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Fantasies and Fools: Allegory in the Tales of F. Scott Fitzgerald

In "The Lost Decade" (1939), Louis Trimble, like a modern-day Rip Van Winkle, has been asleep for a long time and wakes to find his city is not as it was, at least from his point of view. Although he describes himself as having been "every-which-way drunk" for the past decade, it is not Trimble whose "poor head" has been addled by the magic brew of "that flagon" of the night before, but his lunch companion Orrison Brown who is "sorely perplexed."[1] Trimble sees details and feels time differently from the fatuous Brown. Architect of the Armistead Building, the "daddy" of all the new skyscrapers, those huge symbols of the extravagant wealth and folly which, built on the eve of the Great Depression, were the final statement of Fitzgerald's Jazz age, he tells Brown he has been in it lots of times, but has never seen it and "wouldn't ever be able to see it now."[2] It is not that he feels that during those sleeping years he lost his imagination, his awareness, his ability to observe and perceive, but that he never possessed those abilities until now. Orrison Brown - the personification of materialism whose name suggests devotion to the unimaginative and mundane - finds him "kind of nutsy" and reaches out to touch something solid, something he can cope with, "the texture of his own coat [and] the granite of the building by his side" (750).

Like a good architect, Trimble is concerned with details, but it is their expression more than the material details themselves that interest him now: "how heads are joined to bodies"; not exactly what people are saying, "but whether the words float or submerge, how their mouths shut when they've finished speaking"; the cast in a

waiter's eye; the lightness of a spoon, an everyday object which for him has become a "little bowl with a stick attached" (749). Fitzgerald sends a succinct message to readers of this tale, couched in his usual bittersweet blend of humor and sarcasm, that he has been at once shanghaied and misunderstood. As with so much of his work, this tale is autobiographical and self-effacing, and critical of society in broad terms. The basic message seems to be that neither he nor America should try to regain past glories or re-establish old methods, which in any case led to the crack up and the Great Depression, but should instead find a new way of looking at things, a new way of functioning, a new system; perhaps most important of all, he tells his readers that his work has been almost completely misunderstood, evaluated according to faulty aesthetic criteria — not only by his readers and critics, but by himself. The material of a work — stuff on which it is built — is not so important as its tone, air or aspect. In other words, in order to see like Louis Trimble, one must be able to observe details and nuance creatively, away from the mundane brown and into a world of imagination.

Fitzgerald had tried to make readers aware of an area beyond the mundane material details of his fiction before this late tale was written, often using parody, or, as Lawrence Buell has suggested, the fantastic to counterbalance his realistic representations.[3] Buell suggests that when fantasy is at its most transparent in Fitzgerald's work, "the narrative fails to reinvent reality", creating a sense of disjunction between the fictive world and "reality" by presenting "two contrasting modes of presentation" that produce an ambivalent locus of reality so that readers are made more conscious of the artist as manipulator of his characters and of [the readers themselves]."[4] The fantastic moves away from or transforms extra-textual social reality through "an interplay or tension between the sense of a 'real world' and the sense of an anti-world of the implausible or the outlandish."[5] The reproduced reality thus has an "illusory, pasteboard quality [...] which mocks the pretended solidity of [Fitzgerald's] realistic portrayals and the high seriousness of his straightforwardly romantic passages."[6] The underlying perception of "reality" as fabulous and of "romanticism" as pathological, and the dramatization of such perceptions through the use of the discontinuous, the grotesque, the

bizarre, and occasionally the supernatural, makes Buell want to identify Fitzgerald, as William Goldhurst had, "not only as the moralist or the recorder but also as the "fabulist" of his age."[7]

In this paper I am not concerned, as Buell was, with whether the fantastic or the realistic was Fitzgerald's "primarily literary mode,"[8] but rather with how Fitzgerald crossed the boundaries of the real and the fictive to take the reader to a third area that, like the "crook comedies" that inspired Basil Duke Lee to write *The Captured* Shadow, "opened out into a world much larger and more brilliant than themselves that existed outside their windows and beyond their doors". For Fitzgerald "it was this suggested world rather than any conscious desire to imitate [...] that had inspired the effort before him" (416). Even the most 'realistic' literary text always stresses the interplay between the fictive and the real or extra-textual world from which it draws because the world presented is self-consciously fictional, and the author, by convention, tacitly asks the reader to adopt an attitude appropriate to fiction, that is, to look for meaning beyond the reality represented. But like Brecht, whose *Verfremdungseffekt* is intended to demonstrate that things are seldom what they seem, especially the most common-place, that they need to be observed in context to be understood and acted upon, Fitzgerald places reality within ironicizing quotation marks: elements from the world outside the text are selected for use within the text, combined and presented quite candidly as fiction in order to point the reader in the direction of that 'suggested world'.

Such a strategy is most apparent when obviously fictional elements like fantasy are present in the text. But even in a realistic tale like 'The Bowl' (1928), the interplay between fictive and real that opens out into that suggested area outside and beyond is evident. Jeff Deering, the narrator of 'The Bowl', begins as if he were reciting a fable: 'There was a man in my class at Princeton who never went to football games' (390), and he reminds his readers that he is telling a story throughout the tale. His richly imaginative descriptions of the games outstrip even the hyperbole of sportscasters, emphasizing a dream-like, unreal quality, such as when the atmosphere in the Bowl rises "to the intensity of wind and rain and thunder, [beating] across the twilight from one side of the Bowl to the other like the agony of

lost souls swinging across a gap in space" (408). Like the newspaper headlines which reduce the muddled, uncertain, patchy and scrappy afternoon game to a succinct, condensed and clear order, the tale is a series of accents, "a placing of emphasis - a molding of the confusion of life into form" (396), indicating an area beyond the material itself.

Fitzgerald uses allegorical techniques to indicate this "suggested area"; he does not write allegories *per se,* rather he suggests allegorical interpretation through fragmentation and parody of allegory; his characters, for example, are not usually personifications of abstract qualities, but their names are often peculiarly appropriate, revealing the selection and combination of elements that characterize them in relief against what has been left out. Like allegories, his tales read as extended metaphors in which objects, characters and actions transcend their places in the narrative, and are equated with or refer to meaning outside the narrative itself and the fictional world it presents. Readers are thus drawn in two directions - to the characters, settings and events themselves, and to the ideas or significance they are intended to convey. Meaning is independent of the action in the surface story, transcending events in Fitzgerald's life or other extra-textual matters from which they are drawn, to point to moral, social and political questions. Fitzgerald is thus in many ways a traditional satirist, presenting not so much "Flappers and Philosophers" as "Fantasies and Fools" in an attempt to inspire a remodeling of society.

Many of Fitzgerald's early tales are obviously allegorical in their use of symbolism or fantasy. Buell concentrates on "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" (1922), which, because it is a fantasy proper, is easily read as an allegory of greed, but more specifically, of the materialist fervor that had overwhelmed American society, personified in Braddock Washington, whose pioneer-spirited father had founded their mountain-top estate after the American Civil War. This dream turned nightmare is one of Fitzgerald's most convincing portrayals of how, in Richard Lehan's words, "the old aristocratic values of Jefferson [...] gave way to the materialistic values of Hamilton." [9] If allegorical technique is more obvious in tales where Fitzgerald uses two

"contrasting modes of presentation,"[10] it is no less present in tales which appear to be written firmly in the realistic mode. "The Cut Glass Bowl" (1920) and "The Ice Palace" (1922) suggest that Fitzgerald was searching for meaningful symbols to point to the suggested area mentioned by Basil Duke Lee. Another early tale which is obviously allegorical in form is "May Day", with its fairy-tale introduction, throughout which Fitzgerald is purposefully archaic, recalling the voice of chivalric romance and other early allegories. On the surface, the overall tone is positive and celebratory: "the victorious war had brought plenty in its train [...], the young men were "pure and brave, sound of tooth and pink of cheek", the young women "virgins and comely both of face and figure"; the only problem seems to be that the merchants have run out of "trinkets and slippers" and have nothing left to sell (98). Fitzgerald's description of their plight is ironic, satirical, even sarcastic; if there are no apparent problems, he suggests that the fairy-tale described in the introduction - and thus the tale it presents - is as unsustainable, as out of date as it sounds. The defeated people are nowhere mentioned and, except for the merchants who have run out of merchandise - and who are in any case quite happy about it - there are no losers in "the great city of the conquering people". The defeated are thus present only in their absence, providing invisible support for the beautiful people represented.

Fitzgerald echoes the tone of his introduction throughout the tale in descriptions of people, places, objects and situations, giving it a somewhat one-sided, didactic perspective. The passage depicting fur coats, "bags of golden mesh and varicolored slippers of silk and silver and rose satin and cloth of gold" is echoed in section I when Gordon Sterrett's eyes rest "for a moment on a great English traveling bag in the corner and on a family of thick silk shirts littered on the chairs amid impressive neckties and soft woolen socks" (99). Section II places the events of their introduction in a modern setting: as the "wealthy, happy sun glitters" in transient gold through the thick windows of the smart shops", working girls admire "trinkets" such as "mesh bags and purses and strings of pearls in gray velvet cases, gaudy feather fans of many colors, laces and silks" and finally "bad paintings and period furniture", thinking of their future hus-

bands, while soldiers and sailors "trod" through the streets. The satire is increased to the point of sarcasm by having the girls dream of a richer life while digesting cheap food, and by having "the great city thoroughly fed up with soldiers" so soon after their return. Section III offers a closer description of two of these soldiers, deflated even more so as mythological splendor is replaced by a cold description of the reality of their situation - broke, friendless (except for each other), even without the power to buy a drink, and although now freed from their latest oppressor, seemingly intent on finding a new one. Here Fitzgerald is even more sarcastic: the soldiers wield toothpicks with great gusto as they saunter down Sixth Avenue (107). Finally, toward the end of the tale the introduction is again recalled with Mr. In and Mr. Out, who

> During the brief span of their lives [..]. walked in their native garments down the great highway of a great nation; were laughed at, sworn at, chased, and fled from. Then they passed [into their own personal heaven] and were heard of no more. (135)

In this early tale, the names Fitzgerald chose for his characters reinforce the roles they play and hint at broader significance. There are two "Keys" in "May Day" - Carrol and George. Fitzgerald's comment that the name" Key" carries "some potentiality" may stem from his being named after his distant relative Francis Scott Key, the American lawyer who wrote the national anthem, but the name may be even more potent. George, literally "earth worker", and Carrol, which means "full-grown", are each a miniature of the two main characters, and their fates are those of the characters they mirror: like Philip Dean, George Key has been successful at tilling the urban soil of New York City and seems able to continue doing so, while his hapless brother Carrol, like Gordon Sterrett, has already reached the pinnacle of his development and thus dies pointlessly. Whether such a connection holds the key to the abstracted meaning is another question but it does suggest that Fitzgerald was searching for meaningful symbols in the text to refer to extra-textual meaning.

Other names also suggest "potentiality", if not abstract qualities, satirizing particular types. Jewel Hudson, the somewhat unfortunate, fortune-seeking painted beauty, is Fitzgerald's devalued gem

of the great city of the conquering people. Gordon is the name of an elegant, dark-haired breed of hunting dog, which reinforces his hunt for money, help and acceptance, while Sterrett, sounding like "stare at", recalls his public displays of self-pity that culminate in his anti-climatic suicide staged so that he is found sprawled across his drawing materials with a bullet neatly planted behind his temple, both biologically and figuratively. He is a parody of the romantic artist repressed by a society of philistines, his self-directed death tableau in the «temple» of his studio a far cry from that of Shakespeare's Cleopatra, who is a master of public display. Henry literally means the ruler of an enclosure, which fits in with his leaving the family home and his secure position at Cornell to find his own place in the big city as editor of a socialist newspaper. More interesting is Edith, which is derived from the Old English *ead,* riches, prosperity, happiness, and *guth,* combat, battle, war; it can refer to the riches of war or one who seeks them, rendering her at once one of the trinkets and one of the soldiers or merchants mentioned in the introduction; hers is a beauty of artifice and cunning, and she trades on it throughout the tale.

Most surprising of all is the name Philip Dean. Dean, now used only as the title of a university administrator, was originally the title for a leader of a group of ten soldiers, who in this tale become the Yale alumni in New York for the party at Delmonico's. Philip literally means lover of horses, but is also the name of the saint whose feast day just happens to be May Day. St. Philip was one of Christ's apostles, and so present at the Last Supper and among the first to eat symbolically the body and blood of his master, the "bread and wine" intended to save humanity. Fitzgerald continually makes reference to Dean's teeth; in his initial description he is described as one who smiled frequently, showing, large and prominent teeth" (99). Coming as it does immediately after the introduction, Dean is seen as one of the "pure and brave" young men, "sound of tooth and pink of cheek", a victor; but to have a victor one must have losers to be defeated, or more bluntly, devoured. The weak and defeated have no place in the introduction because, as food for the victors, they are the bread and wine which sustain the great city. When in section I the focus narrows to Gordon, in whom the defeated find embodi-

ment, and his meeting with Dean, it is clear who the victor will be; but unlike Christ's death, Gordon's has no potential for liberating the masses. In the same scene, while Dean is drying his naked body in front of the shabbily dressed Gordon, he mentions Edith Bradin as "Damn good looking", a sort of pretty doll who would smear if touched. Fitzgerald follows this remark with the following description: "He surveyed his shining self complacently in the mirror, smiled faintly, exposing a section of teeth" (99). This is rather like someone examining a horse's teeth, appropriate for the narcissistic, self-absorbed Dean who sees Edith as a comely young virgin he has won the right to devour. Later, when Gordon is given only part of the money he has asked for, he again notices Dean's projecting teeth (106).

The early and underrated tale, "Dice, Brassknuckles & Guitar" (1923), is often considered a hodgepodge of scraps thrown together by Fitzgerald to earn a quick buck; Anne Margolies, for example, calls it tedious and episodic.[11] After finishing it, Fitzgerald himself called it "pretty bad stuff on second thots"[sic];[12] later, when considering it for inclusion in *All the Sad Young Men* he called it "Exuberant Jazz in my early manner,"[13] but feeling nonetheless that it needed major revisions, he dropped it from the volume. The tale takes a humorous yet serious look at valuation, a recurring Fitzgerald theme, focusing attention on difference and the valuation of it from the beginning: modern houses are disparagingly compared to Victorian examples; a script writer, significantly named Israel Glucose, would write idiotic transitions for the film of the young and beautiful Amanthis the narrator hopes to make, a film every bit as saccharine and predictable as the Jewish writer's transition would be. This ironic self-criticism subtly disrupts confidence in the narrator, who is seen to be as racist and prejudiced as his characters.

Unlike many other Fitzgerald "heroes", southerner Jim Powell seems almost repelled by money, the very standard by which so much is measured. The principal of his inheritance is sacred to him - its value lying not in the number of dollars nor its purchasing power, but in its being a personal gift from his late aunt. The interest that he makes on the principal is inconsequential; it has no value in and

of itself. The bottle of "good old corn" he gives to Amanthis as a parting gift seems a trite almost worthless gift, especially if assessed materially; its value lies in its status as a "personal remembrance". Amanthis, a northerner, places the conventional, American value on money as a necessity of life. It is not clear whether or how much she values Jim's gift, but it is certainly implied that she values him and what he stands for.

However, not all Jim Powell stands for is "good". His feeling of self-worth is presented in relief against his treatment of his black "body-servant" Hugo. When Jim tells the bewildered Amanthis, "We call a nigger a boy down yonder" the narrator says, "At this reference to the finer customs of his native soil the boy Hugo put his hands behind his back and looked darkly and superciliously down the lawn. "Yas'm" he muttered, "I'm a body-servant" (239). The irony is particularly intense here—"the finer customs", the mock title "the boy Hugo", "darkly", suggesting both despondently and as a black man, and "superciliously", signifying his pride in himself and his position, while his muttering his answer also suggests his displeasure. Difference is emphasized again when Hugo asks for Jim's permission to eat and when Jim is surprised at seeing a white-skinned servant. When Jim fills his academy with pupils, the differences between him and these rich youngsters is described at length, culminating in his realization that they put him on the level of the family butler. Significantly, Hugo is standing next to him as he has this revelation. Hugo, at best a second class citizen in the South, has found a different sort of fulfillment in the North; his status is raised while Jim's, in his own eyes, is lowered. Jim decides to return to the South "where under no provocation were such things said to white people as had been said to him" in the North (253). Fitzgerald does not explain or resolve these differences; he uses them, and his characters' perceptions of them, as motivating factors, almost forcing readers to consider critically these problems of valuation.

"Dice" uses an outsider's view to peer into the world of the privileged and the rich and, as Matthew Bruccoli suggests, helped pave the way for Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby.* The nameless narrator of "The Rich Boy" is a further extension of this perspective, and, as in Gatsby, the reader is almost immediately reminded that an

imaginary world is about to be entered, in this case by being told that both rich and poor tell lies about the rich:

> such a wild structure they have erected that when we pick up a book about the rich, some instinct prepares us for unreality. Even the intelligent and impassioned reporters of life have made the country of the rich as unreal as fairy-land. (318)

The narrator, this "queer fish" who has already stated that virtually everybody lies, then prepares readers for his version of the fairy tale: "Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me" (318). Among Fitzgerald's most famous and infamous words, they indicate a fairy land far beyond the pseudo-real one imagined by the less rich of the extra-textual world, beyond the "preposterous movie" of the fictional Anson Hunter, and beyond the narrative about to be related.

According to the narrator, the very rich do not have to "discover the compensations and refuges of life" for themselves - like children, when threatened they can always withdraw into the family, their private world of make believe. Taking cues from allegorical traces in the text, this tale becomes a satire on the myth of eternal youth. By showing how Anson treats people - especially women - like toys, like objects he can manipulate at will, rather than as human beings, Fitzgerald emphasizes the negative aspects of retaining qualities, attitudes and activities associated with childhood. Although Anson shows a strong commitment to work and family, such commitments are conventional and obtainable even by someone as apparently emotionally immature as Anson. Maturity, or the end of childhood, is in this tale measured by commitment to another person, symbolized by successfui marriage. Anson Hunter "lived in a great house, and had the means of introducing young men into other great houses" (326). Presumably he could connect himself to another great house in the same way, but he doesn't - he merely toys with the idea. Described as almost obsessed with the lives of his newly married friends, by acting as a catalyst for the development and maturity of others, he manages to avoid his own. When the newlyweds no longer need him, they disappear from his life, a

change he resents and fails to comprehend. Although he believes that" change itself [is] the essential substratum" of his position, he remains unchanged and unchanging, in a perpetual dalliance with "pretty little things" like Dolly, whose anonymous name emphasizes her role as an object. At the time "Dolly", the diminutive form of "doll", was a slang term for a pretty but frivolous or silly woman; more importantly it is the diminutive for the familiar child's toy made to resemble a human being, the term often used by children themselves for the object that embodies the fairy-tale family. Like an insecure child, Anson is never happy "unless some one was in love with him, responding to him like filings to a magnet, helping him to explain himself" (349), that is, fulfilling the traditional role of a mother. In fact when Mrs. Hunter retires to a select Episcopal heaven, the entire remaining structure that had supported the Hunters' superiority passes with her. At the end of the tale it is the attention of the girl in the red tam that restores his happy, childlike existence, that enables him to remain a rich boy.

Beyond serving as Anson's "true love", and her "legendary" status as the young, beautiful rich girl, satirically characterized as all any man could hope for, Paula Legendre symbolizes the opportunity to grow and develop, to reach maturity and adulthood. Their missed chances reveal Anson's stubborn clinging to childhood and his desire to be nurtured perpetually by the legendary rich girl. Paula's first marriage is unhappy; although they had courted, she married Thayer shortly after her final encounter with Anson, and the narrator implies that it was a rash decision, typical of hers and Anson's shared immaturity: she comments later that "she wanted to die" when she found she was pregnant with her first child because even then Thayer was like a stranger to her (346). Despite this she went on to have two more children with him, and when she greets them while pregnant with her fourth, by her new husband, she is distant and abstracted. With her marriage to Peter Hagerty, Paula finds true love and happiness - her childhood and innocence are thus over, and she dies as she reaches adulthood. Her dying just when she achieves exactly what Anson is shown to lack is typical of the ironic outlook of this tale, em-

phasizing that emotional maturity has no place in Anson's preposterous world.

In his article "Rich Boys and Rich Men", James Martine discusses the similarities between several of Fitzgerald's tales in terms of the interplay between the romantic hero and the code hero. In discussing "The Bridal Party", Martine suggests that, like Hemingway's code hero Pedro Romero, Hamilton Rutherford's "manhood is a thing independent of women", and that romantic hero Michael Curly's "cure" consists of his taking on some of the code hero's traits. In fact Curly's somewhat egalitarian outlook concerning women - at least as compared to Rutherford's - is exorcised until, like Anson Hunter, women become nothing more than playthings. Set against the backdrop of the Stock Market crash, the tale suggests that when reality is too difficult to cope with, the only recourse is through fantasy.

Curly is a slightly more financially stable Gordon Sterrett, "washed up on the French coast" with the broken pieces of his lost love still in his hands. He is every bit as maudlin, and every bit as public with the display of his wounds, but his is a story of satirically deflated salvation rather than suicide, as he changes into an Anson Hunter, not quite so rich and aristocratic, but every bit the girl chaser. As soon as he learns of the impending marriage of his old love Caroline Dandy (whose name implies "mature top girl "), Fitzgerald plunges Curly into a world of make believe. He walks "in a daze" to his bank and is taken up with fantasy: he buys a detective story, stares at "a faded panorama" of battlefields in a tourist-office window and is pestered by a tout selling dirty postcards. Although the first two images are significant enough, indicating the battle he sees himself fighting to win Caroline back, the last is even more loaded as it foreshadows the change that will take place in his attitude towards women. The Graf Zeppelin, "shining and glorious symbol of escape and destruction", or escape through destruction if necessary, floats by, and just as a woman is saying that it would not surprise her if the bombs started falling, a very big one lands smack in "the void in his stomach". Face to face with Caroline and her fiancé, he is surprised that they do not float

away backwards through the Tuileries Gardens, fading out across the river (561-2). Michael imagines himself as "a little counter" in the game of families and money, imagining too that this "profound woundedness" has somehow touched Caroline enough for him to win her back. Miraculously, with the timing only a fairy story can have, he inherits a quarter of a million dollars from his grandfather. Lying awake that night listening to "the long caravan of a circus moving through the street from one Paris fair to another" he resolves to win her back (564). The moving circus suggests that Curly himself is moving from one fantasy world to another, from the illusion of love he thought he shared with Caroline, and all the other illusions that go with it - his lack of money, her family being against him, etc. - to his new illusion of winning her back or at least putting some of himself into her heart.

The symbols of the marriage couple receding and fading into the distance and that of the carnival frame the tale. As they are being photographed, the bridal party become the sinister characters at an amusement park, "still as death and pale as wax" (575), a surprisingly negative image which is reinforced as Curly watches the couple "fade off into joys and griefs of their own, into the years that would take their toll" (576). The "ceremonial function"of the bridal party - the tale itself as well as "the pomp and revelry" that make up its narrative - drawing to a close, initiate Curly into a new world of make believe, one without bitterness, reconstituted out of the youth and happiness surrounding him, "profligate as the spring sunshine" (576), another strangely negative image. Curly, for whom girls have "become gossamer again, perambulatory flora", whom he now identifies more by their "lovely fluttering dresses" (574) than by their sensitivity or desires, struggles to remember with which bridesmaid he has made a dinner date. The tale ends as he walks forward to bid Hamilton and Caroline Rutherford good-bye; his "cure" has insured that he can play the rich boy himself, while the cure itself reveals a certain sarcasm for what it really entails.

Alcohol plays a small but important role in Curly's cure - as the tale draws to a close he drinks more and more of Rutherford's cocktails and champagne, seemingly an integral part of the "ceremonial function" that numbs his pain, melts the bitterness out of him, and

reconstitutes the world into a lascivious dream. Alcohol use and abuse plays a role in much of Fitzgerald's work. In "May Day" Edith Bradin likes men to have had something to drink because it makes them "so much more cheerful, and appreciative and complimentary - much easier to talk to" (116). Although, like Paula Legendre, she strongly objects to outright drunkenness, she uses dancing to achieve that "dreamy state" equivalent "to the glow of a noble soul after several long highballs" (122). Tippling is de *rigueur* in "the correct manly world" of "high finance and high extravagance" (320-1) of Anson Hunter, Hamilton Rutherford, and the even more notorious Fitzgerald alcoholic Nelson Kelly of "One Trip Abroad" (1930), who finds socializing so intolerable that he develops "the kind of face that needs half a dozen drinks really to open the eyes and stiffen the mouth up to normal" (596). Critics never fail to draw attention to Fitzgerald's own problems with booze and his apparent attempts to exorcise the beast through his fiction, but this sign on the road towards dissipation is more a symptom than a cause.

In "One Trip Abroad" the Kellys' increasing use of alcohol, especially Nelson's, punctuates the tale, marking their increasing problems and estrangement from each other. The precedent for disagreement between this magically happy couple occurs after they split two bottles of champagne with the Mileses, neither Nelson nor Nicole "was accustomed to so much" (580). When they realize their dream life in Sorrento requires hard work and determination, they begin drinking more, looking for diversion in other people, not for the friendship but as a means of providing the party they feel is necessary as the backdrop to their supposed idyllic life. The outcome of the Fragelle incident in Sorrento is that they finally take Mrs. Miles' advice and go to Monte Carlo, not Paris, where they had hoped once again to "work seriously"(582). Nicole has stopped drinking by the time they finally do get to Paris, but by then Nelson is drinking heavily and their marriage is in trouble.

What drives them to drink - and what later pushes Nicole away from it - is participation in a life they find increasingly repellent, in another dream that, in Fitzgerald's presentation of it, has gone horribly wrong. Too much money is another familiar, recurring symptom: having had somewhat dismal, unsatisfactory lives before meeting

each other, they come abroad for "a change"after Nelson inherits half a million dollars. They have no real plans, Nicole wants to study singing, Nelson painting, but basically, they are long-term tourists with money and nothing really specific to do. Their idleness, lack of direction and determination - a sort of naiveté about being artists - and the fact that they do not really have to work to survive, lead directly to their problems,- money allows their irresponsibility to blossom.

In this modern Morality Play, Fitzgerald slowly deconstructs the Kellys and their story-book idyll. At the beginning of the tale they are symbols of vitality, of life itself, of young, happy love; they are very much like Adam and Eve before the Fall, but instead of being thrown out of Eden and into the world at large, the Kellys leave America, hungry and unfulfilled emissaries from the New World in search of something it lacks - a chance to study art and music, things which do not fit into the materialistic, money-making orientation of American life. They are thus also symbols of hope, leaving the green breast of the New World behind to regain part of the lost dream in the Old. Fresh and alive, still on their honeymoon, very good looking and well-mannered, inherently natural and reserved, they contrast sharply with the other passengers as if they had arrived direct from Paradise, innocent, free from sophistication, content with each other, aware of the magic around them, and magical themselves in their love and affection for each other and what they see. Their aloofness, the fact that they are happy in each other's company and do not need other people, is enhanced by the exotic setting of "hysterically unfamiliar sounds" "under a sky that [is] low and full of the presence of a strange and watchful God" (579), which they alone can see, feel and appreciate. The presence of other people - the passenger arguing about the exchange rate, the Mileses - adds to their detachment; other people are peripheral to their happy, peaceful, magical world. But once they taste the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and become involved in the material world around them, they lose Paradise, that is, themselves.

The parasitic Mrs. Miles pulls them out of their world and into her own "with a sort of impatience in from the night and up to the table" (579), away from imagination toward substantial material.

Worn away inside and bored with themselves, the Liddell Miles - whose name suggests what they have gained from 15 years of travel - need the Kellys to complete their existence. Impatient with their, to her, naive wonder at their surroundings, she breaks the spell and begins sucking the life and love out of them. Although the Kellys ignore Mrs. Miles' advice for a time, she has planted the "sickness" inside them: they become discouraged and bored, seemingly no longer content with only themselves, finding they need someone to "give the party" - provide the life they had once found in each other. They are not interested in working seriously and instead, like the Mileses, begin an endless search for some diverting show.

After more than two years in Monte Carlo, the yacht Nicole can see from her bedroom window takes on a special significance for her as the center of their life there, a life which consists of "making whoopee for its own sake", and not the "serious work" they had talked about before leaving Sorrento. For all their social activity they have become as stationary as the yacht, traveling only within the radius of Monte Carlo and Cannes. The private world of wonder they once inhabited is replaced with possessions Nicole sums up: "five new evening dresses and four others that would do", her pretty face, her husband, three other men in love with her "in a harmless way", a dozen charming people from seven different nations coming to lunch — "All that", as Fitzgerald sarcastically concludes. She should be happy, but instead she broods (584). Trouble on the Mediterranean forces the Kellys to Paris where the arrival of their baby sends Nicole briefly into a new Paradise, but she cannot resist the temptation of the Marquis's floating party, "like a child's dream out of Arabian Nights" (592), and, like Nelson, loses "peace and love and health"(596) in quick succession. In the end, in a Swiss hospital, with a violent thunderstorm receding over the mountains that recalls the storm of locusts that had signaled their meeting with the Liddell Miles, and the enigma of the mirror couple resolved, they cling to each other with their former worlds, both good and bad, above and below them, and resolve to begin life anew, again hoping to find what has been lost, an inverted, ironic parody of Milton's Adam and Eve:

> They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
> Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
> Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
> With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms:
> Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
> The world was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest, and Providence their guide;
> They, hand and hand, with wandering steps and slow,
> Through Eden took their solitary way. [14]

Valuation is again a major theme - the Kellys clearly do not understand the value of money and free time, squandering their privileged lives in a derailed pursuit of happiness which once more has become a pursuit of pleasure. Valuation is a central theme in one of Fitzgerald's best and most obviously allegorical tales, "Babylon Revisited"(1931). CharlieWales, who believes in character as the eternally valuable element, lost his honor during the Jazz Age, when wealthy Americans had taken over Paris; having scored big in the bull market, he gave up work and partied constantly, spending nearly all of his time in bars and night clubs. Coinciding with the Stock Market crash, this period comes to an end when he locks his wife out in the snow, shortly after which she dies; but he locks himself in as well - he is figuratively "behind bars", imprisoned in his reputation as a wild, irresponsible drinker.[15] Returning to Paris after getting his life back together in Prague, he feels he has redeemed himself enough to warrant the return of the custody of his daughter, Honoria, but his links with the past continue to lock him out of his new life: Charlie has a heavy price to pay before he can be forgiven, by himself as well as by others.

Character names are again significant. The name of Charlie's daughter, Honoria and his own surname are quite obvious, but the names of Honoria's guardians, Lincoln and Marion Peters, are more subtle. "Peters"suggests "popes", an interpretation supported by their address on Rue Palatine; they fulfill the role of Charlie's judges. "Marion"- spelled with a final "o" instead of an "a" - is the masculine form of the name, which literally means a devotee of the Virgin Mary; in fact, Marion says her duty is entirely to Helen, Charlie's late

wife, a torch still burning within him. If Charlie feels released from the past, Marion is still firmly there, carrying it into the present with all the resentment she can muster. She is the guardian of Charlie's honor, the guilty conscience that will not let him forget his sins, keeping him locked in the prison of his past. Lincoln, the great emancipator, seems to be willing and to have the power to free Charlie, to override Marion's final decision and give him back his honor, but he cannot risk her "going to pieces" even if the situation past and present has not been entirely Charlie's fault. If Marion is Charlie's guilty conscience, Lincoln is his inner judge who will decide when he has done enough time.

After a few preliminary meetings, Charlie discusses the custody issue openly with the Peters. They were waiting for him to arrive, Marion dressed entirely in black - even her necklace is composed of black stars - sitting behind a coffee service, looking not only like a grave judge but like an undertaker or priestess sitting behind a funeral urn containing Helen's ashes (624). Lincoln, on the other hand, is quite mobile and "had already been talking", just as Charlie had been doing with himself, going over what he is going to say. Charlie takes a beating but wins his point: Marion sees him "plainly", realizes "he had somehow arrived at control over the situation"and gives in "as if it were a matter of no importance"(627). Although elated, Marion's sudden capitulation leaves him trembling. He has convinced her that Helen's death and their marital problems were not entirely his fault, but later he finds that he himself is not convinced. As he dreams of Helen that night, she tells him encouraging, friendly things, but he is not clear about his own position, whether he has forgiven himself or not - in the dream he cannot hear everything she says.

Lorraine Quarries, a palpable ghost of Charlie's past, as her name alone implies (a part of the French quarrels), effectively overturns the decision. Barging into the Peters' apartment spot on cue, with the very man for whom Charlie himself had left the Peters' address in the first scene, she leaves in her wake the tableau of Marion standing by the fire with son and daughter firmly within the circle of her arms, and Lincoln, "still swinging Honoria back and forth like a pendulum from side to side" (631). Charlie's attempt to salvage the

situation is weak and predictable, and as Marion leaves the room, Lincoln carefully sets Honoria down, planting her in the safety of his warm, comfortably American home.

On Charlie's first night back in Paris he had visited some of his old haunts and meditated on the meaning of "dissipate"- "to make nothing out of something"- and on the wildly squandered sums offered "to destiny that he might not remember the things most worth remembering, the things that now he would always remember". As a sort of penitential offering he bought a woman eggs and coffee in a *brasserie,* gave her a twenty-franc note, eluded her "encouraging stare" and returned to his hotel (620). After losing the battle with his guilty conscience he tells himself they cannot make him pay forever (633). Marion is in such bad shape that Lincoln sets a sentence of a further six months. If character is the eternally valuable element, Fitzgerald seems to be saying that the courage to forgive can only come from within.

Charlie Wales is a particularly vivid personification of a fool who was blind to the consequences of his fantasy, of an America that destroyed the dream by selling it short. By placing the pleasures of dissipation against the backdrop of a dream of freedom and happiness, Fitzgerald uses the energy of attraction and repulsion to create moral tales that put choice firmly in the hands of his readers, if not forcing them to make a choice, then at least suggesting that one must be made. Fitzgerald was supposed to have had socialist leanings, but as is the case with Brecht, critics find difficulty in accepting that a true socialist could have lived so high on the hog, especially while criticizing the rich so vehemently. If his letters and other autobiographical documents fail to show that Fitzgerald was indeed a socialist, his tales reveal a strong anti-materialist stance, both in content and in form, that places his criticism of the society he presents firmly in the foreground. The traces of allegory running through the tales, the clash between realism and fantasy, satirize the people and society represented and the "material" on which they are built. Like Jay Gatsby, the heroes, or antiheroes, of the tales discussed here are not unsympathetically treated - there is always something admirable, something attractive about even the meanest; but at the same time there is always an underlying criticism of these characters and what

they stand for, something which pushes them out of the realm of sympathy, This dynamic contradiction propels Fitzgerald's fiction, giving it the life and rhythm for which he is justly admired: he was a crafty writer - careful in selection, subtle in presentation - whose tone was at once critical and full of hope. The real problem with telling a tale by means of negative characters who are at once attractive and repulsive - the same problem that Milton faced with Satan in *Paradise Lost,* that Brecht faced with Macheath in *The Threepenny Opera,* and Shakespeare faced with *Richard* III [16], to name only a few - is the problem of showing that the broad, beaten, pleasant road leads to hell, to this or some other side of Paradise.

1 Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle" (1819), *The Norton Anthology of American Literature,* 3rd edition, New York, Norton, 1989, p.359.

2 F. Scott Fitzgerald , "The Lost Decade", *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald,* ed. by Matthew Bruccoli, New York, Scribners, 1989, p.749. All citations to Fitzgerald's short stories are taken from this edition; subsequent citations will be made in the text.

3 Lawrence Buell, "The Significance of Fantasy in Fitzgerald's Short Fiction", *The Short Stories of F.Scott Fitzgerald. New Approaches in Criticism,* ed. by Jackson R. Bryer, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1982, pp.23-38.

4 Buell, p.32 and p.26.

5 Buell, p.28.

6 Buell, p.30.

7 Buell, p.38. He quotes Goldhurst from William Goldhurst, *F.Scott Fitzgerald and His Contemporaries,* Cleveland, World, 1963, p.228.

8 Buell, p.25.

9 Richard Lehan, "The Romantic Self and the Uses of Place in the Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald. New Approaches in Criticism,* ed. by Jackson R.Bryer, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1982, p.7.

10 Buell, p.26.

11 Alan Margoles, "Kissing, Shooting, and Sacrificing", *The Short Stories of F.Scott Fitzgerald. New Approaches in Criticism,* ed. by Jackson R.Bryer, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1982, p.70.

12 F.Scott Fitzgerald, *As Ever, Scott Fitz* -, ed. by Matthew Bruccoli and Jennifer M.Atkinson, Philadelphia and New York, J.B.Lippincot, 1972, p.50.

13 F.Scott Fitzgerald, *Dear Scott/ Dear Max,* ed. by John Kuel and Jackson R.Bryer, New York, Scribners, 1971, p.112.

14 John Milton, *Paradise Lost,* ed. by Edward Le Comte, New York, Mentor, 1961, p.343.

[15] Carlos Baker also uses the bar-prison symbolism in his psychological reading of Charlie Wales, "When the Story Ends: 'Babylon revisited,'" *The Short Stories of F.Scott Fitzgerald. New Approaches in Criticism,* ed. by Jackson R. Bryer, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1982, pp. 269-77.

[16] For a discussion of Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt,* see my article "Shakespeare and Brecht: A Revaluation" in *Comparative Drama* 30:2, Summer 1996, pp. 158-87.