; and one day the postman rang and announced the publication of the novel. This Side of Paradise was an immediate and big success. Within a week, he married Zelda and the presses were pounding out the novel "like they pound out extras in the movies." (31) The Fitzgeralds were famous and momentarily rich. At that time, Hollywood was largely functioning under the star system, and the young and brilliant couple could finally live as movie stars. Further, the studios "were panting for screen material." (32)

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(27) Lillian Gish, Op.Cit., p.282
(28) Ernest Hemingway, A Moveable Feast, Hawks do not Share, (Scribner, New York, 1964) pp.147-186
(29) Letters, p.160
(30) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., Early Success, p.58
(31) Ibid., p.60
(32) Ibid., p.23

The successful author further remembers: "two of the actresses whom I had worshipped from afar in 1913 had dined in our home." (33)

After all, why not be as famous as a movie star, since he had acted in St Paul in Newman and in Princeton for the Triangle Club. This Side of Paradise was sold to the movies for 10,000 dollars and Scott and Zelda were offered the chance by a film producer to play their own real story on the screen. (34) Fitzgerald took the offer seriously in spite of the objections of Maxwell Perkins, who feared "a first and last appearance positively." (35) According to Andrew Turnbull, Fitzgerald finally refused the offer, but Aaron Latham assumes in Crazy Sundays that "the project was shelved only to be revived three years later in 1923." (36)

Answering Scott's question about the future of their child, Zelda said, "I'd rather have her be a Marilyn Miller than a Pavlova ≠ ;" (37) as for herself, she would try to get a place in the 'Follies'. ≠ "Or the movies," she added. (38) In Save me the Waltz, Zelda recalls that the film actresses were famous and the saleswomen looked like Marilyn Miller; Charlie Chaplin used to put on a yellow jacket. (39) Scott for his part told a reporter from the St Paul Daily News that Carl Sandburg was less of a poet than Charlie Chaplin, (40) but when Zelda insisted on being a movie actress, he told her "she would have to make up her mind whether she wanted to go into movies or get in with the young married set." (41)

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(33) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.27
(34) Andrew Turnbull, Op.Cit., p.141
(35) Unpublished letter in Princeton University Library, quoted by Aaron Latham, Op.Cit., p.35
(36) Ibid., p.36
(37) Nancy Mitford, Zelda--a Biography (Harper and Row, New York, (1970), p.101
(38) Ibid.
≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms
(39) Zelda Fitzgerald, Op.Cit., p.91
(40) Ibid., p.135
(41) Ibid., p.113

Scott helped Zelda with one of her short stories called Our Own Movie Queen which is attributed to both of them in Bits of Paradise by M.J.Bruccoli. (42) Our Own Movie Queen was the story of a young girl elected Queen of New Heidelberg and trying to get into the movie business. She did not succeed in fulfilling her dream, but nor did Zelda, who had to be satisfied with her young married set. In October 1921, Scottie was born, and Fitzgerald sent a telegramme to Zelda's parents: "Lillian Gish in mourning. Constance Talmadge ≠ is a back number. A second Mary Pickford ≠ has arrived." (43)

First National had won Mary Pickford over from Zukor at Paramount and gave Charlie Chaplin the same year his million-dollar contract. At the beginning of the twenties, Mary Pickford, nicknamed 'America's sweetheart', had married another star, Douglas Fairbanks. The two joined up with Charlie Chaplin and D.W.Griffith to form the United Artists which rapidly stood out as one of the major companies with Universal, Paramount, MGM and Fox. The ties between the producers and the theatres were so strong that one of the early theatre owners named Marcus Loew purchased a studio in 1920 and created the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer company. Fitzgerald's career as a screen-writer was to deal mainly with MGM until the end of his life.

When Scribner's published his Flappers and Philosophers in September 1920, MGM showed interest in some of the short stories. Scott contacted Zelda: "I have sold the movie rights of Head and Shoulders to the Metro Company for twenty-five hundred dollars." (44)

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(42) Matthew J. Bruccoli, Bits of Paradise, (Julhard, 1977). French translated by Jean Queval.

≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms

(43) Turnbull, Op.Cit., p.136

(44) Arthur Mizener, Introductory Essay to Flappers and Philosophers in The Fitzgerald Reader (Scribner, New York, 1963)

The story was adapted under the title: The Chorus Girl's Romance and told of an actress named Marcia Meadow and a professional student, Horace Tarbox. Horace falls in love with Marcia and decides to join the world of entertainment in a passing circus. MGM also acquired the rights for The Offshore Pirate published in the same collection. The adaptation was quickly filmed and was about a girl named Ardita kidnapped by a band of offshore pirates, whose leader was not a real pirate but a young millionaire. Ardita lives her adventure as if it were a movie tale and begs her pirate: "I want you to lie to me just as sweetly as you know how." (45)

Arthur Mizener drew a parallel between the heroine of the story and Ardita Ford, who gave a theatre party in St Paul so that everyone could "see what I am like in the movies." (46)

Then Twentieth Century Fox bought a story called Myra meets his Family, and the Fitzgeralds were successful and rich. "The world of the picture actors was like our own" but "when I first met Dorothy Gish I had the feeling that we were both standing on the North Pole and it was snowing." (47) Fitzgerald remembers he danced at the Midnight Frolic "elbow to elbow with Marion Davies ≠ ." (48) Once an ingénue in Oh, Boy! a Broadway musical, Marion Davies was starred in 1917 in her first picture Runaway Romany and became a celebrity after The Dark Star (1919) and The Restless (1920). Fitzgerald also admired Constance Barnet, a newcomer of 1922, who triumphed with What's Wrong with Women? and Cytherea (1924). The young author remembers "the gilded youth circling around young Constance Barnet in the

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(45) F.Scott Fitzgerald, Flappers and Philosophers (Scribner, New York, 1920) p.27
(46) Arthur Mizener, This Far Side of Paradise, Op.Cit., p.373
(47) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.25
≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms
(48) Ibid., p. 25

Club de Vingt, the classmates in the Yale Princeton Club whooping up our first after-the-War reunion, the atmosphere of the millionaires' houses that I sometimes frequented." (49)

It seems that Fitzgerald was haunted by the predominance of the motion pictures, "something I could neither accept nor struggle against." (50) The twenties were a Golden Age for the movies. The companies grew in size and power, costs of production and star salaries kept climbing and the public responded to the star-making. It is curious to note that Fitzgerald, who had been so influenced by the motion picture industry would state later in Echoes of the Jazz Age: "Contrary to popular opinion, the movies of the Jazz Age had no effect upon its morals. The social attitude of the producers was timid, behind the times, and banal." (51) Fitzgerald gave the example of the younger generation who remained absent from the screen until 1923: "There were a few feeble splutters and Clara Bow in Flaming Youth; promptly the Hollywood hacks ran the theme into its cinematographic grave." (52)

Pretending to ignore the rebellious Eric Von Stroheim and his 'scandalous' Foolish Wives (1921), Greed (1924) and Queen Kelly (1928), Fitzgerald, who was probably shocked by his experience in Hollywood went on to say: "Throughout the Jazz Age, the movies got no farther than Mr Jiggs, keeping up the most blatant superficialities! This was no doubt due to the censorship as well as the innate conditions in the industry." (53)

Yet Hollywood had gained as early as 1922 the reputation for being the most glamourous and most corrupt city in the country. Hollywood reflected in its pictures the change in moral standards which had taken place in the United States. Drinking scenes

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(49) Ibid., p.
(50) Ibid., P.23
(51) Ibid., p.49
(52) Ibid;, p.14
(53) Ibid., p.14

abounded in the films in spite of Prohibition, and there were also suggestive sex sequences. The conservative element in society protested on the grounds that it was relevant to Hollywood alone. They had certain arguments behind them: the 'Fatty'Arbuckle rape case ≠ and the murder of director William Desmond Taylor, implicating celebrities like Mabel Normand and Wallace Reid, who confessed addiction to drugs. Following the protests, the major studios decided to form the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America and got round the National Censorship by setting up a policy of self-censorship. Then came De Mille, who proposed a more idealistic approach to sex; the audacious Hollywood gave way to a much more conventional and sophisticated dream-factory.

In 1923, the Literary Digest sent a circular to "leaders of thought in literature, drama and religion" asking them to express their views on censorship. Fitzgerald replied in a letter to the editor: "The clean-book Bill will be one of the most immoral measures ever adopted. . .George Moore, Hardy and Anatole France are unintelligible to children and idiots and will be suppressed at once for debauching the morals of village clergymen." (54) Now the threat of censorship concerned all the arts, but particularly the motion picture. Fitzgerald did not neglect the financial possibilities offered by the film industry even if he seemed to be disappointed at its evolution.

In August 1921, he wrote to Shane Leslie about Flappers and Philosophers: "I am living royally off the moving picture rights of the same stories." (55) After This Side of Paradise was published, the author announced to his Aunt and Uncle McQuillan: "I am waiting to hear from a scenario outlined on

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≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms
(54) Letters, Op.Cit., p.496
(55) Ibid., p.396

and moreover to the style of the Raoring Twenties. Robert Redford is wearing "white flannels with a silver shirt and gold tie," just as Fitzgerald described. (4)

Daisy cries when Gatsby shows her his shirts: "It makes me sad because I've never seen such--such beautiful shirts before." (5) During the period before and after the film exhibition, every magazine seemed to feature a range of the brilliant, colourful Gatsby fashions, as if the film had been financed by great dressmakers.

In August 1949, Newsweek wrote: "The script follows the original with remarkable fidelity. Where The Great Gatsby fails is in its attempt to recapture an era." (6) Vincent Canby says in The New York Times that the recent version "completely mistakes the essence of Fitzgerald's novel," and that the novel "demands something more perceptible of the moviemakers than mere fidelity to plot." (7) The Elliot Nugent film got better reviews than the Jack Clayton version. Most critics thought that the former was well-constructed while the latter concluded Vincent Canby is "so lugubrious, threatening at times to turn into the longest movie ever made." (8)

In its attempt to catch the new fashion of the seventies and connect them to the twenties, the adaptations of the third version probably irritated many an observer. To look back again at the adaptation three years later may help explain this reaction. Francis Ford Coppola, the famous, Oscar-winning director of The Godfather (1971) and The Conversation (1973) wrote very faithfully to the novel and

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(4) The Great Gatsby, p.47
(5) Ibid., p.99
(6) Film Fan Monthly, Op.Cit., p.15
(7) Ibid.
(8) Ibid.

its author as well. It is not so "all-too-reverential" as Vincent Canby suggests, but rather represents an attempt to photograph with very bright colours the old Fitzgerald dilemma between love and success, esteem and money.

The central character is Scott Fitzgerald rather than Jay Gatsby himself. Jack Clayton, claims Tristan Renaud in Cinéma 74, "nous assène à grands renforts de plan-séquences ≠ (techniquement impeccables) un spectacle qui ne semble d'avoir d'autre but que de séduire l'oeil." (9) How could the director photograph Fitzgerald's style without trying to seduce the spectator's glance? The colours remarkably photographed by Douglas Slocombe are the essential complement to Fitzgerald's spirit.

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(9) Tristan Rénaud, Cinéma 74, N° 193, December 1974, p.139

≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms

CHAPTER SEVEN

FIRST STAY IN HOLLYWOOD

"The modern college story" he was offered to write for Constance Talmadge was an opportunity for Scott Fitzgerald to increase his income and to try himself as a screen-writer. He had been born and grew up with the movies. The new art was almost everywhere in his works. His stories were purchased by major film companies and filmed. His own stories and novels were filled with conversation about the Seventh Art. His only experience in the field of adaptation was the continuity of This Side of Paradise written for Famous Players four years before, and never used. Fitzgerald had succeeded in many fields: he was an eminent figure in American literature, he was the leader of the Jazz Age and all the stars looked at him and Zelda as the most brilliant hosts of the twenties. Obviously, he was fascinated by the world of the movies and particularly by Hollywood, this gigantic maker of dreams. "At that time," he recalled later, "I had been generally acknowledged for several years as the top American writer both seriously and, as far as prices went, popularly. I honestly believed that with no effort on my part I was a magician with words." (1)

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(1) Letters, p.31

This first experience would show the author that it was no use being "a magician of words" if you could not fully adhere to the restrictions and standards of the system Hollywood had established. The formula: 'based on a novel by. . .' was advertising more than enrichment. The moving-picture industry decided alone on its relationship to literature on strictly financial grounds. Hollywood was purchasing Fitzgerald's name as a symbol for a whole generation, just as they had done with W. Faulkner, R. Chandler, D. Hammet, H. Mc Coy and even the reluctant Hemingway. ≠

When Fitzgerald arrived in Hollywood, his reputation was higher than it had ever been before. The Great Gatsby had brought him praise and admiration from the people who counted for him. He was now successful and admired, and Hollywood wanted him. For his part, he was ready to try a stint as screen-writer, being offered $ 3,500 in advance and, if the story was accepted, he would receive twelve thousand dollars in all. The Fitzgeralds stayed two months in Hollywood, living on the same scale as they had done on the Riviera. They found almost the same Mediterranean climate in California, and Zelda wrote to Scottie, who had stayed in Washington: "It is so hot we can't wear coats, and even Daddy sleeps under one blanket. It is the most beautiful country imaginable--just long avenues of palm trees and Eucalyptus, and Poinsettas grow as tall as trees." (2)

During their stay, Scott and Zelda shared a four-apartment bungalow in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles with famous personalities: the actor John Barrymore, author Carl Van Vechten and Carmel Myers, "whom they had met in Rome on the set of Ben-Hur." (3)

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(2) Nancy Milford, Zelda, a biography, Harper and Row, New York, 1970.

(3) Turnbull, Op.Cit., p.178

≠ Note: All these writers sold stories and novels to Hollywood. The first two participated in many scriptwritings. As for Hemingway, he was very contemptuous of Hollywood, but nevertheless accepted the money it offered him.

Pola Negri, the former Polish-German star, was living in the immediate neighbourhood. Zelda was first attracted by the style of life typical of Hollywood: "We paid homage to the pale, aloof concision of Diana Manner's primitive beauty, and dined at Pickfair to marvel at Mary Pickford's dynamic subjugation of life. A thoughtful limousine carried us for California hours to be properly moved by the fragility of Lilian Gish, too aspiring for life, clinging vine-like to occultisms." (4)

When a reporter asked Scott to draw a parallel between the original flapper and the flapper of the screen, Fitzgerald answered that the only films he saw when he was in France were Westerns, "and he proposed to speak about Tom Mix. He gave me at last some examples of Hollywood flappers: Clara Bow, Constance Talmadge, Colleen Moore." (5)

To his cousin Ceci (Mrs Richard Taylor) Scott explained how difficult it was "to be plunged immediately into movie-making," exclaiming: "My God! How hard they work out here! This is a tragic city of beautiful girls--the girls who mop the floor are beautiful, the waitresses, the shop ladies. You never want to see any more beauty." (6)

The parties were less wild than Zelda expected and she began to feel bored and restless; as she wrote to Scottie: "If we get out of here, I will never go near another moving-picture theater or actor again." (7) Zelda's dislike had other more serious reasons than those given to the child: "Hollywood made a big fuss over us and the ladies all looked very beautiful to a man of thirty." (8) Scott had, in fact, been over-charmed by a seventeen-year-old actress named Lois Moran.

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(4) Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, Show Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald to Number, The Crack-up, p.47
(5) Turnbull, Op.Cit., p.179
(6) Letters, p.435
(7) Milford, Op.Cit., p.128
(8) Ibid., p.129

Zelda did not like this flirtation even if it was always innocent and platonic. Inanother letter to Scottie, Zelda mentioned the actress: "Daddy was offered a job to be leading man in a picture with Lois Moran! But he wouldn't do it. I wanted him to because he would have made so much money and we could all have spent it, but he said it was silly." (9) In fact, Scott and Lois Moran had arranged a screen test, but the studio decided that the test was not convincing and the project was abandoned. Zelda and Scott were to quarrel again over Lois Moran, whom Scott had invited to visit them once they were settled; Zelda threw her diamond and platinum watch from the window of the train that brought them back East. This watch was a souvenir of their courtship in Alabama, and meant much to Zelda. Nevertheless, Lois Moran did visit them and managed a weekend at their home in Wilmington; this was on the day that Lindbergh landed in Le Bourget, which made Zelda behave in a more friendly way.

Fitzgerald remarked to Lois Moran that she bore the same name as the heroine of a short story written seven years previously called Benediction. After he retreated from Hollywood, and Lois Moran left his life, Scott completed his first short story for sixteen month's, Jacob's Ladder. It is the story of a seventeen-year-old actress struggling against the love of a man twice her age. Jacob Booth is a wealthy businessman who suffered from "a humorous apathy." However, when he meets Jenny Dehalanty, he awakens and tries to help her accomplish her physical beauty as well as her career. He arranges a screen-test for her which proves successful and from then on Jacob lives "more deeply in her youth and future than he had lived in himself for years." (10)

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(9) Milford, Op.Cit., p.129
(10) F.SCott Fitzgerald, Jacob's Ladder, in The Saturday Evening Post, August 20th 1927

Disappointed by her lack of awareness, Jacob takes refuge in his phantasms and "molded her into an image of love--an image that would endure as long as love itself." Jenny, having changed her name into Jenny Prince, is now a professional actress and does not need Jacob Booth any longer. When they separate, "the image he had made stood near him, lingering in the room, joined in mystic marraige to his heart." But this image is on a poster with the title: "Fulfil your secret dreams in wedding for an hour."

Jacob enters the theatre, finds a place in the "fast-throbbing darkness," and becomes a spectator of his own creation. "She was here, all of her, the best of her. The effort, the power, the triumph, the beauty." In Fitzgerald's imagination, dreams, phantasms and reverie are mingled with his conception of movie-making, which was to culminate in Tender is the Night.

Written in the same period, The Bowl (11) is the story of a college football hero, Dolly Harlan, who like many successful young men does nothing and lives apathetically. After a first failure in love, Dolly meets Daisy Care, an eighteen-year-old movie-actress who shows him how to live actively.

For the last short story he wrote in 1927, Fitzgerald went back to Hollywood to describe his two-month stay and first experience as a screen-writer. The first paragraph of Magnetism (12) is an acute description of the new Babylon as he discovered it when he arrived there in the first days of 1927.

> "The pleasant, ostentatious boulevard was lined at prosperous intervals with New England colonial houses, without ship models in the hall . . .The next street was a complete exhibit of the Spanish-bungalow phase of West Coast architecture; while two streets over, the cylindrical windows and round towers of 1927--melancholy antiques which sheltered swamis, yogis, fortune-tellers, dressmakers, dancing teachers, art academics and chiropracters--looked now upon brash buses

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(11) F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Bowl, in The Saturday Evening Post, January 21st, 1928

(12) F. Scott Fitzgerald, Magnetism, in The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Scribner, New York, 1951

> and trolley cars . . .Everything in the vicinity --even the March sunlight--was new, fresh, hopeful and thin, as you would expect in a city that had tripled its population in fifteen years." (13)

The plot of Magnetism is an inversion of the love-relations in Jacob's Ladder. The central character is an actor much like the author, with whom young actresses fall in love. One of them, Helen Avery, looks much like Lois Moran; she is described as "a dark, pretty girl with a figure that would be full-blown sooner than she wished. She was just eighteen." As for George Hanaford, he is just over thirty and "can't control his charm." When a girl telephones him from San Francisco he does not even remember who she is and pretends: "Somebody has been doubling me up in Frisco." Kay, George's wife, is jealous--"He hadn't said a word to Helen Avery that Kay could have objected to, but something had begun between them on the second day of this picture that Kay had felt in the air. Perhaps it had begun even earlier, for he had determined, when he saw Helen Avery's first release, that she should play opposite him." (14)

This is a clear transposition of Fitzgerald's infatuation with Lois Moran and Zelda's objections, though perhaps expressed with a certain amount of parody as far as George's overwhelming charm is concerned. Hanaford had "met Kay Tomkins at the old Griffith studios at mamaroneck and their marriage was a fresh, personal affair, removed from most stage marriages." (15)

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(13) Magnetism, Op.Cit., p.131
(14) Ibid., p.133
(15) Ibid., p.134

Despite himself, Hanaford creates romantic dreams of love in the women he meets, and therefore represents a new dimension in Fitzgerald's platonic conception of a hero. "George Hanaford was still absorbed in the thought of Helen Avery as he left the studio and walked towards his bungalow over the way." (16) He was afraid, even horrified, that "anyone should come between him and Kay," but at the same time, he would regret that "he no longer carried that possibility in the forefront of his mind." Conscious of the danger their marriage is running in to, George evokes Hollywood's most famous and lasting couple: Douglas Fairbanks Jr and Mary Pickford, "America's sweetheart." George "realised suddenly that the two Fairbankses, in sitting side by side, were not keeping up a pose. They were giving hostages to fate. This was perhaps the most bizarre community in the rich, wild, bored empire, and for a marriage to succeed here, you must expect nothing or you must be always together. For a moment his glance had wavered from Kay and he stumbled blindly into disaster." (17)

In all these stories, Fitzgerald "substitutes the synthetic passion of the movies for the real passion of which life has frustrated him." (18) Irony shows through when Kay is compared to Elizabeth Meehan, the former dancer who adapted The Great Gatsby for the screen. Like her, Kay "was playing small parts in Ziegfeld shows" (19) when George met her. Like Zelda and Scott, Kay and George "preserved between them something precious that made their house one of the pleasantest in Hollywood to enter." (20) As a famous couple of the Roaring Twenties, the Fitzgeralds were often invited to join the

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(16) Magnetism, p.135
(17) Magnetism, Op.Cit., p.146
(18) Ibid., p.135
(19) Sklar, Op.Cit., p.255
(20) Magnetism, p.137

Hollywood parties, like those described in Magnetism. They met "people who had been in the early Griffith pictures," people who were already "considered to be the old crowd" in spite of their young age; "but they were different from those coming along now, and they were conscious of it." (21) Through these pioneers of the film industry, Fitzgerald draws an interesting parallel between those "who had worked in pictures before pictures were bathed in a golden haze of success" and the newcomers who take their triumph "for granted", like half a dozen or so of the women who "were especially aware of being unique." (22)

Like Scott and Zelda, "George and Kay were greeted affectionately; people moved over and made place for them" but Zelda felt disappointed by the Hollywood she found, having thought it gayer and less boring. She and Scott therefore decided to have some extra fun starting from the party their friend Carmel Myers gave when they arrived in Hollywood. Scott and Zelda gathered the ladies' purses and boiled them up in a giant pot in the kitchen. When Kay says: "Oh, we're such actors, George, you and I," Fitzgerald is thinking of their behaviour and quarrels during their stay in Hollywood as well as the novel he meant to write. Later, in Tender is the Night Rosemary says the same thing to Dick Driver: "Oh, we're such actors, you and I." (23) Like Dick Driver, George Hanaford must pay for his magnetism; he is blackmailed by a former script-girl, and cannot be safe until Helen Avery has gone out of his life, so that Dolores, his housemaid, could "rub her hands together in a gesture that might have expressed either ecstasy or strangulation, and watched the rising of the thin, pale California moon." (24)

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(21) Ibid., p.138
(22) Ibid.
(23) F. Scott Fitzgerald, Tender is the Night, Scribner, New York, 1934, p.173
(24) Magnetism, Op.Cit., p.154

Zelda wrote to Scottie about the parties they went to: "And we have seen so many pretty girls that I did not think there were so many in the world. How would you like to be a moving picture actress when you are a lady? They have pretty houses and lots of money." (25) While Scott was working on his script, Zelda was trying to learn to do the 'Black Bottom' dance. At night, they met again and went to parties like the one Samuel Goldwyn of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer gave for Constance and Nathalie Talmadge. Famous actress Colleen Moore remembers finding them at the street door, on all fours and barking. She let them in, but Zelda went upstairs and casually took a bath before joining the party. (26) In spite of appearances, the Hollywood community was highly conventional; the same year, H.L.Mencken wrote in the American Mercury: "I saw no wildness among the movie folk. They seemed to me, in the main, to be very serious and even somber people. And no wonder, for they worked like Pullman porters or magazine editors. When they finish their day's labor they are far too tired for any recreation requiring stamina. Immorality! Hollywood seemed to me to be one of the most respectable towns in America. Even Baltimore can't beat it." (27) It was because of this that the Fitzgeralds' behaviour was likely to irritate the influential people and make enemies in the studio.

Scott worked hard on his script for almost eight weeks before it was finished. Zelda wrote to Scottie: "He says he will never write another picture because it is too hard, but I don't think writers mean what they say about their work." (28)

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(25) Milford, Op.Cit., p.130
(26) Ibid., p.30
(27) Quoted in Brownlow, Op.Cit., pp. 40-41
(28) Milford, Op.Cit., p.130

Griffith's order for --- who is a colorless in the life as her pal, ---. But I am not averse to taking all the shekels I can garner from the movies." (56) Fitzgerald was not even afraid that Hollywood would "put on the movie in a different spirit from the way it was written." (57)

Determined to challenge the bourgeois conventions, the young author was even more eager to become rich. This contradiction is fully expressed in a letter he wrote to James Branch Cabel in February 1921, in which he announced: "I'm about to sell my soul. . .and go to the coast to write one moving picture." (58) However, it is difficult to believe that Fitzgerald was concerned only with the financial possibilities of the movie. His definition of himself as an entertainer and a spokesman for a whole generation made him show openly his interest in the most popular form of expression. As if he wanted to establish his own definition as an entertainer and his college-boy dream of being both the new Tarkington and the new Bernard Shaw of the American theatre, Fitzgerald decided in 1922 to "crash Broadway with a play." (59)

To Maxwell Perkins he wrote that he was writing "the best American comedy to date" and that it was going to make him rich forever, adding: "It really is, I'm so damned tired of the feeling that I'm living up to my income." (60) Fitzgerald wrote and revised the play many times and tried to convince several producers on Broadway before Gabriel's Trombone changed into The Vegetable, or from President to Postman. The play was again revised when Fitzgerald settled in Great Neck, Long Island, and was at last accepted in April. It opened in Atlantic City in November and was a "colossal frost." (61)

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(56) Letters, p.486
(57) Ibid.
(58) Ibid., p. 488
(59) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.27
(60) Letters, p. 179
(61) F.G.W.Cross, Op.Cit., p.40

Fitzgerald had been sure he was going to crash Broadway, "but Broadway sent its scouts to Atlantic City and quashed the idea in advance." (62) On opening night, many walked out during the second act and a week later the production was abandoned. Fitzgerald had failed in his attempt to make the audience laugh at the story of Jerry Frost, a railroad clerk, who dreams of becoming President of the United States. The author's satirical criticism of the American 'Log Cabin to White House' was more intellectual and less hilarious than he had supposed. "After the second act, I wanted to stop the show and say it was all a mistake, but the actors struggled heroically on." (63)

It was the end of Fitzgerald's dreams of wealth and success through playwriting. The Vegetable was a failure and the Fitzgeralds, who were living in Great Neck on a grand scale, were heavily in debt. It was the beginning of a moral and financial bankruptcy "linked up with Bacchic diversions." (64)

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(62) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p. 17
(63) F.Scott Fitzgerald, Afternoon of an author, How to live on $36,000 a year (Princeton Univ; Library,Princeton, N.J. 1957)
(64) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.26

CHAPTER FIVE

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MOVIES ON FITZGERALD

This Side of Paradise is not only a record of the start of a social revolution but also a picture of America in the early twenties. The country is becoming emancipated from the inhibitions of the nineteenth century. In 1920, the working classes and the young people tried to find the picture of their generation on the screen, and so did Fitzgerald's characters. Amory "pictured the happy party jingling along snowing streets, the appearance of the limousine" (1) and Myra "pictured an all-night tobacco debauch." (2) Giving Myra's imagination "time to picture dark horrors", Amory announces: "I went to the burlesque show last week." (3) The narrative is already visual and naïve as it was in the early films. Fitzgerald's film, however, is a 'talkie'. The sound of the gramophone and the trumpets or the songs of the singers fill the soundtrack with the popular tunes of the Jazz Age. Amory's glimpse of New York's "vivid whiteness against a deep blue sky had left a picture of splendour that rivalled the dream cities in the Arabian Nights." (4)

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(1) This Side of Paradise, Op.Cit., p.18
(2) Ibid., p.22
(3) Ibid., p.32
(4) Ibid., p.35

The author recalls his trips to New York when he was in St Paul. His love for the big city was inseparable from his passion for the movies, the Girl and the theatre: "The play was The Little Millionaire with George M. Cohan and there was one stunning young brunette who made him sit with brimming eyes in the ecstasy of watching her dance." (5) The first image of this girl was Ina Claire's face in The Quaker Girl: "I wonder about actresses; are they all pretty bad?" (6)

When he entered the University, Amory discovered that the movies were the students' only pastime. He himself found the image of the post-war heroine on the screen emerging from her Victorian reclusion. Fitzgerald gives us an account of the atmosphere in a movie-house of the time: "After supper they attended the movies, where Amory was fascinated by the glib comments of a man in front of him as well as by the wild yelling and shouting:

'Clinch!'

'Oh Clinch!'

'Kiss her, kiss 'at lady, quick!'

'Oh-h-h!' " (7)

As he came out of the theatre amid the crowd pushing and yelling "Amory decided that he liked the movies, wanted to enjoy them as the row of upper classmen in front had enjoyed them, with their arms along the back of their seats, their comments Gaelic and Caustic." (8) Amory's attitude towards the movies is probably a reminiscence of Fitzgerald's own reactions not only as a boy but also as a young artist: "a mixture of critical wit and tolerant amusement. . .The movie thrived on caustic comment, but the men who made them were generally running it out." (9)

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(5) This Side of Paradise, p.35
(6) Ibid.
(7) Ibid., p.44
(8) Ibid., p.48
(9) Ibid.

Amory wanted to do "immoral acting" with the English Dramatic Association but decided to concentrate on "The Triangle Club, a musical comedy organisation that every year took a great Christmas trip." (10) Amory often refers to Bernard Shaw, whom he considers his model, but after the discussions, they "finished the day in a moving-picture show and went into solemn systematic roars of laughter." (11)

When at last Amory meets Rosalind, the Girl, the movies and the theatre become entwined in pieces of dialogue. The introduction to The Debutante could be considered as instructions for staging or screening as well. This is an example: "The time is February. The place is large,. . .a girl's room: pink walls and curtains and a pink bedspread on a cream-colored bed - pink and cream are the motifs of the room." (12) Everything is visualised and even coloured except that the movies were still silent and black-and-white.

Rosalind and Amory are always playing and acting:

"Exit Cecilia while Rosalind is combing her hair.

Enters suddenly Amory.

HE: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought. . .

SHE (smiling radiantly): Oh, you're Amory Blaine, aren't you?

HE (regarding her closely): And you're Rosalind." (13)

The instructions here contain a shooting plan. We have first a medium shot ≠ on Amory then a close medium shot ≠ on Rosalind considering him, then back to the first shot and at last a close-up when Amory regards her "closely".

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(10) Ibid., p.48
(11) Ibid., p.78
(12) Ibid., p.153
(13) Ibid., p.158

≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms

This Side of Paradise was a typical product of the early twenties; its success has been explained by the chronicle it offered of the post-war generation. Reviewers hastened to note the defects and the immaturity of the novel, but most of them failed to link its success to the new technique adopted by its author. Fitzgerald was among the first--if not the first--to introduce the cinematic structure into an American novel. This Side of Paradise cuts across the genteel tradition of the nineteenth century and belongs to the age of the movies. Amory's development is shown through a series of sequences ≠ and shots which seem not to be linked if we consider the traditional technique of the novel. "The technique," writes K.G.W.Cross, "is less impressionistic than cinematic, the narrative writing moving with the jerkiness of an early film." (14) Aaron Latham refers to an undated article written by Heywood Brain in the New York Times and mentioned in Fitzgerald's scrapbook in which the author said of The Far Side of Paradise: "Every move is a picture and there is a cameraman behind each tree." (15)

In 1920, Fitzgerald would have loved to act like Amory and Zelda as Rosalind, for they were the stars of the new age; but the project was delayed. Three years later it was revived, but this time Fitzgerald was asked by Famous Players to write what the author described as "a ten-thousand word condensation of my book." Fitzgerald received ten thousand dollars for the film rights and the adaptation. "This is not a synopsis, but a variation of the story better suited for screening," explained Fitzgerald, for whom the apprenticeship as a screenwriter had begun. (16)

≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms
(14) K.G.W.Cross, Op.Cit., p.25
(15) Aaron Latham, Op.Cit., p.35
(16) Wilson, B.F., interview with Fitzgerald in Crazy Sundays, Op.Cit., p.40

The treatment began with an introduction about what the author expected the movie to be. "The theme should be the struggle of the ideals of the young, as exemplified by Amory and Rosalind, against the snobbish and mercenary world into which they were born." Fitzgerald seemed to take the theme too seriously and thus lost a part of his humour and of the objective position he had adopted in the novel. "The spirit of the picture should be that of the book--the affairs of youth taken seriously." (17) According to Aaron Latham, the adaptation proposed by Fitzgerald seems like a melodrama where "at one moment, the heroine is reduced to tears, at another the hero is elevated to the lofty position of Christ-figure." (18)

Fitzgerald introduced some changes in the continuity, but gives many explanations instead of proposing a screen-shooting plan. Eleanor is, for example, "the spirit of wild jazz" while Rosalind is "the spirit of, on the whole, good jazz". The author did not fully realise that the word 'jazz' was as abstract and invisible as the movies were silent. "There is a new generation of movie patrons growing up who never lived in any age but the age of jazz music and wouldn't recognise the innocent country girl if they saw her--or if she existed." (19)

Contrary to what happens in the novel, Burne Holiday comes back and marries Rosalind. "They go off through the rain, Holiday driving, and the accident takes place. Holiday is killed." The hero did not conquer the debutante in the novel, because he is a "spoiled priest", thinks Mizener, and his dream of wealth is wiped out. When this treatment was written, Fitzgerald had married Zelda, Scottie was born and the ten-thousand dollar contract from Famous Players could make them think they were rich.

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(17) Ibid.

(18) Ibid., p.40
(19) Ibid., p.41

And so Amory appears as a saviour and marries Rosalind. Curiously, this adaptation is even less cinematic than the novel itself. Fitzgerald seemed to underestimate the Seventh Art and its audiences. The oversimplified adaptation he proposed looked like a melodrama designed for children. The same year, Chaplin directed The Pilgrim, Griffith Orphans of the Storm, Lang The Nibelungen, René Clair Paris qui dort and de Mille The Ten Commandments. In an interview given after This Side of Paradise was published Fitzgerald said: "I suspect it must be difficult to mold my stuff into the conventional movie form with its creaky mid-Victorian sugar. Personally, when I go to the pictures, I like to see a pleasant flapper like Constance Talmadge or I want to see comedies like those of Chaplin's or Lloyd's." (20) Fitzgerald proposed many changes like the "Christlike" look or the wedding scenes, but the film was never made and the author had to abandon for a while his Hollywoodian dreams.

Back in 1922, Fitzgerald wrote a much more prophetic novel called The Beautiful and the Damned. This was the story of Gloria Gilbert, a flapper who loses her beauty and never becomes a star, while the hero Anthony Patch, a novelist who starts with a successful and brilliant novel entitled This Side of Paradise, becomes an irrecoverable alcoholic who writes "trash for the movies." (21)

The movies are even more present in The Beautiful and the Damned than they were in the former novels. The technical advance over This Side of Paradise is as obvious as the change that took place in the motion picture from one work to the other. The film-making is now submitted to a highly-organised industry dominated by Jewish producers, personified in the character of Joseph Bloeckman.

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(20) Latham Aaron, Op.Cit., p.43
(21) The Beautiful and the Damned, Op.Cit.,p.342

Bloeckman was a showman who, as an immigrant, had followed his career from circuses through vaudeville shows into the movie industry, "just when the moving picture had passed out of the stage of a curiousity and become a promising industry." (22) Fitzgerald links Bloeckman's rise to his belonging to the Jewish world of show-business while the Puritan traditions of most Americans had deprived them from thinking of a career in the film industry. "The moving-picture industry had borne him up with it where it threw off dozens of men with more financial ability, more imagination and more practical ideas." (23) Joseph Bloeckman is Vice-President of 'Films Par Excellence' and does "a lot of business" with Gloria's father.

Before marrying Anthony, Gloria had met Bloeckman several times. "He had asked her to marry him, tendering her everything from a villa in Italy to a brilliant career on the screen." (24) Gloria laughed contemptuously but Fitzgerald insists that "he had laughed too." (25) Why not laugh, since his rise comes closely with the couple's inexorable slide down to degradation and despair? Bloeckman stands for the rising movies, the new breed of rich American as opposed to those rich from inherited wealth, and for action as opposed to dissipation. When Anthony meets him again at the end, he is an alcoholic, desperate physically and mentally. Bloeckman, who has changed his name to Black, is now a rich and respected producer. Gloria, who has always tried to be in the movies, goes to see him and asks him "to put (her) into pictures". (26) Anthony, who was "probably off drinking somewhere" shouts to Bloeckman's face: "Not so fast, you Goddam Jew!" (27)

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(22) The Beautiful and the Damned, p.83
(23) Ibid. p.83
(24) Ibid. p.114
(25) Ibid.
(26) Ibid. p.347
(27) Ibid., p.347

Bloeckman loses his temper and beats Anthony up. The young writer is a failure but Mr Black is still Bloeckman the immigrant Jew, wealthy or not.

This fight is representative of the conflict which opposes the movies to the literature. Anthony stands for the young yet corrupted American novel, while Bloeckman has the strength and the wealth of the new medium behind him. The interest of all the characters in the motion picture is founded on nothing more than money. Since the publication of "The Demon Lover", Dick's gains "had begun to swell unprecedently as a result of the voracious hunger of the motion-pictures for plots". For every story that contained enough 'action'--kissing, shooting and sacrificing--for the movies, "he obtained an additional thousand." (28)

Fitzgerald seems to suggest that the movies had acquired only his cheapest stories and this "kissing, shooting and sacrificing" may explain the failure of the author's adaptation of This Side of Paradise. What the motion-picture is seeking in a story still remains a mystery to the author. When Dick's novel was sold to the movies, "they had some scenario-man named Jordan work on it." (29) It drove Richard Caramel mad "because about half the movie reviewers speak of the 'power and strength of William Jordan's Demon Lover.' Didn't mention old Dick at all." Bloeckman explains, however, that when the contract mentions it, the original writer's name goes into all the paid publicity. (30) A few moments before, Dick enquired: "I hear all the new novels are sold the motion pictures as soon as they come out?" Bloeckman answers that what matters in a moving-picture "is a strong story. . .because so many novels are full of talk

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(28) Ibid. p. 184
(29) Ibid. p. 172
(30) Ibid.

and psychology. . .it's impossible to make much of that interesting on the screen.'
'You want plot first', said Richard brilliantly." (31)

Bloeckman was primarily interested in plots, but also in discovering stars like "Theda Bara, the prominent moving-picture actress." (32) Bloeckman plays the role of Famous Players' producer, who had proposed to Scott and Zelda to act their own life two years before. Gloria/Zelda is very excited at the prospect of "a brilliant career on the screen: 'I want to be a successful sensation in the movies. I hear that Mary Pickford makes a million dollars annually." (33) Bloeckman encourages her:"I think you'd film very well" but Gloria wants Anthony's view: "Would you let me, Anthony? If I only play unsophisticated roles?" Gloria wants to have a trial, which warns Anthony of how badly she wants to be an actress.

"It's so silly!" is Anthony's reply. "You don't want to go into the movies--moon around a studio all day with a lot of cheap chorus people," to which Gloria answers: "Lot of mooning around Mary Pickford does!" (34)

Anthony objects that "everybody isn't Mary Pickford" and adds that he hates actors.

As Gloria grows older, all she wants to do is to remain young and beautiful, to have money and to be a famous movie star. Every time Bloeckman reappears, Gloria tries to convince Anthony to let her go into the movies: "Blockhead said he'd put me in." (35) Anthony is tired of this 'Blockhead' interfering and getting richer as he becomes a failure and Gloria loses her youth.

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(31) Ibid.,p.83
(32) Ibid. p.72
(33) Ibid; p.177
(34) Ibid. p.178
(35) Ibid. p.251

At last Gloria, whi is now twenty-nine, gets her trial. In a chapter called The Movies (36) Fitzgerald makes the reader visit a studio. Bloeckman proposes to Gloria the role of a flapper in a film directed by Percy B. Debris. She is given a typewritten continuity ≠ and receives instructions just before the test. The director tries to get facial expressions and physical reactions, but Gloria cannot help "listening to the regular sound of the camera." (37) Mr Debris cannot make his decision before he has seen the rushes ≠ and the following day, Gloria receives a note from Bloeckman who abruptly announces that Mr Debris needs " a younger woman" for the part he has in mind. Nevertheless, since "the acting was not bad" he proposes that she play the part of "a very haughty rich widow" in the film. (38) When she looks in the mirror, Gloria realises how tired her features are: "Oh, my pretty face! Oh, what's happened?"

This 'Belle Dame sans Merci' has lost her looks and partly her mind. Anthony and Gloria then begin aristocratically waiting for Adam Patch to die to inherit his fortune, while Bloeckman, standing for the self-made man, in spite of his low beginning grows in wealth and style just like the movies. Neither Gloria no Anthony were able to act, while Bloeckman and the Motion Picture were the symbols of action. The once-successful writer Dick Caramel himself ends contemptibly; reviewers never mention his name without "a smile of scorn". He was accused of making a great fortune by writing trash for the movies, but "as the fashion in books shifted, he was becoming almost a byword of contempt." (39)

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(36) Ibid. p. 321

≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms

(37) Ibid., p.325
(38) Ibid., p.327
(39) Ibid., p.342

The Beautiful and the Damned is full of conversation about literature and the cinema and the author seems to complain about the difficulty of being a writer in an age dominated by the new medium even if he was one of the first totally confirmed American novelists. The Beautiful and the Damned was indeed promonitory in announcing fifteen years in advance the Fitzgeralds' failure and 'crack-up'. In 1936, Scott echoed to his prophetic writings: "I saw that the novel which at my maturity was the strongest and supplest medium for conveying thought and emotion from one human being to another, was becoming subordinated to a mechanical and communal art. . .As long past as 1930, I had a hunch that the talkies would make even the best-selling novelists as archaic as silent pictures." (40)

For the moment, the movies were still panting for stories and still helped Fitzgerald deal with his debts. In 1922 The Beautiful and the Damned was sold to Warner Brothers for 2,500 dollars, "which seems a small price," added Fitzgerald in a letter to Maxwell Perkins. "Please don't tell anyone what I got for it." (41) As usual, the novel was rapidly adapted and filmed. It starred Marie Prevost as Gloria, Kenneth Harlan as Anthony, and Harry G. Hyers as Bloeckman. The script had been written by Olga Printzlau and the movie was directed by William A. Seiter. One reviewer from St Paul described the film as "one of the most horrific pictures in memory." (42) Although there is no print ≠ of this version available, it is worth noticing that William Seiter--one of the earliest directors of First National--has gained a solid reputation as a film-maker. In 1938, he directed Room Service starring the Marx Brothers.

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(40) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.48
(41) Unpublished letter in Aaron Latham, Op.Cit., p.38
(42) James Gray, St Paul Dispatch, March 2nd 1926, p.15

≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms

The Beautiful and the Damned was followed the same year (1922) by a collection of stories called Tales of the Jazz Age.(43) These included May Day and The Diamond as Big as the Ritz, which count among Fitzgerald's best stories. Robert Sklar writes: "the author's first impulse was to borrow the language of the movies and call the book 'In One Reel'." (44) From the May Day riots ≠ to the rotten splendour of the Ritz-Carlton, Scott Fitzgerald openly explores and questions the implications of the American Dream. Once again, the story is told--or rather, photographed--by a young man named John T. Unger, sent to the most expensive school in the world. There he is befriended by a strange boy called Percy Washington, the son of Fitz-Norman C. Washington, owner of a diamond "bigger than the Ritz-Carlton Hotel." "The richer a fella is, the better I like him," replies John T. Unger. The author obviously plays on the symbolic names: Unger for Hunger, Fitz for Fitzgerald. The author's dilemma is shared between the personality of Unger the poor boy watching the wealthy people act, and Fitz-Washington who stands for the American Dream of limitless wealth.

Washington's wealth was so absolute that he was in the position to preserve the whole capitalist system and the social and economic values of all Americans. He was more powerful than the government which he corrupted. Built in the West, the Washington château is a Hollywoodian set to be compared only to Griffith's Babylonian set. Little Unger asks about the man who planned the "honeyed luxury" of the estate placed on top of the diamond; and Percy answers reluctantly: "I blush to tell you, but it was a moving-picture fella. He was the only man we found who was used to playing with an unlimited amount of money, though. . .he couldn't read or write." (45)

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(43) Tales of the Jazz Age, Scribner, New York, 1922
(44) Op.Cit., p.129
(45) The Diamond as Big as the Ritz in Tales of the Jazz Age, p.120

≠ See P.

In the same way that he was both attracted and repelled by the very rich, Fitzgerald felt both fascinated and disgusted by the movies endowed with "a more glittering and grosser power" (46) than literature. While in his bath, Percy proposes to watch a movie. "There is a good one-reel comedy in this machine today, or I can put in a serious piece in a moment, if you prefer it," suggests the black servant; (47) but the opulence proves a nightmare, and Percy tries to escape. He is saved by the aeroplanes of the United States bombing the Washington estate in a scene which could have been imagined by Fritz Lang in Metropolis, three years later. Planes bombing a mountain of diamond is a fine cinematic conception. Amid the sound of bombs and explosions stands Braddock Washington, bearing an enormous diamond and "offering a bribe to God." The whole mountain is finally dissolved into tiny fragments. The story ends with a return to Reality, which may be harder to face than the false Dream: "Turn up your coat collar, little girl, the night's full of chill."

This ending could be compared to that in Jean Renoir's La Règle du Jeu when Christine asks her niece to stand straight in spite of Jurrieu's murder. "Jackie, on nous regarde" meets "His was a great sin who first invented consciousness. Let's lose it for a few hours. So wrapping himself in a blanket, he fell off to sleep." (48)

In 1923, Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald worked together on a short story called Our Movie Queen based on Zelda's dream of becoming a star. In fact, Scott wrote only the last third of the story and revised the text, adding a happy ending as usual. Published in the Chicago Sunday Tribune, this story was more or less forgotten until Matthew J. Bruccoli included it in Bits of Paradise. (49)

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(46) The Crack-up; Op.Vit., p.49
(47) The Diamond as Big as the Fitz, Op.Cit.,p.
(48) Ibid., p.138
(49) Bruccoli, Op.Cit., p.83

Gracie Axelrold elected Queen of New Heidelberg is chosen by Mr O'Noy the director to star in the film "New Heidelberg of Our Middle West". Gracie attends all the rehearsals and watches the Indians' assault on location. The day of the preview, Gracie does not recognise herself on the screen and feels ashamed and full of hatred for the movies. Finally, she does not go into the movies, but she buys all the movie-magazines and marries Joe Murphy. As for Mr O'Noy, he has a breakdown after which he is appointed by "Films par Excellence" to direct a film entitled "Love and Insanity;" The Fitzgeralds seemed to have overcome the crisis caused by Zelda's longing to act, and are now looking askance at the movies as if Gloria Gilbert and Anthony Patch had taken their revenge on "Films par Excellence."

Before cooperating on Our Movie Queen Scott had started a new novel, so they decided to go and live in Great Neck with several celebrities for neighbours. These were people like Gene Buck, who was known as the great Ziegfeld's closest assistant in the 'Follies' ≠, Herbert Bayard Swope, the famous sports reporter, Allan Divan, the producer and director, Lillian Russel and G.M. Cohan. Their best friend was Ring Lardner, who sent a poem to Zelda to say good-bye:

"It's you and I back home again
To Great Neck, where men are men
And booze is three-quarters water."

The Fitzgeralds were fleeing Long Island in an attempt to put some order into their riotous existence. In this period, the middle of the twenties, Scott badly wanted to get back to work on his novel, which was designed on the model of the Great Neck show business community.

≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms

The Great Gatsby [50] was published in April 1925. It was a critical rather than a financial success. Maxwell Perkins called Scott up in Marseilles that the reviews were enthusiastic but the sales uncertain. Fitzgerald received letters of praise from Gertrude Stein, Edith Wharton and T.S.Eliot, which convinced him that he had attained the peak of his mastery of art and technique. Following his quest for a new moral perspective, the author keeps on questioning the American Dream. Gatsby is not a legitimate member of the show-business community in Great Neck, he is accepted because he is the product of the same shows the very rich in the Roaring Twenties. He is strongly suspected of being a bootlegger and has accumulated a fortune like a movie star." [51]

Gatsby acts. "If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promise of life." [52] Milton Hindus insists on Gatsby's acting: "There is some evidence for believing that in making Gatsby resemble an actor who regarded life itself as his stage, Fitzgerald thought that he was drawing a universal human characteristic." [53] Gatsby's parties seem to have been prepared by Hollywood and Broadway set designers; his house with its "high Gothic library panelled with carved English Oak, and probably transported complete from some ruin overseas" [54] is a Hollywoodian whim designed for Ernst Lubitsch's Bluebeard's Eighth Wife or René Clair's Fantômes à vendre. Like the big stars, Jay Gatsby "sprang from this platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God." [55]

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(50) F.Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby, Scribner, New York, 1925.
(51) See John H. Randall III, Jay Gatsby's Hidden Source of Wealth, Modern Fiction Studies, Summer 1967, pp.247-57
(52) The Great Gatsby, p.8
(53) Milton Hindus, F.Scott Fitzgerald: An Introduction and Interpretation, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, N.Y. 1968, p.42
(54) The Great Gatsby, p.51
(55) Ibid., p.105

Among the celebrities Daisy meets in Gatsby's house, there is a "ghostly celebrity of the movies." "The man bending over her", says Gatsby, "is her director." (56) ≠

According to A. Le Vot, this sentence is the key to the optical system on which the novel is technically based. (57) The star appears twice, always with her director bending over her. "Almost the last thing I remember was standing with Daisy and watching the moving-picture director and his star. They were still under the white plum tree and their faces were touching except for a pale, thin ray of moonlight between. It occurred to me that he had been slowly bending toward her all evening to attain this proximity, and even while I watched, I saw him stoop one ultimate degree and kiss at her cheek." (58)

Fitzgerald introduces a supplementary element of mystery with the characters of the creator and the creature facing the word in his process of creation. In the manuscript, Jordan informs us about the star and the director: "The man with her is her director." As the man is bending too closely over her, Daisy is afraid the star would slip "and spoil her hair." Gatsby suggested that Daisy give the star her hairdresser's address and thus become famous. The star is her director's creature, but Daisy feels superior and refuses to be modelled by Gatsby. Gatsby is a demiurge and now Daisy is afraid that "some authentically radiant young girl" would "blot out" her lover's devotion "with one fresh glance at (him)." (59)

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(56) The Great Gatsby, Op.Cit., p.112
(57) André Le Vot, Francis Scott Fitzgerald:The Great Gatsby (Armand Colin, Collection U2, Paris 1969)
(58) The Great Gatsby, Op.Cit., p.114
(59) Ibid., p.110

≠ Among Gatsby's guests are also Newton Orchid, who controlled "Films par Excellence" and Arthur McCarthy, also connected with the movies. They appear in most of Fitzgerald's work, notably The Beautiful and the Damned, The Great Gatsby, Tender is the Night and Our Movie Queen, written with Zelda.

Nick was now looking at the parties "through Daisy's eyes" (60) The glances of owl-eyes and the eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckelburg with their enormous spectacles are the mirrors in which the destiny of a whole community is reflected. "God sees everything," says Wilson when his wife is killed. (61) They are like a gigantic screen upon which everyone plays his own role under Gatsby's direction. Everyone, that is, but Daisy, who killed his capacity for creation and thus caused his death. When Gatsby waves his hand in a gesture of farewell to his guests, he is standing in the porch, alone and solemn. From the porch he watches the bacchic parties in his garden. Wrapped in his dream, Gatsby stands superior at the top of the steps: "he stood on those steps, concealing his incorruptible dream, as he waved them good-by." (62)

From the technical point of view, certain objects play an important part in the narrative, as they do in the movies. Gtasby has a swimming-pool just like the star of Billy Wilder's Sunset Boulevard. Wilder was probably using the visual effect of Gatsby's body floating in the middle of the pool, when he filmed from the bottom of the pool the screenwriter shot by the extravagant star. The end of a chapter is like the end of a cinematographic scene.

The gardener discovers Wilson's body "on the grass a little way off, and the holocaust was complete." (63) Wilson had been driven to Gatsby by the indication of the open yellow car and also because everybody leaves his own trackson his way to death, just as happens in Fitzgerald's films. Here the tracks wre very clear and cannot be obliterated. The past, the dream, the present interfere and Gatsby "paid a high price for living too long with a single dream."

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(60) Ibid., p.111
(61) Ibid., p.166
(62) Ibid., p.154
(63) Ibid., p.168
(64) Ibid., p.169

Gatsby is paying for the betrayal of the Great American Dream, for believing too long in the green light for which he had come a long way. Long Island is, as A. Le Vot points out, a microcosm of all America, where the East Egg stands for the new splendour and the West Egg for nostalgia. "West Egg annonce aussi l'Ouest que décrira The Last Tycoon, la dernière frontière des illusions, Hollywood."

In his descriptions, Fitzgerald gives us rather precise indications on the distances, which enables us to visualise the whole microcosm.

"I want to be extravagantly admired again," wrote Scott to John Peale Bishop.(65) Unfortunately, the novel was far from attaining the seventy-five thousand copies its author expected and Fitzgerald, depressed by Perkins's telegramme, replied: "In all events I have a book of good stories for the fall. Now I shall write some cheap ones until I've accumulated enough for my next novel." This "next" novel was to be published almost ten years later! As had become a habit, he would turn to the movies of his plans came to fail: "I'm going to quit, come home, go to Hollywood and learn the movie business. I can't reduce our scale of living and I can't stand this financial insecurity."(66)

The Great Gatsby was however adapted for the stage by Owen Davis and gave Fitzgerald a feeling of security for a while. It opened on Broadway in February 1926 and was directed by George Cukor, who later gained a solid reputation as an eminent film director with movies like David Copperfield, Little Women, The Women, A Star is Born, The Girls, My Fair Lady.

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(65) Letters, p.377
(66) Letters, p.199

Fitzgerald had worked on the first script of The Women, but the scenario was finally signed by Anita Loos and Jane Murfin.

Scott and Zelda were told by Salies-de-Bearn how successful the play was on Broadway. Zelda wrote; "We had a play in Broadwayand the movies offered us $60,000, but we were china people by then and it didn't seem to matter particularly." (67) In fact, the amount of profits from stage and screen sales totalled about forty thousand dollars; but at least Scott had the Broadway hit he had dreamed of as a young artist. He never saw the play but read the reports. One of them quoted by Arthur Mizener said: "The Great Gatsby in the theater is at least half as satisfactory an entertainment as it is in the book." (68)

Andrew Turnbull tells the extravagant visits to Paris made by the author and James Rennie, the actor who played Jay Gatsby on Broadway. With the movie and stage rights, Scott did not feel like working and his entire production sank to nothing from February 1926 to June 1927. Instead, he left with Zelda for Antibes with the Murphys, where he often met Ernest Hemingway and Donald Ogden Stewart, a script-writer who was to remain among his best friends. (Stewart was to be banished by the McCarthy Commission of Anti-American Activities after World War II).

One of Scott's pastimes during that summer was to take amateur films and notes on the gay elements of the American society "divided into two main streams, one flowing towards Palm Beach and Deauville, and the other, much smaller, towards the summer Riviera." (69)

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(67) Milford, Op.Cit., p.118
(68) Mizener, Op.Cit., p.210
(69) Echoes of the Jazz Age, in The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.15

Fitzgerald did not yet know that he would have to change from amateur into professional a few months later. Mizener wrote that the movies "offered Fitzgerald what always drew him, a Diamond-as-Big-as-the-Ritz scale of operation, a world 'bigger and grander' than the ordinary world." (70) Just like Gatsby, Fitzgerald needed much money to finance his dreams: Hollywood was the author's form of bootlegging ("writing trash for the movies").

Fitzgerald seems to have paid little attention to the first adaptation of The Great Gatsby written for Paramount by Elisabeth Meehan, the former dancer of Ziegfeld Follies, and who was later to adapt Dickens to the screen. The film, directed by the notorious Herbert Brenon (Peter Pan 1925, Beau Geste 1926) starred famous actors like Warner Baxter (Gatsby), Lois Wilson (Daisy), Neil Hamilton (Nick) and William Powell (Wilson). The movie version of The Great Gatsby was a commercial success but did not help much in selling the novel. According to Photoplay, quoted by Olivier Comte, " l'intérêt passait de Gatsby à Daisy." (71) After this silent version there were two other adaptations to come, one in 1949, just before the Fitzgerald Revival, and the latest in 1974. These three versions are quite different from each other, and will be compared in the next chapter.

While he was in Antibes, Fitzgerald had conceived The Melarky Case, later to be Tender is the Night. At the outset, it was the story of Francis Melarky, a successful Hollywood technician, who went to the Riviera for a holiday with his authoritative mother. Zelda's ill-health and lack of money drove the Fitzgeralds back to America where Scott intended

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(70) Mizener, Op.Cit., p.180
(71) Cinéma 70, N° 148, p.95

to work hard on his novel. Instead he received on the last day of 1926 a telegramme from John W. Considine, a director at First National Pictures, which said:

> Am still interested in getting fine modern college story for Constance Talmadge and would like to have you work on story with me in Los Angeles Stop In order to familiarise yourself with screen personality of Miss Talmadge would you like to see following pictures . . .Familiar with your career and work in fact believe I was at Yale while you were at Princeton therefore it ought to be easy to us to understand one another and work well together. (72)

So at thirty-one, the novelist began the year 1927 with a new career. As usual, Fitzgerald would be mysterious about this new job perhaps because he was afraid it would not work. On January 4th 1927 he told his editor Maxwell Perkins: "Going to the Coast for three weeks Confidential address: First National Pictures Hollywood. Happy New Year." (73)

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(72) Quoted by Latham, Op.Cit., p.49
(73) Ibid., p.50

CHAPTER SIX

TWO VERSIONS OF THE GREAT GATSBY . . .

In 1949, Paramount decided to release its own version of The Great Gatsby. At that time Fitzgerald was almost completely forgotten by all but a few people working on his life and works. Arthur Mizener was preparing The Far Side of Paradise (1951) and Budd Schulberg his Disenchanted (1950). These two books being the starting point of Fitzgerald's revival, the 1949 version of The Great Gatsby had to some extent played the part of a preview in the campaign.

The production was not ranked an 'A' film, and was released in black-and-white without any special care. Success did not yer depend on reviews; it was rather determined by the stars. Paramount's leading idol was then Alan Ladd, the enormously popular "tough guy." It seems that Alan Ladd himself was dreaming of playing the role of Jay Gatsby and helped the project go into production. The star was reputed to have some similarity of feature with the extinct writer; perhaps he was tired of playing the hard fellow, or perhaps he wanted to add a prestige film to his filmography, and to try his hand at a new kind of assignment.

In any case, he had insisted on the making of the re-make; but his fans never accepted him as the genteel romantic hero in the Fitzgeraldian tradition. They expected him to shoot and fight, and phrases such as "old sport" would much more fit an actor like Robert Redford, who was to star in the 1974 version of The Great Gatsby. There are some apparent similarities between the two actors and both look a little like Fitzgerald himself who remains far and away the central character in the book.

Alan Ladd's performance was the film's basic--if not sole--accomplishment even if he failed to attract his traditional audiences. He was gorgeous in the way Fitzgerald wanted Gatsby to be, and proved his ability to soften his looks and acting. He had known himself such a tremendous and sweeping success that he could question Gatsby's dream as his own. Climbing from poor origins and limited education, he climbed to the position of an Olympian god and was more convincing than Robert Redford who, in comparison, looks rather like a model of the Hollywood establishment.

In Elliot Nugent's film, Jay Gatsby was a complete mystery, while Jack Clayton and Francis F. Coppola in the book's third adaptation provided the spectator with many hints about the hero's links with what we would call today the 'Mafia'. In the 1949 version, Gatsby appears as a naive romantic hero rather than a gangster or a social climber, while the 1974 re-make introduces him as half-gangster, half-social climber. He became rich only to reach Daisy's moneyed world. Alan Ladd's interpretation of the character gave the special flavour to the story. Gatsby was a mysterious millionaire who invited people he never met because of the emptiness of his secret life. "Un être vous manque, et tout est dépeuplé," he would say after Lamartine. Time Magazine was more down to earth: "Ladd looks about as comfortable as a gunman at a garden party," it wrote on July 25th 1949. Yet the quality of his acting and even his small stature made him look more like Gatsby that Redford was to twenty-five years later.

In the second adaptation, Betty Field was Daisy and MacDonald Carey, Nick Carroway, while Ruth Hussey was Jordan and Barry Sullivan Tom Buchanan. Compared to the 1974 version of the film, the cast seems inadequate and

sometimes poor, particularly when Barry Sullivan was concerned. Tom Buchanan, a brutal, selfish, bourgeois character was much better tailored for Bruce Dern who played the part in the Jack Clayton film. Shelley Winters' features seem closer to Fitzgerald's description of Myrtle Wilson: "faintly stout," with "no facet . . .of beauty; . . .a woman in the middle thirties." (1) That is more Shelley Winters than Karen Black.

Elliot Nugent who directed the second version was a theatre man as well as a cinematographer. When Film Fan Monthly interviewed him about The Great Gatsby, he said: "I felt very unhappy when I was making the picture. That was a time when I was depressed, and I felt that I was doing an injury to a man I greatly admired, Scott Fitzgerald. I felt I shouldn't be making the picture and Alan Ladd shouldn't be playing in it. But it finally turned out pretty well, and it got quite good reviews. Ladd was not quite up to it, but he got away with it." (2)

"In individual scenes," wrote a Time review, "Elliot Nugent's shrewd direction achieves an illusion of complete authenticity." (3) The most striking difference in the two talking versions is, apart from the use of colours, the stress laid on the costume designs in the last adaptation. In Elliot Nugent's film, the actors were wearing clothes that could have been confused with those of 1949. In the 1974 version, Theoni V. Aldredge, the costume designer, gave each character clothes corresponding to his personality

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(1) The Great Gatsby, p.31
(2) Film Fan Monthly, N° 154, London, April 1974
(3) Ibid.

The story was called Lipstick and Fitzgerald had worked under the control of John Considine. According to Frances and Albert Hackett, this Considine had a rather bad reputation among writers, excercising constant censorship and often missing the point. (29) He refused, for instance, to take on Fred Astaire, who was already a star on Broadway, because he thought his test was "awful." (30) Even more serious was Fitzgerald's disagreement with Constance Talmadge on the character she was to play. Later, in Tender is the Night, Rosemary will tell director Earl Brady that she will probably sign with First National or keep on with Famous Players. (By the time the novel was published, the two companies had merged into Warner Brothers). Brady offers her a star part in his next picture: "Rather make a picture with you than any girl since Constance Talmadge was a kid."

"Why don't you come back to Hollywood?" asks the star.

"I can't stand the damn place," replies the director.

But for Rosemary, "The Mediterranean world was less silent now that she knew the studio was there." (31)

Fitzgerald's attitude towards Hollywood was composed of attraction and disdain. Like Gatsby, he is enchanted and repelled by his "incorruptible dream." Dolly Caroll, the heroine of Lipstick, is a collector of pictures, mainly of stars and flappers, pinned up on her cell walls. The story continues to tell how Dolly, freed from prison, tries to be a success. She is even invited by University professors compared to prison guards. (32) Dolly attracts everybody with her magic magnetic lipstick; but a newspaper debutante steals it, and almost lands in jail. However, there is a happy ending, and Dolly wins the man she loves.

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(29) Latham, Op.Cit., p.54
(30) Latham, Op.Cit., p.54
(31) Tender is the Night, Op.Cit., p.90
(32) F.Scott Fitzgerald, Lipstick, in Princeton University Library.

After finishing his script, the author left Hollywood for Wilmington, Deleware, because Zelda was "crazy to own a house." Also, he had realised that working on the movies was very hard; after two months, he received a cable from John announcing: "Sorry . . .we have decided not to produce picture based on your story. Everyone thinks the beginning or premise contains exceptionally fine material but that rest of story is weak. Stop. "

Considine also suggested that the story should be submitted to Budd Schulberg of Famous Players to see if the story fitted Bebe Daniels, but strongly advised that Fitzgerald's name should not be mentioned. Scott did not take the advice seriously anyway, but felt deceived by his failure: "I had worked so desperately hard to develop a hard, colorful style," he later recalled in a letter to Scottie in 1937 (33) about what he called his three Hollywood ventures. "The first one was just ten years ago . . .Total result--a great time and no work. I was to be paid only a small amount unless they made my picture--they didn't."

Fitzgerald's failure could be explained by many elements, such as his "hard, colorful prose style" which was difficult to reconcile with a silent, black and white picture. Hollywood was still in the Age of Innocence and big productions based on straight action stories like Ben-Hur or The King of Kings. Lipstick was the wrong kind of story for Hollywood in 1927. Much later, directors like George Cukor or Blake Edwards became specialised in this kind of "hard, colorful" comedy style, later to be called the "American comedy."

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(33) Letters, pp.30-31

Fitzgerald's disagreement with Constance Talmadge probably accentuated the conflict with the studio. The man who was courting the star was himself a hero much like the tragic and romantic heroes of Fitzgerald: Irving Thalberg, head of MGM production since the age of twenty-five. Fortunately, Thalberg never married Constance Talmadge; and Fitzgerald had met the suitable hero for his tragedy.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SECOND TRIP, SECOND VENTURE . . .

Finally, Scott Fitzgerald went back home without the big money. He was determined to work on his new novel The Melarky Case, also known as The Boy who killed his Mother and later, Tender is the Night. The summer of 1927 began with some progress and the novel appeared like the story of Francis Melarky, a successful Hollywood technician on holiday on the Riviera with his mother. But the next year, Zelda's mental health showed the first signs of disturbance. Probably upset by Scott's flirtation with Lois Moran, Zelda decided to become a ballet dancer at twenty seven. With his novel still incomplete, Scott brought Zelda to Paris for lessons under the direction of Madame Luga Egorova. When they returned to the States, the gap between them had widened and in his turn, Scott began to crack, drinking too heavily and falling deeply into debt in spite of his continuing high income. He needed money and devoted his time to short stories for The Saturday Evening Post. After Fitzgerald had visited him in New York, H.L.Mencken, who had felt the cracking-up appear, told his assistant that Scott would never amount to anything unless he got rid of Zelda who had now become a burden on him. (34)

This was the result of the "wide-spread neurosis" which began to be evident by 1927 and which Fitzgerald later described in Echoes of the Jazz Age. Among the stories Scott signed for financial reasons, one was in fact written by Zelda, and published by The Post in 1930 under the suggestive title The Millionaire's Girl. Caroline decides to become a movie star

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(34) Milford, Op.Cit., p.139

in order to win Barry the millionaire who has let her down. "Maintenant je vais m'imposer au cinéma, un grand succès, pour le choisir une deuxième fois." (35) Caroline was so good in her first film that the director decides to give more importance in the editing to the character she played. ≠ "Une première d'Hollywood est un conte de fée," remembers the storyteller, who gives an account of the atmosphere surrounding a preview ## ten years before Nathaniel West's The Day of the Locust. Caroline becomes a celebrity and marries her millionaire, " et depuis qu'à cette occasionelle a renoncé au cinema, ils ont eu mutuellement beaucoup de reproches à se faire." (36)

That was three years ago, and since the story was published in 1930, it is possible to link the ending with the Lois Moran incident: "Il y a maintenant trois ans, et jusqu'ici ils se sont gardés l'un comme l'autre d'introduire une instance en divorce." (37) They did not divorce, but lived constantly on the edge of a break-down as Gloria and Anthony did in The Beautiful and the Damned.

Just before leaving America again for Europe in the spring of 1929, Fitzgerald wrote in a short story called The Swimmers: "Money is power. Money made this country, built its great and glorious cities, created its industries . . .It's money that harnesses the forces of Nature." The hero of the story left for Europe just as Scott Fitzgerald did: "I am sneaking away

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(35) Zelda Fitzgerald, The Millionaire's Girl, Bruccoli, Op.Cit., p.230 Translated into French by Jean Queval,

(36) Ibid., p. 232

(37) Ibid.

≠ Note: Given the strict rules under which a film was prepared and made in Hollywood, it is hard to imagine a Director changing the shooting-script or the editing, since few directors could even attend the editing process or the screenings. In The Last Tycoon Fitzgerald wrote: "directors did not appear at these showings--officially because their work was considered done". (p.65)

See Glossary of Technical Terms.

like a thief without leaving the chapters," (38) he wrote to Maxwell Perkins who was waiting for the new novel to be completed. The Fitzgeralds travelled to Algeria in February 1930 in an attempt to escape themselves. They visited Biskra, Bu Saâda, Constantine and Timgad as well as Algiers, of which Zelda wrote: "It is one of the places I should like to go again. Algiers will always remain colored for me." (39)

The Swimmers appeared in The Saturday Evening Post of October 19th 1929. Four days later, the New York Stock Market and its great crash made the twenties as past and archaic as the Middle Ages. As a symbol and a spokesman for the twenties, Scott Fitzgerald suffered the crash too and suddenly became an old writer of the past. Six months later, Zelda suffered a serious nervous breakdown. The tragedy came in social, personal and artistic forms to Fitzgerald. The Golden Era was over; in six months,he had turned into the most famous 'has-been' in American literature. The author was immediately conscious of the change that had occurred in his life and subsequently expressed his feelings in one of his best short stories, Babylon Revisited.

Charlie Wales is a chronicler of the change: "I have lost everything I wanted in the boom," he confesses. At least, Charlie wants his daughter back, because he now knows what killed Gatsby and caused Anthony Patch's decay; it was their attempt to substitute " à l'élan créateur de l'imagination la croyance au pouvoir catalyseur de l'élan." (40)

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(38) Letters, p.232
(39) Milford, Op.Cit., p.249
(40) André Le Vot, Introduction à F.Scott Fitzgerald, Short Stories, (Aubier-Flammarion, 1972), p.37

Fitzgerald proved his ability to understand the nature of his past, but his knowledge did not prevent his coming back to the heart of Babylon in November 1931 and living his second venture in Hollywood Revisited. ≠ The Fitzgeralds were living in Montgomery, Alabama, both to escape the effects of the Depression and to help Zelda recover from her breakdown, when an offer came through Scott's agent Harold Ober. It came from MGM wonder-boy Irving Thalberg and Fitzgerald accepted it for many reasons. He wanted to escape from the atmosphere of illness and quarrel in which he was living in Montgomery; furthermore, the forgotten hero of the Roaring Twenties had turned thirty-five that year and needed money to pay bills for the expensive school and sanatorium he had sent his daughter and wife to respectively. But money was not the only reason. Fitzgerald had come to Hollywood eager to wipe his first rankling failure of 1927 out of his memory, and try his hand again at film writing.

At MGM, he was going to work with Irving Thalberg. At the age of thirty-two, Thalberg had been an important figure in Hollywood for a dozen years. He was now the leading producer of the biggest film company confirming the impression he had made on Fitzgerald during his first visit, when the author had met the young producer. In The Last Tycoon, Fitzgerald recorded Thalberg's comments while they were having lunch in the MGM commissary:

> "Scottie, supposing there's got to be a road through a mountain and . . .there seems to be half a dozen possible roads . . .each of which, so far as you can determine, is as good as the other. Now suppose you happen to be the top man, there's a point where you don't exercise the faculty of judgement in the ordinary way but simply the faculty of arbitrary decision . . . when you're planning a new enterprise on a grand scale, the people under you mustn't ever know or guess that you're in doubt." (42)

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(41) F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Last Tycoon (Scribner, N.Y. 1941)
(42) Ibid., pp. 134-5

≠ Note: In a letter of 15/1/32 to Maxwell Perkins, he said: "I'm doing that Hollywood Revisited in the evenings and it will be along in, I think, six days--maybe better." Letters, p. 245

Fitzgerald had been struck by the shrewdness, ot rather, the "largeness" of the young man's remarks. Irving Thalberg liked writers: "I think I understand them," says Monroe Stahr. (43) His attitude towards them "was that of a Renaissance prince with a vast ptaronage of artists. He was tolerant of their human frailties." (44) In fact, Thalberg needed more and more scripts and was ready to pay high prices for screen properties. He bought original novels, stories or plays; then he employed five or more writers to adapt them. Fitzgerald was not the only writer Thalberg brought to Hollywood. The sound era made it even more necessary for Hollywood to use literary talents. Fitzgerald found there some people he knew, like Dorothy Parker, Donald Ogden Stewart, Dwight Taylor and other famous names like George S. Kauffman, Ben Hecht, George Kelly, Elliot Nugent, Anita Loos and even the English playwright, Frederick Lonsdale.

Thalberg needed writers to be readily available when he was hot satisfied with a previous treatment of a story. If it cost MGM a lot of money--most of the hundred writers working for the company received over one thousand dollars a week--it was less expensive than having a super-star like Jean Harlow or Clark Gable without a part for a few weeks. While discussing their projects and work, writers often discovered that they were working on the same script, which proved embarrassing for them; but Thalberg did not mind. He was the sovereign of a new Empire, maybe the only one that had not been affected by the Crash. He was the 'Last Tycoon.'

Thalberg preferred using original writing as raw material for scripts. This time, Fitzgerald was not assigned to an original story of the Lipstick kind. Thalberg was looking

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(43) Ibid., p.150
(44) Bob Thomas, Thalberg,life and legend, Banton Book, New York, 1970, p.163

for a story that would make Jean Harlow a star, because he knew how badly audiences wanted to identify with new stars. He therefore asked Fitzgerald to write an adaptation of The Red-headed Woman which was regarded as a Fitgeraldian novel by his imitator Katharine Brush.

Fitzgerald signed a five-week contract at twelve hundred dollars a week and would leave Hollywood with sixty thousand dollars whether the film was made or not. If he succeeded, he would have the prospect of a new contract and could thus consider the future optimistically on both financial and artistic grounds. Scott wrote from Hollywoodto Zelda that if his script was accepted, he might make seventy-five thousand dollars. Zelda, who felt anxious about her husband's new trip, was delighted and started making plans: "We could build us a house . . ." she replied, (45) asking him however not to mention again "Lily Dalmita or Constance". Zelda was still thinking of the silent era stars while Scott's new assignment was to compose something great for Jean Harlow. Thalberg wanted something of a sympathetic portrait of a girl who tries to climb the social scale by sleeping around with men who could help her, but it proved difficult for Fitzgerald to write the kind of script the chief executive had in mind.

In 1937 he wrote to Scottie about his second venture in Hollywood: "The second time I went was five years ago. Life had gotten in some hard socks and while all was serene on top, with your mother apparently recoovered in Montgomery, I was jittery underneath and beginning to drink more than I ought to. Far from approaching it too confidently I was far too humble. I ran afoul of a bastard called de Sano, since a suicide, and let myself

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(45) Milford, Op.Cit., p. 206

In his letter to Scottie, Fitzgerald called de Sano "a bastard" and charged him with the failure of the adaptation. De Sano, whom Aaron Latham introduces as a supervisor, was in fact a Rumanian-born citizen, an eccentric and brilliant director. He would probably have directed The Red-headed Woman if Fitzgerald's script had been accepted. ≠ Unfortunately, the treatment has neither been accepted nor preserved; all that remains of it is a seventy-page script with de Sano's corrections. The first part of it can be found in the Princeton University Library. The original script is not mentioned in the author's essays but Fitzgerald complained of de Sano's interference: "He changed as I wrote", which was a usual practice, but the successful novelist was unable to cope with this new situation. In a letter to Zelda's psychiatrist, Dr Forel, Scott Mocked Hollywood and gave the impression of feeling lowered by his job. Just before leaving Hollywood, he received a letter from Zelda to whom he had expressed his dissatisfaction: "I'm sorry your work isn't interesting. I had hoped it might present new dramatic facets that would make up for the tediousness of it. If it seems too much drudgery, and you are faced with the 'get-together-and-talk-it-over' technique--come home, Sweet. You will at least have eliminated Hollywood forever." (49)

When he left, Fitzgerald felt "disillusioned and disgusted, vowing never to go back" but at least he went away "with the money, for this was a contract for weekly payments." (50) Since The Red-headed Woman was a woman's story, Thalberg decided to ask one of Fitzgerald's friends, Anita Loos, to rewrite the script. De Sano himself was fired, although he wanted somebody

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(49) Milford, Op.Cit., p.201
(50) Letters, p.31

≠ Note: Marcel de Sano had been largely successful in 1925 with The Girl who wouldn't Work, based on a story by B.P.Schulberg.

else on the script, Thalberg decided that except the cast, everybody was going to move away from the project until he found people who "can get hot on it again." (51) Jack Conway, a successful director of the thirties, ≠ was called in to direct the film which starred as previously announced Jean Harlow, Chester Morris, Lewis Stone and Leila Hyams.

Having sworn never to return to Hollywood, Fitzgerald went back in 1937 with an MGM contract. One year before, Thalberg had died and one may recall what the writer Joel Coles had said of the death of producer Miles Calman: "What a hell of a hole he leaves in this damn wilderness--already!" (52) When Thalberg died in 1936, Fitzgerald wrote: "Thalberg's final collapse is the death of an enemy for me, though I liked the guy enormously." (54) As ever, Fitzgerald's fondness for the character is based on ambiguity and dilemma. In Crazy Sundays he remembers how he was fired by a man who attracted him as a romantic hero, the last of the Hollywood tycoons. In January 1932 Fitzgerald announced in a letter to Maxwell Perkins: "I'm doing that 'Hollywood revisited' in the veneings, and it will be along in, I think, six days--maybe ten." (53)

It is interesting to note the parallel established between Hollywood and Babylon in the novelist's mind. The first draft of the articles was incorporated in a short story called Crazy Sundays. The Saturday Evening Post and Scribner's rejected it and it was finally accepted by H.L.Mencken for the American Mercury for "financial value of name" suspected Fitzgerald.

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(51) The Last Tycoon, p.49
(52) Latham, Op.Cit., p.203
(53) Letters, p.245
(54) Thomas, Op.Cit., p.304

≠ Note: Jack Conway, revealed by The Red-headed Woman, is known for commercial successes like Too Hot to Handle (1938), Boom Town (1940) and Honky Tonk (1941), all starring Clark Gable.

He was wrong, for the story contained a sharp vision of Hollywood community which Mencken did not fail to notice. Fitzgerald's confusion came from his inability to understand that Mencken was the only one who dared to face the possibility of giving offence to people like Thalberg, Marion Davies or Norma
Joel Coles who is writing a continuity is introduced as a writer of twenty-eight, "not yet broken by Hollywood." He is delighted when he receives an invitation to a Sunday afternoon party at Calman's house: "The Marion Davies crowd, the high-hats, the big currency numbers, perhaps even Dietrich and Garbo and the Marquis, people who were not seen everywhere, would probably be at Calman's." Since Coles is described as "a young man of promise"--Fitzgerald was thirty-five--the author was most probably referring to his friend Dwight Taylor, Laurette Taylor's son. Coles, who "agreed that writers drank too much", promised himself that he would not do so this afternoon. In actuality, Dwight Taylor had come with Fitzgerald to chaperone him and prevent him from drinking, knowing what a heavy drinker Scott was. Coles is greeted by Stella Calman (Stella Walker, of course) whom he compliments on her baby. Norma Shearer the famous star and Mrs Thalberg at the same time also had a baby by the same period. As soon as Dwight Taylor moved off, Fitzgerald forgot his determination and took one cocktail, then another. "Possessed by the hunch, his blood throbbing with the scarlet corpuscles of exhibitionism," Coles-Fitzgerald announced to Norma Shearer that he wanted to sing, neglecting the fact that his exhibitionism was nothing in front of professional exhibitionists. It was a song about a dog, and, remembers Dwight Taylor, the superstar Ramon Navarro proposed to improvise a piano accompaniment. The guests gathered round "like people gathered at the scene of an accident." (55)

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(55) Dwight Taylor, Joy Ride, G.P.Putnam & Sons, New York, 1959, p. 241

For poor Fitzgerald, it was to be a deplorable accident. The song began with these words:

"In Spain, they have the donkey
In Australia, the kangaroo
In Africa they have the zebra
In Switzerland, the zoo
But in America, we have the dog
And he's a man's best friend."

In Crazy Sundays, Coles is dictating a burlesque based upon the film colony which only caused "the resentment of professional toward the amateur, of the community toward the stranger." (56) The only person who showed, or feigned, some sympathy was Norma Shearer who sent a telegram to Fitzgerald the following day: "I thought you were one of the most agreeable persons at our tea." Coles received exactly the same from Mrs Calman but he missed the point, for he thought it was "the sweetest thing I ever heard in my life." (57)

When he met Dwight Taylor, he realised how bad his exhibtion had been. "This job means a lot to me," he told him. "I hope I didn't make too much of a jackass of myself. I don't know why I chose yesterday of all days to go off. I always do that--at just the wrong time." (58)

With his script going the wrong way and de Sano on his tracks, Fitzgerald's bad performance hastened Thalberg's decision and the following week, the writer was fired as Thalberg had fired famous artists before him, particularly Eric Von Stroheim, one of the most gifted directors in film history.

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(56) Crazy Sundays, in Taps at Reveille (Scribner, N.Y., 1935) p.187
(57) Ibid., p.190
(58) Taylor, Op.Cit., p.246

The rest of Crazy Sundays concerns the marital problems of the Calmans until Coles's attempt to seduce Stella is doomed by a telephone call which announces Miles's death. "What a hell of a hole he leaves in this damned wilderness--already!" exclaimed Joel Coles five years before Thalberg's death. Fitzgerald had had forebodings about such a hero, as if, like Gatsby, he was too Great for this world. When he came back again to Hollywood, in 1937, Fitzgerald found a different atmosphere. Almost at once, he decided to write a novel on Hollywood: "Show me a hero, I'll write you a tragedy," he used to say. His second trip to Hollywood had at least provided him with a hero. The tragedy was soon to come.

CHAPTER NINE

TENDER IS THE NIGHT--IN HOLLYWOOD

After leaving Hollywood, Fitzgerald was determined to put an end to the novel he had started sixteen years before in Antibes. In May 1932, Scott found a house near Baltimore. It was called 'La Paix' and belonged to Mr and Mrs Bayard Turnbull. Maxwell Perkins remembers that Scott was still drinking heavily but at the same time working hard on Tender is the Night. The author noted in his ledger: "The novel now plotted and planned, never more to be interrupted." (1) Several drafts had been outlined before the novel was settled as Tender is the Night. From 1925 to 1930, Fitzgerald had based his work on The Melarky Case the story of a Hollywood cameraman who comes chaperoned by his mother to the Riviera for a holiday. Zelda suggested calling the novel 'The Boy who killed his Mother', for that was what happened at the end of this version. After his 1927 trip to Hollywood, Fitzgerald made Melarky eager to avoid the movie colony. When he learns that the director Earl Brady is making a picture in Monte Carlo, Francis tries to get in the film. "More than anything, he wanted to make pictures." The character of Earl Brady is probably based on Rex Ingram, as Genevieve and Michel Fabre suggest. (2)

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(1) Milford; Op.Cit., p.260
(2) Geneviève et Michel Fabre, Tender is The Night, U2 Collection (Armand Colin, Paris, 1969), p.226

Fitzgerald had met Ingram at the Murphy's. He possessed the Victoria Studios in Nice where he had directed famous runaway films like Mare Nostrum and the Garden of Allah.

After he had written a short story called The Rough Crossing, Fitzgerald gave up the Melarky version: "I'm working night and day on the novel from a new angle that I think will solve previous difficulties." The movies are not excluded from this new draft, which the author began in 1929. Fitzgerald uses this time a great deal of what he had observed during his 1927 stay in Hollywood. Francis Melarky is replaced as a leading man by Lew Kelly, a director who leaves for Europe with his wife Nicole. Just as in The Rough Crossing, a young girl named Rosemary tries to catch Kelly's eye in order to get into one of his films. Rosemary, who acts under her mother's influence, reminds us of Lois Moran, and the relationship between Lew and Nicole Kelly of that existing at that time between Scott and Zelda.

Before leaving for Hollywood in 1931, Fitzgerald had already abandoned the Kelly version. In the mean time, Zelda had suffered a break-down and her father died while Scott was in Hollywood. His trip without her had caused another break-down in January 1932 and Fitzgerald felt uneasy after his second failure as a scriptwriter. When he returned to his novel, he was obsessed by Zelda's mental insanity and his reliance on alcohol. The book was finished in early 1934 and published under the title Tender is the Night. In the final version, the setting is still the Riviera, and the protagonists a community of wealthy American expatriates; but the hero has become a notorious psychiatrist, Dick Driver, who falls in love with a patient, Nicole Warren. K.G.W.Cross considers that "Much more than a psychological novel, Tender is the Night is Fitzgerald's attempt to diagnose the sickness that money breeds." (3)

(3) Op.Cit., p.79

The presence of people like Earl Brady and Rosemary Hoyt is logical in this context and stands for the material sickness of the film community in the United States. "Rosemary Hoyt and her mother enter as if they entered on a silent theater stage," writes Robert Sklar, until the reader "learns that Rosemary herself is a motion-picture actress." (4) Fitzgerald has assimilated some of the motion-picture principles, for as Sklar goes on: "The stage is divided between the dark people and the light."

The first part of Tender is the Night is dominated by Rosemary's angle of vision; "the star of 'Daddy's Girl' is a girl without a daddy." (5) When she falls in love with Dick, she is making a compensation. This love will be "one of her greatest roles" and Rosemary is referring to Dick Driver as the extremely skilled director she was looking for. Like Lois Moran, Rosemary Hoyt looks "so young and innocent . . .embodying all the immaturity of the race," (6) while Dick and Nicole Driver represent "externally the exact furthermost evolution of a class." (7) After a lucheon, the Drivers, the Norths and Rosemary went to a projection room at Franco-American Films for a screening of 'Daddy's Girl.' When the lights went on, Dick simply said, "You're going to be one of the best actresses on the stage," (8) and Rosemary echoed: "I've arranged a test for Dick." Dr Driver rejects the offer, pretending he is "an old scientist" contrary to Fitzgerald who did go before the cameras when Lois Moran asked him to be her "leading man in a picture." (9)

In The Great Gatsby, Daisy manages to escape Gatsby's pretension to direct and create her. in Tender is the Night,

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(4) Sklar, Op.Cit., p.266
(5) Ibid;, p.267
(6) Tender is the Night, p.137
(7) Ibid., p.98
(8) Ibid., p.138
(9) Ibid.

Dick takes a superior attitude and refuses to be the creator or demiurge for Rosemary, who is then conceived as a product of beauty and innocence. And yet Dick Driver is an actor. "We're such actors, you and I," exclaims Rosemary (10) in exactly the same words used by Helen Avery to George Hanaford in Magnetism. Like Gatsby, Dick Driver is the "organiser of private gaiety, curator of a richly incrusted happiness." (11) In Fitzgerald's conception the artist of the post-Crash era should be a movie director and a psychiatrist together, if he is to express the 'widespread neurosis' of the thirties. Rosemary finds the two characteristics combined in Dr Dick Driver's complex personality: "Catapulted 'from the middle of the middle class' to the 'uncharted heights' of Hollywood, where dreams are translated into shadows, it seems to Rosemary that Dick has indeed recreated Eden." (12)

A product of a new art, Rosemary is still innocent, while Dick and Nicole, beautiful and insane, are the products of modern America threatened by powerful forces of disintegration. One of these forces is represented for Dick by the past: "Time stood still and then every few years accelerated in a rush, like the quick re-wind of a film;" and now that Nicole was cracking, "he could not watch her disintegrations without participating in them." (13) In the novel, time passes as in a movie and when Rosemary compares Dick to the "novelist just back from Russia," what appeared mainly was his "technique of moving many types." Her next phantasm illustrates her conviction of Dick's ability to direct a film: six of the "noblest relics of the evening" tell the night concierge of the Ritz that General Pershing wanted

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(10) Ibid., p. 144
(11) Ibid.
(12) K.G.W.Cross, Op.Cit., p.81
(13) Tender is the Night, p.190

caviar and champagne. What follows is a setting prepared for a shooting: "frantic waiters emerged from everywhere, a table was set in the lobby . . ." (14) The scene conceived in Rosemary's mind and angle is written like a shooting continuity.

When Rosemary and Dick discover Peterson's body, Dick thinks immediately of the 'Arbuckle Case' ≠ on which "the paint was scarcely dry." He fears for Rosemary whose "contract was contingent upon an obligation to continue rigidly and unexceptionally as Daddy's girl." (15) Dick himself argues about Rosemary's prettiness, introducing a restriction in his remark: "She was well directed," (16) implying that she needed either a director or a father every moment of her life. Rosemary herself is conscious of her dependence on screen and psychiatry together: "Of course, I Do Love Dick Best," but the director was leaving for Hollywood and "I think we ought to leave too." (17) Hollywood, "where all American women would be happy" echoes Kaethe Gregorovius. ✓ Fitzgerald had not forgotten Norma Talmadge, the girl Thalberg was courting and who had been supposed to star in Lipstick seven years before: "Norma Talmadge must be a fine, noble woman beyond her loveliness. They must compel her to play foolish roles." (18)

When Dick meets Rosemary years later in Italy, she is no longer a little girl but a woman. When Dick announces that he "had 'Daddy's Girl' run off just for myself," (19) Rosemary replies: "I have a good part in this one if it's not cut." She feels anxious not only for her career but also for her 'sex-appeal' which appeared clearly, she thought, in the rushes. ≠

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(14) Ibid., p.146
(15) Ibid., p.179
(16) Ibid., p.186
(17) Ibid., p.162
(18) Ibid., p.258
(19) Ibid., p.229
≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms
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Rosemary is at last a grown-up. Daddy's girl belongs to the past and her presence in the 'runaway' film colony increases Dick's jealousy and "feeling of dissatisfaction." "She wanted to be taken, and she was, and what began with a childish infatuation on a beach was accomplished at last." (20) Consciously or not, Fitzgerald is condemning his dream of innocence and beauty as symbolised formerly by Lois Moran. Hollywood is no longer a place for innocence. While Dick is having dinner with Hussein, he "told him preposterous tales" about Hollywood, pretending that "every hotel guest is assigned a harem." (21) By the end of the novel, Dick Driver has lost everything he cared for and started up a medical practice in Buffalo, "but evidently without success." (22) "Like the hero at the end of a Western movie," writes K.G.W.Cross, "the figure of Dr Driver recedes into the distance." (23)

When Tender is the Night was published in 1934 after so many years of toil and trouble, Fitzgerald failed to gain the attention of either the reviewers or the audience, selling no more than 13,000 copies. The Depression had represented a great blow to book sales but had also made it difficult for audiences to sympathise with failures like Dick Driver. Most of the reviewers missed the novel's depth and supreme quality; Fitzgerald again had to confront his conviction of himself as a failure and despite some demonstrations of support and esteem, he felt once again his old dilemma haunting him. As early as April 1934, he wrote to H.L.Mencken:" I am afraid I am going to have to violate your favorite code of morals--the breaking of engagements--because I've got to go to New York about trying to capitalise on my novel in the movies." (24)

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(20) Ibid., pp.232-33
(21) Ibid., p.278
(22) Ibid., p.334
(23) Cross, Op.Cit., p.89
(24) Letters, p.529

He badly needed money, but his work of art had failed to provide him with the necessary financial security. In a letter to Maxwell Perkins dated October 1936, Fitzgerald noted: "There is no likelihood that after the comparative financial failure of Tender is the Night that I should be advanced a sum as $36,000. The present plan, as near as I have formulated it, seems to be to go on with the endless Post writing or else go to Hollywood again." (25) The letter ended with the short comment: "My God, debt is an awful thing!"

Going back to Hollywood seemed to be the worst solution in 1936. Instead, Fitzgerald would try the possibility of selling the movie-rights but a big sale depended either on a "success d'estime" or on a literary and financial success, and Tender is the Night had gained neither. The novel failed to interest the movie studios. Fitzgerald decided to write a screen treatment with Charles Warren; they even made a list of actors and actresses who would eventually star in the film.

Katharine Hepburn, Miriam Hopkins , Dolores del Rio were suggested to play the character of Nicole Driver, while Dick should be chosen from among people like Fredric March, Robert Montgomery, Richard Barthelmess, Douglas Fairbanks Jr . . . Ronald Colman, George Raft and Ina Clair, the forgotten actress of The Quaker Girl were also named for the other characters. (26)

"Scott didn't know anything about adaptations," asserts Warren; (27) which is difficult to accept after two ventures in Hollywood and a literary experience pervaded with cinematic and technical references. It took Fitzgerald and his friend a few weeks

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(25) Letters, p.289
(26) Latham, Op.Cit., p.86

(27) Quoted in Latham, Op.Cit., p.92, from an unpublished letter to Bess Meredith.

to write their adaptation, which turned out to be quite different from the novel. The meeting of Dick and Nicole is caused by an accident which happens to the heroine. Dr Driver and his patient get closer "by coincidence" during another "accident" and their love is supposed to be underlined by "a melodywritten . . .by Charles W. Warren." Scott Fitzgerald seems to have insisted a lot on music as a means of expressing feelings. Again Dick Driver and Rosemary are brought together by an accident: during a car crash, "Rosemary is thrown against him in such a way that it looks as though he might have crawled over to her." Nicole herself begins a flirtation with Baklin, her teacher, but remains faithful to her husband. Once again, Dick is called upon to cure her of hysteria and the movie treatment ends without any separation.

Then Charles Warren left for Hollywood carrying various letters of introduction in order to sell the script. In one of these letters addressed to Bess Meredith, who had worked with him on The Red-headed Woman three years before, Fitzgerald introduced Warren as "the third best seller in the country and (he) seems to be about as inadaptable to treatment as was the carrot-topped tart of three years ago." (28) In the same letter, he reminds Bess Meredith of his "politeness to de Sano."

Fitzgerald sent another letter to George Cukor, who had directed the stage adaptation of The Great Gatsby in 1926 on Broadway and who was close to becoming a celebrity as a movie director after the success of Sylvia Scarlett. Warren in his turn wrote to Fitzgerald and eventually gave advice: "Lower your highbrow and help on some trash . . .They buy trash here.

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(28) Latham, Op.Cit., p.92. From an unpublished letter to Bess Meredith.

They're quite willing to pay high for it . . .If you would forget originality and finesse and think in terms of cheap melo-theatrics you would probably have made a howling success of your visits here and would likewise have no financial worries now." (29)

Maybe the ambitious young dramatist did not know how long Fitzgerald had been haunted by this old dilemma. Twelve years earlier, Dick Caramel was accused at the end of The Beautiful and the Damned of "making a great fortune by writing trash for the movies." (30) Nevertheless, Fitzgerald replied that he could not "cooperate at the moment but would if it isn't too like Merton of the Movies." (31)

In spite of his self-confidence, Charles Warren did not succeed in selling the treatment of Tender is the Night nor did he find a job in the studios for himself. He wrote to the author that the studios were not interested in the novel and, thinking that Fitzgerald was a millionaire, that it would cost them a lot of money. Fitzgerald was drinking too much and when the studios rejected his work, he wrote for Gracie Allen a ten-thousand-word adaptation for the radio, which also was rejected.

By the end of 1936, the author felt desperate and confessed in a letter to Maxwell Perkins: "For a whole year, I have been counting on such a break in the shape od either Hollywood buying 'Tender' or else of Grisman getting Kirkland or someone else to do an efficient dramatisation." Fitzgerald had waited for a stage adaptation to come but it did not; and he thought he knew why: "I know I would not like the job, and I know that Davis ## who had every reason to undertake it after

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(29) Turnbull, Op.Cit., p.257
(30) Op.Cit., p.342
(31) Latham, Op.Cit., p.93

Note: Owen Davis had successfully adapted a Broadway version of the Great Gatsby in 1926, directed by George Cukor.

the success of Gatsby simply turned thumbs down from his dramatist's instinct that the story was not constructed as dramatically as Gatsby and did not readily lend itself to dramatisation."(32)

And yet in 1938, while Fitzgerald was in Hollywood, he heard of a dramatist named Mrs Edwin Jarett who had written a stage version of Tender is the Night for Broadway. Fitzgerald seemed impressed by the quality of the treatment and congratulated its author, adding that it should "get by Broadway first" because he assumed that "Bob Montgomery and others here would love to play the part" in the movie version. (33)

The play did not go to Broadway and no film was made in Fitzgerald's lifetime. Nevertheless, between Tender is the Night and the movies there was a long, non-performed love story. When the novel was published, the author had sent copies to many people from the film colony in Hollywood: Bess Meredith, Robert Montgomery, Fredric March, Irving Thalberg, David O. Selznick, Lilian Gish. To Lilian Gish he added the inscription: "For Lilian Gish, My Favorite Actress." Thalberg for his part had read the novel and probably decided that it was the wrong kind of story for a picture. When he died in 1936, Fitzgerald was in Asheville, North Carolina, where Zelda was a patient in the sanatorium. From there he wrote: "Thalberg's final collapse is the death of an enemy to me, though I liked the guy enormously . . .I think. . . that he killed the idea of . . either Hopkins or Frederick March ≠ doing 'Tender is the Night." (34)

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(32) Letters, p.288
(33) Letters, p.587
(34) Op.Cit., p.304

≠ Note: Fitzgerald was a legendary bad speller. The second actor he refers to was Fredric March. Although neither of them was under contract to MGM, it is possible to imagine Thalberg's influence killing a project in any other company.

David O. Selznick, who was vice-president of MGM, received the book and the movie treatment and in March 1934, three weeks after the book was published, he sent a memorandum to one of his stor editors, a certain Mr Marx: " 'Tender is the Night'--I cannot get anything out of this synopsis, but I am such a Scott Fitzgerald fan that I hope to be able to read the book. If you hear of any company being about to close, I wish you would advise me." (35) David Selznick seemed to be really very attracted by the novel, since he wrote at the end of his life: "It is one of the great regrets of my career that I did not make 'Tender is the Night.' " (36) Selznick was vice-President at MGM but Irving Thalberg as Chief Executive could launch or stop any project, which explains why Selznick did not succeed in his idea. After Gone with the Wind which he produced for MGM he formed his own company, the 'David O. Selznick Productions, Inc.' in 1941.

"I sold all the stories that I owned," (37) Selznick remembers, and one of them was certainly Tender is the Night. "With Ivan Moffat I prepared what I thought, and still think, was a really outstanding script. Unfortunately, I sold the package, including Miss Jones, to Twentieth." (38) He would have later at least two reasons to regret this sale: in selling the package, he had sold his own wife-to-be. ≠ Moreover, when The Far Side of Paradise by Arthur Mizener came out (39) everybody seemed to discover Scott Fitzgerald. A few days after the book was published, Selznick wrote to his assistant: "I am really

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(35) David O. Selznick, Memo, ed. Rudy Behlmer (MacMillan, 1973)p.72
(36) Ibid., p. 423
(37) Ibid., p. 291
(38) Ibid;, p. 423
(39) Boughton Miffin, Boston, 1951

≠ Note: In 1945, Jennifer Jones divorced star Robert Walker and married David O. Selznick in 1949.

more eager than I can say about this biography, because I am fearful therewill be competition because of the growing interest in Fitzgerald." (40) One of the obstacles to production came from Mrs Frances Lanahan, Fitzgerald's daughter, who objected to referring to Zelda as 'insane.' Selznick apparently wanted to take the occasion of the new interest in Fitzgerald to make an adaptation which would at the same time be biographical: "The relationship with Fitzgerald was a good one. I kept up contact with him, and--unsolicited--he made it a practice to send me an autographed copy, with a personal sentiment, of each of his books as it appeared, and I of course value them highly for my library." (41)

The same year, Selznick suggested that Tender is the Night or the story based upon the life of Scott Fitzgerald should star Vivien Leigh or Jennifer Jones along with Laurence Olivier, who seems to have personally solicited the role, especially if the film were based on Fitzgerald's life. Despite his great admiration for Vivien Leigh, the producer added: "Jennifer and I have both had our hearts set on her playing this role for several years now." He had tried to persuade Mrs Lanahan to let him make a film based on the story of her parents, "knowing," he specified, "my long personal friendship and professional associations with Fitzgerald."

However, the Fitzgerald revival came with some personal blows to his intimate reputation, though articles or books like Budd Schulberg's novel The Disenchanted--which drew heavily on the author's life-- or Sheilah Graham's The Beloved Infidel. Under these conditions, Frances Lanahan was opposed to any biographical filming of Tender is the Night; but Selznick was attached to his

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(40) Selznick, Op.Cit., p. 443
(41) Ibid., P. 444

idea, and to the title as well: "one of the best I have ever heard," he thought. (42) He suggested George Cukor, for he was one of the few directors "who actually have the feelings of the period."

Cukor, who had directed The Great Gatsby on the stage was eager to do it. "Cary Grant, Jennifer Jones, Scott Fitzgerald, George Cukor, 'Tender is the Night': how could you resist it?" exclaimed Selznick. Failing to persuade Fitzgerald's daughter, the producer contacted some writers about his adaptation, after directors like William Wyler and Fred Zinneman had told Selznick of the enormous problems involved in getting the story into a story suitable for screenplay. To Robert Chapman, Selznick gave, in 1956, very keen advice and orientations as to how to adapt the novel: "I have banned the folly of being faithful to a book that had failed." Proving his perfect knowledge of Fitzgerald's works and life, Selznick suggested that the audience should "see and hear what Fitzgerald knew and lived through." He went through the detailed relationship between Dick and Nicole Driver and compared it to "the great tragedy of what the failure of this book did to Fitzgerald."

After Robert Chapman, Selznick engaged in 1958 the French novelist Romain Gary (43) to adapt Tender is the Night warning him, however, that it was "a verydifficult assignment. Able writers have come a cropper on it." Above all, Selznick hoped that Gary would "preserve every Fitzgerald value."

In 1959, the film was still not made, and Mrs Selznick (Jennifer Jones) was growing impatient. She suggested William Holden for the leading role but it seemed that Twentieth Century Fox, who had bought the property, had objected to the choice.

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(42) Selznick, Op.Cit., p.445
(43) Ibid., p. 448

"Tender is the Night" wrote the producer to the star, "has long been your dream . . .Thus we must come to a conclusion, and very, very fast. . ." The names of many top actors were suggested until the success of the theatrical version of Budd Schulberg's novel The Disenchanted caught the eye of Jason Robards Jr. In December 1960, the Twentieth Century Fox director Henry King was assigned to Tender is the Night. (44) This was after John Frankonheimer had done some preliminary work on the project. Henry King wanted to make the film in France and Selznick suggested the ols studio in Nice which was bought for cover sets ≠ and built by Rex Ingram, the original character on whom film director Earl Brady was modelled. Exteriors were finally filmed on the French Riviera and in Zurich. The interiors were filmed at the Twentieth Century Fox studios in Beverly Hills, California. Selznick continued to be in touch with the production, suggesting that the music of the film would rely on Fitzgerald's references to "both romantic songs and hot numbers of the Jazz Age," (45) recalling the author's statement: "no-one knows better than I the sound of my generation." (46)

In spite of all his recommendations, the film fell short of Selznick's expectations. "It just makes me sick at my stomach," he wrote to director Henry King, "to see the sloppiness with which pictures are made today, including, I'm sorry to say, 'Tender is the Night.' " (47) Selznick had an exact notion of what the old house in which the Drivers lived in Zurich should

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(44) Ibid., p.452
(45) Ibid., p.455
(46) Ibid., p.457
(47) Selznick, Op.Cit., p.459

≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms

box "heavy and somber and depressing." He worked hard on the set, decorating the set-dressing, which gives an idea of the role played by a producer in the Thalberg tradition in Hollywood. "I could cry when I think of what this picture would look like. . . if it had been done by George Cukor," exclamied Selznick in his letter (48) to Henry Wienstein, the producer that Twentieth Century Fox had selected for the film. Selznick warned Wienstein against "the tendency of Henry King's letting scenes play at a slower pace," but added as if to reassure himself: "Often a picture looks terrible in rushes, and wonderful when put together; often the reverse is true." (49)

Selznick was curiously aware that the making of Tender is the Night was linked to the system that had "practically emptied the theaters of the world, at least those that show Hollywood products." (50) Written in the autumn of 1961, this statement was prophetic for Hollywood which was to live through a tragic crisis in the sixties. "I regret this new evidence of the complete passing of showmanship from the industry." (51)

In early 1962, the film was finished and Selznick resumed his feelings by saying: "To me, it is heartbreaking." (52) Nevertheless, he tried to save "all the trims, all of the out-takes, all of the sound-tracks ≠ and everything connected with the editing." He did not despair of getting "a little re-shooting and re-editing . . .to make the picture somewhat closer to what it could be." (53) Unfortunately, Selznick did not succeed in what now appears as his last battle before he died in 1965.

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(48) Ibid., p.462
(49) Ibid., p.462
(50) Ibid., p.463
(51) Ibid., p.465
(52) Ibid., p.467
(53) Ibid., p.468
≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms

The film was released without any of the revisions he had suggested and failed in everything including as a commercial product. It had taken almost thirty years to fulfil the product and, when it was completed, Hollywood was old and helpless. Jennifer Jones and Jason Robards Jr were themselves too old to act as Nicole and Dick Driver--Mrs Selznick was 43 and Jason Robards Jr was 40. As always, the Hollywood tribute to Scott Fitzgerald had come too late to amount to anything. In the book Nicole was 18 at the beginning and 24 at the end. The difference in age was essential and even the relationship between Nicole and Rosemary (played by Jill Saint John) was jeopardised since it became a matter of jealousy that could be interpreted by the difference in age. Under these conditions, it was necessary to adapt the story completely, which script-writer Ivan Moffat ≠ refused or was unable to do.

The result was a heavy production, with whole scenes from Fitzgerald interpreted and filmed in a very sentimental mood which preserved but little of the depths of the story and the value of the novel. ## The film however succeeded to some extent in the direction and the photography but, as a whole, it was an illustration of the movies using literary masterpieces against their own reputation.

≠ Note: He is famous for films like Bhowani Junction (George Cukor, 1955) and They came to Cordura (Robert Rossen, 1959).

Note: Just before his death, Selznick wrote: "It is one of the great regrets of my career that I did not make Tender is the Night. . .Unfortunately, I sold the package including Miss Jones to Twentieth Century Fox. I was supposed to have approvals of carting, and they were obliged not to change the script without my approval; but they ignored my advice, and in my opinion, ruined the film." (Selznick, Op.Cit., p.423)

CHAPTER TEN

THE SCREENWRITER

The critical and financial failure of Tender is the Night left Fitzgerald helpless and desperate. Deeply in debt, he even realised that he was seriously ill. With Zelda growing more and more insane, the Fitzgeralds were descending into darkness. In 1936, Esquire published three articles: "The Crack-up, Handle With Care and Pasting It Together in which Scott Fitzgerald wrote about his own suffering and feeling of failure. "My recent experience parallels the wave of despair that swept the nation when the boom was over." (1) His lack of confidence in his creative powers was aggravated by the failure of his last novel. Even if he had decided to begin another novel immediately in 1934, he significantly chose to set it in Medieval France. The Count of Darkness never reached the size of a novel and rapidly turned into four episodes published by Redbook Magazine. The hero Philippe Villefranche and his companions are described as a band of aristocrats but lawless gangsters, "as the American imagination of the thirties envisioned such men in films like Public Enemy," claims Robert Sklar. (2)

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(1) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.56
(2) Sklar, Op.Cit., p.300

He concludes: "They use contemporary American slang and gangster argot and one can imagine Philippe's character played by Cagney or Bogart."

Fitzgerald would not start any other novel until Hollywood offered him a chance to rely on his artistic possibilities. Meanwhile, he no longer believed in the power of prose and failed to succeed as a screen-writer. "Never any luck with the movies. Stick to your last, boy," he warned himself in Afternoon of an Author. (3) The Wall Street crash had hurt book sales as much as the 'talkies' had and the two combined forces of disintegration put an end to the predominance of literature.

"I saw that the novel," wrote Fitzgerald in Pasting It Together, "which in my maturity was the strongest and supplest medium for conveying thought and emotion from a human being to another, was becoming subordinated to a mechanical and communal art that, whether in the hands of Hollywood merchants or Russian idealists, was capable of reflecting only the tritest thought, the most obvious emotion. It was an art in which words were subordinated to images, where personality was worn down to the inevitable long gear of collaboration." (4)

Fitzgerald had probably kept in mind his disastrous collaboration with Marcel de Sano on the grounds of "writing trash for the movies." The words were no longer subordinated to images and much later, the positions would ven be reversed. ≠

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(3) F. Scott Fitzgerald, Afternoon of an Author

(4) F. Scott Fitzgerald, Pasting It Together,

≠ One particularly thinks of the French leaders of the 'nouveau roman' like Alain Robbe-Grillet or Marguerite Duras making films on a literary basis.

Fitzgerald was convinced that the talkies had even been a harder blow for literature when he wrote:

> "As long past as 1930, I had a hunch that the talkies would make even the best-selling novelist as archaic as silent pictures. People still read . . .but that was a rankling indignity, that to me had become almost an obsession, in seeing the power of the word subordinate to another power, a more glittering power . . .this was something I could neither accept nor struggle against." (5)

Except for a few articles, Fitzgerald fell into isolation and found no way to struggle except by going to Hollywood if he was to set his finances in order. In the autumn of 1935 he asked his agent Harold Ober to get him a contract to work as a screen-writer in Hollywood: "I would have gone to Hollywood a year ago last spring," Fitzgerald continued, claiming that he had no choice and arguing about his former ventures and the difficulty of working on other peoples' stories. "No serious man with a serious literary reputation has made good there."

The author thought that the solution lay in the choice of a solid partner who should be a technical expert. "That's very different from having a superior who couldn't fit either the technical or creative role but is simply a weigher of completed values." During his stay at MGM, Fitzgerald had become obsessed with the mechanics of script-writing and even the film techniques. He asked other experienced writers to advise him on how to plan camera angles and travelling ≠ for example. Friends like Dwight Taylor or Anita Loos may have given him advice instead to concentrate on the plot by creating characters,

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(5) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., pp. 48-9

≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms

dramatization and dialogue, but he would not listen to them. He was convinced that his past failures were linked to his ignorance of technical rules. A few months before going back to Hollywood, Fitzgerald was still intent on finding a supervisor. "This would be hard to find, because a smart technician does not need or want a partner." He said he could have worked with his friend Bess Meredith if "we hadn't been in constant committee of five." (6) The author wanted to avoid "inadvertencies" that ruined the sale of Tender is the Night and the Gracie Allen venture.

Harold Ober was again in touch with Hollywood in February 1937 and Fitzgerald assured him: "This is obviously a job that I can do expertly." (7) In March, he wrote to Ober asking him about his contract: "I sit worrying about next week's $35.00 hotel bill! I really meant it that I'd like to go to Hollywood and let them see me . . .And the dullest dogs making $1000 a week in Hollywood. Something has got to be done!" (8) Harold Ober contacted people whom Fitzgerald knew well in Hollywood, among them Edwin Knopf proving the most persuasive. He sent an offer through H.N.Swanson, a Hollywood agent: MGM proposed a six-month contract for one thousand dollars a week to the author of Tender is the Night. Swanson and Ober protested feebly, but accepted the offer. Before leaving for the West, Fitzgerald felt anxious. "Each time I have gone to Hollywood," he wrote to Maxwell Perkins, "in spite of the enormous salary, has really set me back financially and artistically." (9) In July 1937 he confessed in a letter to his daughter: "I feel a

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(6) Letters, p.420
(7) Ibid., p.421
(8) Ibid., p.425
(9) Ibid., p.288

certain excitement. The third Hollywood venture. Two failures behind me though one no fault of mine." (10)

For Scottie, the leader of the Jazz Age recalled his two former ventures, the first happening when he was a generally acknowledged top American writer, and the second after the Crash and the Silent Era, when he went there to work for Irving Thalberg. When he had left in 1931, Fitzgerald was convinced that "this was interpreted as running out on them and held against him;" but he added: "I want to profit from these two experiences. I must be very tactful but keep my hand on the wheel from the start--find out the key man 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." (11)

Fitzgerald could at last use his past reputation and face the future as a professional writer of the moving-picture industry. Edwin Knopf took pains to get the approval of the MGM triumvirate--L.B.Mayer, Sam Katz and Eddie Mannix--who had been reigning over the company since Thalberg's death. Of the three men, only Mannix seemed to know who Scott Fitzgerald was. Knopf remembered Mannix being shocked by Fitzgerald in 1931 (12) and was surprised at his defending the author's cause. Edwin Knopf was an old fan of Fitzgerald. In 1934, he had written a script for a film directed the next year by King Vidor called The Wedding Night and starring Anna Sten and Gary Cooper. It was the story of a successful writer who could be compared to Scott Fitzgerald

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(10) Letters; p.30
(11) Ibid., p.31
(12) In Latham, Op.Cit., p.63

himself. In the script sent to this latter, Scott and Zelda were called by their real name although the hero of the story bore the name of Tony Barnett. (13) King Vidor himself, an eminent figure of the moving-picture creation, was an old friend of Fitzgerald. In 1936, the author confessed to Harold Ober that he had portrayed the character of director Calman on the model of King Vidor for Crazy Sunday. ≠ Forty years later, Anthony Page directed another film written by James Cottigane and called Scott Fitzgerald in Hollywood. Produced in 1976 for American television, this long feature film draws rather heavily on Fitzgerald's life although it is based on a real historical reconstruction. Scott's character is played by Jason Miller and appears at the beginning of the movie rather flat and broken.

"I wish you could see me," he wrote to Ober in March 1937, "weight 160 instead of 143, which was at Christmas." (14) From the train steps down a lonely man; the young man who is waiting for him does not recognise the heavy passenger at once: "Nobody but you is wearing an overcoat in California, Mr Fitzgerald," he remarks. The young assistant says he was expecting a man who would look like Gatsby, gin bottle in hand, although he hasn't read The Great Gatsby since the book is out of print. (15)

The young man was Edwin Knopf's assistant at MGM. Knopf himself remembers welcoming "a completely crushed and frightened man;" (16) when he sees the old car driven by the assistant, Fitzgerald remarks: "The last time, they sent me

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(13) Ibid., p.100
(14) Letters, p.424
(15) Taken from the dialogue of Scott Fitzgerald in Hollywood, written by James Cottigane, directed Anthony Page, 1976.
(16) Latham, Op.Cit., p. 104
≠ Note: In a letter dated February 8th 1936, Fitzgerald reminded Harold Ober of the way the Hearst publicity men killed his story Crazy Sunday, in spite of the fact that no character "could have been identified except possibly King Vidor, and he would have been amused by the story."Letters, p.424

a limousine."

This sentence is followed by a flash-back which brings us back to 1927. Zelda and Scott are expected at Los Angeles station by a whole crowd of fans, photographers and people from the film industry. They are young, happy and successful. Ten years later, Scott is broken and forgotten. To his young companion he summarises his two former visits to Hollywood: "The first time I came here, it was in 1927. I was assigned on a film for Constance Talmadge."

"Both of you have been victims of the talkies," replies the young man.

"The second time I was black-listed by the Hollywood committee, but now I am determined to work hard for I am deeply in debt. I need $40,000 and this job means a lot to me."

Fitzgerald confesses that he was sorry to have disappointed Thalberg, whom he admired.

Shortly after his arrival in Hollywood, the author wrote to his daughter: "Norma Shearer invited me to dinner three times but I couldn't go--unfortunately, as I like her. Maybe she will ask me again." ≠ She did, and he appeared with Scottie. "All goes beautifully here," he wrote to Maxwell Perkins, "so far, Scottie is having the time of her young life, dancing with Crawford, Shearer etc., talking to Fred Astaire and her other heroes." (17) In a letter to Mrs Harold Ober, Fitzgerald wrote in July 1937: " Suffice to summarise: I have seen Hollywood, talked with Taylor, dined with March, danced with Ginger Rodgers . . . lunched alone with Maureen O'Sullivan, watched Crawford act . . . And this is to say I'm through. From now on I go nowhere and see no-one because the work is hard as hell, at least for me, and I've lost ten pounds." (18)

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(17) letters, p.294
(18) Ibid., p.572

≠ Note: Norma Shearer was Irving Thalberg's widow and heroine of Crazy Sunday.

Almost immediately after arriving, Fitzgerald had moved into a famous hotel called the 'Garden of Allah' on Sunset Boulevard in Bverly Hills. His friend Dorothy Parker lived there too and so did John O'Hara and Alan Campbell.

Fitzgerald's first assignment in his new job at MGM was a comedy about the adventures of a young American Rhodes scholar in England. The studios had asked the author of This Side of Paradise to work on the final revision of a college story, A Yank at Oxford (19) before it went into production. Thus, Fitzgerald's reputation was not forgotten and although he had never attended Oxford, two of his heroes, Jay Gatsby and Dick Driver had. It convinced him that he was going this time to write the right script. He worked hard in the office that Edwin Knopf had given to him in the Thalberg Building. He never drank anything but Coca-Cola while he worked on the script. Originally, the project had been called Yale versus Oxford; when it became A Yank at Oxford Robert Taylor was chosen as the leading star. The original story had been conceived by John Monk Saunders, a man the Fitzgeralds had mocked in 1927 in his own house. (20)

Fitzgerald's task now consisted of revising what another screen-writer called Frank Wend was writing before him. MGM was still using the mass-production system established by Irving Thalberg. While working on the treatment, Fitzgerald received a message from Maureen O'Sullivan, who had been picked to star in the film with Robert Taylor: " Miss Maureen O'Sullivan wishes you to have luncheon with her tomorrow. You may get in touch with her in her dressing room." (21) ≠

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(19) A Yank at Oxford, unnumbered script pages dated July 13-24 in the MGM studio archives, Culver City, California.
(20) Latham, Op.Cit., p.53
(21) Ibid., p.110

≠ Note: Maureen O'Sullivan was Jane, Tarzan's famous girl-friend, in most of the MGM productions from 1932 to 1942.

The writer and the star had lunch at Malibu and while the former was fascinated, the latter remembers complaing that the role of Molly was "one of those very dull ingenue parts," and begged him " to liven it up, to make it more interesting." (22) As a result, Fitzgerald insisted on Molly's British speech as opposed to the Yank's American version.

When Lee Sheridan (Robert Taylor) arrives at Oxford, he is proud of being a Yankee and shows arrogance. All the students avoid him except Molly, who nonetheless asks: "But do you speak the same language as we do?" (23) In Anthony Page's film on Fitzgerald in Hollywood, an assistant producer named Hooper comes into the writer's office to show him the first thirty pages of his treatment: "I don't know what the script does need, but I do know what should be bled out," he says, showing the pages heavily underlined in red pensil. "Look at page 19. There is a marginal note underlined three times . . .the note said: What does the camera show?" The producer explains that he is a mid-West peasant; he prefers action to words and Johnny Weissmuller as Tarzan. ≠

Fitzgerald could not relate A Yank at Oxford to Tarzan, but he was assigned another job. Two other writers were called in to re-write what Fitzgerald had revised--Malcolm Stewart and Walter Ferris. When they were about to finish, MGM engaged George Oppenheimer to supervise everybody's work. Ferris and Oppenheimer co-signed the script; there was no mention of Fitzgerald's name.

Some of the scenes have been saved by George Oppenheimer, the'screen-play doctor' as he was called. In the final version,

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(22) Ibid., p.111
(23) Ibid., p.114

≠ Note: Weissmuller played opposite Maureen O'Sullivan. See previous note.

Lee Sheridan, the son of a famous journalist (Lionel Barrymore) gets a scholarship and leaves for Oxford, where he meets Dolly (Maureen O'Sullivan) and another girl, played by Vivien Leigh. After a first unpleasant encounter with Oxford traditions, he is welcomed and even cherished after taking part in an Oxford rowing victory over Cambridge. Just like The Red-headed Woman, A Yank at Oxford was directed by Jack Conway. Fitzgerald had not passed a whole script, but although his name was not on the screen, at least he knew that some of the scenes he wrote were.

The film opened at the Capitol Theater in New York on February 24th and was acclaimed as a good comedy. Fitzgerald was already working on his next script. He was put to work on a treatment of Erich Marie Remarque's Three Comrades. (24) The novel, set in Germany shortly after the end of the Great War, told of the atmosphere of economic, moral and social decay which had followed the German defeat. Fitzgerald felt very happy to work alone on Three Comrades and at the beginning of October 1937 he wrote to his secretary Mrs Owens: "'Three Comrades' is almost finished. Joan Crawford is still slated for Pat, but you never can tell. In my version, Taylor has about three lines to her two--perhaps that will discourage her." (25)

Fitzgerald must have been very much relieved, for the same day he wrote to Mr Finney: "I have just finished the script of 'Three Comrades' . . .and I'm reconciled to staying out here. It is the kind of life I need. I think I'm through drinking for good now." The writer was conscious of the fact that in "free-lance writing, it doesn't matter a damn what you do with

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(24) Olivier Comte, Cinéma 70,

(25) Letters, p.577

your private life as long as your stuff is good," (26) but how important it was to stand "on the wagon" while working for the studios.

A few days later, producer-director Joseph L. Mankiewicz read the treatment and although he praised the work, he decided that Fitzgerald needed some professional help. He introduced him to Ted F. Paramore, who, assigned as a collaborator on Three Comrades, was not unknown to Fitzgerald; sixteen years before, he had appeared as Fred E. Paramore in The Beautiful and the Damned. Fitzgerald had not given him the best part in his novel, nor did Mankiewicz. Edmund Wilson's friend now stepped in and killed Fitzgerald's dream of working alone on one movie script.

In November, Scott announced to his daughter: "An old friend Ted Paramore has joined me on the picture in fixing up much of the movie construction, at which I am still a semi-amateur, though I won't be that much longer." (27) Actually, things did not go so well and one should say that there was no collaboration at all between the two men. As a conflict was developing Fitzgerald, who worked to avoid confrontation or controversy, wrote Ted Paramore a long letter:

> "I totally disagree with you as to the terms of our collaboration . . .My script is in a general way approved of. There was not any question of taking it out of my hands--as in the case of Sheriff. The question was who I wanted to work with me on it and for how long . . ." (28)

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(26) Ibid., p.576
(27) Ibid., p.35
(28) Ibid., pp; 578-80

Fitzgerald continued to accuse Paramore of trying to concentrate "the whole course of things in hand" because he liked Scott's work less than Mankiewicz did. Fitzgerald did not even want to argue about scenes or interpretation: "That there are a dozen ways of treating it all, or of selecting material is a commonplace, but I have done my exploring and made my choices according to my canons of taste. Joe's ≠ caution to you was not to spoil the Fitzgerald quality of the script."

Although he revealed much of his feeling of superiority over his collaborator and the material he was adapting, Fitzgerald wanted to give Mankiewicz assurance that the script would be finished within three weeks without disagreement over the main scenes. "When you blandly informed me yesterday that you were going to write the whole thing over yourself, kindly including my best scenes, I knew we would have to have this out."

The writer was determined to fight for independence of conception and proudly concluded: " The idea of sitting by while you dredge through the book again as if it were Shakespeare --well, I didn't write four of my best-sellers or a hundred and fifty top-price stories out of the mind of a temperamental child without taste or judgment."

As a result, it was Mankiewicz who took the whole course of things into his hands, re-writing much of what Fitzgerald wrote. Mankiewicz, who was famous for being among the rare producer-directors in Hollywood, was known as a practical man. He could not stand any delay and his relations with Fitzgerald therefore suffered from the conflict with Paramore. He suppressed all the titles suggested by the writer to convey the atmosphere of social and economic decay that had followed the end of the War. Fitzgerald wanted to use a graph to show the fall of the German economy and the rise of inflation.

≠ i.e. Joseph L. Mankiewicz.

In fact, the kind of change Mankiewicz introduced was rather slight. For example, in his dialogue, Fitzgerald had written: " Gottfried: Well, the grandpa was a sewing machine, the grandma an old radio and the papa was a machine gun." In the final shooting script revised by Mankiewicz, this read: " Gottfried: Well, the grandpa was a sewing machine, the grandma is an old radio and the papa was an alarm clock." (29)

Introducing such small changes--whether important in the final result or not--Mankiewicz claimed to have re-written everything from the opening. To Présence du Cinéma No. 18, the producer stated: "Malheureusement, le dialogue n'était pas dramatique. C'était un bon dialogue de roman, bon pour la lecture, mais pas pour être dit. Je le modifiai. Et ironie du sort, quand le film sortit, tous les critiques admirèrent le dialogue de F. Scott Fitzgerald." (30)

In spite of these conflicts, the production was not delayed and by the beginning of November, the cast was being settled. After thinking of Joan Crawford, who, wrote Fitzgerald "had her teeth in the lead but was convinced that it was a man's picture" (31) Mankiewicz decided to give the part to Margaret Sullavan, Loretta Young not being available. Leading male stars would be Robert Taylor, Franchot Tone and Spencer Tracy, until this latter was replaced by Robert Young.

Mankiewicz had introduced some changes maybe because the treatment was still too literary but perhaps also because it had become a custom in Hollywood that somebody would change what others had revised before, the last to intervene being, as a matter of fact, the producer. Fitzgerald went to New York in

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(29) Latham, Op.Cit., pp. 135, 138
(30) Comte, Op.Cit., p.97
(31) Letters, p.36

January and from there he wrote Mankiewicz a letter in which he protested against the producer's methods. "My own writing doesn't survive being written over so thoroughly and there are certain pages out of which the rhythm has vanished." The writer went on to give a detailed account of what he thought was "bad taste", politely claiming: "I think that sometimes you've changed without improving." (32) Having stressed most of the changes, Fitzgerald concluded: "What I haven't mentioned, I think is distinctly improved." (33)

Nevertheless, the writer kept on writing and the producer changing the script. When he went back three days later to California, Fitzgerald wrote another letter to Mankiewicz about the second part of the revised scenario. (34) This time the tone was more bitter and the author of The Great Gatsby proceeded to ask: "I guess all these days I've been kidding myself about being a good writer. . .For nineteen years with two years out for sickness, I've been writing best-selling entertainment, and my dialogue is supposedly right up at the top."

After confronting Ted Paramore, Fitzgerald was now faced with the producer himself and the battle between fiction and movies revived like an old sore. Fitzgerald asserted again his rights as an entertainer, and reading the end of his script scratched out and blurred, his anger and pride flared out: "I learn from the script that you've suddenly decided that it isn't good dialogue and you can take a few hours off and do much better. I think you have a flop on your hands. . ."

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(32) Ibid., p.581
(33) Ibid., p.582
(34) Ibid., pp.583-5

Fitzgerald did not feel like excusing the producer, for he said: "This time you had something and you have arbitrarily and carelessly torn it to pieces." The writer claimed that Mankiewicz was simply tired of the best scenes because he had read them too much: "This is a job you will be ashamed of before it's over." Again Fitzgerald backed up his opinion with many examples. He begged Mankiewicz to "ask some intelligent and disinterested person to look at the two scripts" and to "restore the dialogue to its former quality."

The writer was again feeling desperate and helpless at the prospect of a new failure: "Oh Joe, can't producers ever be wrong? I'm a good writer--honest. I thought you were going to play fair." Refusing to distrust himself, Fitzgerald would rather fight to save his reputation; he who had proudly warned Mrs Bayard Turnbull a few days before: "You mustn't miss my first effort, Three Comrades, released next winter." (35)

Finally, Three Comrades went into production in February and by that time, Fitzgerald was already writing on his next assignment. "I started on the Joan Crawford picture--as yet unnamed," he wrote to Scottie. (36) He was overwhelmed and considered the indignities inflicted on him as a deep humiliation: "I am half sick with work . . .The last part of a job is always sad and very difficult but I'm proud of the year's output and haven't much to complain of." (37) Fitzgerald used to avoid exaggerating when addressing his daughter. In February he wrote to her announcing that Three Comrades was half way through and that he had been allowed to see some of the shooting and some of the rushes ≠ since he was still credited with being the

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(35) Letters, p.463
(36) Letters, p.36
(37) Ibid.

≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms

screenwriter of the story. ≠ "To my mind, the producer seriously hurt the script in re-writing it, though maybe I am wrong." (38)

The finished product tells the story of three friends who, in post-war Germany, manage to own a garage. Lenz (Robert Taylor) and Pat (Maureen O'Sullivan) are killed, and as the surviving comrades are standing in the cemetery, says: "There's fighting in the city" and both of them flee to South America. Fitzgerald strongly disagreed with this ending, preferring the comrades to stay in Germany like "four people, living and dead, heroic and unconquerable, marching side by side back into the fight." (39) This conception of The Three Comrades' ending was set out in a letter that Fitzgerald sent over the head of Mankiewicz to Eddie Mannix, the studio manager and Sam Katz, the administrative executive of MGM. "I have finished my part in the making of Three Comrades but Mank has told me what the exhibitors are saying about the ending and I can't resist a last word." His opinion was that to every American, the idea of the surviving comrades going back into the fight was infinitely stronger and more attractive than that of running away like cowards.

Mankiewicz did not direct the whole film himself. ≠≠ He assigned to the technical shooting a director, Frank Borzage ≠≠≠ who was one of the best film-makers in Hollywood when it came to conveying an atmosphere of tragedy. To a friend who had visited Hollywood in March 1938 Fitzgerald wrote that he should not

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(38) Letters, p.585-6
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≠ Note: Fitzgerald detailed the rushes to Scottie as "where they run off what they have shot that day." To this are only admitted a few people--the producer, the director, the writer, the chief photographer and the script-girl.

≠≠ Note: Most of the big producers used to take part in the directing especially as far as the action was concerned. From 1931-44 J.Mankiewicz signed twenty films as 'producer' and from 1946-75, twenty-one as 'producer-director.'

≠≠≠ Note: See Glossary of Technical Terms for further details.

carry away a false impression. "In the old days . . .it was true that the whole thing was the director. He coordinated and gave life to the material. He carried the story in his head." (40) He added that the situation had greatly changed and gave Three Comrades as a typical example of a director who "had little more to do than be a sort of glorified cameraman." He thought that a Bob Sherwood picture could be shot by an assistant or a script-girl and authors did not jump at the chance of becoming a director. Fitzgerald explained the new situation as a result of the talkies, concluding: "Your feeling that the director or producer was the great coordinator no longer applies."

Three Comrades was a great financial success but neglected to relate as Fitzgerald had wished the three comrades' mentality to the mentality of German youth in the post-war era. Sheilah Graham remembers having attended the film preview: "As the picture unfolded, Scott slumped deeper and deeper in his seat. At the end he said,'They even changed that.' " (41) However, the picture did very well both financially and critically and Maragaret SulLivan won two awards for her performance. Fitzgerald saw his name for the first and last time in the credit titles ≠ of the film. In addition, his MGM contract was renewed for twelve months and his salary raised to twelve hundred and fifty dollars a week instead of one thousand as a result of his work on Three Comrades.

"I am considered a success in Hollywood," he wrote to Beatrice Dance on March 4th 1938, "because something I did not write is going on under my name, and something which I did write has been quietly buried without any fuss or row." (42)

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(40) Letters, pp.592-3
(41) Sheilah Graham and Gerald Frank, Beloved Infidel (Henry Holt, New York, 1957) p.176
(42) Sklar, Op.Cit., p.322-3

≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms

Before Three Comrades was half completed, Fitzgerald had started a new picture "which is after all a piece called Infidelity and will star Joan Crawford and I don't know who else. I will finish the first draft Easter," he announced to Scottie. (43)

Scott Fitzgerald was about to live a new kind of experience and face the obstacle that he hated most: censorship.

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(43) Letters, p.38

CHAPTER ELEVEN

INFIDELITY, INFIDELITY . . .FIDELITY

That Mankiewicz re-wrote him made Fitzgerald angry beyond reason. He later wrote to Harold Ober that he had always hated Hollywood since Mankiewicz had cut his script. (1) "Joe thinks he's Shakespeare," George Oppenheimer used to say, and Ogden Nash remembers that it took him four months to write a scenario and only twenty-four hours for Mankiewicz to cut his name off the screen credit. (2) Fitzgerald's dream of a new start in the movie business was already broken and he took again to heavy drinking.

In Anthony Page's movie on the writer, this incident took place in Nashville where Scott went to pay a visit to Zelda in the sanatorium where she was being treated. The writer prefers his gin bottle to sharing his room with the insane woman; and when he returned to Hollywood, he decided that he could not conceive of living with Zelda any longer, or even of taking care of her. He went back to Sheilah Graham, the Hollywood columnist, who convinced him to give up his flat in the 'Garden of Allah' for a house at Malibu Beach. He was no longer leading a double life and Sheilah was devoting to Scott most of her free time.

He even announced to Scottie that Sheilah had broken off her engagement to the Marquess of Donnegal, but avoided

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(1) Turnbull, Op.Cit., p.302
(2) Latham, Op.Cit., pp.121-2

mentioning any prospect of marriage although it was now a settled question between them. Sheilah Graham undoubtedly helped Scott gather his last strength to try to restore his image of the creative artist.

In spite of their arguments, they cared for each other and Sheilah, though infuriated by his spasmodic heavy drinking, decided to help him fight his alcoholism. In her book Beloved Infidel (3) Sheilah Graham remembers how badly he treated her when he was drinking. He reminded her of her origins, which she had tried so hard to hide, and called her his "paramour". He even struck her. By that time, the nature of Fitzgerald's life in Hollywood was taking the character of a double allegiance: he felt deeply committed to his family, to Scottie, to Zelda, but at the same time his dependence on Sheilah's love was growing. After a disastrous trip East with Zelda, Scott called Sheilah up from the airport and announced to her that he was going to get a divorce and marry her. When she arrived, she realised that he was drunk, and she deliberately forgot what he had said and thought only of preventing him from drinking in the future. She was to write later, in 1973,: "I never asked him to get a divorce. I did not want to add to the problems that had made him turn to liquor and relief." (4)

However, Scott started suggesting in his letters to Zelda's doctor Mr Carroll that he did hope to be freed from his wife. When Scottie was asked to leave the school at Ethel Walker, Fitzgerald related his anger to what Zelda had inflicted on his dream and talent: "The dream divided one day when I decided to marry your mother after all, even though I know she

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(3) Published by Henry Holt, New York, 1957
(4) Sheilah Graham, State of Heat (W.H.Allen and Co. Ltd., London, 1973), p.150

was spoiled and meant no good for me . . .The mistake was in marrying her." (5)

Scott's bitterness towards Zelda was strengthened by his puritanical sense of sin while living in adultery with Sheilah Graham. On the other hand, while working on Infidelity, he mat have remembered the times when Zelda was infatuated with a French aviator called Edouard Josanne. That had been fifteen years ago in Antibes; Josanne, who served as a model for Tommy Barkan in Tender is the Night,, was handsome and careless, but years later he wrote: "That September 1924, I knew something had happened that could never be repaired." (6)

While Fitzgerald was working on Infidelity he wrote to Scottie saying that Dr and Mrs Carroll were threatening to release Zelda "which would be simply a catastrophe. I can't work and look after her." (7) He had already told her that he was working on Infidelity and had been since the middle of February. To Maxwell Perkins he gave some details: "I am writing you on a new Crawford picture called 'Infidelity.' Though based on a magazine story it is practically an original." (8) Fitzgerald seemed very proud to be working on an original, the first since The Red-headed Woman in 1931. Although Fitzgerald's script was not used, the project was not buried and it was Scott's old acquaintance Anita Loos who wrote the final draft.

The film, directed by Jack Conway, was very amusing but the heroine's promiscuity had shocked not only the W.C.T.U. ≠

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(5) Letters, pp.47-9
(6) Notebooks, in The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.1

(7) Letters, p.44
(8) Letters, p.296
≠ Note: The Women Christian Temperance Union: an organisation that had fought steadily for prohibition during the Roaring Twenties. The women's leagues have since had a regular influence on the Hollywood Board of Censorship, the famous 'Hays Office.'

but also the Hays Office and last but not least, Mr L.B. Mayer himself. The film was not banished because, as Thalberg had thought, humor would temper the effect of the moral objections. Jack Conway had even refused to shoot an audacious scene that Anita Loos directed herself. The outcry of outraged people was so great that it resulted in the enforcing of the film industry's self-censorship production code, which decided the moral and political rules on which a film should be based.

Will Hays, the manager of the notorious Hay's Office, issued an official edict a little after The Red-headed Woman concerning fidelity: "Adultery, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated, or justified, or presented attractively." (9) It might be Fitzgerald's fate that he should so often be confronted with his old experiences and failures, but it was clear that with such a title, the writer was once more launching out into a hopeless adventure. He was so excited by his new project that he did not see the difficulties ahead. "I like the work," he wrote to Perkins, "and I have a better producer than before--Hunt Stromberg-- a sort of one-finger Thalberg, without Thalberg's scope, but with his intense power of work and his absorption in his job." (10)

Hunt Stromberg had been one of Thalberg's collaborators since 1925. He had entered films as press agent for MGM as a personnel representative of Thomas Ince. Thalberg had assigned him especially the supervision of the sexier subjects such as Our Dancing Daughters, Red Dust, Naughty Marietta and Maytime, which he completed after Thalberg's death. (11)

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(9) Bob Thomas, Thalberg, life and legend (Bantam Book, New York, 1970), p.191
(10) Letters, p.296
(11) Thomas, Op.Cit., pp.81, 124, 273, 307

Stromberg had a good reputation among writers, whom he always protected even against Thalberg himself. Unfortunately, he often got into trouble with the Hays Office because of the kind of film in which he specialised. Just before Fitzgerald began writing Infidelity the representative of the Hays Office had cut many scenes from Wife versus Secretary written by Albert and Frances Hackett because the heroine was involved in an adulterous affair.

Relating their troubles to Fitzgerald's situation, the Hacketts remembered: "We felt so desperately for Scott because we knew it couldn't be done. They wouldn't allow him just because it was about infidelity." The Hacketts did not dare to tell Fitzgerald for he seemed so enthusiastic about his script; "it was the first thing he really came to life on. But Wife versus Secretary probably put the nail in his picture's coffin." (12)

Meanwhile Fitzgerald was locked inside his dream of the perfect screen treatment especially because he found more freedom while working on a semi-original like Infidelity. As he was supposed to write for Joan Crawford, he devoted his first week to screening her best films. When he met the star, she stared at him and then told him: "Write hard, Mr Fitzgerald, write hard!" (13)

Writing hard was apparently not sufficient. In a letter to Gerald Murphy in March about the new picture he was writing for Joan Crawford, Fitzgerald confessed: "Writing for her is difficult. She can't change her emotions in the middle of a scene without going through a sort of Jekyll and Hyde contortion of the face, so that when one wants to indicate that she is going from joy to sorrow, one must cut away and then back. Also you can never

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(12) Latham, Op.Cit., pp.150-2
(13) Turnbull, Op.Cit., p.301

give her such a stage direction as "telling a lie", because if you did, she would practically give a representation of Benedict Arnold selling West Point to the British." (14)

Gary Cooper was chosen to be the leading man in Infidelity and Fitzgerald was making progress on the pre-scenario. The first version was called The Tap Drummer's Wife and had something to do with the character of a drummer in Benny Goodman's orchestra. It was rapidly abandoned for a second draft much closer to the theme of infidelity. This time, Fitzgerald had been reproached with leaning towards words when he should have emphasised pictures and situations rather than dialogue.

It was the story of two married people, Althea and Nicolas, that the husband's infidelity comes to destroy. Scott was very confident in his script which was close to being finished when he heard that the Hays Office would not let the film be made. In April he wrote to Scottie: "We have a censorship barrier in Infidelity to our infinite disappointment. It won't be Joan's next picture and we are setting it aside a while till we think of a way of halfwitting halfwit Hayes and his Legion of Decency." (15)

Hunt Stromberg suggested changing the picture's title from Infidelity to Fidelity, but the censor apparently did not agree at all with the theme and the treatment of the ending, the reconciliation between Althea and Nicolas. Fitzgerald attempted to work for a compromise, but did not succeed in convincing the censors that his script was worth doing.

At this point, Anthony Page's film opens on a party that Scott and Sheilah are giving after the failure of Infidelity. Everything goes well until Scott, who has been drinking a lot

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(14) Letters, pp.447-8
(15) Letters, p.44

throughout the evening, locks Nunally Johnson, the successful playwright, in one of the rooms of the house at Malibu Beach. After twenty minutes, Fitzgerald releases the young man only to exhort him to leave Hollywood: "It will ruin you like it did to all those who have talent." Escaping from Fitzgerald's house, Johnson did not flee from Hollywood, where he won a reputation as one of the best screenwriters of the forties.

In May Fitzgerald wrote to his daughter: "The censors have stopped Infidelity as we were about to go into production. I am doing the screenplay of The Women for Norma Shearer. My God--what characters! What gossip!" (16) As if terrified by The Women's gossip, he warned Scottie: "Let me remind you never to discuss my affairs with a living soul."

This time, Fitzgerald was asked to adapt a play about women written by a woman called Clara Booth. After the failure of Three Comrades and Infidelity, the writer was not very excited by his new assignment though some of the characters resembled his own heroines, Gloria Gilbert, Nicole Dicker . . .Only one of these women, Mary Haines, is regarded as innocent, while the others are ambitious, corrupted, gold-seeking experienced actresses. The Women was a play full of dialogue, essentially gossipy talk with heavy jokes. Thus Fitzgerald found himself in the position of a censor and began cleaning up Miss Booth's dialogue.

Except for Mary Haines, all the other women look like Fitzgerald's heroines: the richer they are, the more spoiled they end up. Norma Shearer, Thalberg's widow, was to play Mary Haines the innocent victim of the gossip; she was opposed to her more ambitious rival at MGM, Joan Crawford, playing Crystal, the

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(16) Letters, p.46

energetic saleswoman. Joan Fontaine would be Peggy and Phillis Povah, Edith. (17)

Fitzgerald was working again for Hunt Stromberg, whose health was failing, making him look uncertain and changeable. Before Scott finished his script, Stromberg associated him with director Sidney Franklin who was rapidly replaced by one of Fitzgerald's oldest friends Donald Ogden Stewart, whom he had known in St Paul as a college boy. The Ted Paramore story was playing back, and Fitzgerald was to collaboratethis time with one of those he respected more. Don Stewart as he used to call him had written the first parody of Fitzgerald's fiction in 1921 but now he was a popular and successful writer himself. (18)

This time, Fitzgerald did not want to let himslef be driven into a controversy with a friend, knowing especially that the irritable Stromberg was difficult to please . . . "toward the end Don and I lost interest," wrote Scott to Phil Berg. (19) The producer then decided that only a woman could solve the problem and called for Jane Murfin who started another adaptation. Miss Murfin kept on cleaning Clara Booth's original dialogue so radically that Stromberg called another woman in with a special assignment: put back all the gags into the script in order to make it as comic as possible.

The film had already gone into production and Anita Loos was writing while the director was shooting. The director's name was George Cukor, the man who had directed the stage adaptation of The Great Gatsby on Broadway in 1926. Cukor had started Gone With The Wind for David O. Selznick when a conflict with Clark Gable made the producer replace him with Victor Fleming. Cukor arrived on the set of The Women as Ernst Lubitsch left it; after Thalberg's

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(17) Latham, Op;Cit., pp.186-7
(18) Sklar, Op.Cit.,p.323
(19) Ibid., pp.191-2

death, the MGM system was turning into a swirling substitution. The cast was a little changed but was still based on six stars: Norma Shearer, Joan Crawford, Paulette Godard, Joan Fontaine, Rosalind Russel and Mary Boland. The Women preview took place in September 1939 and the picture was a success. Scott Fitzgerald's name was not associated with its fame.

Comparing himself as ever to Hemingway, Fitzgerald was now facing a new kind of failure; while Hemingway, he said, "talked with the authority of success," he "talked with the authority of failure." He received credit neither from films, nor was he writing fiction. Referring again to Hemingway, he wrote: "His inclination is towards megalomania and mine toward melancholy." (20) The writer was now living permanently in a state of melancholy: "What a time you've had with your sons, Max," he exclaimed in a letter to Maxwell Perkins, "Ernest gone to Spain, me gone to Hollywood." (21) Hollywood appears to be Fitzgerald's lost war while Spain was Hemingway's land of action and victory; except that History alone decides who should be the winner or the loser.

While still working on Infidelity Fitzgerald wrote: "Relations have been so pleasant, not only with you but with Harold and with Lorimer's Saturday Evening Post, that even working with the pleasantest people in the industry, Eddie Knopf and Hunt Stromberg, I feel this lack of confidence. Hard times weed out many of the incompetents, but they swarm back." Fitzgerald gave as an example the case of Herman Mankiewicz, "a ruined man who hasn't written ten feet of continuity in two years, finally dropped by Metro, but immediately picked up by Columbia!" (22)

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(20) Letters, p.262
(21) Letters, p.299
(22) Letters, p.298

Fitzgerald's lack of confidence was exacerbated by the fact that his MGM contract would soon expire. As he began working on his fifth script for the Metro company, he wrote to his daughter: "I am intensely busy. On the next two weeks, during which I finish the first part of Madame Curie, depends whether or not my contract will be renewed. So naturally I am working like hell." Showing his anxiety, he added: "I would not expect you to understand that--and getting rather bored with explaining the obvious over and over to a wrong-headed daughter." (23)

He was relieved when he learned that he would not have a supervisor but a famous writer as collaborator, Aldous Huxley, who had successfully adapted Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice for the movies. Huxley had already gathered a lot of French newspapers dealing with Madame Curie's life and research. The two men tried to combine these documents with Eve Curie's biography of her mother. Sidney Franklin ≠ was to produce the movie just as he did for The Women.

In spite of his good relations with both writers, Huxley was "soon tired of the regimentation of studio work and quit MGM to return to 'literature' ", writes Aaron Latham. (24) Fitzgerald thus remained alone to fight the movie criteria and try to convince the MGM front office that a personal, loving Marie Curie would be more effective than the rigid scientist they wanted to portray. Fitzgerald wanted to present "Madame Curie as an image of everything a woman of the future should aspire to." (25)

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(23) Letters, p.54
(24) Latham, Op.Cit., pp.197-9
(25) Note in MGM Archives, quoted in Latham, Op.Cit;,p.203
≠ Note: Sidney Franklin had been with Hunt Stromberg, Albert Lewin and Harry Rapf one of the closest assistants of Thalberg. Like J.L.Mankiewicz, he was a producer-director, known for films such as The Guardsman, A Free Soul and The Good Earth.

Aldous Huxley had discovered that Marie Curie had had a love affair with a young assistant and both he and Scott wanted to exploit the event in order to humanise the scientist. In December 1938, the writer announced to his agent Hayward that he and Sidney Franklin "were backing Bernie Hyman's preconception of the thing as a love story. Hyman glanced at what we had done and shelved the whole project. Franklin had been very interested up to that time." (26)

After being discharged from Madame Curie, he proposed to Hyman, one of the main executive producers at MGM, some originals, but no offer came and the MGM contract was not renewed. It was no less than four years later that Paul Osborn and Hans Rameau finished the final shooting script. The film was not released before the end of 1943, three years after Fitzgerald's death, and the director was Melvyn Le Roy who had become famous with Little Caesar. Thus Scott Fitzgerald was "fired" like Erich Von Stroheim before him.

A few days before they let him know about his future, he wrote to Maxwell Perkins: "Whether or not my MGM contract is renewed I'm going to freelance out here another year to lay by some money, and then do my modern novel." (27) Fitzgerald's dream of a new career was over. He did not succeed in cutting a dash in the Hollywood community and his self-conviction as a failure was strengthened. In 1939 he told Harold Ober his former agent: "Neither Swanson nor Sheilah nor Eddie Knopf have any idea but I have labored conscientiously out here for twenty months and every studio (except Wanger, but including Metro!) asked for, according to Swanson, me at some time during April and May." (28)

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(26) letter to Hayward of 6/12/39 in Latham, Op.Cit.,pp.207-8
(27) letters, p.301
(28) Letters, p.427

As a result, Fitzgerald drew Ober's attention to the fact that he had fulfilled all his "obligations" by having paid off about $25,000 worth of debts with his MGM salary. It was the only concrete profit he could think of from these twenty months spent in Hollywood. Although he needed money to avoid the feeling of financial insecurity, Scott Fitzgerald was already thinking of retiring from Hollywood and finishing a novel he had started a few months before. He needed money to write it with security, but his movie job, which provided him with a high salary, required too much effort from him and the novelist was again struggling to resolve his old dilemma.

CHAPTER TWELVE

FREELANCING

Fitzgerald's transfer to Gone With the Wind should have resulted in an agreement with MGM for on January 6th 1939 David O. Selznick wrote a memo to Dan O'Shea, the film's executive producer: "Fitzgerald starts with us today, 6/1/39, at $ 1250 a week, on loan from MGM. He will work on Gone With the Wind dialogue. He will undoubtedly be here all day Saturday and Monday, but it is possible that after we may use him only for an hour or two each day--however, I will let you know about this later." (1) David Selznick, who was L.B.Mayer's son-in-law, had worked for MGM in 1933 before founding his own company Selznick International. He had always been a fan of Fitzgerald as far as literature was concerned. Later in 1951 he recalled: "When I was still in my teens, I persuaded my brother Myron to engage him--Fitzgerald was in his early twenties at the time and the first flush of his success--to write some originals, and while the originals were never made (they were awful!) the relationship with Fitzgerald was a good one." (2)

Selznick's admiration for the writer was probably mingled with the fact that he felt that Fitzgerald was no good as a screen-writer. In January 1939 he knew that Scott was in need of help and offered him work not on the whole script but

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(1) David O. Selznick, Memo, Op.Cit.

(2) Ibid., p.443

on a few scenes only. He was supposed to contribute with criticism, suggestions and proposals and to provide the scenario with some revised dialogue. As he later wrote to Maxwell Perkins, he was "absolutely forbidden to use any words except those of Margaret Mitchell; that is, when new phrases had to be invented, one had to thumb through as if it were Scripture and check out phrases of hers which would cover the situation." (3)

Although he liked Margaret Mitchell's novel--"it's a good novel" he told Scottie--he was rather critical of it, adding that it was "not very original, in fact leaning heavily on The Old Wives' Tale, Vanity Fair and all that has been written on the Civil War. There are no new characters, new techniques, new observations--none of the elements that make literature--especially no new examination into human emotions. But on the other hand it is interesting . . .and I felt no contempt for it but a certain pity for those who consider it the supreme achievement of the human kind." For all these reasons Fitzgerald did not know whether he was going to work on the script "two weeks or two months." (4)

The day after Fitzgerald was engaged to work on Gone With the Wind Selznick sent his instructions in a long letter addressed to "Messrs. Cukor, Garett and Fitzgerald." The producer noted that since they had to cut it, this could only be "through the elimination of some of the very best scenes in the whole picture." Selznick wanted to cut in the couple of reels preceding the story of Scarlett and Rhett which he thought was the scene "upon which the success of the picture will depend." (5)

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(3) Letters, p.304
(4) Letters, p.64-5
(5) Selznick, Op.Cit., pp.184-6

He suggested eight detailed possibilities for shortening without concluding what should be dropped, leaving the decision to the writers and particularly to Fitzgerald who was now supposed to cut into the former script and restore Margaret Mitchell's dialogue when possible. In the final shooting version none of the possibilities mentioned was dropped.

Fitzgerald had every reason to work hard. On the one hand, he wanted to have his name associated with a picture so promising as Gone With the Wind and on the other, he was to work with people he liked and who respected him as a successful writer. David O. Selznick and the man who was supposed to direct the film, his friend George Cukor, were among them. In order to help the writing of the dialogue, Sheilah and Scott played Belly Acres and Rhett Buttler's parts as if they were Scarlett O'Hara and Clark Gable. After four days of almost uninterrupted work, Fitzgerald handed Selznick a first list of suggestions and revisions, mainly restoring Mitchell's dialogue. After that he wrote to his daughter: "Day of rest! after a wild all-night working on Gone With the Wind and more to come tomorrow." (6)

Sheilah Graham tells in College of One how Scott was dismissed from his assignment after George Cukor's intervention. The director complained about the fact that Aunt Pitty's character was not clear. "She's supposed to be quaint," said Cukor who opens the script and reads: "Aunt Pitty bustles quaintly across the room." Then he asked the fatal question that Fitzgerald had so often heard while working for the studio: "How can I photograph that?"

For three hours, Fitzgerald and Garett tried to make Aunt Pitty funny but the director did not seem satisfied. Cukor seemed to argue rather with Garett who was fired the same night,

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(6) Letters, p.64

but Scott received a telegramme "saying that he too will not be needed any more." (7)

This happened on January 24th, that is to say that Fitzgerald's collaboration with David O. Selznick had lasted eighteen days, which was not much to justify the admiration Selznick boasted twelve years later when he wanted to produce Tendor Is the Night for his second wife Jennifer Jones. Three weeks later, and after having directed half the film for two full months, George Cukor was fired in his turn. A statement was issued by Cukor and Selznick, who announced: "As a result of a series of disagreements between us over many of the individual scenes of Gone With The Wind, we have mutually decided that the only solution is for a new director to be selected at as early a date as is practicable." (8) In fact, Clark Gable had threatened to withdraw from the cast if Cukor did not. Gable claimed that Cukor, who was known as a women's director, was too much preoccupied with the characters played by Vivien Leigh and Olivia de Havilland and that he, Gable, was being neglected. The day following Cukor's exit, Victor Fleming, a good friend of Clark Gable's, was chosen to direct the film. (9)

George Cukor was put on to The Women from which Scott had been removed a few months before. As far as Fitzgerald was concerned, Selznick later wrote a letter in which he recalled: "Not too long before his death, Fitzgerald again worked for me, this time in a writing with some episodes of Gone With The Wind into the writing of which I called him (for your information,

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(7) Sheilah Graham, College of One (Bantam Books, New York, 1968), pp. 169-70

(8) Selznick, Op.Cit., p. 191

(9) Ibid., note p. 192

only, he was able to contribute nothing--but here again, the relationship was a good one despite this). . ." (10)

Scott Fitzgerald for his part was wondering "what Dave (Selznick) thinks of me I haven't any idea. . .I think that Dave is probably under the impression that I am a novelist first and can't get the idea as to what pictures are about." (11)

Gone With The Wind opened in Atlanta in December 1939 amidst the most colourful Southern atmosphere. Sidney Howard was credited with the script-writing, Victor Fleming with the directing and in the cast triumphed Vivien Leigh, Scarlett O' Hara, Clark Gable and Olivia de Havilland. The picture was an enormous financial success, Selznick was a new Thalberg and Scott Fitzgerald had missed out.

By then, Fitzgerald knew that Hollywood could not provide him with his financial security and was trying to write popular stories for the magazines. Whether for social reasons, intellectual development or personal circumstances, Fitzgerald was more and morereferring to himself as a "Marxian" which enabled him to replace his failure in a wider context. He must have expressed his disgust with Hollywood, for he wrote to his daughter during the winter of 1939: "Sorry you got the impression that I'm quitting the movies--they are always there--I'm doing a two-weeks re-write for Paramount at the moment, after finishing a short story. But I'm convinced that maybe they're not going to make me the Czar of the Industry right away, as I thought ten months ago. It's all right, baby, life has humbled me--Czar or not, we'll survive. I am even willing to compromise for assistant Czar!" (12) Fitzgerald went on to give the only information that concerns the film he was revising: "Anyhow, I'm on the new

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(10) Ibid., p.444
(11) Latham, Op.Cit., Letter to Hayward, p.219
(12) Letters, p.63

Madeleine Caroll picture (go to see Café Society--it's pretty damn good, I think. This one is the same producer-director-stars combination) and anyhow, the movies are a dull life and one hopes one will be able to transcend it."(13)

This Madeleine Caroll picture is likely to be Honeymoon in Bali directed by Edward H. Griffith, a pioneer at Edison's. Besides Madeleine Caroll, the other stars were Fred MacMurray, Ossa Massen and Allan Jones. (14) It was the story of a businesswoman courted by a handsome young man whom she considers a danger to her independence. On March 11th, Scott wrote to Scottie again: "I have let myself be inveigled into another picture and it may possibly run on the tenth of April; on the other hand, it may blow up tomorrow. (It is the new Caroll-MacMurray picture.)" (15)

It probably did blow up, for the person credited with the script-writing of Honeymoon in Bali was Virginia Van Upp who had adapted stories by Grace Sartwell and Katharine Brush. It was the second time Fitzgerald was asked by the studios to work on a story by Katharane Brush who was considered to be his imitator.

Before Honeymoon in Bali, Scott Fitzgerald had worked on two other projects: Winter Carnival and Air Raid. At the beginning of February, producer Walter Wanger had engaged him to collaborate with Budd Schulberg on a story based on the Dartmouth Winter Carnival. Budd, who was the son of the famous producer B.P. Schulberg, had written a script on this subject, but Walter Wanger was not satisfied and asked him if he would like to work on the project with Scott Fitzgerald.

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(13) Letters, p.63
(14) Cinéma 70, Op.Cit.,p.98
(15) Letters, p.67

"My meeting with Scott Fitzgerald still holds for me a dream-like, legendary quality," he later remembered in an article written in 1961 called "Old Scott." (16) Schulberg was happy to work with the man he admired so much but who appeared to him "physically or psychologically broken".

The writers were supposed to produce a love story between a duchess and one of her former lovers during the winter Carnival. They wrote a ten-page synopsis about a girl who takes her baby and goes to Dartmouth to hide from her outraged husband. Wanger asked the writers to join the camera crew which was going to shoot background hold take ≠ at the traditional Dartmouth Winter Carnival. (17) Fitzgerald protested but Wanger insisted and the writer left with Sheilah who was afraid that Scott would suffer a relapse of his tuberculosis. When they were on the point of taking the plane B.P.Schulberg gave his son two bottles of champagne to celebrate Budd's first assignment. When the plane landed, Fitzgerald was drunk and it was the beginning of an endless spree--"his biggest, saddest, most desperate spree," said Malcolm Cowley. (18)

Fitzgerald was always drinking and felt diminished when he realised that room-reservations had been made for everybody except him and his writer-colleague. Scott was convinced that this omission revealed Hollywood's real attitude toward writers. At a party given by one of the film makers, a group of professors started to criticise Fitzgerald's contribution to the picture. "You know," he answered, "I'd love to be a professor in a University like this with all the security and the smug niceties, instead of having to put up with the things we have to put up

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(16) Budd Schulberg, Old Scott (Esquire, Jan. 1961, pp.97-9)
(17) Turnbull, Op.Cit., pp.302-4
(18) Schulberg, Op.Cit.,p.99
≠ See Glossary of Technical Terms

with out there in the world. I bid you a good night, gentlemen." (19)

During the same weekend, the two screenwriters, on their way back to their hotel after having drunk a lot, met Walter Wanger by accident. The producer fired the two writers and Fitzgerald's venture at Dartmouth ended in a hospital. Schulberg took care of Scott until he was relieved by Sheilah Graham. When he returned to Hollywood, where he "has every access to the heads of companies," (20) wrote Fitzgerald, Budd Schulberg was hired again by Wanger, but alone. Though very short, the two writers' association had been rather complex Scott seemed to have appreciated the young man even if it was mingled with some feelings of superiority; "I know a young Dartmouth man, a recent graduate . . .who has just chosen to go East and continue some work he has in mind for Collier's -- there's no secret about it, it's young Budd Schulberg--thus seriously curtailing his income." (21)

Schulberg for his part admired Fitzgerald as a celebrity of literature but did not fully appreciate the kind of collaboration they had had. Scott wrote him a letter by the end of February apologising for his behaviour: "I won't forget the real pleasure of knowing you, and your patience as I got more and more under the strain. In retrospect, going East under those circumstances seems one of the silliest mistakes I ever made." (22)

From then on, Fitzgerald and Schulberg were to work as fair competitors, both writing "something" on Hollywood. After Scott's death, Budd was to publish many articles concerning him and recall the Dartmouth venture in The Disenchanted, a novel drawn from Fitzgerald's life.

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(19) Turnbull, Op.Cit.,p.303
(20) Letters, p.606
(21) Letters, p.606
(22) Letters, p.600

Winter Carnival was made the same year by United Artists. It was directed by Charles F. Riesner and 'adapted' by Lester Cole, Budd Schulberg and Maurice Rapf from Corey Ford's short story Echoes That Old Refrain.

Fitzgerald took a month's rest, then producer Jeff Lazarus asked him to collaborate on Air Raid. After a month's work on the film he wrote to his daughter: "Seriously, I expect to dip in and out the pictures for the rest of my natural life, but it is not very soul-satisfying because it is a business of telling stories fit for children and this is only interesting up to a point." (23)

Fitzgerald was called on once more to re-write a friend's story. Air Raid, which had first been written by Donald Ogden Steward, inaugurated a long series of scripts about the war that was just beginning in Europe. The film came probably too early, for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer decided to abandon the project and Fitzgerald remained a whole summer without anything to do for the movies. After Air Raid he wrote a letter to Scottie with a short P.S.: "I am pretty definitely breaking with Ober, but he doesn't know it yet." (24) After Harold Ober had refused to lend him some money, Fitzgerald decided to break their agreement. "Your advice that I should have taken on some movie work with a long cavity and a temperature of 102° was a new slant. The cavity evidently began to form about the time I started on Air Raid." (25)

Firing Ober meant dismissing H.N.Swanson too since the Hollywood agent was associated with Ober. Swanson was replaced in California by Leland Heyward and Fitzgerald decided to be his own literary agent in relation to the magazines. Now he was

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(23) Letters, p.63
(24) Letters, p.74
(25) Letters, p.426

offered $250 for each of the Pat Hobby stories. Ten years ago, his short stories were still worth ten times that financially.

Scott Fitzgerald had been waiting three months for his next movie work. "Since I stopped picture work three months ago, I have been through not only a TB flare-up but also a nervous breakdown of such severity that for a time I threatened to paralyse both arms." (26) In fact, the doctor, willing to frighten his patient and keep him from drinking, had told him that it might be an alcoholic paralysis. After that, Scott took greater care of himself but as he put it in a letter to Zelda, "sickness and no money are a wretched combination." (27)

Finally in September an offer came from Samuel Goldwyn to work on a film called Raffles. Joseph Breen had killed the making of Infidelity but this time when he did the same for Raffles, Scott Fitzgerald was called in to revise the script according to the censor's objections to what he termed "a violation of the Production Code." The Hays Office declared unacceptable the fact that a criminal should be allowed "to outsmart the police and go off scot-free." Joseph Breen suggested that a scene should be added that would indicate to the audience that Raffles knows that he cannot escape justice, that the police are waiting for him. Moreover, the producer was asked to cut out some expressions like "Good Lord!" from the dialogue. (28)

Adapting the script to the rules of the Legion of Decency was a new assignment for Fitzgerald. The writer had to forget his own objections to censorship in general and started re-writing the opening scene of the movie which told the story of a celebrated cricket player who tries to hide his financial bankruptcy. The film was to cast David Niven and Olivia de Havilland.

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(26) Letters, p.75
(27) Letters, p.125
(28) Latham, Op.Cit., pp.234-5

In September, Fitzgerald wrote to his lawyer: "I've been on the run between Universal and United Artists (where Niven is and isn't going to finish the picture) and on the point of suing R.K.O. for keeping me awake on their lot across the street." (29) Fitzgerald worked no more than a week on Raffles and the whole project sank. "I am almost penniless," he wrote to Zelda in October, but at the end of the month he wrote to his daughter: "I am alive again--getting by that October did something--with all its strains and necessities and humiliations and struggles. I don't drink." (30)

Fitzgerald was referring to his brief allocations to various scripts as "humiliations and struggles"; these conflicts helped him understand the Hollywood colony and to start a new novel on the movie people. At last Fitzgerald had found a strong theme and commented to Scottie: "Look! I have begun to write something that is maybe great, and I'm going to be absorbed in four or six months. It may not make us a cent but it will pay expenses and it is the first labor of love I've undertaken since the first part of Infidelity. (Do you remember that half-finished script the censor stopped two years ago?)" (31)

He finished the first chapter by late November but could not find any editor who would accept to serialise it. In the meantime, the Pat Hobby short stories, written for Esquire at $250 each, were done "to pay the grocer." (32) As his novel progressed, the stories based on the run-down Hollywood script-writer showed the writer's capacity to associate the theme of failure to a funnier and more detached treatment. When 'Colliers' refused to serialise the novel-in-

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(29) Letters, p.615
(30) Letters, p.128
(31) Letters, p.77
(32) Letters, p.306

progress, Fitzgerald wrote to Maxwell Perkins that his plan was to "just go ahead and dig it out," (33) but complained however of being short of money: "I think I can do some intermittent work in the studios between each chapter of the novel instead of this unprofitable hacking for Esquire, and I may be able to get somewhere by spring."

He actually worked on his novel until April when a producer called Lester Cowan called him to write a movie treatment of one of his own stories Babylon Re-visited for Columbia. Fitzgerald had sold the movie-rights of the story in January but as he had put it in a letter to Scottie: "You have earned some money for me this week because I sold Babylon Revisited in which you are a character, to the pictures (the sum wasn't worthy of the magnificent story--neither of you nor of me--however, I am accepting it.)" (34) In any case, he was not in a position to refuse money. He was drinking more and often quarrelling with Sheilah Graham when he announced to his daughter: "I am going to work on Babylon Revisited at a lousy salary--a week from Monday--Anyhow, it's something." (35)

With his novel progressing and this first offer to adapt one of his own stories, the writer felt less forgotten and began working passionately on his screenplay although the deal was not clearly settled. On April 11th he wrote to Scottie again: "I go to cinema work tomorrow on a sort of half-pay, half-spec business on my own story Babylon Revisited." Columbia, which was becoming one of the major film companies, advanced him a small amount of money, "living money" as he put it himself (36), while he was preparing the first draft of the treatment. Fitzgerald received three hundred dollars a week but Cowan had offered him

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(33) Letters, p.306
(34) Letters, p.79
(35) Letters, p.82
(36) Letters, p.83

as he explained to the Murphys "to do a piece of my own for a small sum ($2,000) and a share in the profits. The piece is Babylon Revisited and an old but not bad Post story." (37) The agreement implied that if the story went over"in installments with the producer, the company, the releasing people," then Fitzgerald would get "an increasing sum."

The writer, who did not want to reduce his scale of living of ten years before with an income of still in the region of $30,000 a year, was growing less ambitious and more resigned, and concluded: "At bottom we eat--at the top the deal is very promising." (38) The writer and the producer seemed to like each other very much and Fitzgerald was allowed to work at home, which the studios rarely permitted. By May he announced enthusiastically to Scottie: "My movie progresses and I think it's going to be damn good." (39) On June 7th, he wrote to her that he had finished his picture and was doing a short story.

Fitzgerald was expecting to hear "in a day or so" whether he was going back to work on his picture story; in fact, Columbia had stopped giving him his weekly cheques and the writer was again short of money and back to his old standby, Esquire. Scottie had asked him for some money to go to Montgomery; he explained the small amount of the cheque he sent, writing: "I'm sorry that it can't be more but, while my picture is going to be done, the producer is going to first do one that has been made for the brave Laurence Olivier who will defend his country in Hollywood (though summoned back to the British Government)." (40)

The war was raging in Europe by this time, and mocking

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(37) Letters, p.449
(38) Letters, p.83
(39) Letters, p.89
(40) Letters, p.96

appeal for an anti-aircraft defence for New York, he called this "a cowardy panic." "Next we will have Louis B. Mayer calling for anti-aircraft guns to defend Metro." (41) Fitzgerald said he had not foreseen the war to come in 1939 and concluded: "The comrades here are in a gloomy spot." (42)

Meanwhile, although Columbia had stopped financing him, Scott Fitzgerald was still polishing his screenplay. He was determined to succeed this time with a material that "may lead to a new line here." (43) He was convinced that he had written "a really brilliant continuity" which made him think he could achieve"one of those brilliant Hollywood reputations which endure all of two months sometimes." (44) Fitzgerald knew perfectly well that waiting for the outstanding pictures like Rebecca of Alfred Hitchcock was "much higher" not only financially but critically as well than producing stories for the commercial magazines. It was the triumph of the talkies!

In June, Fitzgerald was waiting to see if Wanger could sell Babylon Revisited. screenplay to Shirley Temple, commenting "If this happens, everything will look very much brighter." Unfortunately, Shirley Temple--or rather her mother--was irresolute. Fitzgerald told Scottie that the actress had reminded him of his daughter at 11 1/2 but he did not know yet if she was going to do the picture or not. (45) By the end of July, he was still on the project and wrote to Zelda: "Shirley Temple and her family . . .want to do the picture and they don't want to do the picture but that's really the producer's worry and not mine."

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(41) Letters, p.93
(42) Letters, p.93
(43) Letters, p.308
(44) Letters, p.134
(45) Letters, p.100

By the time Babylon Revisited had turned into Cosmopolitan, the project had already lost a sug estive and beautiful title. Talks were dragging on and nothing concrete resulted from the negotiations. Paramount which was now involved in the projected picture did not want to star Shirley Temple alone and Wanger could not "find any big star who will play with her." (46) In spite of the confusion, Fitzgerald did not give up hoping for "attaining some real status . . .as a movie man and not as a novelist," as he confessed to Zelda in September. A week later, however, he expressed his fears that Shirley Temple would be grown up before her mother decided to sign a contract with Wanger: "It would not be interesting if she's thirteen." (47) By the end of October no agreement had yet been reached but Paramount was announcing Little Eva starring Judy Garland and Shirley Temple. At the time of Fitzgerald's death, there had still been no real progress; but at least the prospect was still alive, and Fitzgerald died believing that Babylon Revisited was on the point of being made.

When This Far Side of Paradise by Arthur Mizener inaugurated the Fitzgerald revival, MGM--the company that had fired the writer--purchased the script for $100,000 . Budd Schulberg had been asked to re-write the screenplay of "Old Scott" but he gave it back unchanged with the comment: "I read it and thought it first-rate, just as it stood." (48) Julius J. Epstein and Philip G. Epstein accepted not only to re-write the story but even to splice it together with Elliot Paul's novel The Last Time I Saw Paris. When the film was shot in 1954 under Richard Brooke's direction, Fitzgerald's name had disappeared from the credit and titles. Van Johnson (Charles) and Elisabeth Taylor

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(46) Letters, p.142
(47) Letters, p.143
(48) Schulberg, Op.Cit.,p.100

(Helen) starred in the picturealong with Dona Reed and Sandra Descken. The story was set in Paris, not at the time of the Crash but in the years after World War II. It was as if Hollywood did not want to evoke the roaring twenties and the Great Depression because they were so remote in the past. Fifteen years later, MGM kept on killing Fitzgerald's dream of success in the industry and Hollywood still failed to understand the writer's view of the lost decade. Thus Metro spoiled Fitzgerald's best screenplay according to most observers. (49)

Cosmopolitan adapted from Babylon Revisited opened with a flashback that brings us to New York before the Crash. Mr Wales is retiring to Paris with his daughter Victoria and Helen his wife. Wales is a tycoon--just like Monroe Stahr, whose character in The Last Tycoon, written during the same period, had probably influenced the making of the screenplay's hero. Scott Fitzgerald gave frequent camera indications based on counterpoint technique ≠ when on the boat "we hear the captain asking advice about the market, we see the little girl looking at the pig," remarks Aaron Latham. (50)

While the stock market was collapsing, Helen throws herself into the ocean and Wales's moral and financial bankruptcy is suddenly revealed. Although moving from Wales's crack-up and not Helen's, the rest of the story is but slightly changed from the way it had been written in 1930.
"I believe," says Aunt Marion to Victoria, "you think more about your father than about your poor mother," to which the child replies: "Mother's dead--Daddy's still alive." (51)

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(49) Latham, Op.Cit., pp.257-8
(50) Ibid., p.249
(51) Ibid., p.252

Writing The Last Tycoon [52] helped Scott Fitzgerald keep alive, but Hollywood will remain for him both a living and posthumous symbol of failure until the seventies. Before his death, while waiting for Cosmopolitan to go into production, Fitzgerald had worked for Darry Zanuck, the head of 20th Century Fox. It was in late August and Scott had written to his wife: "I think I had a pretty good job coming up next week--a possibility of ten weeks' work and a fairly nice price at 20th Century Fox. I have my fingers crossed but with the good Shirley Temple script behind me I think my stock out here is better than at any time during the last year." [53]

Fitzgerald had often met Darryl Zanuck at parties in Europe during the twenties and when the two men met gaain in 1940, the former was almost considered a failure, while the latter appeared as a new tycoon of the film industry, able to make his company--20th Century Fox--greater than Metro itself. Fitzgerald was asked to adapt a successful London play called The Light of Heart by Emlyn Williams. It was the story of an artist who had been famous and cherished before becoming an alcoholic. At the end of the play, the old, forgotten artist tries to support his daughter by writing commercial trash that he despises.

It was probably not by accident that Darryl Zanuck had asked Fitzgerald to re-write this story. More likely he thought that Scott was the right man to feel this artist's pain and crack-up. As he explained to his wife, Scott expected to work for some weeks on his new assignment before going back to his novel. "I don't suppose," he wrote, "anyone will be much interested in what I have to say this time." However, he hoped

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(52) F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Last Tycoon (Scribner, New York, 1941)

(53) Letters, p.141

to get a credit on either Cosmopolitan or The Light of Heart, so that "things will never again seem so black as they did a year ago when I felt that Hollywood had me down in its books as a ruined man--a label which I had done nothing to deserve." (54)

Fitzgerald wrote a brilliant screenplay with all the devices he had been learning since coming to Hollywood, and giving the many detailed technical indications that had seemed so mysterious to him a few years ago. Now he was a mature screenwriter; but was it not too late? He was even thinking of the possibility of directing his own writing. In Anthony Page's film, as soon as he arrived for the third time in Hollywood, he said it was the only way to avoid being betrayed.

When Fitzgerald started re-writing The Light of Heart he wrote to Zelda: "They've let a certain writer here direct his own pictures and he has made such a go of it that there may be a different feeling about that soon. If I had a chance, I would attain my real goal in coming here in the first place." (55) After eight weeks on the story, Zanuck's collaborators said it was "too gloomy" (56) and this treatment joined the others on the shelves until Fox finally asked Nunnaly Johnson, now a celebrated screenwriter, to re-write the script in his turn. The picture was shot in 1942 under the title Life Begins at 8:30 and starred Monty Wooley.

Fitzgerald decided to return to his novel, hoping that what he had saved "in the weeks at 20th (would) last until December 15th." (57) He still hoped to finish the first draft by the middle of December and thus he worked as hard as his state of health allowed. The writer wanted to exploit all his experiences,

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(54) Letters, p.144-5
(55) Letters, p.142
(56) Latham, Op.Cit., p.267
(57) Letters, p.146

controversies and failures in Hollywood as literary material for writing a novel Fitzgerald had intended to do even before becoming part of the moving-picture colony.

"It may be the last novel I'll ever write," he wrote to Zelda, "but it must be done now. . ." (58)

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(58) Letters, p.145

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE HOLLYWOOD OF THE TYCOONS

In 1920 Scott Fitzgerald had tried to sell the great D.W. Griffith "the idea that people were so interested in Hollywood that there was money in a picture about that and romance in the studio." (1) Fitzgerald had always been certain that something fascinating could be "got out of Hollywood, which is certainly one of the most romantic cities in the world." (2) His first story based on the film colony is dated 1932, one year after Fitzgerald's second stay in California.

Even before the fiction about Hollywood had come to life with Pirandello's Shoot, subtitled The Notebooks of Serafino Gubbio, Cinematographer Operator. (3) The novel story is that of a film technician who works for the Kosmograph, a monstrous motion picture film company. The writer makes his hero aware of the camera possibilities for de-humanisation: "Everything flickers and disappears." (4) In Pirandello's novel, film techniques are opposed to literary devices and stand as a symbol for the modern condition.

When the 1929 Crash shattered most of America's confidence in the American Dream, Hollywood seemed unconcerned with the economic collapse. The sunny West still provided the whole country

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(1) Letters, p.423
(2) Ibid.
(3) Published by E.P.Dutton, New York, 1926
(4) Ibid., p.10

with adventures, glamour, fame and dreams. "Hollywood was now the spokesman for America's dreams," writes Robert Sklar. (5) Because of people's lack of confidence and the social problems that followed the Great Depression, the movies and the far-West Southern California's new assignment was to comfort the audiences and convince them to TRUST the American Dream of unlimited wealth. Long queues of unemployed people entered dark movie houses to be entertained by Frank Capra's Mr Deeds Goes to Town, Mr Deeds Goes to Washington, It's a Wonderful Life or Ernst Lubitsch's Monte Carlo, Bluebeard's Seventh Wife.

All these films were based on sudden wealth and naïve success. "The motion picture industry was among the last American Enterprises to feel the Great Depression," wrote Frank Capra, the director of the New Deal. "Films were the cheapest, and for many, the only form of entertainment." (6) Hollywood was manufacturing dreams to overcome despair. Never have people been so fascinated and lured by these manufactured dreams; many writers who had seen the Depression seriously hurt book sales turned their interest toward Hollywood, out of which grew significant fiction.

In 1934, James Cain published a novel called The Postman Always Rings Twice ≠ and the next year, Horace McCoy wrote They Shoot Horses, Don't They? Both novels were set in Hollywood Southland periphery. Both novels deal with the theme of destruction and dissolution. McCoy's novel was filmed in 1971 by Sidney Pollack and refers to the Depression, relating the three hundred peoples' marathon dance to the desperate need for comfort and

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(5) Sklar, Op.Cit.,p.334
(6) Frank Capra, The Name Above the Title (MacMillan, New York, 1971) p.136

≠ Note: The Postman Always Rings Twice was later transposed by Luchino Visconti into a satire Ossessione, set in 1941 in Sicily and directed against Mussolini's fascism.

notertainment. Gloria Beatty had come to Hollywood to be in the pictures and so had Robert who dreamed of working for Von Sternberg orMamoulian . The dreamers die and so do their dreams.

In 1938, Fitzgerald's friend John O'Hara wrote Hope of Heaven which was a failure from the critical point of view. However, O'Hara's story of two men who have drifted into Hollywood and their dissolution appears as a metaphor for the failure of the American Dream shown through the intellectual and sexual corruption of Hollywood. While Scott Fitzgerald was writing The Last Tycoon, three of his colleagues in Hollywood were preparing novels on the same subject: Nathanael West's The Day of the Locust, published in 1939, Raymond Chandler's Farewell, My Lovely, which was finished in 1940 and Budd Schulberg's What Makes Sammy Run, published a few months after Fitzgerald's death.

All three were working as screenwriters in almost the same conditions as Scott, re-writing rather than writing originals, winning but little credit, using their studio salaries to produce literary fiction. Nathanael West, like William Faulkner, had attained professional status as a screenwriter; his fiction is mingled with Hollywood characters, while Faulkner drew a clear dividing line between his job as a screenwriter and his commitment as a novelist, never confusing the former with the latter.

In June 1939, Fitzgerald reported in a letter to S.J. Perelman: "Laura's brother (Nathaniel (sic) West) sent me his book and a very nice letter with it which has totally disappeared since a trip I made to Cuba." (7) Scott worried over how to answer West and commented: (7)

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(7) Letters, p.604

"The book, though it puts Gogol's The Lower Depth in the class with The Tale of Benjamin Bunny, certainly has scenes of extraordinary power--if that phrase is still in use. Especially, I was impressed by the pathological crowd at the première, the character and handling of aspirant actresses, and the uncanny, almost medieval feeling of some of its Hollywood background, set off by those vividly drawn grotesques." (8)

By the time he was writing the Pat Hobby stories, Fitzgerald had read the Day of the Locust and probably felt relieved because he was not concerned with attaining effects similar to West's.

The novel tells the story of a man called Tod Hackett who works at National Films and dies months later in a riotous dissolution at a movie première. Once again the hero is destroyed along with his belief in the Great American Dream symbolised by the Hollywood dream factory. Nathanael West lays the stress on the corruption of the film colony as representative of America as a whole. Corruption is related to sexuality, false religion, lack of Love and Beauty, illusive success. Art stands as an alibi for Hollywood merchants and money is the real motive. Instead of being saddened by the collapse of the Waterloo set, the actors "were quite happy about their wounds: they were to receive several days' extra pay, and the man with the broken leg might get as much as five hundred dollars." (9)

The Day of the Locust was filmed in 1975, one year after the third adaptation of The Great Gatsby. Both pictures were made by English directors: the former by John Schlesinger, the author of Midnight Cowboy and the latter by Jack Clayton, a cinematographer of less renown.

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(8) Ibid.
(9) Nathanael West, The Day of the Locust (Collected Works in Penguin Books, first published in 1949) p.96

John Schlesinger's production of The Day of the Locust gave an outstanding view of the climax of the novel when the riotous juxtaposition of sex and violence erupts in a bloody madness. The film often enriches the novel and hides some of its minor flaws. In spite of these flaws, The Day of the Locust, which Fitzgerald praised, remains a major fictional achievement as far as Hollywood is concerned.

When Raymond Chandler wrote Farewell My Lovely (10) he was already making his apprenticeship as a screenwriet in Hollywood. The novel is based on the destruction of the Dream, even if the story is set in a world of gangsters and failures. Chandler shows Los Angeles and its third-rate entertainers as as example of urban dehumanisation. Though Chadler's novel stands on the edge of Hollywood, rarely mentioning the industry, Farewell My Lovely is largely influenced by the Hollywoodian aesthetics, and its well-known hero Philip Marlowe lives in Hollywood. The novel has often been adapted: in 1942, Chandler collaborated, uncredited, with Irving Reis's direction of The Falcon Takes Over. In 1945, Edward Dmytryck made Murder my Sweet and in 1976 Farewell My Lovely was finally filmed under its real title by

Chandler was never satsified with the Hollywoodian system of adaptation except in one case: The Big Sleep, written by William Faulkner among other writers, and directed by Howard Hawks. This was in 1946. Chandler once noted in a letter that he was interested by the fact that nothing could emerge from the Hollywoodian system, "car, par sa nature même, le système cherche à exploiter un talent sans lui donner le droit d'être un talent." (11)

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(10) Raymond Chandler, Farewell My Lovely (The Raymonff Chandler Omnibus, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1964) p.287

(11) Cinéma 70, Op.Cit., p.87, translated by Olivier Comte.

When Scott Fitzgerald heard that his friend Budd Schulberg was writing a novel on Hollywood, he was afraid that it would clash with his own book in progress. A few days before his death, he wrote to Maxwell Perkins: "Budd Schulberg, a very nice, clever kid out here, is publishing a Hollywood novel with Random House in January. It's not bad but it doesn't cut into my material at all." (12) The novel was published a few weeks after Fitzgerald's death and was called What Makes Sammy Run? (13) It was Schulberg's first novel and told the story of Sammy's rapid ascent in Hollywood as a screenwriter until he becomes a tycoon with a bodyguard and much power. Schulberg makes a portrayal of the studios and the film colony as an "American microcosm, a place whose ethical and spiritual decomposition signals . . .the death of the American Dream" writes Walter Wells. (14) Schulberg obviously condemns Hollywood as a corrupt place where there could be no place for real talent.

On the same day he wrote to Maxwell Perkins, Fitzgerald sent Schulberg's editors Bennet Cerf another letter in which he praised Budd Schulberg's novel as "a grand book, utterly fearless and with a great deal of beauty side by side with the most bitter satire. Such things are in Hollywood--and Budd reports them with fine detachment." (15)

Later in 1950 Budd Schulberg was to write another novel based on Hollywood, The Disenchanted, in which Fitzgerald was involved as a central character.

When he died a few days before Christmas 1940 and one day before Nathanael West killed himself and his wife in a car crash, Fitzgerald was still working on The Last Tycoon. Some of

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(12) Letters, p.311
(13) Published by Random House, New York, 1952
(14) Walter Wells, Tycoons and Locusts (Southern Illinois University Press, 1973)
(15) Letters, p.625

the seventeen Pat Hobby stories which first appeared in the January 1940 edition of Esquire were published posthumously. (16) At the beginning, the stories were linked only by the hero's permanent presence but after writing the first three, Fitzgerald developed the idea of a larger entity. Although their primary purpose was to pay the grocer's bills, these stories played several roles in Fitzgerald's fictional work. Through these short pieces, Fitzgerald projected an interesting portrait of a writer who was probably not himself, but whom he came to know very well.

Pat Hobby, forty-nine years old, has been a screenwriter for his last twenty years, earning credits and contempt successively. Pat could be considered a failure, but he does not look at his career in a tragic light. He is inclined rather to see the funnier aspects of his destiny. In Boil Some Water--Lots of It, Pat Hobby assumes that film-making is an industry, not an art, and thus looks on himself as a professional writer rather than an author. (17) Like many screenwriters that Fitzgerald had observed in Hollywood, Pat Hobby never takes the trouble to read the original work when he is assigned to an adaptation. He has "scarcely opened a book in a decade" because now, he says, "they got English teachers working in pictures." (18)

Just like Fitzgerald, Pat Hobby had gained a few credits in the past years (19) but after Hollywood had lured him with a $2,500 contract, his salary had fallen to $250 a week (like Fitzgerald's). Now, Pat Hobby's secret hope (20) is to become a producer, just the way Fitzgerald dreamed of getting his chance as a writer-director. Both shared the same quest for intellectual

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(16) F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Pat Hobby Stories (Scribner, New York, 1962)
(19) Pat Hobby and Orson Welles
(18) A Man in the Way
(17) Cf. Mightier than the Sword
(20) Pat Hobby's Secret

and material independence. Although written in a comic vein, The Pat Hobby Stories convey the writer's bitterness over his experience as a Hollywood screenwriter. Moreover, these stories fulfilled another purpose which consisted of clearing away the large amount of material Fitzgerald had gathered when he had decided to write a novel on Hollywood. These stories served him as a rough-copy for the great thing he began to write in October 1939, only a few weeks after the first story was published.

Fitzgerald's purpose was to write a tragedy; his set would be Hollywood and his hero a film producer. Though he tried to convince his editor that his new novel was "distinctly not about Hollywood," The Last Tycoon turned out to be based on the moving-picture colony. The writer declared he was in terror "that this misinformation may have been disseminated to the literary columns." (21) Whether he thought it necessary to keep his real purpose secret, or believed that Hollywood was a dangerously choking matter, Fitzgerald remained secretive about The Last Tycoon as long as he had not finished its first draft. Two weeks before his death, he wrote to Scottie: "My novel is something of a mystery, I hope; I think it's a pretty good rule not to tell what a thing is until it's finished. If you do, you always seem to lose some of it." (22) In September, he seemed more confident when he sent an outline of the novel to Maxwell Perkins:

> "There's nothing that worries me in the novel, nothing that seems uncertain. . .If one book could ever be 'like' another, I should say it is more like The Great Gatsby than any other of my books. But I hope it will be entirely different. I hope it will be something new, arouse new emotions perhaps even a new way of looking at certain phenomena . . .It is an escape into a lavish, romantic past that perhaps will not come again in our time." (23)

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(21) Letters, p.305
(22) Letters, p.116
(23) The Last Tycoon, Op.Cit., p.172

He finished the first chapter by late November, but Colliers, a literary magazine, refused to serialise it, and Fitzgerald stopped working on the novel to write the Babylon Revisited script for Columbia. When he went back to The Last Tycoon he was drinking a lot and his health was getting worse. To his daughter he confessed: "You don't realise that what I am doing here is the last tired effort of a man who once did something fine and better." (24) His literary reputation seemed remote in the past and he felt himself a forgotten artist from another century.

One year later, Fitzgerald was even more tired but as his novel grew in length and colour, his hopes were high. "At present I'm doing a masterpiece for Esquire," he wrote to Scottie. (25) Living in Malibu with Sheilah Graham and working as a freelance screenwriter most of the time at home, he was hardly ever taking part in the professional and social life of Hollywood.

His novel was based on the observations he had collected from the past and his opinion of the movies was now very critical; he thought that the movies were a "racket": "You cannot be honest without admitting that its constructive contribution to humanity is exactly minus zero." (26) He was convinced that the film industry was luring the audiences just the way it had lured him some years ago. "It's simply a means of making dubious promises to a credulous public." (27)

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(24) Letters, p.48
(25) Ibid., p.97
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He had been credulous himself and the promises of a financial and artistic security had proved more than dubious. He was alone and poor, now living entirely in the past. One of the last notes he recorded at the end of The Last Tycoon was a statement: "There are no second acts in American lives;" (28) and yet Scott Fitzgerald was hoping to emerge again against Hollywood which had him "down in its books as a ruined man." (29)

He was sure tha his novel was good and would help him live an exceptional second act, except that his health was collapsing which made him gloomy: "No possible triumph is worth the loss of your health," he wrote to Scottie three months before he died. (30) He suffered his first heart attack in the first days of December and though nothing organic was disclosed by the cardiogram, he hurried back to his novel. On December 13th he told Zelda that he could not go to the studio in his condition, as he had to spend most of his time in bed; but he added: "The novel is about three-quarters through and I think I can go on till January 12th." (31) To Maxwell Perkins he announced that he was not going to stop working until he finished his first draft "which will be sometime after the 15th January." (32)

On December 20th, the day after he had written the first part of Chapter VI, he had a second attack, and on the 21st, a third and fatal one. Francis Scott Fitzgerald would not live his second act, though posterity would give him more acclaim than he ever achieved in his lifetime.

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(28) The Last Tycoon, Op.Cit., p.196
(29) Letters, p.145
(30) Letters, p.111
(31) Letters, p.150
(32) Letters, p.311

When Edmund Wilson edited the unfinished novel, he insisted on the fact that even Fitzgerald intended to revise or re-write the six chapters he had written. A letter to Maxwell Perkins and an outline were added to the manuscript along with various notes, so that it became possible to conclude that what remains from The Last Tycoon corresponds to only one half of the projected story. For a long time Fitzgerald had pretended that it was not a novel about Hollywood, telling Maxwell Perkins that the love affair was in fact "the meat of the book." (33) The reader might be misled by this assumption if he strictly considers the unfinished draft which stresses the love affair between Stahr and Kathleen much more than it appears in the general outline of the whole story.

Reading the summary of the novel that the author left in his notes conveys a sense of the personal and political conflicts that were threatening the organisation of the studios. Fitzgerald had often compared his last novel to The Great Gatsby which stood as a model for the kind of balance he intended to accomplish between the social forces and the hero's involvement in the conflicts as an individual. If Gatsby's dream was representative of the genteel hero in the twenties, Monroe Stahr's rise and fall would have been the result of the economic contradictions that Hollywood showed during the thirties. As Michael Millgate put it, The Last Tycoon was in fact "two novels in one": one "psychological" about the typically Fitzgeraldian hero Monroe Stahr and the other "social" in its analysis of Hollywood. (34)

In Monroe Stahr, Scott Fitzgerald had found the hero he needed to write a real tragedy. The writer had first met his model during his visit to Hollywood in 1927. The former was, at thirty-one, at the peak of his literary fame, while the latter

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(33) The Last Tycoon, Op.Cit., p.168
(34) Michael Millgate, Scott Fitzgerald as a social novelist: Statement and Technique in The Last Tycoon (English Studies, XLIII February 1962) pp. 1-3

who was three years younger, was already ranked a genius and a wonder-boy by the whole community of the film industry. Irving Thalberg had invited Scott Fitzgerald for lunch in the MGM commissary; the two men had become acquainted primarily because the writer was working on an original story for Constance Talmadge, whom the producer was courting. Fitzgerald later remembered the conversation he had had that day with Thalberg:

> "Scottie, supposing there's got to be a road through a mountain--a railroad, and two or three surveyors and people come to you and you believe some of them and some of them you don't believe, but all in all, there seem to be half a dozen possible roads through these mountains, each one of which, so far as you can determine, is as good as the other. Now suppose you happen to be the top man, there's a point where you don't exercise the faculty of judgement in the ordinary way, but simply the faculty of arbitrary decision . . .But when you're planning a new enterprise, the people under you mustn't ever know or guess that you're in doubt, because they've all got to have something to look up to and they mustn't ever dream that you're in doubt about any decision. These things keep occurring." (35)

At that point, the conversation was interrupted by other people arriving at the table but Fitzgerald never forgot how much he had been "impressed by the shrewdness" of what Thalberg said. Like Gatsby, Thalberg had risen from very humble origins to become a man of considerable power and wealth. He came from a family of German-Alsatian-Jewish origin and was

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(35) The Last Tycoon, Op.Cit., pp. 161-2

born in Biroklyn in 1899. His first job for a studio was offered him in 1918 by Carl Laemmle, then founder of Universal Pictures in New York. In 1919 at the age of twenty he became the studio manager of Universal Pictures in Hollywood. While still very young, Irving Thalberg was in charge of the complete production of the company and had to deal with such celebrities as Erich von Stroheim and Billy Wilder.

Stroheim was an artist of unique talent but his strength of personality almost immediately opposed Thalberg's sense of command. The manager stopped the shooting of Foolish Wives which--once completed--proved to be the biggest success in Universal's history. Thalberg could not stand somebody as hard-headed as himself and did stop von Stroheim's next film. From then on he was widely known as 'the man who fired Eric von Stroheim,' which is not a flattery, since, according to many critics and film-goers, Stroheim might have become the greatest director in the whole world. In 1923 Thalberg signed a contract for MGM as vice-president and production assistant. Among the most famous films he produced, there were titles like Ben-Hur, Stroheim's Greed--which he cut from twenty-four to ten reels, killing thus one of the most impressive masterworks in the history of film--and King Vidor's The Big Parade.

When Fitzgerald met Thalberg in 1927, the young man was no longer the Hollywood wonder-boy but an established authority in the biggest film company, sharing with Louis Mayer the direction of the enormous MGM. Thalberg produced famous films like Vidor's The Crowd, La Bohème and Beaumont's The Broadway Melody, but as Scott Fitzgerald noted at the end of his manuscript, he "never wanted his name on pictures," because, he said, "if you are in a position to give credit to yourself, then you do not need it." (36)

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(36) The Last Tycoon, Op.Cit., p.176

Although a self-made man, Thalberg was an insatiable reader and loved talking to writers. He knew Fitzgerald by reputation but at the time of their conversation the writer, who was then enjoying the full glory of his fame, was the one who was fascinated by his young admirer. When he returned to Hollywood in 1931, Fitzgerald was less confident in his talent while Thalberg had become a giant of the film industry. The producer asked Scott to write an adaptation of Katharine Brush's The Red-headed Woman; but the two men rapidly disagreed on how the story of this ambitious young girl should be approached. "I tried to get at Thalberg, but was erroneously warned against it as 'bad taste'," Fitzgerald wrote to his daughter six years later. "Result--a bad script," he concluded.

When Fitzgerald returned to Hollywood with a six-month contract at MGM in January 1937, Irving Thalberg was already dead. When Miles Calman died in an air-crash at the end of Crazy Sunday, Joel Coles said: "What a hell of a hole he leaves in this damn wilderness--already!" That was in 1931, and Calman had been portrayed on the model of both Irving Thalberg and King Vidor. Now, Fitzgerald could apply Coles's sentence to actuality. He hesitated no longer; he decided that Irving Thalberg would be the hero of the tragedy he meant to write on Hollywood.

"Thalberg has always fascinated me," Fitzgerald wrote to Kenneth Littauer, the editor of Collier's. "I've long chosen him for a hero (this has been in my mind for three years) because he is one of the half-dozen men I have known who were built on a grand scale." (39) In the same letter, Fitzgerald insisted on the fact that the events he had built around Monroe Stahr were pure fiction, but he added: "All of them are things which might very well have happened."

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(39) Thomas, Op.Cit., p.10

Fitzgerald had always chosen his heroes for what they represented. Gatsby was the enriched bootlegger, Dick Diver the corrupt scientist and Stahr the Last Tycoon of the films' Golden Age. Despite his claim that "no single fact is actually true" in the novel, Fitzgerald had in fact used all the events he had noted while working under Thalberg's distant supervision. His choice of Thalberg as a hero did not mean an adhesion to his conception of power. "Indeed, Thalberg's opinions were entirely different from mine in many respects that I will not go into," he told Kenneth Littauer. (40)

Scott Fitzgerald, who did not want to disclose the actual content of his novel, firmly denied that it was either about Hollywood or based on real observations. Both facts proved true and three weeks before his death, he said of the novel to his friend Edmund Wilson, who was later to publish the unfinished manuscript: "I honestly hoped somebody else would write it but nobody seems to be going to." (41) After reading Budd Schulberg's What Makes Sammy Run and Nathanael Wests' The Day of the Locust, Fitzgerald thought that nobody before him had been able to produce the right fiction on Hollywood and that it was his last mission to do it. One of Edmund Wilson's first remarks was that The Last Tycoon was the first novel by Fitzgerald "to deal seriously with any profession or business" while the other books had been "preoccupied with debutantes and college-boys." (42)

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(40) Ibid.
(41) Letters, p.369
(42) The Last Tycoon, Op.Cit., Introduction by Edmund Wilson, p.2

Wilson added:

> "Monroe Stahr, like any other of Scott Fitzgerald's heroes, is inextricably involved with an industry of which he has been of the creators, and its fate is implied in this tragedy. The moving picture business in America has been observed at close range, studied with a careful attention, and dramatised with a sharp wit such as are not to be found in combination in any of the other novels on the subject."

Wilson concludes with an opinion common to many a critic: "The Last Tycoon is far and away the best novel we have had about Hollywood and it is the only one that takes us inside." That was also the opinion expressed by Stephen Vincent Bennett in The Saturday Review of Literature and James Thurber in The New Republic. (43)

As for the exactness of facts, Fitzgerald has endowed Stahr with most of Thalberg's habits and features. "Remember," read a note on Stahr at the end of the novel, "that he was a fighter though he was a small man--certainly not more than 5'6 1/2", weighing very little (which is one reason he always liked to see people sitting down). . ." (44) Fitzgerald also noted that Stahr was "Napoleonic and actually liked combat" and referred at the end of the episode to old Laemmle, the founder of Universal Pictures, who made Thalberg studio manager at the age of twenty. The phrase "wonder boy" is often used by Fitzgerald to distinguish Stahr's precocious talents. (45)

"Stahr's education was founded on nothing more than a night-school course in stenography," (46) but as the novel opens he is at the height of his success and Fitzgerald wanted to re-write the end of the first chapter to convey the feeling

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(43) Thomas, Op.Cit., pp. 12-13
(44) The Last Tycoon, p.177
(45) Ibid.
(46) Ibid.

that Monroe was symbolically landing on his own kingdom, "feeling certainly of coming home to an empire of his own--an empirehe has made." (47) Like Calman in Crazy Sunday, Stahr was to have died in an air-crash and before his rivals turned him out of his position. The Last Tycoon is the story of the rise and fall of a new Fitzgeraldian romantic hero. After Manny Schwartz--once as successful as Stahr--committed suicide, his note recalls Nick Carraway's final tribute to Gatsby: "Dear Monroe, you are the best of them all and I have always admired your mentality . . ." (48)

This very suicide occurring before Stahr proceeded on his Hollywood journey announces an outburst of violence, symbolised by the earthquake, and a series of conflicts which were going to threaten the tycoon's position and power. Violence itself is used in films: "The men fought over and over. Always the same fight," (49) and Stahr refuses to share his power with any person or group, and judged this scene "too short in Napoleonic leaning towards combat." (50) When Kathleen disappears in the night, he realises how much the past has vanished, with his wife and his fame as a 'wonder-boy'. Now Monroe doubts even the possibility of love and is involved in two different kinds of conflict: on the one hand, the race for power within the system itself, which opposes the bosses like Brady (Thalberg's rival Louis B. Mayer at MGM) and Stahr, and on the other, the social and political conflict between the company and the forces of labour which are being organised.

Until now, Stahr has been the sole element of unity

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(47) Ibid., p.163
(48) Ibid., p.
(49) Ibid., p.
(50) Ibid., p.

in the system: Prince Agge asked Stahr, "But what does make the Unity?" and Stahr hesitated before replying: "I'm the Unity." (51) Everything depends on him, and everybody, whatever his function, actor, producer or director; they must rely entirely on him. "To Stahr," writes K.G.W. Cross, "the growing power of the unions--particularly those of left-wing affiliations, such as the Writers' Guild--constitutes a challenge to his authority." (52)

One of the most interesting achievements of this book is the description of the relationship between Stahr and the directors on the one hand, and Stahr and the writers on the other. As soon as Thalberg arrived at Hollywood, he ran into conflict with Stroheim whom he never allowed to be actor and director as well in order to be able to fire him at any time. "Up to his arrival, the director had been kingpin in pictures since Griffith and The Birth of a Nation. Now, therefore, some of the directors resented the fact that he reduced their position from one of complete king to being simply one element in a combine." (53)

After visiting the stage where Red Ridingwood is shooting a film, Stahr calls the director out to his car and announces to him abruptly that he is dismissed from the movie. "Shall I finish this take?" asked Red. "It's being done now," said Stahr. "Harley's in there." The producer, realising that the actress disagreed with Red's methods had chosen the less expensive alternative: fire the director. "How about my coat?" asks Red. "Here it is," said Monroe, who had taken it before leaving the studio.

This episode is quite significant of the kind of relationship that prevailed at that time in Hollywood. In the

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(51) Ibid., p.72
(52) Cross, Op.Cit., p.104
(53) The Last Tycoon, p.176

projection room, Stahr decides whether to cut a scene or to have it developed. ≠ Rushes are trash if he decides so. (54) He behaves as if he were the real 'author', in the modern sense of the word, of all the movies he produces. As for the author of the script, he is hardly an author at all; he is rather a jobbing workman normally working with a six-month contract before becoming, like Fitzgerald, a freelance writer, a kind of mercenary of the studios without security of any kind.

" Stahr knew he had a working knowledge of technics, but because he had been head for so long and so many apprentices had grown up during his sway, more knowledge was attributed to him than he possessed." (55) Stahr says that he likes writers and actors, but this love is highly paternalistic: "You writers and artists goof out and get all mixed, and somebody has to come in and straighten you out . . .You seem to take things so personally, hating people and worshipping them . . "(56) When Wylie White asks him why Stahr pays him, Stahr replies: "That's a question of merchandise. I am a merchant. I want to buy what's in your mind." (57)

Stahr may have ten writers working ahead or behind somebody else, "a system which he so thoughtfully invented," recalls Fitzgerald, who had found himself under the supervision of people like De Sano or Ted Panamore, and sometimes re-written by close friends like Anita Loos. The conference in Chapter III is recorded from Fitzgerald's own experience on The Red-headed Woman in 1931. Stahr repeats that he is the one who decides the kind of story he wants: " When I want to do a Eugene O'Neill play, I'll buy one," he states. (58)

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(54) Ibid., pp. 67-8
(55) Ibid., p.178
(56) Ibid., p.21
(57) Ibid.
(58) Ibid., p.49

≠ Note: "The Directors did not appear at these showings--officially because their work was considered done, actually because few punches were pulled here as money ran out in silver spools. There had evolved a delicate staying-away." TLT p.65

A good writer, according to Fitzgerald, would write trash for the movies deliberately. "Would you write that in a book of your own, Mr Boxley?" asks Stahr. "What?"answers the scriptwriter, "Naturally not." In the system invented by Stahr, the best accomplishment in the job is "the cleverest plagiarist in the biz." (59) Stahr explains that he has to work with any writer that would accept the system and "stay decently sober" --which Fitzgerald and Billy White could not achieve.

"Disappointed poets, one-hit playwrights" are employed in pairs: "I've had as many as three pairs working independently on the same idea." (60) He eventually interfered with the writing: "We don't need <u>less</u> characters . . .we need <u>more</u>." (61) As a whole, he considers writers as children: "I never thought that I had more brains than a writer has. But I always thought that his brains belonged to me--because I knew how to use them," he says to Brimmer, the Communist Party representative.

Brimmer replies that the writers are "the farmer in the business. They grow the grain, but they're not at the feast." Brimmer goes on to develop a theory of class-struggle when he says: "Their feeling towards the producer is like the farmers' resentment of the city fellow." (62)

In <u>The Last Tycoon</u> Fitzgerald achieved a sharp description of the economic conditions of life in Hollywood, which he presents as "a perfectly zoned city, so you know exactly what kind of people economically live in each section, from executive to directors, through technicians in their bungalows, right down to extras." (63) This observation might be compared to

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(59) Ibid., p.44
(60) Ibid., p.71
(61) Ibid., p.129
(62) Ibid., p.145
(63) Ibid., p.85

what Fitzgerald wrote to his daughter the year he began his novel: "Most questions in life have an economic basis (at least according to us Marxians)." (64)

In The Last Tycoon Scott Fitzgerald describes Hollywood at the end of the tycoons' rule, when every company was governed by a boss as if he were an emperor. MGM is Stahr's empire as Fox was Zanuck's, Warners was Jack Warner's. The tycoon was generally the executive producer. The Company President is still the old founder, who sometimes arbitrates the conflicts in the front office. In Chapter III, Stahr proposes to the committee the production of a prestige film, but he is challenged by Brady, Cecilia's father and Monroe's rival at MGM (Louis B. Mayer succeeded Thalberg as executive producer in 1936). Old Marcus, the President, states: "Monroe is our production genius." (65)

Monroe's opinion is that one company cannot play constantly safe. "It's time we made a picture that'll lose some money . . .this'll bring in new customers." (66) This theory proved to be prophetic when, forty years later, Hollywood decided to produce a very expensive adaptation of The Great Gatsby in order to win new customers.

Is Monroe Stahr "Christian Industry"? asked Cecilia in the notes following the novel. Fitzgerald was convinced that Stahr-Thalberg "was a marker in industry like Edison and Lumière and Griffith and Chaplin. He led pictures way up past the range and power of the theatre, reaching a sort of golden age, before the censorship." (67)

In a lecture he wrote for Sheilah Graham, Fitzgerald says: "Once in a while, a great figure appeared (in Hollywood).

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(64) Letters, p.62
(65) The Last Tycoon, p.57
(66) Ibid., p.59
(67) Ibid., p.35

Griffith was one, Thalberg another. There is no such person now . . ." (68)

Stahr-Thalberg is linked to three American Presidents: Jackson, McKinley and more emphatically to Lincoln, who stands as a symbol not only of the past to which Stahr devotes his dreams, but also of the tradition of authority which he embodies. The executive producer is assisted by associate producers who appear in Chapter III in the conference room. Reinmund is introduced as "a handsome young opportunist. . . manifesting an almost homosexual relation to Stahr," and Wylie White as "an intellectual of the second order." (69) They are both supervising John Broaca, the picture's director and totally depend on their boss.

Thalberg usually looked on directors with much contempt, but occasionally had close relations with some of them like King Vidor. Most of these men were, in fact, producer-directors, such as Joseph Mankiewicz when he produced and directed Three Comrades. In the book, after the earthquake Kathleen and her friend are riding on the top of a huge head of the Goddess Silva; the rescuers hurry "because de Mille needs that head next week," explains one of them.

Eleven men of the front office are having lunch in the private dining-room of the studio commissary. "They were the money men--they were the rulers," writes Fitzgerald, who adds: "Eight out of the ten ≠ were Jews--five of the ten were foreign-born including a Greek and an Englishman." (70)

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(68) Edward Murray, The Cinematic Imagination (Frederick Ungar Publishing, New York, 1972), p.202
(69) The Last Tycoon, pp. 46-7
(70) Ibid., p.55

≠ Note: The eleventh is Prince Agge, their guest.

Cecilia relates her father to Wall Street at the opening of Chapter III: "Of course he talked that double talk to Wall Street about how mysterious it was to make a picture." Fitzgerald suggests that Eastern Financing groups control the studios imposing their "box-office standards on producers, directors, writers, everyone." (71) He even gives the reader some details about the means of production when he writes: "Almost single-handed (Stahr) had moved pictures sharply forward through a decade, to a point where the content of the 'A-productions' was wider and richer than that of the stage." (72)

Monroe Stahr is introduced as an organisational genius, the creator of a system which is now threatened by two different but implacable forces. Stahr is caught between those who, like Brady, want to reduce his power and the unions, symbolised by Brimmer, who want to substitute an organisation based on the principle of the class-struggle. Both forces agree on the fact that the tycoon should relinquish at least some of his powers and prerogatives; they want to put an end to a system dominated by a single man. Stahr is not ready to transfer any of his powers; he fights in order to remain on top of everything that is made in the studio.

The meeting with Prince Agge shows how unpopular Stahr has grown with the management of the company. Old Marcus is obliged to provide him with a backing which brings nothing more definite than a delay to the final issue of the conflict. When Stahr announces that he intends to produce a "quality film," (73) which may lose money, he appears to the capitalists who control the industry as an idealistic artist no longer

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(71) Murray, Op.Cit., p.204
(72) The Last Tycoon, p.116
(73) Ibid., p.59

needed by the machine. Once, Stahr saw a negro who told him that he did not allow his children to go to the movies; after that, "Stahr had thrown four pictures out of his plans--one that was going into production this week." (74)

At the same time, Stahr is attacked by the unions particularly the Writers' Guild and the Communists for his tendency to regard his collaborators as his belongings. Significantly, he seeks to meet a member of the Communist Party after receiving the telegramme announcing Kathleen's marriage. "Stahr's negociations," narrates Cecilia, "with the Writers' Guild, which had continued over a year, were approaching a dead end." (75) Before meeting Brimmer, Monroe ran off "the Russian Revolutionary films that he had in his library at home" as well as Robert Wiene's Doctor Caligari and Salvador Dali's Chien Andalou (directed by Luis Bunuel). He had even asked for "a two-page treatment" of the Communist Manifesto.

Brimmer accuses Stahr of being "a paternalistic employer" and as Stahr shows he is losing his temper, knocks him down, saying: "I always wanted to hit a ten million dollars but I didn't know it would be like this." (76) Later in the story, "a wage-cut has been threatened in the studio" (77) while the conflict between Stahr and Brady is coming to a climax. Brady calls a meeting of writers and announces the wage-cut. Caught between the two forces, Stahr is, from Fitzgerald's point of view, the victim of a double conspiracy: "The Reds see him now as a conservative--Wall Street as a Red." (78)

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(74) Ibid., p.
(75) Ibid., p.142
(76) Ibid., p.153
(77) Ibid;, synopsis, p.154
(78) Ibid., p.156

Kathleen has married a cutter working in the studio who played an active role in the technicians' union against Stahr. The tycoons' era seems over and Fitzgerald explains the new situation by "the split between the controllers of the movie industry, on one hand, and the various groups of employees." (79) The end of the story was to describe the wild fight between Stahr and Brady, who try to murder each other, except that Monroe dies in an air-crash like Calman in Crazy Sunday. (80)

In his notes, Fitzgerald wrote that Stahr had "died for what he believed in," (81) which Edmund Wilson explained as "the relation of the moving-picture industry to the American ideals and traditions." (82)

Stahr is a modern Gatsby and stands for the Great American Dream threatened and cuoorpted by the interests of money, just as the movies are packaged in a dream factory instead of being an art in themselves. Stahr's successes, struggles, defeat and death symbolise the death of art and creative individualism in America. Cecilia Brady, the narrator, has been modlled by motion picture values; she suggests on Fitzgerald's behalf that after the twenties had ended with the Great Depression Hollywood's fate is America's.

Scott Fitzgerald had once written that he disagreed with Thalberg's methods and that he could not give his sympathy to a man who used writers in teams as if they were miners. In The Last Tycoon he describes Hollywood as the spokesman for the American Dream. "Hollywood," writes Robert Sklar, "not only spoke for the nation's dreams, it manufactured them." (83)

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(79) Ibid., p.158
(80) Crazy Sunday, Op.Cit.
(81) The Last Tycoon, p.172
(82) Ibid., p.155
(83) Sklar, Op.Cit., p.334

Although fascinated by the movies as a popular form of entertainment, Fitzgerald denounces a system which is a "shame . . .gross, commercial, to be deplored." Hollywood's values are primarily destructive and conventional. "The moving-picture business in America, " writes Edmund Wilson about The Last Tycoon, "has here been observed at a close range, studied with a sharp wit . . .The Last Tycoonis far and away the best novel we have had about Hollywood, and it is the only one which takes us inside." (84)

In fact, we are driven inside a jungle, where the humans, unlike the beasts, respect no rule. A few months before his death, Fitzgerald wrote to his daughter that the movies are " a racket . . .whose constructive contribution to humanity is exactly minus zero." (85) To his former secretary he wrote in July 1940: "Isn't Hollywood a dump--in the human sense of the word? A hideous town, pointed up by the insulting gardens of its rich, full of the human spirit at a new low of debasement." (86)

In Edward Murray's opinion, "The Last Tycoon represents one of the most striking applications of the cinematic imagination to a literary subject that has yet been written . . ." Although the writer had movie construction in mind during the composition of The Last Tycoon, he did not commit the mistake of Dos Passos in projecting a 'movie novel'. Fitzgerald's cinematic method remains relatively unobtrusive; the technique is assimilated to the subject, and not the other way round, and without the authority of the writer's presence--that is to say without the tone and style of the narrator --the novel would be nothing." (87)

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(84) The Last Tycoon, Introduction, pp. 2-3
(85) Letters; p.107
(86) Letters, p.24
(87) Murray, Op.Cit., p.204

"The novel would be nothing": this sentence explains the failure of so many screen adaptations derived from literary masterpieces. The 1949 filming of The Great Gatsby failed to convey the beauty of Fitzgerald's style. It was still a time when the word was subordinated to the image and the talkies were not quite mature. Now, a film can be based entirely on filmed speech and succeed. In 1977, three years after producing an expensive screen version of The Great Gatsby, Cinema International Corporation decided to put Fitzgerald's last and unfinished novel into production. Sam Spiegel, the film producer, was very careful in his choice of collaborators. Elia Kazan, one of the best American film-makers, was to produce the film along with him and direct him as well. Kazan, who began his career in the movies with A Tree grows in Brooklyn in 1945, has since directed at least ten of the more outstanding modern films ranging from A Streetcar Named Desire (1951) to America, America (1963) and The Arrangement (1973) through On The Waterfront (1954) and East of Eden (1955).

The most difficult obstacle remained the making of the screenplay. The two producers decided to call for a successful English playwright who had achieved a most brilliant career as a screenwriter since writing The Servant in 1963--Harold Pinter. Working Primarily for Joseph Losey (The Servant, Accident, The Go-Between) Pinter had already collaborated with other English directors such as Jack Clayton (who directed the 1974 version of The Great Gatsby) for The Pumpkin Eater (1964) or Michael Anderson for The Quiller Memorandum (1966).

Elia Kazan was one of the first American directors to win and deserve the title of "author", making very personal films which could not have been made by any other director. The striking thing about The Last Tycoon is that it will probably be recorded as the least 'Kazanian' among all Kazan's films. He wrote himself his last scripts and has been working very

hard to gain a total freedom of creativity. When Sam Spiegel asked him to direct the movie in 1974, he refused. For many months afterwards, Mike Nichols, who directed The Graduate and Five Easy Pieces, worked on the script with Harold Pinter until he disagreed with the producer, who called again for Kazan.

Kazan began preparing the shooting with a screenplay already finished. In his treatment, Harold Pinter had suppressed the content of the first chapter and the plane landing in California. The film opens in Stahr's projection room with a few people attending the screening of the rushes in black-and-white. This scenesucceeds in conveying the atmosphere in the studios during the thirties. The rest of the script deals strictly with the other five unfinished chapters of the book. Pinter, in agreement with Sam Spiegel, decided not to use Fitzgerald's notes and outline of the second part of the story. "Car," Elia Kazan told Michel Ciment in an interview for the French review Positif, "un écrivain prévoit des choses qu'il peut ensuite ne pas inclure dans son roman." (88)

One could agree or disagree with this statement and yet consider Fitzgerald's outline as a very clear and efficient synopsis. Nevertheless, the story ends with Monroe Stahr being fired by the studio management and overthrown by Brady, which was not Fitzgerald's idea. Stahr's departure is devoid of any violence and appears as the logical failure of an exhausted romantic and lonely hero. The new bosses look at him leaving through the curtains of his former office, "et cela ressemble à un cortège funèbre, à ses funerailles," says Kazan.

Stahr enters a big, empty studio and stands in the darkness alone. At the end of the script, Pinter repeats the

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(88) Michel Ciment , Positif N°192, April 1977, Interview with Elia Kazan, p.11

scene in Chapter III when Stahr tells writer George Boxley the beginning of a story about a girl entering an office and leaving a nickel on the desk. "Go on," said Boxley, smiling, "What happens?" "I don't know," said Stahr. "I was just making pictures." (89)

The second time, the story is told very distantly by Stahr, who dissolves into his own legend. For Fitzgerald himself, this episode was designed to show Stahr's sense of creativity and artistry, just as he wanted to use his conversation in 1927 with Thalberg about railways through a mountain to emphasise his sense of authority. The sequence of the nickel story seems in the film to apply to Fitzgerald himself, caught between reality and illusion. Stahr's career is an attempt to mask his origins, just as was Fitzgerald's arrogant success through the twenties. His slim body and his weariness announce his next defeat. The last tycoon's failure is also the screenwriter's helplessness. Through Stahr's fall from power summarised in the sequence, Scott Fitzgerald seems to make a transfer of his own from his disappointing career as a scriptwriter to his last accomplishment as a creative genius. For this reason, the twice-told story is probably the best achievement of the whole script.

Apart from these changes, nothing new has been added to the story which focusses on Fitzgerald's saga. "Je pense," said Elia Kazan, "que le film est davantage sur Fitzgerald que sur Thalberg." (90) Fitzgerald's dialogue has been preserved most of the time and proves very efficient as well as its visual ideas. As written, The Last Tycoon was a perfect script with a highly cinematic technique. Why was such a man unable to write in this way for the studios?

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(89) The Last Tycoon, pp. 40-1
(90) Positif, Op.Cit., p.12

In other words, why did the studios and their tycoons show such stubbornness in seeking trashy material?

Fitzgerald's last novel relates the end of an era and suggests that the Writers' Guild and the other unions might change the course of things in the future.

Kazan's film differs from the novel in its attitude toward Hollywood. The movie is not so critical of the film capital or its colony. "Hollywood n'a jamais gagné autant d'argent que dans les années 40," claims Kazan. "Personne n'est irremplacable." (91) One may even suspect Kazan of using the script to reach a sort of conciliation-deal with Hollywood in its need for a new golden era. ≠ The script shows none of the novel's violence and attacks against the Hollywoodian system, regarded by Fitzgerald as an example of the corruption of the Great American Dream.

Kazan's The Last Tycoon is actually not a film on Hollywood; it is rather a film on Fitzgerald, told with an embittered tone. Tristan Renaud writes in Cinéma 77: "L' adaptation de Pinter propose du Dernier Nabab une lecture primaire, castatrice, à base de sentimentalisme et de romantisme rétre, et tente de réduire Fitzgerald à un médiocre univers d'intrigues castatrices et médiocres . . . Fitzgerald . . .résiste magnifiquement à la perversion de l'adaptation." (92) Renaud also thinks that Kazan's film tries to seduce rather than disturb its audience "et n' arrivait jamais, à force de gommer les arêtes vives, à la violence désespérée du monde illusoire où baignait l'oeuvre originale."

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(91) Ibid., p.7
(92) Tristan Renaud, Le Dernier Nabab in Cinéma 77, N° 221, April 1977, p.83

≠ Note: It is difficult to forget Kazan's involvement with the MacCarthy Commission in 1947.

The cast is very rich and refers to the past of some once famous stars like Robert Mitchum (Pat Brady), Dana Andrews (Ridingwood, the fired director), Jeanne Moreau (Didi, the tyrannical star), Donald Pleasance (Boxley), Ray Milland (Fleischacker), Tony Curtis (Rodriguez). Robert de Niro (Monroe Stahr), unlike the celebrities who belong to the past, is a new-born star revealed by Taxi Driver and Bertolucci's Novocento. de Niro is very convincing and looks very much like Irving Thalberg.

Another current star appears in the cast, Jack Nicholson, who provides Brimmer's character with a privileged height and attraction. Kazan and Spiegel decided to introduce Ingrid Boulting as Kathleen Moore and Theresa Russel as Cecilia Brady. The latter is full of life and youth, as Fitzgerald had imagined her, while the former fails to convey the atmosphere of mystery and premonitory dissolution suggested by the character in the original novel.

With its shortcomings and its qualities, The Last Tycoon movie version still appears more faithful to Scott Fitzgerald, and even seems to belong more to him, posthumously, than it does to its actual director.

CONCLUSION

"I talk with the authority of failure," once wrote Fitzgerald, "Ernest with the authority of success." (1) Judgements on Fitzgerald's behaviour and conduct are often confused with judgements of his work. It is difficult to disentangle these two judgements, since the author of The Great Gatsby showed such an intimate connection between his life, his opinions and his writing. Has Fitzgerald ever been fascinated by failure, the consistent theme of his work? The answer probably lies between the two alternatives. To some extent, Fitzgerald has permanently dramatised his own failures as well as those of his society. This Side of Paradise was an account of his failure to be a Princeton man right to the end and his inability to get into the War.

At the end of his life, Fitzgerald intended The Last Tycoon to be a record of the writers' difficulty in working in a system dominated by all-powerful tycoons. In this sense, Fitzgerald's last novel was more a transfer of the screenwriter's failure into a literary accomplishment achieved by a man who made his last effort to prove that he was still a gifted author.

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(1) William Troy, Scott Fitzgerald: The Authority of Failure (Modern American Fiction) p.137

As far as his literary works are concerned, Fitzgerald is far from being a failure. Talking with the authority of failure does not mean being a failure, as many a critic has hastily concluded. Scott Fitzgerald has been able to speak about his time better than any other American writer of his generation. His early novels and short stories are full of indications about the Jazz Age, the Roaring Twenties, the Lost Decade or whatever name the twenties have been given. From the outset, the writer had tried to convey the atmosphere of the new era through a new technique suggested by the movies. No major American novelist was more conscious of the impact of the movies on Society and Literature than was Fitzgerald. His novels and short pieces are filled with references to the film industry as a popular medium which seemed to fascinate and repel him at the same time.

As a young writer, he had shown an impressive enthusiasm for the movies; in his works, he never failed to prove his understanding of the new medium. He was born and had grown up with it, and had from the beginning experienced the cinematic techniques. A summary of his early works could not be reduced to themes or analysis. There is a lot to see and much to hear in his writings: people singing and dancing, bands playing jazz, cars going over the gorgeous city of New York, wild parties and colours everywhere. "What ensued," he wrote, in The Crack-up, "was only one of the thousand success stories of those gaudy days, but it plays a part in my own movie of New York." (2)

Fitzgerald has not only offered a movie of New York but also a documentary film on America at an important stage of modern civilisation: the illusion of never-ending opulence,

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(2) My Lost City in The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.23

the Boom and its characters: Al Capone, Clara Bow, Al Smith, Eugene Debs, Harding and Wall Street, of which Jay Gatsby is a combination.

Ernest Hemingway, once Fitzgerald's friend and later his permanent rival, resumed all the contemporary critical attitude to the author of The Great Gatsby when he wrote in The Snows of Kilimandjaro: "He remembered poor Scott Fitzgerald and his romantic awe of them and how he started a story once that began 'The very rich are different from you and me' and how someone had said to Scott: 'Yes, they have more money.' " (3)

Hemingway's rejoinder fails to understand the importance of wealth and opulence to the future of modern life. Fitzgerald described fifty years ago what is now called the 'americanisation' of world-wide civilisation, whatever credit or corruption is given to the concept. Europeans have lived through the same phenomenon--thirty years later, during the fifties--and other societies are following in the same tracks. Fitzgerald had been attracted and repelled by this new-born civilisation based on material values. He was part of it, even if he was one of the most violent objectors. He wanted to be successful and rich to maintain himself and Zelda on top of what he once called "the most expensive orgy in history." (4)

The moving picture industry, which stood as a symbol for unlimited wealth, could provide him with the money he needed. In 1920, MGM and Fox acquired three of his short stories which were hastily filmed with nobody caring how bad they could be. Only the money mattered and stimulated the

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(3) Letters, p.287
(4) Echoes of the Jazz Age in The Crack-up, Op.Cit., p.18

writer's interest in the new medium. The movies had lured him as they did later when he signed a six-month contract for one thousand dollars in 1937 and ended up as a freelance scriptwriter.

In The Beautiful and the Damned, Fitzgerald began to show an ambivalent attitude toward the movies, represented by producer Bloeckman (modelled on J. Stuart Blackton, a producer who lost millions of dollars in the 1929 Crash). The novel introduced the theme of dissolution and ended prophetically with the heroine losing her looks and the hero becoming a hopeless alcoholic. The writer in the book is accused of writing trash for the movies.

Although not primarily a cinematic novel, The Great Gatsby reveals Fitzgerald's experiences with the film colony, but when the novel was adapted for the first time to the screen, its author was associated with the treatment. Nonetheless, he still wanted to try his hand at script-writing and went to Hollywood in 1929 as a successful, conquering artist. It was the only time he was asked in his life to write an original; and he failed to interest the producer of Lipstick.

While writing Tender is the Night, Fitzgerald wrote several short stories dealing with the moving picture colony and technique and came back for another short stay in Hollywood. When he finished his fourth novel, it became clear that all its characters were strongly influenced by the screen and to a large extent derived their image from a cinematic attitude.

When he came back at last to Hollywood in 1937, Scott Fitzgerald had suffered a terrible crack-up and was feeling that the Great Depression had been his own. He was conscious of the fact that "no single man with a serious literary reputation has ever made good there." (5)

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(5) Letters, p.420

He believed that forming a partnership with a real technician would be the solution for him, for he had grown obsessed by technical problems. Already in 1931, he kept asking questions about camera angles, directing and so on; but though he did work in a team with other partners, the results were worse. There was always somebody behind him to revise or re-write his story and he, the genuine artist, did not know how to write the cheap things he was asked to, even if he had boasted some years before of his ability to be cheap. He needed money but looked on his new job with contempt; yet he won his only credit with a script which had been re-written and revised several times after him: Joseph Mankiewicz's Three Comrades.

Fitzgerald became ever more contemptuous of Hollywood which was paying him one thousand dollars to write deliberate "trash", to perform something far below his recognised capacity. Slowly he began to realise the purpose of his presence in Hollywood. Other people like R. Chandler or William Faulkner had worked in Hollywood, taking away the money they needed to ensure their financial security, but without getting entangled in moral problems or causing any harm to their literary reputations.

Fitzgerald's main fault was his obsession with building a solid reputation as a screenwriter when the system used him as a jobbing workman, one link in a chain. In the 30s in Hollywood, a writer was a piece-worker whose brains, as Stahr in The Last Tycoon pointed out, belonged to the producer. Fitzgerald, whose moral integrity was unchallenged in spite of, or because of, the dilemma he was living--his need for money and his will to be a real artist--was learning his job and at the same time collecting various notes for the novel he intended to write on Hollywood.

He was still fascinated by the Seventh Art as a popular form of entertainment. He knew that Hollywood was manufacturing America's dreams and that furthermore, the movies were modelling the cultural criteria of the nation. He was conscious that the novel, which at his maturity was "the strongest and supplest medium" was now "subordinated to a mechanical and communal art that, whether in the hands of Hollywood merchants or Russian idealists, was capable of reflecting only the tritest thing, the most obvious emotion." (6) Monroe Stahr was finally defeated by the same political and economic forces that had never allowed the writer to express his visions without somebody remarking: "How would you film that?!"

Scott Fitzgerald wrote some good scripts for Hollywood, like Cosmopolitan, and met many obstacles. Did he come too early to Hollywood, whose criteria were almost entirely shaped by the market and its definition as a dream-factory? Forty years later, the successful adaptation of The Great Gatsby and The Last Tycoon on the grounds of a faithful script proves how much Scott Fitzgerald is up to date, and his technique cinematic. Obviously there is no way to photograph an author's style unless the author uses a technique that is appropriateto the movies. Without committing, that is, the mistake made by Dos Passos in U.S.A., designed to be a "movie novel."

Fitzgerald always used a cinematic technique which lets the story move smoothly. Now the rules that shape the film techniques have become wider and more flexible; now, many a writer may film his own story in the way he thinks best. It was one of Fitzgerald's most secret and cherished fantasies to become some day his own director. He might be regarded as a modern screenwriter and would certainly be more satisfied with the evolution of the Seventh Art.

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(6) The Crack-up, Op.Cit., pp.48-9

At the end of The Great Gatsby, Nick Carroway is standing on Gatsby's porch: "I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock . He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he would hardly fail to grasp it . . .Gatsby believed in the green light." (7)

"Yes, but how would you film that?" a producer of forty years earlier would have asked. In Jack Clayton's version of the novel, the green light in the depth of field ≠ is a meaningful symbol for hope and dream and remains linked to the best scenes in the film. In the ghostly light of the dawn and thanks to lighting-effects the lawn does look blue in contrast to the blinking green of the light across the dock.

Fitzgerald's descriptions are full of colours. Gloria's "fur-trimmed suit was grey--'because with grey you have to wear a lot of paint' she explained--and a small toque sat rakishly on her head, allowing yellow ripples of hair to wave out in jaunty glory. In the higher light, it seemed to Anthony that her personality was infinitely softer." (8) The Beautiful and the Damned is filled with such colorful descriptions (9) as are Fitzgerald's other novels and stories.

En route to Hollywood, the writer explained to his daughter in July 1937 his previous failures in scriptwriting by saying: "I had worked so desperately hard to develop a hard, colorful prose style."

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(7) The Great Gatsby, p.188
(8) The Beautiful and the Damned, p.55
(9) Ibid., pp. 64, 106 . . .

The first film in colour on which Fitzgerald collaborated was Gone With The Wind, but he explained that he "was absolutely forbidden to use any words except those of Margaret Mitchell!" (10) In fact, he was already ranked by Hollywood " in its books as a ruined man"--a label, he protested, "I had done nothing to deserve." (11)

Had he have been to Hollywood a few years later when colour began to take over, his career as a screenwriter would probably have been quite different, and certainly more filled with success. Hollywood's attempt to revive through the writer's own revival and exceptional "second act in American lives" (12) proves that the genius of Scott Fitzgerald has resisted the combined effects of Time and the Hollywoodian System.

Once Fitzgerald had asked Hollywood to help him stay afloat. The wheel has turned; and now Hollywood needs help to keep afloat from one it had allowed to drown.

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(10) Letters, p.304
(11) Letters, p.145
(12) The Last Tycoon, p.196

APPENDIX I

TECHNICAL TERMS .

Added scenes, scènes additives
Angle shot, prise de vues de côté, plan cassé
Art director, chef décorateur
Assistant director, assistant réalisateur
Assistant production manager, régisseur
Background hold take, prises de vue en extérieur destinées à la transparence
Bckground lighting, éclairage de découverte
Background shooting, prise de vue avec transparence
Background music, musique de fond
Blow - up, agrandissement
Box office success, film à recettes record
Camera angle, angle de prise de vue
Camera assistant, assistant opérateur
Close shot, plan rapproché
Close medium shot, plan américain (des pieds à la tête)
Close up, gros plan
Costume film, film historique
Credit (v.), créditer au générique
Cover set, découverte
Credit titles, générique
Cross fade, fondu enchaîné par superposition d'images entre deux séquences
Cutter, aide monteur
Cutting and editing, découpage et montage
Cutting print, copie de montage
Cutting room, salle de montage
Depth of field, profondeur de champ
Dialogue list, dialogue
Direct (v.), mettre en scène, réaliser
Direct recording, enrègistrement direct
Director, réalisateur, metteur en scène
Director of photography, directeur de la photographie/chef opérateur
Distance shot, plan d'ensemble
Edit, monter
Editor, chef monteur
Effect lighting, effets lumineux
Entertainment, spectacle/amusement
Executive producer, producteur
Exhibition, représentation
Exhibitor, exploitant
Extra, figurant

Fade, fondu
Fade out, fermeture en fondu
Feature film, film de long métrage
Film cutter, monteur
Film editor, chef monteur
Film library/archives, cinémathèque
Film magazine, (a) boîte-chargeur (b) revue cinématographique
Film reel, bobine de pellicule
Final print, copie avec montage définitif
Flash, séquence brève
Flashback, retour en arrière
Focus, point focal
Focussing, mise au point
Frame, image
Framing, cadrage
Freelance, indépendant
Full frame, plein cadre
Generic, générique
Indirect lighting, lumière indirecte
Intercut shot, insertion d'images
Jobbing worker, tâcheron
Leading star, vedette principale
Location, on, en extérieurs
Location shot, prise de vue en extérieur
Long shot, plan d'ensemble
Main shot, plan principal
Main title, générique
Make-up, maquillage
Master print, copie originale
Medium close shot, plan rapproché
Model, maquette
Movable set, décor mobile
Movies (U.S.), cinéma
Movie theater/house (U.S.), salle de cinéma
Movie (U.S.), film
Narrator, commentateur
Newsreel, actualités
Pan (v.), panoramiquer
Preview, avant-première (d'un film)
Print, copie (d'un film)
Producer, producteur
Production manager, directeur de production
Projection room, salle de projection
Range, gamme
Recording director, ingénieur de son (chef opérateur-son)
Reel, bobine
Rehearsal, répétition
Release (distribution), distribution
Response, écho, acceuil
Re-take, plan refait

Reverse shot, contre-champ
Revue film, film musical
Royalties, droits d'auteur (commerciaux)
Run (v.) a film, projeter
Rushes, rushes (bandes, son et image projetées pour vérifier la qualité du tournage de la veille)
Scenario writer, scénariste
Screen, écran
Screen credit, générique
Screenplay, scénario ou découpage définitif (tel qu'il est réalisé à l'écran)
Screen test, prise d'essai, bout d'essai
Screenwriter, scénariste
Screening, projection, présentation (d'un film)
Script, scénario
Scriptwriter, scénariste
Serials, épisode
Set, décor
Set designer, décorateur
Shoot (v.), tourner/filmer
Shooting, tournage
Shooting angle, angle de prise de vue
Shooting script, scénario découpe/découpage technique
Shot, plan/prise de vue
Sound track, piste sonore
Split screen process, image composite réalisée par cache et contre-cache fixes
Staff writer, auteur salarié
Stage, plateau
Stage panel, panneau de plateau
Starring, être vedette/ liste de vedettes
Story writer, auteur/écrivain
Studio manager, directeur de studio
Subtitle, sous-titre
Supervisor, inspecteur de production
Synopsis, résumé du scénario
Talkies (U.S.), films parlants
Test, essai
Theatre circuit, circuit de salles
Travelling shot, déplacement de la caméra sur un chariot
Treatment, adaptation/traitement
Type, figurant
Zoom shot, prise de vues avec effet de rapprochement provoqué par un changement de focale

APPENDIX II

American Legion, The, An organisation for War Veterans

Arbuckle, Fatty, An actor. In 1922, the director William Desmond was killed in mysterious circumstances during a party in which various celebrities were taking part, like Fatty Arbuckle, Mary Miles Minter and Mabel Normand. Wallace Reid revealed that those present had over-indulged in drugs that evening.

Capone, Al A famous gangster with Mafia connections in the Chicago of the twenties.

Redsocks, A baseball team. The Cincinatti Reds were a medium-level baseball team who won the 'World Series', the semi-official American championships, by beating the favourites, the Chicago White Sox. It seems that Arnold Rothstein rigged the match.

APPENDIX III

ADAPTATIONS AND SCRIPTS.

1920. CHORUS GIRL'S ROMANCE. Directed by William C. Bowlan (Metro Pictures Corporation). Screenplay by E. Percy Heath, adapted from Fitzgerald's short story Head and Shoulders.
Cast: Viola Dana, Garrett Hughes, Phil Ainsworth.

1920. THE HUSBAND HUNTER. Directed by M. Mitchell (William Fox). Screenplay by Joseph Franklin Poland from Fitzgerald's short story Myra Meets her Family.
Cast: Eileen Percy, Emory Johnson, Harry Durkinson.

1921. THE OFF-SHORE PIRATE. Directed by Dallas M. Fitzgerald (Metro Pictures Corporation). Screenplay by Waldemar Young from Fitzgerald's short story The Off-Shore Pirate.
Cast: Jack Mulhall, Viola Dana.

1922. THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE DAMNED. Directed by William A. Seiter (Warner Brothers). Screenplay by Olga Printslan from Fitzgerald's novel (1921).
Cast: Marie Prevost (Gloria), Kenneth Harlan (Anthony), Harry C. Myers.

1926. THE GREAT GATSBY. Directed by Herbert Brenon (Paramount). Screenplay by Becky Gardiner adapted by Elisabeth Meehan from Fitzgerald's novel (1925) and Owen Davis's play (1926).
Cast: Warner Baxter (Jay Gatsby), Lois Wilson (Daisy), Neil Hamilton (Nick Carroway), William Rowel (Wilson).

1937. THREE COMRADES. Directed byFrank Borzage, produced by Leo Mankiewicz (MGM). Screenplay by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ted Paramore, adapted from Erich Maria Remarque's novel.
Cast: Robert Taylor, Franchot Tone, Robert Young, Margaret Sullivan.

1949. THE GREAT GATSBY. Directed by Elliot Nugent(Paramount). Screenplay by Cyril Hume and Richard Maibaum adapted from Fitzgerald's novel (1925) and Owen Davis's play (1926).
Cast: Alan Ladd (Jay Gatsby), Betty Field (Daisy), McDonald Carey (Nick Carroway), Shelley Winters (Mrs Wilson).

1951. THE LAST TIME I SAW PARIS. Directed by Richard Brooks (MGM). Screenplay by Richard Brooks, Julius J. Epstein and Philip G. Epstein; adapted from Fitzgerald's short story Babylon Revisited (1931).
Cast: Nan Johnson, Donna Reid.

1961. TENDER IS THE NIGHT. Directed by Henry King (20th Century Fox). Screenplay by Yvon Moffat from Fitzgerald's novel (1934).
Cast: Jason Robards, Jr (Dick Diver), Jennifer Jones (Nicole), Jill St John (Rosemary), Joan Fontaine (Baby Warren).

1974. THE GREAT GATSBY. Directed by Jack Clayton (Cinema International Corporation). Screenplay by Francis Ford Coppola from Fitzgerald's novel (1925).
Cast: Robert Redford (Jay Gatsby), Mia Farrow (Daisy).

1976. THE LAST OF THE BELLES. Telefilm.

1977. THE LAST TYCOON. Produced by Sam Spiegel, directed by Elia Kazan (Cinema International Corporation). Screenplay by Harold Pinter from Fitzgerald's novel of 1940 (unfinished).
Cast: Robert de Niro (Monroe Stahr), Robert Mitchum (Pat Brady), Tony Curtis (Rodriguez), Jeanne Moreau (Didi), Jack Nicholson (Brimmer), Ingrid Boulting (Kathleen).

BIOGRAPHIES

1959. BELOVED INFIDEL. Directed by Henry King (20th Century Fox). Screenplay by Sy Bartlett from Sheilah Graham and Gerold Frank's book.
Cast: Gregory Peck (F.Scott Fitzgerald), Deborah Kerr (Sheilah Graham).

1976. SCOTT FITZGERALD IN HOLLYWOOD. Telefilm; produced by Herbert Brokin, directed by Anthony Page. Written by James Cottigane.
Cast: Jason Miller (F.Scott Fitzgerald), Julia Foster (Sheilah Graham).

NON-CREDITED SCRIPTS

1937. A YANK AT OXFORD. Directed by Jack Conway (MGM). Screenplay by Malcolm Stuart Boylan, Walter Ferris and George Oppenheimer, from an original idea by John Monk Saunders.
Cast: Robert Taylor, Maureen O'Sullivan, Lionel Barrymore.

1939. HONEYMOON IN BALI. Directed by Edward H. Griffith (Paramount). Screenplay by Virginia Van Upp, adapted from short stories by Grace Sartwell and Katharine Brush.
Cast: Fred MacMurray, Madeleine Caroll, Massen, Alan Jones.

REJECTED SCRIPTS

1932. THE RED-HEADED WOMAN. Directed by Jack Conway (MGM). Screenplay by Anita Loos from Katharine Brush's novel.
Cast: Jean Harlow, Chester Morris, Lewis Stone, Leila

1938 THE WOMEN. Directed by George Cukor (MGM). Screenplay by Anita Loos and Jane Murfin from Clara Boothe's play.
Cast: Norma Shearer, Joan Crawford, Mary Boland, Paulette Godard.

1939. GONE WITH THE WIND. Directed by Victor Fleming (MGM). Screenplay by Sidney Howard from Margaret Mitchell's novel.
Cast: Clark Gable, Scarlett O'Hara, Vivien Leigh, Olivia de Havilland.

1939. WINTER CARNIVAL. Directed by Charles F. Riesner (United Artists). Screenplay by Lester Coyle, Budd Schulberg and Maurice Rapf from Corey Ford's short story Echoes That Old Refrain.
Cast: Ann Sheridan, Richard Carlson.

1943. MADAME CURIE. Directed by Mervyn Le Roy (MGM). Screenplay by Paul Osborn and Paul H. Rameau from Eve Curie's book.
Cast: Greer Garson (Mme Curie), Walter Pidgeon (Pierre Curie).

1943. LIFE BEGINS AT EIGHT-THIRTY. Directed by Irving Pichel (20th Century Fox). Screenplay by Nunnaly Johnson from Emlyn Williams's play Light of Heart.

SHELVED PROJECTS

1923. THIS SIDE OF PARADISE. (Famous Players). A treatment by Fitzgerald based on his own novel.

1927. LIPSTICK. (United Artists).

1939. FIDELITY. (MGM).

1939. MADAME CURIE. (MGM). Film 1943, q.v.

1939. AIR RAID. (MGM).

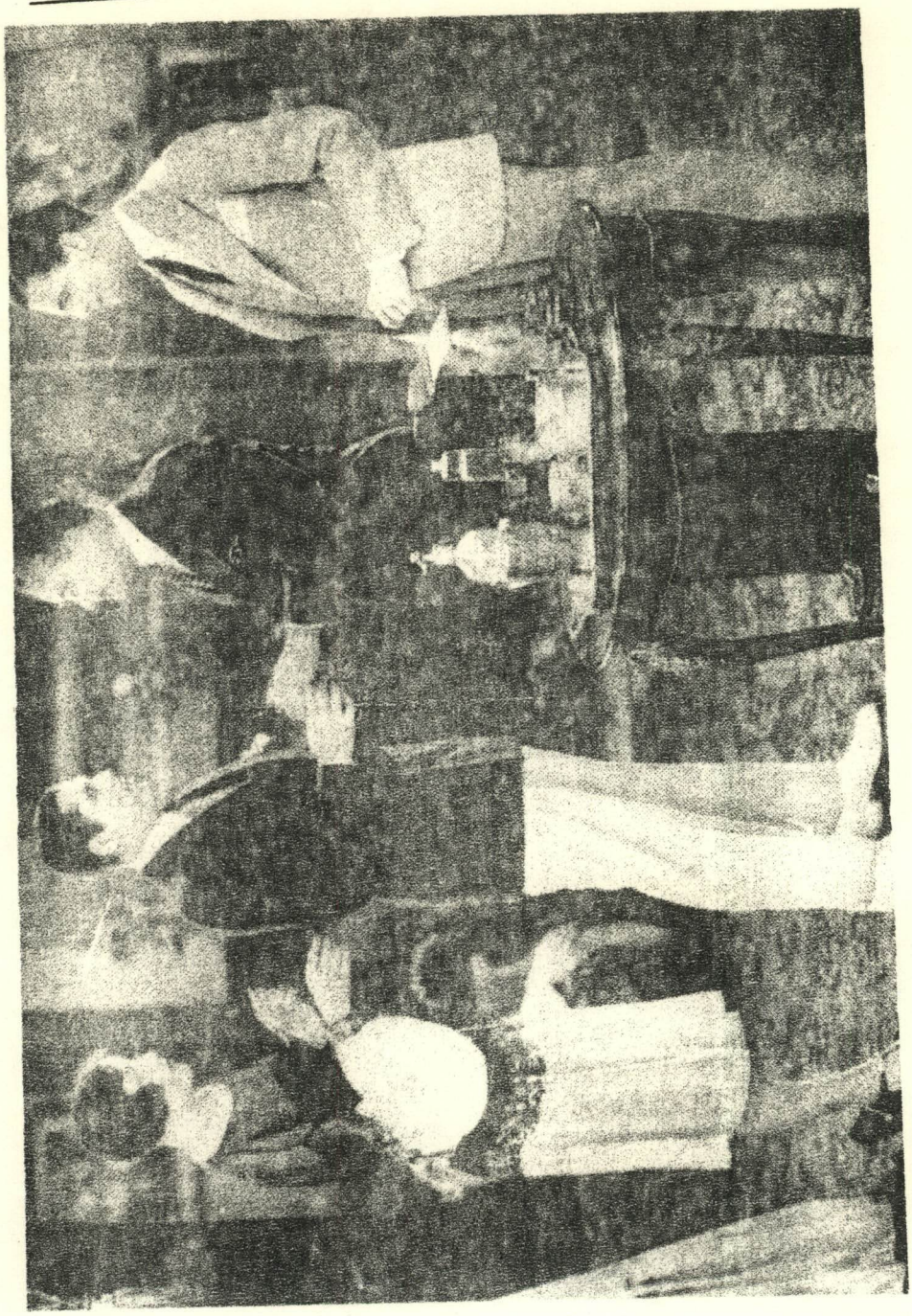
1940. RAFFLES. (Samuel Goldwyn).

1940. COSMOPOLITAN. (Columbia). From Fitzgerald's short story Babylon Revisited. Filmed in 1954, q.v.

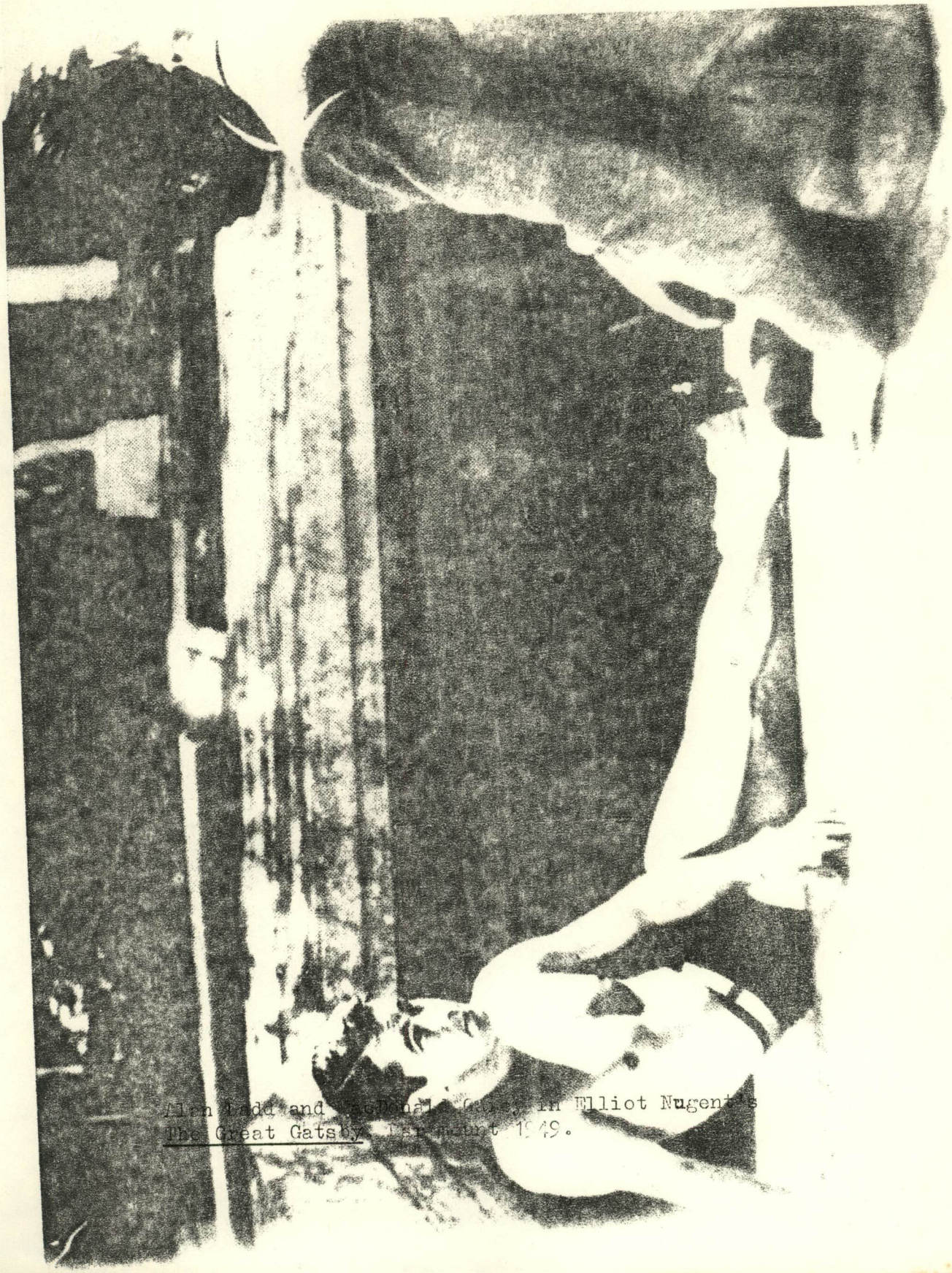
1940. BROOKLYN BRIDGE. (20th Century Fox).

1940. THE LIGHT OF THE HEART. (20th Century Fox). Filmed as Life Begins at Eight-Thirty in 1943, q.v.

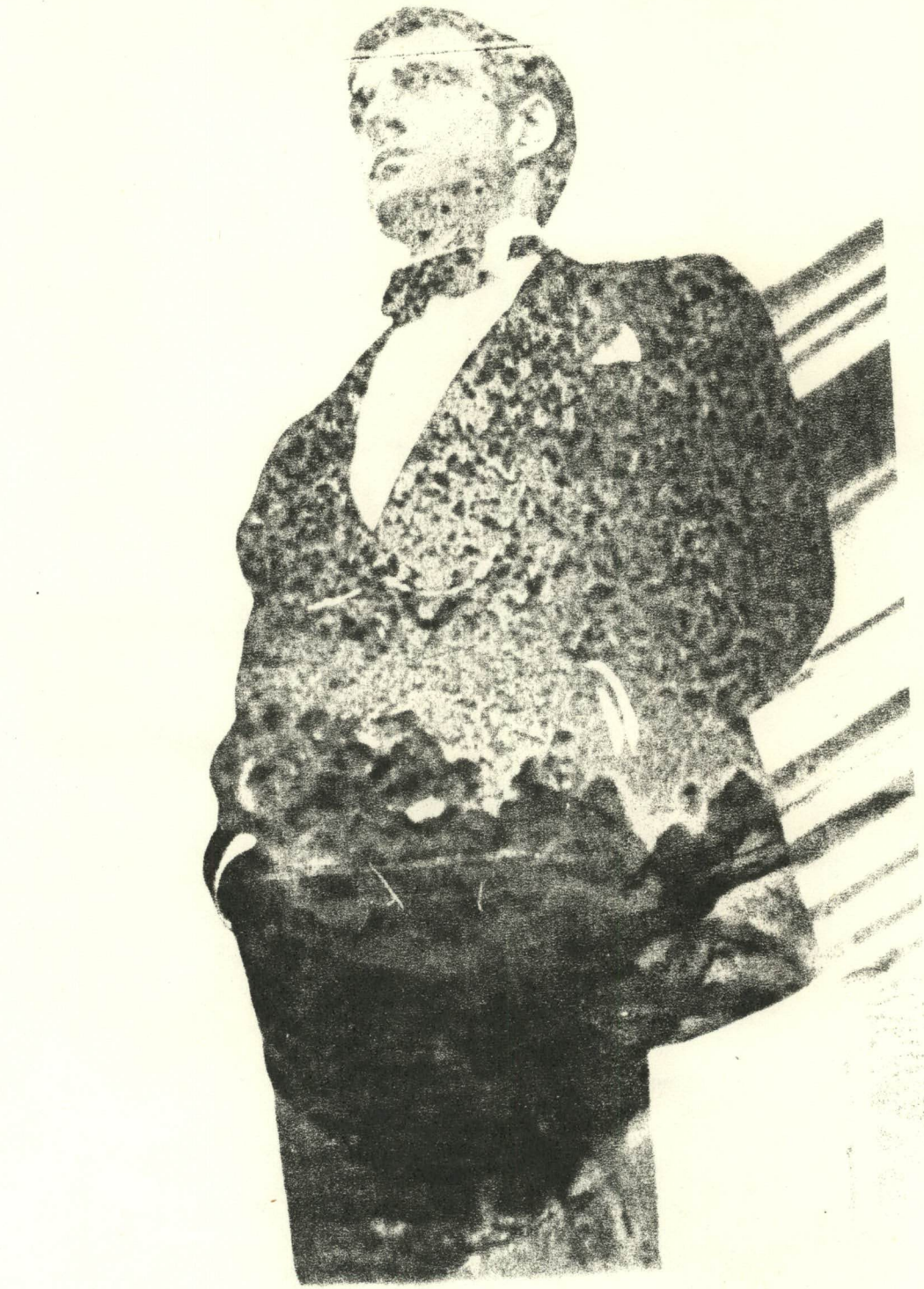
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS



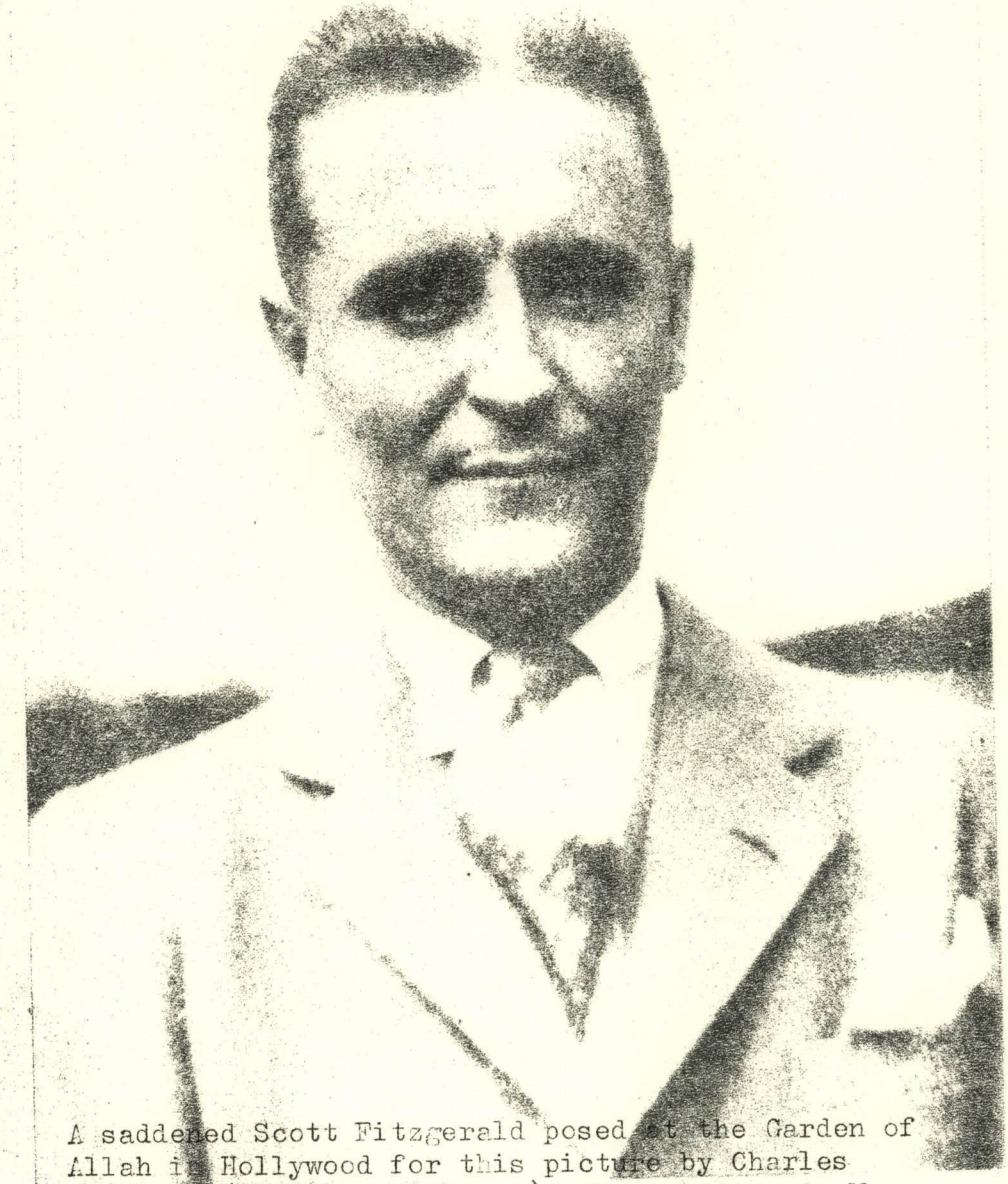
Lois Wilson, Warner Baxter, Hale Hamilton, Neil Hamilton in Herbert Brenon's The Great Gatsby. Paramount 1926.



Alan Ladd and [illegible] in Elliot Nugent's
The Great Gatsby. Paramount 1949.

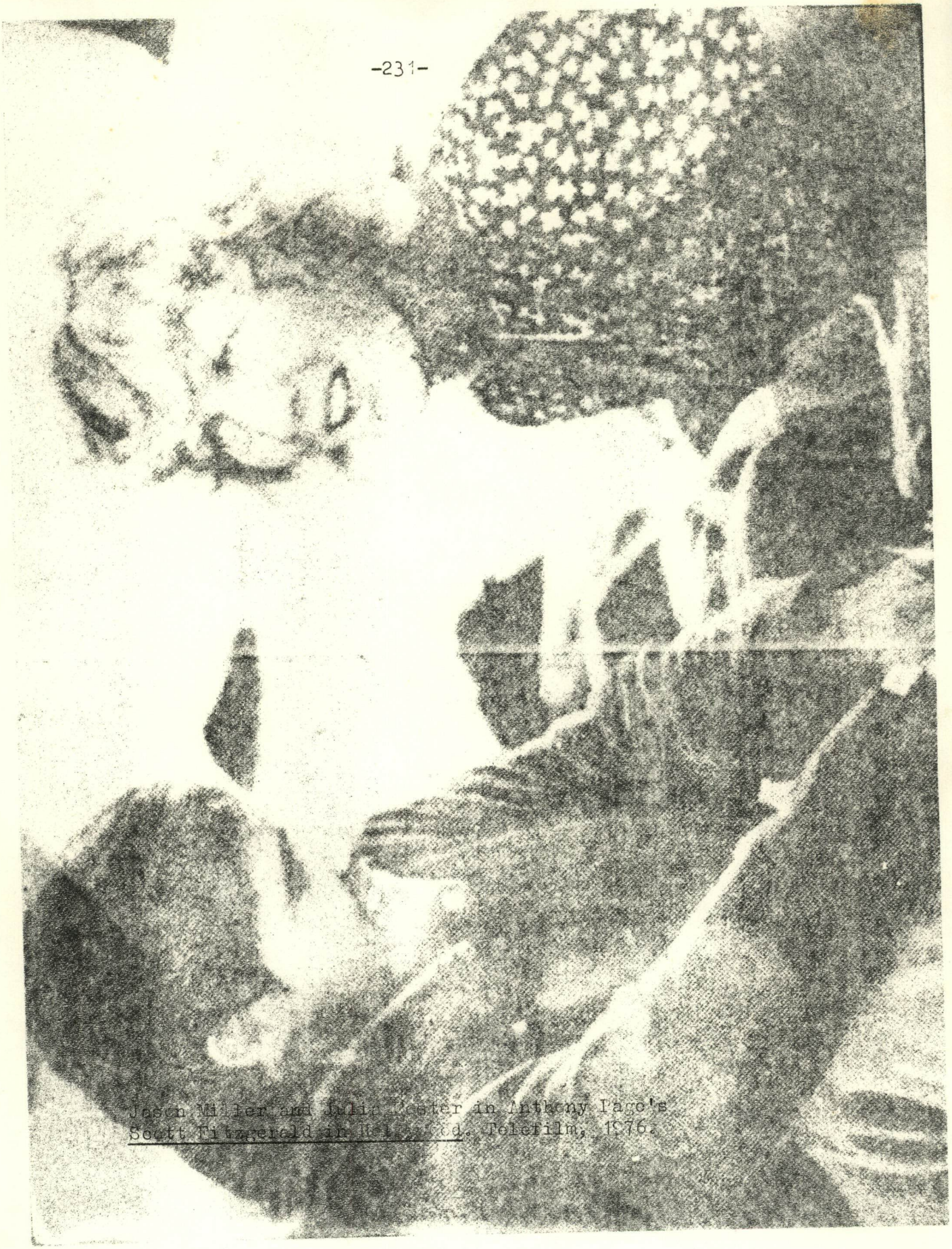


Robert Redford in Jack Clayton's The Great Gatsby. Paramount 1973. Gatsby and "The death car, as the newspapers called it." (The Great Gatsby, p. 144).



A saddened Scott Fitzgerald posed at the Garden of Allah in Hollywood for this picture by Charles Haldeman (Firestone Library). In a letter to Mrs William Hamm he wrote: "an entirely faked-up picture of me as I was forty." (Letters, p.565).

Robert Taylor, Margaret Sullivan and Franchot Tone in Joseph L. Mankiewicz's Three Comrades, 1938.
"Oh Joe, can't producers be wrong?" - Fitzgerald in a letter to J.L. Mankiewicz. (Letters, p. 22)



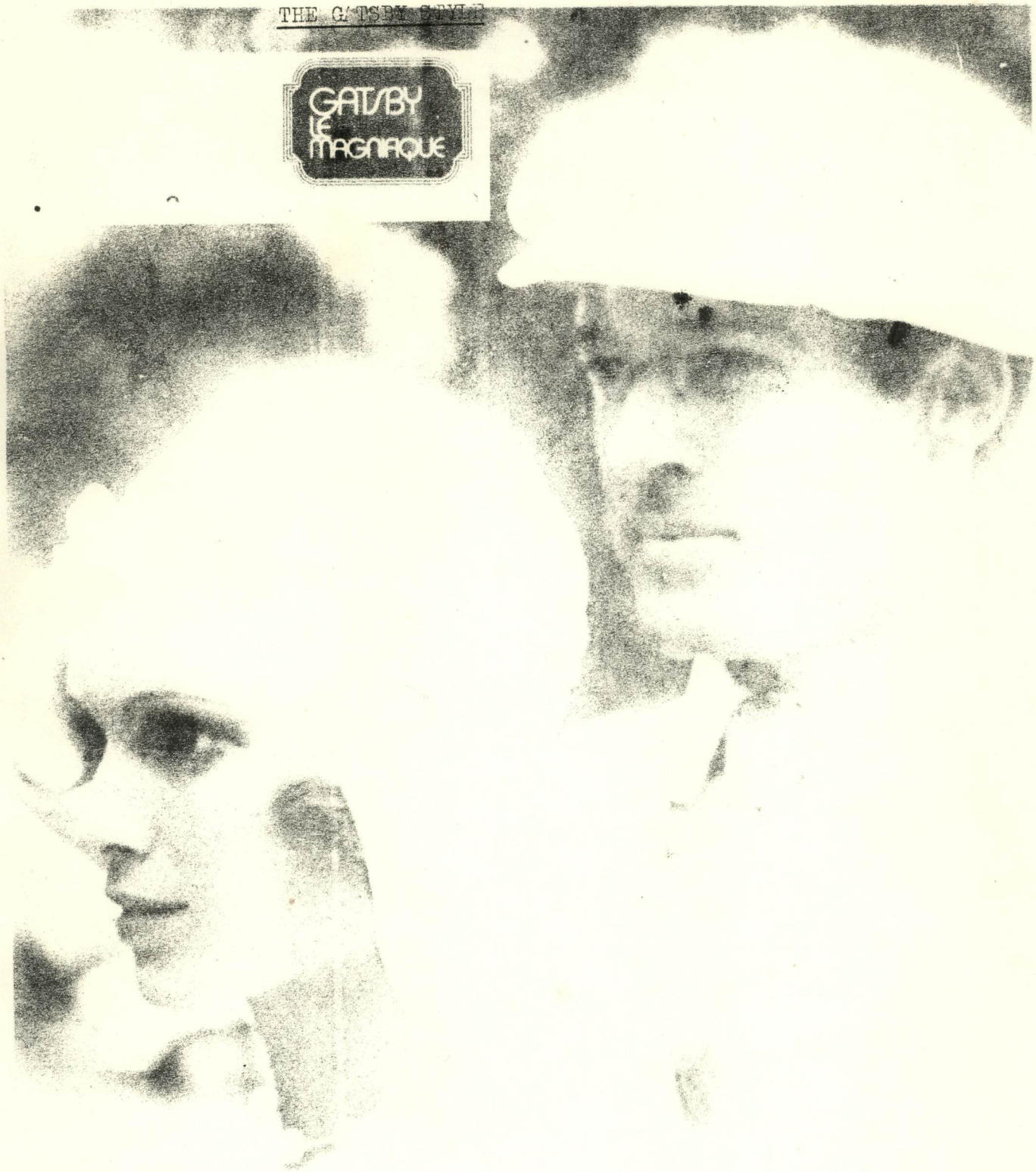
Jason Miller and Julie Foster in Anthony Page's
Scott Fitzgerald in Hollywood, Telefilm, 1976.

F. Scott Fitzgerald in Hollywood in 1939.

"It's all right, baby--life has humbled me--
Czar or not, we'll survive." In a letter to
his daughter. (Letters, p.63).

Robert Redford in Jack Clayton's The Great Gatsby, Paramount 1973. Gatsby and "Old Sport" in the death car, as the newspapers called it." (The Great Gatsby, p. 139).

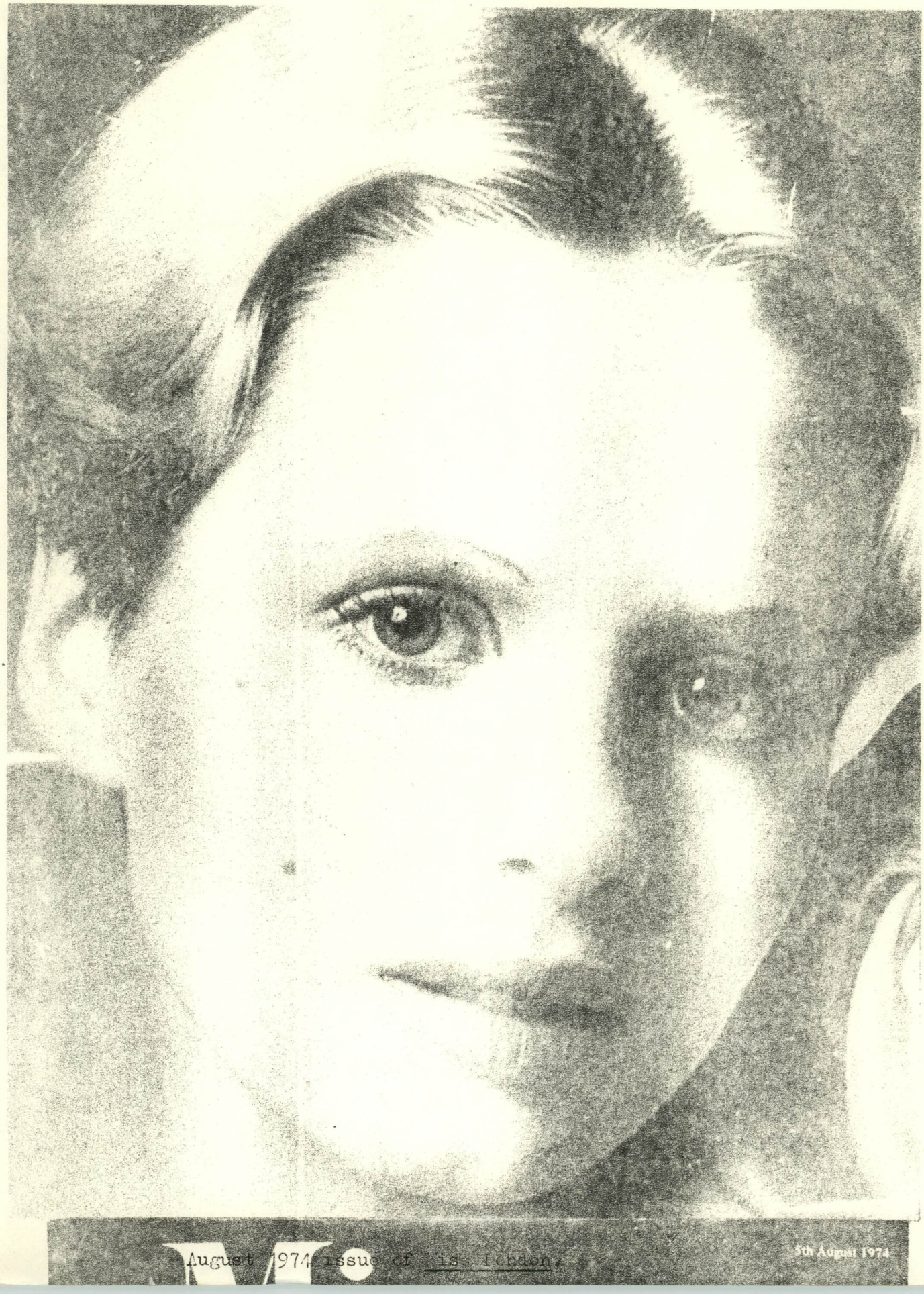
THE GATSBY STYLE



Mia Farrow and Robert Redford in Jack Clayton's
The Great Gatsby. Paramount 1973.

The styles of the twenties.

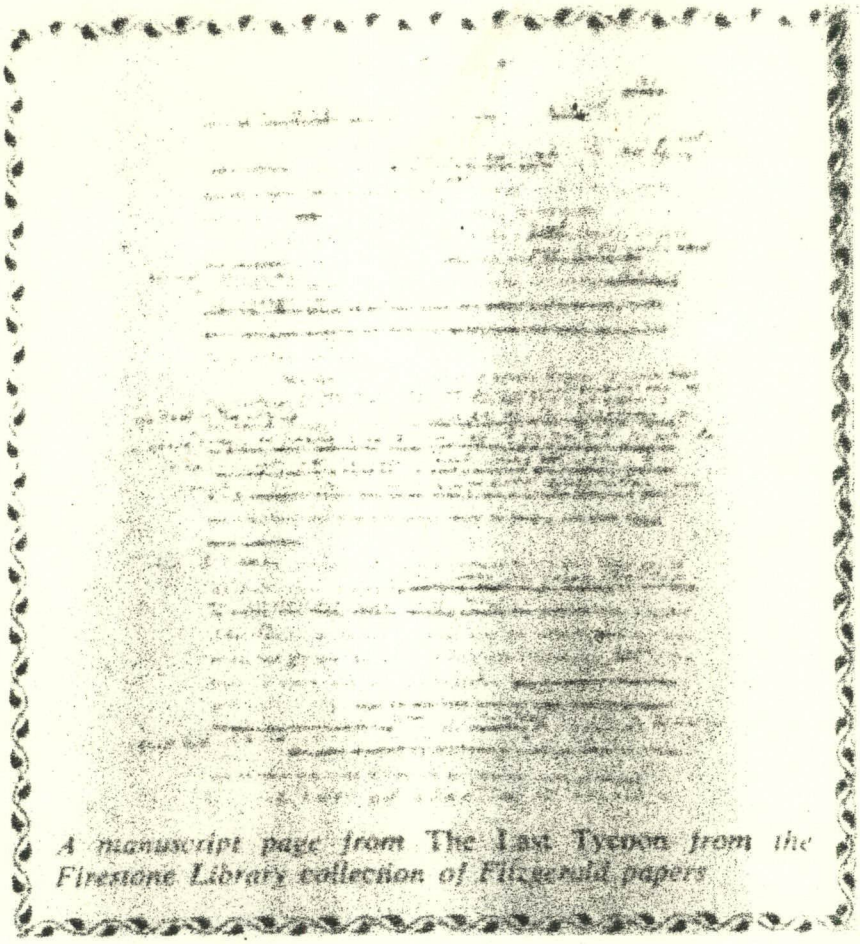
THE GATSBY STYLE



August 1974 issue of is London.

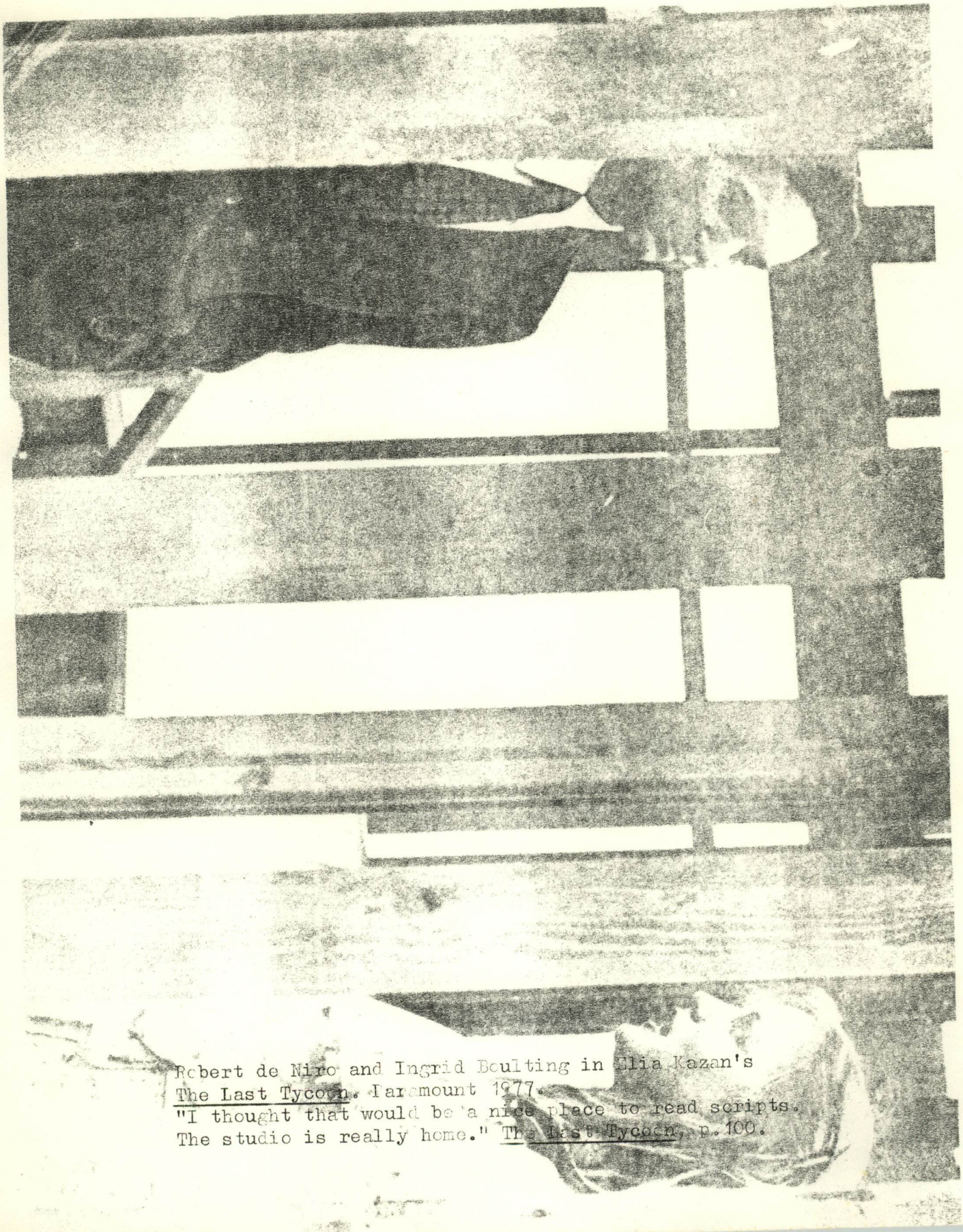
Jeanne Moreau, Robert de Niro and Elia Kazan during the shooting of The Last Tycoon.

"Action in character"--Notes for The Last Tycoon, p. 196.



A manuscript page from The Last Tycoon *from the Firestone Library collection of Fitzgerald papers*

A manuscript page from The Last Tycoon. (Firestone Library).



Robert de Niro and Ingrid Boulting in Elia Kazan's The Last Tycoon. Paramount 1977.
"I thought that would be a nice place to read scripts. The studio is really home." The Last Tycoon, p. 100.

Jack Nicholson and Robert De Niro in Elia Kazan's
The Last Tycoon. Paramount 1973.

"I always wanted to hit ten million dollars."
The Last Tycoon, p.153

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وعلى مشارف نهاية حياته كان يكتب قصة تناول فيها النظام الاقتصادى والأخلاقى بهوليود فى ثلاثينيات وهذه القصة تحمل عنوان ((آخر هيمنه)) ورغم أنه ترك هذه القصة دون أن يتممها فانها تعتبر أحسن الأعمال التى تناولت هوليود كموضوع الى اليوم . ونجاحه فى هذه القصة يعتبر نوعا من الانتقام من هوليود ونظامها الاستغلالى .

وفى هذا العمل الجامعى نحاول أن نتناول حياة "سكوت فيتس جيرالد" من الناحيتين أولهما تأثير الفن السينمائي على مؤلفاته واقتباس هذه المؤلفات من طرف هوليود .

أما الناحية الثانية مشاركته المباشرة فى تأليف سيناريوهات فى عاصمة الفن السابع.

الذى فشل فيه بسبب التناقض الحاصل بين رؤيته ورؤية الشركة التى تعاقد معها . ورجع الى التأليف بعد ذلك حيث ألف كتابه الرائع "ما أحنه من ليل" - 1934 وحضي هذا الكتاب بنجاح كبير فكتبت عنه المقالات النقدية التى تبين مكانته ولكن هذا النجاح على المستوى الأدبى لم يكن ما يقابله على الصعيد المالى والتجارى فكان فشلا آخر من الناحية التجارية دفع به مرة أخرى للرجوع الى هوليود حتى يضمن دخلا يساعده فى حياته المادية.

وفى جانفى 1937 قام برحلته الثالثة بعد ما تعاقد مع الشركة (م.ج.م.)) لمدة 6 أشهر حيث شارك فى تحضير مايزيد عن عشرة أفلام من بينها الفيلم الشهير لمرغريت ميتشل (ذهب مع الريح) ولم يذكر اسمه فى كل الأفلام التى قدمها الا فى فيلم واحد ((الرفاق الثلاثة)) من انتاج جوزيف ما نكيليكس المقتبس من قصة "اريك ماريا روماك" وبقى فى هوليود كمؤلف حر بعد نهاية تعاقده مع الشركة حتى توفي فى ديسمبر 1940 .

وكانت هذه السنوات الاربعة بمثابة فترة مؤلمة شعر فيها بخيبة الأمل الحادة.

.../..

وبحثه عن الشهرة والمال كان لهما أثر كبير فى دفعه الى الاهتمام بعالم السينما ، وصارت النجمية السنمائية هى أمنية التى تجسد كامل النجاح فى المجتمع الأمريكى الذى يسيطر عليه الاعتبار المادى .

ففى الفترة الاولى من أعماله الأدبية ظهر أن الفن السينمائى قد أثر بصفة فعالة على أدبياته ويتجلى هذا بوضوح حتى فى طرق التعبير وتركيب الجمل ومنذ صدور كتابه الأول أصبحت هوليود تعطى اهتماما لأنتاجه وهو شئ الذى كان يبحث عنه ففى هوليود باع الكثير من قصصه بين أعوام 1920 و 1923 أما فى عام – 1927 فقد توجه الى هوليود ليجرب حضه كمؤلف سيناريوما لبث أن فشل فى هذه المحاولة لعدم التجربة الخاصة فى هذا النوع من التأليف وصادف فشله هذا وقوع الأزمة أثرها البالغ بحيث أنها أصبحت بالنسبة اليه أزمة شخصية ومن نتائج ذلك أن غمرة النسيان .

وفى 1931 توجه من جديد الى هوليود لكسب مركز كمؤلف فكتب سيناريو بعنوان ((المرأة ذات الشعر الأزعر))

. . . / . .

سكوت فيتس جيرالد
في
هوليود

لقد كان مولد الفن السنمائي فى عام 1895 بينما خرج الى الحياة "سكوت فيتس جيرالد" فى عام 1896 . اذ لم يكن بين الولادتين الا عاما واحدا وهكذا تحولت السينما الى فن بينما تحول "سكوت فيتس جيرالد" الى فنان خلاق مما جعله أول مؤلف أمريكى يهتم بتأثير السينما على الأدب.

ولقد نال شهرة كبيرة وبالخصوص عندما أخرج كتابه الأول (هذا الجانب من الجنة) فى عام 1920 وكان هذا الكتاب الدعامة الاولى فى صرح هذا الفنان . وجاء هذا الكتاب فى فترة شاهدت تطورا كبيرا حتى أطلق عليها ((السنين المجنونة))

كان هم "سكوت فيتس جيرالد" البحث عن الشهرة ورغم حبه الشديد للشهرة لم يفرط فى المستوى الفنى المطلوب فى انتاجه فهو الذى يحاول أن يوفق بين الشهرة والانتاج الجيد وقد انعكست هذه الازدوجية على شخصيته التى أصبحت مسرحا تتصارع فيه الرغبة فى الشهرة والابقاء على المستوى الرفيع.