

# THE F. SCOTT FITZGERALD SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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## The Twelfth International F. Scott Fitzgerald Conference: Montgomery, AL Nov. 6-10, 2013

An antique car worthy of Jay Gatsby helped set the backdrop, the local St. James School band played a medley of jazz and Gatsby-inspired tunes, and the Southern drawl of Sally Carroll Happer filled the air during a performance of "The Ice Palace" at the opening reception for the 12<sup>th</sup> International F. Scott Fitzgerald Society Conference in Montgomery, Alabama.

That vivacious evening, hosted by the F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald Museum and the City of Montgomery, got things off to a great start, and the events and excitement continued over the next four days of Fitztravaganza/Zeldapalooza."

Around 200 people attended all or some of the various events during the course of the conference, including academic and scholarly sessions held at Troy University's Montgomery Campus; a bus tour of Montgomery that included a walk among the Confederate graves that inspired the scene in "The Ice Palace"; keynote talks by noted Fitzgerald scholars Scott Donaldson and John Irwin; a presentation by *Wall Street Journal* columnist and jazz critic Will Friedwald concerning his Fitzgerald-inspired musical revue; and a reading by Lee Smith from her Zelda-influenced novel *Guests on Earth*.

Along the way, we enjoyed an afternoon at the Montgomery planetarium, an aperitif at the local Aviator Bar, and a night of wholly un-1920s rock 'n' roll in which we were treated to the sizzlin' guitar licks of Richard Martin and learned that Bill Blazek is the reincarnation of Hank Williams and that Walter Raubicheck can channel Dion on command.

The closing reception, our "Belles and Jelly-Beans Ball," was held on the Harriott II riverboat. There were costumes aplenty as men channeled their inner Gatsby and women their inner flapper. As we cruised along the Alabama River, participants enjoyed not only the starry evening and the Montgomery skyline, but also a jazz-age cocktail presentation by Philip Greene, author of *To Have and Have Another: A Hemingway Cocktail Companion*. The house band for the evening, the Lo-Fi Loungers, kept many on the boat dancing the Charleston until the wee hours.

Based on participant feedback, the conference was a great success. Kirk and I had a fantastic time playing host and look forward to seeing everyone again at the next conference!

Sara Kosiba  
Conference Program Director

PHOTOS FROM THE TWELFTH INTERNATIONAL  
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD CONFERENCE—MONTGOMERY, 2013  
PHOTOS BY TOM ADAMS, DIANE PROTHRO, LESLIE MCPHILLIPS, AND OTHER SOCIETY MEMBERS



Scott Donaldson speaking at a session held  
at the Montgomery Planetarium



Marie-Agnès Gay and Rick Morrison  
cutting the rug on the Harriott II



Kirk Curnutt, Jackson Bryer, Bill Blazek, Gail Sinclair, and Philip McGowan  
at the annual Society membership meeting



PHOTOS FROM THE TWELFTH INTERNATIONAL  
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The vaunted 2011 Lyon team (Elisabeth Bouzonviller, Catherine Delesalle-Nancey, and Marie-Agnès Gay) celebrate not having to run this conference



Leanne Maguire and Jade Broughton Adams setting the standard for the closing reception's glamor



Chrissy Auger and Till E. Lampel channeling Nicole and Dick Diver



The Sayre family plot at Montgomery's Oakwood Cemetery

## Robert Olen Butler Receives Fitzgerald Award at 2013 Rockville Conference

Robert Olen Butler received the F. Scott Fitzgerald Award for Achievement in American Literature at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Festival on Saturday, October 26, 2013, at Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland. The event, whose name was changed this year from the F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Conference, also featured screenings of both the 1949 and 1974 film versions of *The Great Gatsby*.

The day began auspiciously when more than 50 people showed up at 9 a.m. to watch the 1949 film, which is now available on DVD. It was followed by an open Master Class, "Creating Fictional Art," conducted by Robert Olen Butler; and by a talk, "The Lost Trip of Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald, Or, How to Build a Novel from a 'Hole in History,'" given by R. Clifton Spargo, discussing his 2013 fictional recreation of the Fitzgeralds' 1939 visit to Cuba, *Beautiful Fools: The Last Affair of Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald*.

The afternoon offerings began with Writing Workshops on Fiction ("The Art of the Scene," led by Alan Cheuse), Poetry ("Surprise Yourself," led by Merrill Leffler), Mystery and Thriller ("Prose to Race a Reader's Heart," led by James Grady), and Memoir ("When the Memoir Knocks," led by E. Ethelbert Miller). Simultaneously, there was a screening of the 1974 film of *The Great Gatsby*. This was followed by a very lively panel discussion, "Which Is the Greater *Gatsby*?" featuring film critics Jane Horwitz, Bob Mondello, and Murray Horwitz, with critic Michael Dirda as the moderator.

The day concluded with the Award Ceremony, at which the winner and runners-up in the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual F. Scott Fitzgerald Short Story

Contest—open to residents of Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia—were announced and the Fitzgerald Award was presented to Robert Olen Butler. The winner of the Short Story Contest was Beth Konkoski of Auburn, Virginia, for "A Drawn and Papered Heart"; the 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up was Sally Toner of Reston, Virginia, for "The Broken Ones"; and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up was Anne H. Oman of St. Leonard, Maryland, for "The Dead Heart of Africa." After receiving the Fitzgerald Award, Butler spoke briefly about his admiration for Fitzgerald's work and then read from his own fiction.



Robert Olen Butler

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Fitzgerald Festival will be held on Saturday, October 18, 2014, in the Auditorium of the Executive Office Building in Rockville, Maryland. James Salter will receive the Fitzgerald Award. For information on the 2014 Festival and future Fitzgerald Festivals, visit [www.fscottfestival.org](http://www.fscottfestival.org) or [fsflc@comcast.net](mailto:fsflc@comcast.net).

Jackson R. Bryer



**Call for Papers:**  
***Gaelicly yours, Scott Fitzgerald:***  
**The 13<sup>th</sup> International F. Scott**  
**Fitzgerald Society Conference:**  
**July 4-11, 2015 in Dublin and**  
**Waterford, Ireland**

From Hemingway's description of his friend's "very fair wavy hair, a high forehead, excited and friendly eyes and a delicate long-lipped Irish mouth" in *A Moveable Feast* to his signature in *The Crack-Up*, "Gaelicly [sic] yours, Scott Fitzgerald," the literary world of F. Scott Fitzgerald is suffused with a Nostalgic Ireland. From the Irish Melodies to Dick's "Irish face" in *Tender Is the Night*; the Irish girls, Tammany politics, and the Irish problem, and Anthony and Geraldine's conversation over Chevalier in *The Beautiful and Damned*; Pat Brady or Katherine Moore in *The Last Tycoon*; and Monsignor Darcy and Beatrice Blaine in *This Side of Paradise*, Fitzgerald's novels, short stories, and essays are populated with the remnants of an elusive Ireland. With that in mind, we invite you to visit one of the places that marks a clear yet underexplored legacy on Fitzgerald's creativity and personality.

While we will happily entertain proposals on all aspects of Fitzgerald's life and work, due to the location, we particularly encourage papers that focus on the Irish influences on or aspects of his writing and career. Those wide-ranging topics might focus on the named Irish elements or characters from stories like "Benediction" to "Babylon Revisited," or interrogate his treatment of traditional Irish and Irish-American tropes (i.e., Religious Ritual and Moral Authority, Catholicism, Alcoholism, Social Mobility and Discrimination, Cultural Heritage, Irish Politics) in short and full-length fiction. Other possible topics might focus on the legacy,



influence, and interaction between Fitzgerald and Irish authors such as James Joyce (who both occupy an interesting connection as Modernist expatriates in Paris), Shane Leslie, or Lennox Robinson (who he worked with while drafting *The Romantic Egotist* and *The Beautiful and Damned*, respectively); or Fitzgerald's influence on Irish and Irish-American authors (such as Ross MacDonald, John O'Hara, or Raymond Chandler). We are also hoping to receive proposals that might explore connections between Zelda and Lucia Joyce (both were patients at the Zürich Burghölzli hospital at virtually the same time).

Conference events will begin with two days in Dublin before moving to our host university, Waterford Institute of Technology. Waterford, located in Munster province, is the oldest city in the country. As the fifth most populous locale at nearly 47000 residents, it is the main city of the South-Eastern Region. Although not a huge city, Waterford has a number of intellectual and cultural venues, such as the three Museums of the Viking Triangle, including Reginald's Tower (the

oldest urban civic building in Ireland); Christchurch Cathedral; Greyfriars Municipal Art Gallery; the historic Catholic seminary, St. John's College, the Theatre Royal and Garter Lane Arts Centre; and, most famously, Waterford Crystal. Conference participants will also have the opportunity to visit the nearby John F. Kennedy Trust at the Irish America Hall of Fame, and the Irish Emigration Experience at the Dunbrody Famine Ship museum.

The conference director will be Prof. Dustin Anderson of Georgia Southern University ([danderson@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:danderson@georgiasouthern.edu)), while co-program chairs are Prof. William Blazek ([blazekw@hope.ac.uk](mailto:blazekw@hope.ac.uk)) and Philip McGowan ([philip.mcgowan@qub.ac.uk](mailto:philip.mcgowan@qub.ac.uk)).

Please send your 250-500-word proposal (noting any audio/visual requests) along with a brief C.V. and biographical statement to our official conference email, [fsfinireland@gmail.com](mailto:fsfinireland@gmail.com). The deadline for proposals is October 1, 2014. Presenters will be notified of acceptance by November 1, 2014.

## **American Literature Association, May 2013**

The Fitzgerald Society sponsored two sessions at the American Literature Association's 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Boston, May 23-26, 2013; both were moderated by Maggie Gordon Froehlich, Associate Professor of English and Women's Studies, Pennsylvania State University, Hazleton.

The first of the two panels, "Masculinity and Trauma in F. Scott Fitzgerald," included the following presentations: "Love and Vanity: F. Scott Fitzgerald's Depiction of the War Veteran," Brittany Hirth, The University of Rhode Island; "In The Drooping Hours: Melancholy and New Masculinity in *This Side of*

*Paradise*," Sharon Becker, Towson University; "Alienated Trauma in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night*," Aaron DeRosa, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona; and "Fitzgerald's 'The Crackup' between autopathography and self-spectacle," Pascale Antolin, University of Bordeaux.

The second of the two panels included: "'With that intense personal interest': Nick Carraway's Solipsistic Flânerie in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*," Rachael Hoy, University of Kentucky; "'The Ice Palace' and 'Winter Dreams': The Midwest and The Psychological Landscape of Isolation," Farisa Khalid, Independent Scholar; and "Social Satire in the Works of Fitzgerald and Powell," Sara Kosiba, Troy University.

The F. Scott Fitzgerald Society will sponsor two panels at the ALA 25<sup>th</sup> annual conference in Washington, DC, May 22-25, 2014. The first panel, "Historical and Cultural Connections and Contexts," will be chaired by Society president Jackson Bryer. Walter Raubicheck will chair the second of the two panels, "F. Scott Fitzgerald and Literary History." We hope to see you there!

Each year, the F. Scott Fitzgerald Society sponsors two sessions at the annual American Literature Association conference, offering a variety of ways for established and emerging scholars to be involved. Mark your calendars and save the date for ALA 2015, which will be held May 21-24, 2015, in Boston. The location of the 2016 conference has yet to be determined. If you are interested in organizing a session (panel or roundtable), presenting research, or serving as a moderator at a future conference, we would love to hear from you. Please contact F. Scott Fitzgerald Society ALA Liaison Maggie Gordon Froehlich at [mgf10@psu.edu](mailto:mgf10@psu.edu).

*Maggie Gordon Froehlich*

## Dreams Sometimes Come True

### Martina Mastandrea

"You see...people have these dreams they fasten onto things and I've always grown up with that dream"  
F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Ice Palace"

This is the story of an Italian girl who realized her (American) dream. It all began years ago, the day I first read *The Great Gatsby*. Before then, I did not know anything about who F. Scott Fitzgerald was but, after few lines of his masterpiece, I felt the compelling need to discover the most I could about him. Soon, my desk was loaded with any kind of book having the name Fitzgerald on its cover. From the very beginning, I so empathized with Scott that I immediately felt in love with Zelda, as soon as I "met" her. Just as it happened to him. And I also started telling everybody about her. Again, just as he did.

I channeled this new literary passion into my Master's thesis, entitled "Zelda Sayre's Impersonations in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Flappers and Philosophers*," where I analyzed the female characters in order to understand the influence Zelda had – both as a writer herself and as the first American Flapper – in the development of his early short stories. Anyway, after my graduation, I felt that to deeply understand the Fitzgeralds I could not limit myself to study the books on them and by them: My biggest ambition became to see where they lived, where they first met, where they wrote and created.

You can, then, imagine my joy when my proposal for the 12<sup>th</sup> International Fitzgerald Society Conference, held in Montgomery, Alabama, was accepted, especially because it dealt exactly with the importance Zelda Sayre and her hometown had in the development of "The Ice Palace." Moreover, to my great delight, I was also told I could volunteer at the F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald Museum, the house where they lived and worked between 1931 and 1932.



Martina at the tomb of "William Wreford, 1864" in Montgomery's Oakwood Cemetery, described by Zelda in a 1919 letter to Scott. (Photo by Kirk Curnutt)



So, I arrived in Montgomery at the beginning of October, with the excitement to have in front of me two months of full immersion in the Fitzgeralds' life, works, and, finally, places. Even more thrilled were my family and friends, who could be temporarily relieved from my one-topic and one-sided discussion. In this sense, less fortunate was the most lovely American family who hosted (and listened to...) me and lived a walkable distance from the museum. It is hard to describe how I felt when I first saw the 919 Felder Avenue house. The idea of walking (and working) on the same floor where my literary heroes daily walked was one of the most touching events in my life – but please do not spread this information around.

The museum was, of course, not the only Alabamian “relic” I had the chance to see: Thanks to the bus tour we took during the conference, we visited, among other Fitzgerald sites, the Oakwood Cemetery, Pleasant Avenue, and Sayre Street, that is to say all the places I had tried to grasp many times with my imagination through Zelda and Scott's writings and biographies.

This amazing two-month experience gave me the opportunity to deepen my knowledge on the Fitzgeralds, especially thanks to two groups of people: on one side, to the professors of the conference and especially its organizers, Professors Curnutt and Kosiba, who taught me precious lessons about Fitzgerald criticism; on the other side to the visitors of the museum, with whom I could share my passion and love for the most famous couple of the Jazz Age.



Martina with her host/landlord during her stay, Ms. Renee Browning.

In both situations, at the university as well as at the museum, the question I was asked the most was: why on earth should an Italian girl come to Alabama? The answer has always been the same: to make my dreams come true.



**At the Jesse L. Lasky-Cecil B. DeMille  
Film Museum: A New Look at  
*The Great Gatsby***

**Richard Buller**

An exhibition devoted to *The Great Gatsby* and to its many motion picture and television dramatizations recently concluded a four-month run at the Hollywood Heritage Museum, located in the Lasky-DeMille Barn in Hollywood, California.

The tiny museum is located in a wood-frame building where in 1913 the two film pioneers produced the first feature-length motion picture – *The Squaw Man* – made in the soon-to-be film capital. Their corporation, The Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company, eventually became Paramount Pictures. The refurbished building stands today adjacent to the famous Hollywood Bowl.

The display, curated by Fitzgerald Society member and retired journalism professor Nick Beck, opened with a mid-October reception at which he showed items from his personal collections, including an inscribed first edition of the 1925 novel and other rare editions, autographs and posters – and ephemera related to a 1926 Broadway stage dramatization, four feature-length film versions (plus one made for television), two condensed TV plays, several radio versions and an opera.

“We had originally planned the opening to coincide with the May 2013 release of the Leonardo DiCaprio-Carey Mulligan motion picture,” Beck said, “but the museum wasn’t able to free up the space until October.”

Beck, a one-time United Press International reporter, had put together a larger Fitzgerald “90<sup>th</sup> birthday exhibit” in 1986 in the Kennedy Library at California State University, Los Angeles. “But it’s always time for another look at F. Scott Fitzgerald,” he said. “And it seemed appropriate that we finally do an exhibit in Hollywood, since he lived and worked here during the last three (1937-40) of his 44 years.”



Promotional Poster from the Hollywood  
Heritage Museum Exhibit

In February Beck brought 98-year-old Frances Kroll Ring to the museum for a private look at the exhibition. Ring, who served as Fitzgerald's secretary in 1939-40, said she thoroughly enjoyed the display. "I have to remind myself that even though Fitzgerald said he 'detested' Hollywood and its movie-lot architecture, he was very much a citizen of the community, and that his apartment on Laurel Avenue and Sheilah Graham's flat two blocks away on Hayworth Avenue (where he died) are barely two miles from this museum," Beck added. "And the places he frequented, even favored, such as Greenblatt's Delicatessen, Musso and Frank's Grill, and the former sites of the Garden of Allah and Schwab's Drug Store, are even closer.

The Pantages Theatre, where Fitzgerald apparently suffered a small heart attack a day or two before his fatal seizure, is literally "down the street," he noted. "We know that Fitzgerald's friend and fellow Princetonian Edmund Wilson believed that Fitzgerald's end-of-life 'failure' was the result of Hollywood's 'appalling record of talent deprived and wasted.'" Yet even Wilson, Beck pointed out, acknowledged that it was in Hollywood that Fitzgerald wrote "what promised to be by all odds the best novel (*The Last Tycoon*) ever devoted to this community."

Reception guests perused production stills, movie "heralds," press books, posters and mementoes related to the various feature films. Only a few seemed to know of the 1926 silent version (believed to be a "lost film") featuring Warner Baxter as Jay, Lois Wilson as Daisy and William Powell as Wilson. Most, however, knew of the 1949 Alan Ladd film, which co-starred Betty Field as Daisy, and practically all had seen the well-promoted but disappointing 1974 version with Robert Redford and Mia Farrow. Those who had seen the recent Baz Luhrmann film were divided on its quality. Some said they liked its "over-the-top" approach to the novel, while others resented the mood of the film and disliked the liberties taken with the story.

Beck also displayed a dozen or so translations of the novel, including the very first, a handsomely rebound copy of the 1926 *Gatsby le Magnifique*, published in Paris. Also shown were the notorious 1934 Modern Library edition, which had to be recalled for lack of sales, and the not-for-sale 1945 Armed Services Edition, distributed free to U.S. military personnel (and believed to have helped trigger the Fitzgerald "revival" of the late 1940s).

Among the framed posters shown were a colorful Belgian entry, *La Prix du Silence*, for the 1949 film and a Japanese number for the DiCaprio-Mulligan picture. Several guests commented that the two actors may be the best looking pair ever to play the Jay and Daisy roles, Redford and Farrow notwithstanding. Another poster advertised the "made for television" 2000 film, shot in Canada, starring Mira Sorvino and Toby Stephens, son of Dame Maggie Smith. One item that drew particular interest was the program for the 1926 Owen Davis stage play, directed by George Cukor. Next to it an 8 x 10 photo of the play's Gatsby, James Rennie, stared out of the display case.

At the reception's conclusion, Beck spoke briefly about his larger collection and about graphic artist and museum board member Sue Slutzky, "the really creative person" behind the exhibit.

## Luhrmann's *Gatsby*: In One Hundred Words or Less

While Fitzgerald fans know that *The Great Gatsby* never quite goes out of style, some years are bigger than others for the novel, and 2013 certainly provided the most notable *Gatsby* moment in some four decades. The May release of Baz Luhrmann's big-budget film adaptation scored the same trifecta of public fascination, gaudy marketing tie-ins, and decidedly mixed critical reaction as its most immediate predecessor, Jack Clayton's 1974 film. Central to the critical debate over Luhrmann's *Gatsby* was the degree to which the director's style meshed with the author's. For some critics, it worked: From his *New York Times* review of May 9, 2013, A. O. Scott argues that the film, "gaudily and grossly inauthentic" as it is, is "worthy" of the novel and its self-invented central character. Scott concludes that Luhrmann's "big and noisy new version" of *Gatsby* "is an eminently enjoyable movie."

Others were not so generous: David Denby, in his May 13, 2013 review in the *New Yorker*, argues that Luhrmann "confuses tumult with style and often has trouble getting the simple things right" in a movie that has a "few good scenes" but otherwise is characterized by "mistakes," "fake explosions," and "discordant messiness." Kenneth Turan, in his May 8, 2013 review in the *LA Times*, sees Luhrmann's effort as "no more than an excuse to display his frantic, frenetic personal style," arguing that the filmmaker's relentless flashiness "suffocates beyond resuscitation any dramatic interest the story might have generated." Still, no less a cultural barometer than James Franco, in his review for *Vice Magazine* on May 15, 2013, leapt to the filmmaker's defense, arguing that "somehow Luhrmann managed to be loyal to both the original text and to his contemporary audience." Particularly effective, for Franco, was a tactic many other critics had objected to, the use of contemporary music to infuse a period work with a "dangerous" sensibility: "Luhrmann needed to breathe life into the ephemera and aura of the 20s and that's just what he succeeded at."

But what about the true experts on the novel, members of the Fitzgerald Society? The take from our group, though not without qualifications and reservations, tended toward the positive. Kirk Curnutt, Fitzgerald Society Vice President, in a May 17, 2013 interview on the PBS "Art Beat" program, had this assessment of Luhrmann's film and the mixed reactions it provoked: "I think the people that have been negative about it are expressing their resistance to Luhrmann's techniques. I mean, he is kind of a two Excedrin filmmaker. There is a certain point where you just get overloaded and your eyes start spinning. But I will be honest: I think that's kind of what *Gatsby* needed at this moment in time. I think the book has been treated as such a holy relic for so long that it's nice to see it juiced up and jazzed up and given some energy. It reminded me of something that I often forget, that the 1920s were loud and obnoxious and dangerous. And this is a movie that dramatizes that."

Several other Fitzgerald experts weighed in on the film on the literary website *The Millions* the week following its release. Michael DuBose argued, "Most of it works, but sometimes the concept falls flat.... However, we know what we're getting with Luhrmann; he's going to execute the grand set pieces to perfection, but will stumble with the nuanced stuff. The director clearly shares Jordan Baker's enthusiasm for large parties: whenever there are more than



five people in a scene, the film sizzles. When there are fewer, it drags. Overall, Luhrmann has assembled an eclectic movie that may not be great, but is certainly *Gatsby*." Joseph Fruscione also praised Luhrmann's work: "The film is very impressive.... Luhrmann deftly merges his style with Fitzgerald's, such as in the first Gatsby party or the alcohol-fueled tension at Myrtle and Tom's apartment.... Yes, Luhrmann's *Gatsby* is dynamic, loud, different, and vibrant. It changes scenes and language, leaves out some, and adds others. It's also brilliant." Sara Kosiba compared Luhrmann's version favorably to previous adaptations: "I do find this the best film version of *Gatsby* to date. Luhrmann's intentions are in line with the soul of the novel, although I hope that it will not become a modern replacement for the actual poetry of the original." And Doni Wilson saw the controversial soundtrack as one of the strengths of the film: "All of the hype about the music faded away as the film progressed: it just seemed to underscore the excitement of the Jazz Age without being an anachronistic distraction. It wasn't your parents' *Gatsby*, but why should it have been?"

A few other Society members were kind enough to send in their brief reactions, which follow below. Have we seen the last of *Gatsby* on the big screen? Judging by the gaudy Gatsby spring of '13, not likely.



The only thing I liked about the film is Nick's wondering if he should set Daisy up with Gatsby (in Toby Maguire's voiceover), openly acknowledging to himself that he is pandering. It makes Nick more participant and less simply voyeur.

Pete Hays



I found many of the screenwriters' choices annoying, irritating, aggravating, infuriating. Why set the narrator's frame in a psychiatric clinic? Certainly Nick was profoundly affected by all that happened that year in New York, changed, saddened. But do we need such a specific setting as an excuse for him to tell the story?...It seemed pointless to give Nick's narration such a narrow, specific point—therapy done in a professional setting. I think I've always believed that Nick wrote the story as a way to understand what had happened to him. Apparently Baz Luhrmann thought today's audiences need things spelled out for them.

Tim Kitora

#### **GATSBY MOVIE (in Skeltonics)**

Jay was sexy,  
Nick was nutty;  
Tom was angry,  
Myrtle slutty;  
Daisy lovely,  
Still the fairy;  
Wilson sweaty,  
Wolfshiem hairy;  
Sets were gorgeous,  
Music breathy;  
Driving reckless,  
Scared-to-death-y!  
Costumes stylish,  
Quite the thing-y,  
Jewelry shiny,  
Lots of bling-y,  
Baz was daring,  
Scenes were speedy;  
Loved Beyoncé,  
Yes indeed-y!  
Acting brilliant,  
Best I've seen;  
Suit was pink,  
Light was green.

—Jim West

## Fitzgerald Photojournal: WWI Battlefields and Fitzgerald's Rome

Tom Adams

### FSF visits the WWI Battlefields

Scott Fitzgerald regretted not getting “over there” to be in the action of WWI. So in the 1920s, he made at least two visits to WWI battlefields. There is not a lot of information about those visits, but he did fictionalize the one in 1926 to the Beaumont-Hamel battlefield in an episode of *Tender Is the Night*. The other visit was in 1928 to the Chemin des Dames area just north of Reims. There is a picture of him there in *The Romantic Egoists* and on page 81 of Brucoli's *Reader's Companion to Tender Is the Night*.

This last May I went to these two areas. First, I went to the Beaumont-Hamel battlefield, which is now a memorial site in honor of the Canadian soldiers from Newfoundland who fought and died there. It has been a memorial since mid-1925 and Fitzgerald arrived in 1926 shortly after the statue of a caribou was placed there. I wondered how much the fictionalized account matched the real area.



Beaumont-Hamel Memorial, 1920s,  
as Fitzgerald saw it



Beaumont-Hamel Memorial in 2013

With many trees and green areas, the look of the battlefield today is quite different from that of the one in 1925. An old picture gives one an idea of the area about the time Fitzgerald was there. The Canadian government has maintained some of the trenches so one can get some idea today of how they looked during the battles. The situation was hopeless for those soldiers as you see when looking out at the “no man’s land” and the hill on the other side where the German machine guns were. In *TITN*, after the episode at the battlefield, Fitzgerald, Abe and Rosemary head back to Amiens where they stop at an American cemetery to help the girl from Tennessee who was looking for her brother’s grave site. However, there is no American Cemetery between Beaumont-Hamel and Amiens today, or as far as I could determine, then. As one drives around the area of the Somme, one can’t help but be impressed by the number of

cemeteries seen along almost every road. The only American cemetery in the area is in the opposite direction of Amiens from Beaumont-Hamel. It is located near Bony, France and is impressive.



Remnants of trenches and no-man's land in background, Beaumont-Hamel Memorial, 2013



American cemetery near Bony, France, 2013 – not near Beaumont-Hamel

As for Fitzgerald's other trip to the battlefields in 1928, he went southeast of Paris to the Chemin des Dames area. The picture mentioned earlier shows a barren landscape with stacks of large artillery shells. The landscape today is very beautiful, and the only remains of the war are all the cemeteries in the area. It is not clear why he visited the area, but Brucoli says that in 1925, Fitzgerald spent a lot of time studying the war. This area was important, especially at the end of the war when France used their tanks effectively against the enemy.



Thanks to Barry Gordon, who volunteers at the WWI museum in Kansas City (<http://theworldwar.org/>), for helping me with the planning for this trip and for reviewing the draft of this article.



Chemin des Dames area, 2013; FSF's 2<sup>nd</sup> trip

## Finding the Hotel des Princes in Rome

Visits to Rome were not times Scott remembered with fondness. Although there were unpleasant memories of his visits there, including time in a jail, he used those experiences in his fiction. I was interested in the areas where Scott and Zelda stayed on their two trips to Rome in the 1920s, which were some of the places he wrote into *Tender Is the Night*.

I focused on three hotels in Rome from the 1921 and 1924 trips to that city. You may recognize some of the names from *Tender Is the Night*. The hotels were the Grand Hotel in 1921 and the Quirinale and Hotel des Princes in 1924. The Grand Hotel and the Quirinale are there today and easy to find. However, the Hotel des Princes has been gone since the 30s, and the exact location was unknown until recently.



In 1921, Scott and Zelda went to Europe while Zelda was pregnant with Scottie. They went to England (page 93, *Le Vol*)

and then to Italy, arriving in Rome in June after stops in Venice and Florence. They stayed in the Grand Hotel, but were not happy there, saying it was flea infested. The stay was not long and not remembered with affection.

Front of Grand Hotel from FSF's 1<sup>st</sup> visit to Rome

In November of 1924, they traveled to Rome from France by car. They initially stayed at the Quirinale Hotel while looking for an apartment, but they decided on the Hotel des Princes because of the lack of apartments due to a religious event bringing many pilgrims into Rome.

In looking for these places, I wasn't sure about the Grand Hotel initially, but it is still there operating as the St. Regis. This hotel has the feel of an earlier era, renovated of course, and still very upscale. I easily found the Quirinale, which is still there and operating as a classic hotel. While the outside is rather plain, the interior has the great look and feel of an earlier era. The pictures show the interior of the hotel, one of several public rooms, with others including the Green Bar. Both these hotels are in the same area just north of the main train station.



Grand Hotel lobby

At both of the above hotels, one can envision Scott walking through the lobby with Zelda. However, the Hotel des Princes is another story. Nobody seemed to know where it was, other than that it was on the Piazza di Spagna near the Spanish Steps, next to the Keats house. I found a professor in Rome with an interest in Fitzgerald, Prof. Caterina Ricciardi



Hotel Quirinale lobby, 2013





Front of Hotel Quirinale from  
FSF's 2<sup>nd</sup> visit and in *Tender Is the Night*



Hotel Quirinale Green Bar



Remodeled Hotel des Princes building, 2013



of the Roma Tre University, who had already searched for the location several years ago without success. After I contacted her, she renewed her efforts and found that a more recent article in Italian about the history of hotels in Rome had been published since she last looked for the location of the hotel. In this article, Prof. Ricciardi found the address of the hotel, 15 Piazza di Spagna, but also found that the hotel is now an office building. The Hotel des Princes had been severely remodeled in the 1930s. What was confusing for anyone who looked for it was Fitzgerald's statement that he could see the Keats house from the hotel. One would assume the hotel would be across the piazza opposite the Keats house (now the Keats-Shelley House museum). However, it is along the same side of the piazza as the Keats house, which can be seen only if one walks out the front of the building and looks left toward the Spanish Steps. Prof. Ricciardi was able to get us into a lawyer's office in the building where we were able to look out a window on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. However, unless one leans far out the window, the Keats house is not visible at all, and then only a fragment of the front left corner of the building can be seen. During the 30s, the Roman ruins under the old hotel were excavated and are now on display in the lobby of the building. These artifacts are worth a stop and can be seen just by walking into the main entrance security area.

Thanks to Prof. Caterina Ricciardi for her help in the year before my trip and especially for taking time to go with me in Rome to discover these places I had read about for so long.



Spanish Steps and Keats house, 2013



Keats house from the Hotel des Princes, just past the crowd in the Piazza

## **Blue-feathered Illusions: How I Came to Love Blue Jays and Jay Gatsby**

**Noël Nicole Layton**

When my cousin named her son “Jay” my grandmother lamented, “Oh no! Everyone is going to call him ‘Jaybird’!” My grandmother was not fond of blue jays and would shoo them from her bird feeder, which was intended for a better class of bird. “Get away from there you pretty bird!” she’d fuss. Even in her discrimination she could not deny that they were a handsome species. It was never explained to me why she disliked them; it was one of those irrational facts of the lives of the adults. When I first read *The Great Gatsby* I instinctively assumed there was some connection between Jay Gatsby and the flamboyant blue jays that lived in our garden.

My history with Jay Gatsby starts like most; I read the novel in 10<sup>th</sup> grade in Pittsburgh, PA. That reading left little impression on me. The second reading occurred in college, as part of an English Literature course where the British and Marxist professor drilled into us the incarnation of American imperialism which the book represented. This left no room for personal interpretation. In desperation to appease the socialist professor, I wrote my final essay on F. Scott Fitzgerald’s use of the color red in the novel, in response to which the professor left the comment: “This is complete mumbo jumbo!” That reading pretty much suppressed all joy of the novel, and I decided Jay Gatsby and I were done.

Seventeen years later, a high school teacher in Stockholm, Sweden, I made the giant leap and decided to start teaching the book to my precocious class of 10<sup>th</sup> grade non-native English speakers. Although extraordinary students, many struggled in the beginning, and being the expert on color symbolism, I tried to guide them on how Fitzgerald used colors as a way to see into the complexity and layers within of the text. I did, however, skillfully avoid the color red. On the third reading, I was getting reacquainted with Jay. A few literary minded students picked up on details that quite inspired me to try a fourth reading.

Last spring, I started my fourth reading with my Advanced English seniors (non-native speakers). This time, I chose the novel because the curriculum for senior English states that they must be able to interpret nuances in different genres. I knew there was a multitude of symbols and layers just waiting at their disposal in *The Great Gatsby*.

Straightaway, one student picked up on Fitzgerald’s use of “eggs,” not just East and West Egg, but also how in Fitzgerald’s letter to his daughter, Scottie, he threatened to call her Egg Fitzgerald if she did not stop calling him Pappy (*Life in Letters* 235). The student reflected that Fitzgerald did not seem to like eggs. The same student also brought up Owl Eyes, and we discussed his ability to see through the illusion of Gatsby’s library. I guess it was the bird imagery that prompted me, out of the blue, to tell the student that jays are a common bird in the U.S. This was the first time I ever articulated my long-held belief that there might be a connection between blue jays and Jay Gatsby. The student found highly relevant a Wikipedia description of jays as “a species of medium-sized, usually colorful and noisy”

birds. Simultaneously, I decided to check out what the *Gatsby* “experts” thought about the matter, and I found nothing.

Although I grew up in the northeastern U.S. and a family of blue jays always lived in my parents’ garden, I knew nearly nothing about the blue jay. Searching online for reliable information, I found Les Line’s article “Slings and Arrows: Why Birders Love to Hate Blue Jays.” What made me read the article was the lead: “They’re smart, spectacular, and vocally versatile, so is the species really so bad?” (Line) This seemed to fit the character Jay Gatsby perfectly! Reading Line’s article confirmed what my student and I had already suspected; Fitzgerald must have had a notion of the blue jay in mind when he christened Jay Gatsby.

Line explains that blue jays have a bad reputation of being bullies, thieves, and murderers because they are known to eat the eggs and chicks of other birds. However, Line says this is grossly exaggerated, because blue jays mainly feed on insects, seeds, nuts etc. “In short, there is no valid reason to hold them in contempt. Instead, we should be celebrating the beauty of [this] bird” (Line).

At the beginning of the novel we hear all kinds of dubious rumors about Jay Gatsby. Several times, it’s mentioned that he might be a murderer: “You look at him sometimes when he thinks nobody’s looking at him. I’ll bet he killed a man” (*Great Gatsby* 44). The reader eventually learns that Jay Gatsby is a criminal, a bootlegger, but he is not a killer. Without hesitation he intends to take the blame for Daisy’s hit-and-run murder. As Professor Peter Hays explained, “I don’t think we’re supposed to dislike Gatsby, not at all, but rather think of him as a rogue, outside decorous circles” (Hays). Jay Gatsby is the blue jay who is not welcome to partake of the succulent supply of nuts and seeds in the birdfeeder and therefore must revert to lawless ways.

The next piece of evidence found in Line’s article that connects Jay to the blue jay is that they “are fast learners ... near-perfect mimic of the calls” of other birds. In a relatively short time Gatsby has been able to transform himself and sway people to believe that he belongs to a higher class than he was born into. His overuse of the phrase “old sport” can be compared to the mock caw of the blue jay that incessantly wants to convince others of its false identity and significance (the phrase “old sport” occurs forty-five times throughout the novel). Line points out the blue jay’s imitations are “near-perfect,” and Gatsby has succeeded in fooling many people, but Nick immediately sees through Gatsby’s verbal façade.

I was looking at an elegant young roughneck, a year or two over thirty, whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd. Some time before he introduced himself I’d got a strong impression that he was picking his words with care. (*Great Gatsby* 48)

Mark Twain wrote about blue jays, in a short story called “What Stumped the Bluejays.” Twain explains, “A jay’s gifts, and instincts, and feelings, and interests, cover the whole ground. A jay hasn’t got any more principle than a congressman. A jay will lie, a jay will steal, a jay will deceive, a jay will betray” (Twain). Jay Gatsby is a gifted, self-taught, sentimental man who has had to lie, steal, deceive, and betray to escape poverty and attain his



dream. As Hays says, “[Gatsby] adapts himself and steals – not eggs, but ... another man’s wife” (Hays).

Lastly, Line brings up the scientific fact that the color blue in feathers isn’t actually blue; it’s an optical illusion. Gary S. Gerronne from *Bird Watcher’s Digest* testifies that “throughout the entire world, and the known galaxy, there isn’t a single blue feather being naturally sported by any bird!” (Gerronne).

With his brightly colored silk shirts and suits, and the pedantic attention he pays to the details in his speech and manners, Jay Gatsby too is an illusion. Through Fitzgerald’s elaborate trickery the reader can interpret Gatsby in shifting ways throughout the novel; at one and the same time he can be a criminal, lover, dreamer, fool, hero, victim, etc. Gatsby needs the illusionary blue feathers, because otherwise he would just be a rather ordinary bird. Nick suggests that this might just be the case:

I had talked with him perhaps half a dozen times in the past month and found, to my disappointment, that he had little to say. So my first impression, that he was a person of some undefined consequence, had gradually faded and he had become simply the proprietor of an elaborate road-house next door. (*Great Gatsby* 64)

It is important to remember that Jay chose his new name and identity when he was still an unsophisticated young man, long before he started hanging out with the likes of Daisy. He was a smart kid, who, like a blue jay, was an opportunist and took advantage of what he could to escape his poverty-stricken life. I think a name like Jay signifies someone who has no fears: an adventurer.

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

I suppose he’d had the name ready for a long time, even then. His parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people – his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all. The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God – a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that – and he must be about His Father’s business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end. (*Great Gatsby* 98)

I have no proof that Fitzgerald consciously thought of the blue jay just when he christened Jay. It is clear that Fitzgerald emphasizes that the change of name was an important part of Jay’s transformation. Professor Kirk Curnutt thinks, “Fitz picked ‘Jay’ more for its sonorous quality” and that “it sounds a bit more aristocratic than James” (Curnutt). The “sonorous” part fits well with the noisy blue jay. However, is the name Jay really more aristocratic than James? Nevertheless, blue jays appear mighty noble and refined with their blue tailored jackets and crests.

The only other indication that Fitzgerald might have purposely named Jay after the jay is that other characters seem to be inspired by nature, such as Daisy and Myrtle, and Tom, who is a tomcat. Other instances of Fitzgerald playing with words and names include the list of guests who attended Gatsby's parties that summer at the beginning of Chapter Four. A few clear examples from that list, where Fitzgerald suggests personal or character traits through names, are the Leeches, Mrs. Swett, and the Smirkes (Armstrong). If Fitzgerald had a tendency to name characters after natural entities and play with words, is it such a far stretch to consider that he would name Jay Gatsby after a cool bird?

Les Line notes that Henry David Thoreau described the blue jay as "delicately ornamented"; this description evokes not only Jay Gatsby, but also the novel. Fitzgerald lulls us into an illusionary world with overwhelming details that pull us deeper into the reverie of reality. He tricks us into forgiving Jay Gatsby for his crimes and passions and makes us love him. Geronne says although there "isn't a single blue feather in the bird world ... thanks to physics, there are plenty of blue-looking birds. And, in at least one little way, it is quite a good reflection upon us" (Geronne). What is life without the blue-feathered visionary?

In the real world, we might not be as forgiving of the actual blue jay. My grandmother's intuition was accurate; my cousin's son is called "Jaybird."

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## **True Scandal Detectives: The Improbable Renaissance of Robert W. Chambers**

**Kirk Curnutt**

Fans of noir and psychological mysteries spent most of January and February engrossed in HBO's eight-episode series *True Detective*, created by novelist and former DePauw University creative-writing professor Nic Pizzolatto. (There is hope for us all.) Starring Matthew McConaughey and Woody Harrelson, the show's intricate structure and sledgehammer-subtle symbolism ignited an avid Internet guessing game over the identity of its serial-killer villain.

One of the striking elements of the show was the mining of an 1895 short-story collection called *The King in Yellow* for its central motifs. Written by Robert W. Chambers (1865-1933), the book uses references to an imaginary play that shares the collection's title to create unity among its tales. In particular, invocations of a creepy netherworld called Corsica repeatedly crop up. Just as Chambers borrowed the idea of this demented city from Ambrose Bierce's "An Inhabitant of Corsica" (1891), Pizzolatto borrowed passages from Chambers to titillate viewers with the possibility of a mystical or supernatural evil cursing the Louisiana landscape. The aura of eeriness proved particularly titillating for fans of "weird fiction," who recognized Corsica from horror author H.P. Lovecraft's famous Cthulhu mythos.

Fans of Fitzgerald may have had a different bell of recognition ring for them. Skimming through *True Detective* commentary as the series unfolded, I kept trying to remember where I had heard the name Robert W. Chambers. Then one day for unrelated reasons, I happened to be rereading H. L. Mencken's review of *Flappers and Philosophers*, and I came across this passage, which I had forgotten, despite quoting it in sundry articles and books:

Fitzgerald is curiously ambidextrous. Will he proceed via the first part of *This Side of Paradise* to the cold groves of beautiful letters, or will he proceed via "Head and Shoulders" into the sunshine that warms Robert W. Chambers and Harold McGrath?

Suddenly remembering references to Chambers in Fitzgerald criticism, I began leafing through James L. W. West III's annotations in various volumes of the Cambridge Edition of the Works of F. Scott Fitzgerald. In *Spires and Gargoyles*, I rediscovered the reference in Fitzgerald's obscure (and negligible) "How They Head the Chapters," where Chambers is satirized as Chobart Rambers. A second reference pops up in the (somewhat) cleverer "The Usual Thing," where Chambers is "Robert W. Shameless." (These are both Princeton-era writings, from 1915 and 1916 respectively).

Piddling around in Jackson R. Bryer's *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Critical Reception*, I came across the most germane reference to Chambers, one I have to admit I don't think I'd read before. It comes from John Farrar's review of *Tales of the Jazz Age* in the *New York Herald*:



“The Diamond as Big as the Ritz” reminds us of Robert W. Chambers’ fine tales in *The King in Yellow*. They are not unlike, these two writers. At the start Mr. Chambers had several talents, among them the ability to write fine English, a fiery imagination and a good plot sense. Perhaps now the last of these is only left. These three gifts at least Mr. Fitzgerald has, mingled, too, with a sardonic humor. Will this last preserve the other three? Whither bound, Mr. Fitzgerald? Answer requested by mail.

And here I must confess that I had never read *The King in Yellow* before *True Detective*. I might be embarrassed if I weren’t so alone in my ignorance. As Pizzolatto’s show reached its mid-run, Chambers’ heretofore obscure book reached No. 7 on Amazon.com’s bestseller list. Eschewing capitalism, more than fifty thousand other people downloaded the book for free off Project Gutenberg. If I wasn’t the only latecomer to jump on the bandwagon, I did feel rather in solitary not seeing many connections between *King* and “The Diamond as Big as the Ritz.” Fitzgerald’s story is a fantasia, but Chambers’ material is Poe-styled horror. I also had a hard time reconciling Chambers with Mencken’s description of his writing as full of “the warmth of sunshine.”

The reality is that supernatural fiction is only one genre Chambers was adept at. Like most commercial writers, to maximize his publishing options he trained himself to be proficient in several different types of fiction, including proto-science fiction, war stories, historical novels, and pure adventure. He was also skillful at popular romance, which is where Fitzgerald’s affinities with him lie. When Mencken refers to Chambers’ “sunshine,” he means such now-forgotten works as *The Restless Sex* (1918), novels that because they focused on young love and the obstacles of money to matters of the heart won the author a reputation as “the Shopgirl Scheherazade.”

When I asked Professor West about Chambers’ potential influence on Fitzgerald, he offered an illuminating suggestion: “I suspect that FSF read Chambers in prep school and college, and was probably ridiculed by Edmund Wilson and J. P. Bishop for doing so. They also chided him for reading Chesterton and Wells, you will remember. FSF might have learned a good deal from Chambers, however, including how to construct a plot, how to create stock characters, how to give pace to the narrative, and how to balance description with dialogue. These are not bad lessons for an aspiring fiction-writer to learn, and Chambers was a proficient teacher.”

Fitzgerald may not have any direct relevance to *True Detective*, even if he did dabble in the supernatural genre with tales such as “The Cut-Glass Bowl” and “A Short Trip Home.” Nevertheless, the improbable albeit probably brief renaissance of interest in Chambers is a serendipitous moment of connection for us Fitzgerald fans. To this viewer it compensates for the fact that another engrossing HBO hit, the 1920s-mobsters-in-Atlantic-City *Boardwalk Empire*, blew a chance to incorporate Fitzgerald into its interlaced storylines. As that series imported a dizzying array of historical figures – everybody from Al Capone to comedian Eddie Cantor to Warren G. Harding and his pregnant mistress, Nan Britton – I kept hoping for a subplot about *The Vegetable* tanking in 1923. Imagine how much fun it would have been to see Scott and Zelda alongside recurring real-life character Arnold Rothstein, aka the Real Wolfsheim.

# News and Notes

## *Great Gatsby* Ballet Review

Ron Cunningham, Artistic Co-Director of the Sacramento Ballet (along with his wife Carinne Binda), produced an elaborate adaptation of Fitzgerald's novel for a new production featuring Cunningham's choreography and the musical score of Billy Novick. Novick composed a score for the Washington, D.C. production of *Gatsby*, featuring his own compositions, but also incorporating songs by Irving Berlin, Jelly Roll Morton, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and others of the Jazz era. Novick brought his band, the Blue Syncopators, from Boston to perform, and E. Faye Butler from Chicago to provide some of the vocals; others were provided by Connor Mickeiwicz, who also served as narrator, Nick Carraway's non-dancing doppelganger. Cunningham gives lie to Gatsby's line: "Old sport, the dance is unimportant."

The evening was introduced with a short piece, George Balanchine's *Who Cares*, set to a score of Gershwin songs, also performed by the Blue Syncopators. The dancers were not in sync with the music, and the choreography, as performed, was stale compared to *Gatsby*.

Cunningham used marvelous scenery and costumes designed for the Pittsburgh Ballet's production of *Gatsby* several years ago. The sets, most greatly impressive painted cycloramas,

include Carraway's cottage, Gatsby's mansion, the interior of the Buchanan home, the Valley of Ashes, and the cityscapes of New York — with lights behind the scrim for lighted windows in Gatsby's mansion, and an elegant couch for Daisy and Jordan to recline on in the Buchanan household.

Gatsby (Stefan Calka) wears a three-piece suit (light blue, not pink) and polka-dotted tie with what appears to be street shoes (also light blue), with heels. Daisy (Alexandra Cunningham, daughter of choreographer Cunningham and wife Carinne Binda), also wears a light blue gown, but with toe shoes. Nick (Oliver-Paul Adams) wears a three-piece suit when we first see him and a dinner jacket at Gatsby's parties, where Gatsby wears white tie and tails. Tom (Christopher Nachtrab) is obviously different in a black tuxedo, and, while Daisy and Jordan wear flowing gowns, the rest of the women at the parties (at the love nest and at Gatsby's) wear flapper dresses.



Alexandra Cunningham as Daisy, and Stefan Calka as Gatsby.  
Photo: Manny Crisostomo/Sacramento Bee

It's a lavish production, and it received rave reviews from newspaper reviewers and a standing ovation at the performance I attended. As a ballet, it's a success: beautiful, tragic love story, gorgeous costumes and sets, superb choreography and dancers. As a representation of the novel, it's no worse than most movie translations of novels. Cunningham has divided the ballet into fourteen scenes, and the program describing the contents of each scene unfortunately conveys more than the dancing does.

The ballet begins with Gatsby, Stefan Calka, reaching toward the green light and dancing wistfully to Irving Berlin's "What'll I Do?" He goes off stage and the narrator begins with Nick's father's line that "all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had." As he walks across the Gatsby mansion set, he is displaced by his dancing doppelganger, Oliver-Paul Adams, who does a jazzy dance, not one I expected from staid Nick Carraway. Then a party erupts at Gatsby's, sweeping him up.

Drinking is vividly portrayed throughout the ballet: Tom tosses off several flutes of champagne as he comes (dressed in jodhpurs and boots) into the room where Daisy and Jordan are (Scene 2), before Nick arrives; and Jordan wears blue, not white. At all the parties, waiters circulate pouring drinks; the fatal trip into New York City at the end is initiated by the absence of booze in the Buchanan household (an unlikely event). Yet most audience members probably did not know that Prohibition was the law at that time, and that drinking was an illegality, a source of Gatsby's money, and part of the corruption that Fitzgerald was targeting.

Scene 4 features a New York city scene (after Nick, Tom, and Myrtle arrive by train from the Valley of Ashes), where Tom takes Myr-

tle shopping; there is a dog (a live one) purchased — not an Airedale — and much more elaborate shopping than the novel describes. The scene features a parade with confetti, busy pedestrians, nuns, a cop chasing burglars, and off in a corner stage right, a man giving Gatsby a suitcase full of money. The program identifies this as Gatsby doing "business with underworld figure Meyer Wolfsheim," but it's a ten-second scene that those watching the dancers sweep the confetti off the stage will miss; the former professional ballerina whom I asked to accompany me for expert opinion did not see the suitcase scene at all. From the dance alone, the audience will certainly miss the fact that Gatsby is a crook. Unfortunately, the dancing cannot convey the gulf between nouveau riche and old money.



Jordan (Isha Lloyd), Tom (Christopher Nachtrab) and Daisy. Photo: Keith Sutter

What dance can show is difference in attitude. At the first Buchanan house scene, where Nick has dinner with Daisy, Jordan (who has a dance with a putter), and Tom, there is the interrupting phone call. Tom answers, and a phone booth is pushed on stage right with Myrtle (Amanda Peet, not the film actress of that name). Tom crosses the



stage to meet Myrtle, while Daisy, Jordan, and Nick watch in the background in subdued light. The music is Ellington's "Creole Love Call," "I'm Gonna Meet My Sweetie Now," and Louis Armstrong's "Wild Man Blues," with Butler's vocal growls supplementing the reed instruments. The dance is sexually aggressive, *apache* rather than *pas de deux*. Gatsby's dances with Daisy are always more refined and elegant. Often he lifts her above him, the physical elevation echoing his idealization of her. At one of Gatsby's parties, Novick includes "The Charleston" and "The Sheik of Araby"; later, at his mansion with Daisy, there's "Ain't We Got Fun," the latter two songs from the novel.

Christopher Nachtrab as Tom is an excellent dancer and actor, vividly portraying Tom's lasciviousness, anger, and jealousy. But he's a thin man, slighter than Gatsby, Nick, and Wilson (Michael Separovich). We get the rich man on the make—he even slaps the rears of maids serving him champagne in his house—but no "national figure" football player, certainly not a lineman (which ends were in 1914). So we have no corruption in sports here—nothing about Jordan cheating at golf. (The program identifies Jordan as a professional golfer; Fitzgerald based his portrait of Jordan on Edith Cummings, a friend of Ginevra King's and a golf champion of the time, but a champion of amateur golf, not a pro. Nothing in the text indicates that Jordan plays professionally; doing so would not be in keeping with her social standing. The Ladies Professional Golf Association was not formed until 1950; I do not know when women first competed professionally.)

At the Plaza Hotel, Tom and Gatsby dance around each other threateningly to Novick's music, "Broadway Tango at the Plaza." The program reads: "Gatsby pleads with Daisy to say she never loved Tom. He has asked too much of her and Daisy cannot bring her-

self to do that." We see Daisy and Gatsby dancing, but we do not see outright refusal on her part in the dance. Again, my ballerina expert only got the idea of Daisy's denial of Gatsby from the program. Daisy takes the keys from Tom's hand, and she and Gatsby go off, the only sign that she is driving the car that kills Myrtle. As staged, we see approaching headlights, Myrtle runs out and falls. George comes to cradle the body. Then Tom appears stage right, Daisy and Gatsby stage left, looking on. Tom points to Gatsby as the driver, Gatsby comforts Daisy, and the scene ends. For those who didn't pay attention to the program, Gatsby's and Daisy's romance is shattered by Wilson's bullet, not by Daisy's denial. In the last scene, Gatsby, wearing short modern swim trunks, no singlet, is shot by Wilson, and dies slowly, reaching for the green light, as "What'll I Do" is played again.

Nothing in the ballet makes clear Gatsby's poor, farm background or lack of social status; even the shirts he displays are not gaudy, and his suit, while light in color, is definitely not pink. Nothing differentiates West Egg from East Egg. The only clue to status is the coverall costumes of the men at Wilson's gas station. Nothing in the ballet emphasizes Gatsby's criminal dealings. And Daisy's maiden name is changed, for no apparent reason, from Fay to Prince.

In sum, for those who do not know the novel and aren't interested in it, Cunningham's ballet of *The Great Gatsby* is a marvelous and moving spectacle. For those who value the layers that Fitzgerald put into the novel—the pandemic corruption of the 20s, from athletes to politicians; the dissection of class status; the investigation of the myth of the American dream, that we can all succeed if only we'd work harder; and our love of a past that we can never recapture—it's only a pale reflection.

## A Granddaughter's View

Eleanor Lanahan, in the London *Times* (April 29, 2013) Film Section, comments about her grandparents on the release of Baz Luhrmann's film of *The Great Gatsby*:

Because Scott often wrote about the Beautiful People, it's assumed that he was one of them. His knowledge of all that was glamorous and fashionable, as manifest in *Gatsby*, made him an icon of the era.

...Even in their own time my grandparents were viewed as the epitome of chic. Scott and Zelda Sayre were married in New York City in 1920, a week after the publication of his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*. He was 23, she 19. They became instant celebrities and darlings of the press. "To my bewilderment," Scott wrote, "I was adopted ... as the archetype of what New York wanted."

He and Zelda became spokespeople for their generation. They gave interviews, tossed off observations about marriage, political affairs and the character of their postwar generation. They were quintessentially contemporary and quotable.

Their attention to fashion may have fueled some of the confusion. From 1925, when *The Great Gatsby* was published, Scott became mistaken for his creation — the man in the white suit, fabulously rich and stylish. This association is stunningly inaccurate.

Though Scott and Zelda helped to invent a whole new culture of youth, one liberated from Victorian morals, Scott produced five novels and 170 short stories in a very short lifespan. We never see *Gatsby* working, aside from taking a phone call from one of his "drug stores," whereas Scott toiled passionately. His work ethic and honesty were the bedrock of his character.

*Gatsby* grooms a mystery about his life. By contrast, Scott and Zelda's personal lives are public record. They saved their letters — amazingly romantic and, quite often, sad. Scott kept meticulous journals and, during the Depression, published frank essays about his emotional bankruptcy.

Had they met at a party Scott probably wouldn't have liked *Gatsby*. My grandfather was a moralist at heart, not blinded by any *Gatsbyesque* delusion that an old-moneyed girl can be won by conspicuous wealth.

Although it would later become his most celebrated work, in fact Scott and Zelda's tragedy began with the publication of *Gatsby*. By 1922 Scott was critical of *This Side of Paradise* (he called an early version "a tedious casserole") and conceived something wholly different for his third novel, which was to become *Gatsby*. "I want to write something new — something extraordinary and beautiful and simple," he wrote.

But distractions were many. There were parties and drinking. Eventually, hoping to escape these diversions, Prohibition and the high cost of living, Scott and Zelda moved to Europe. Scott discarded most of what he'd written of his novel, which was then titled *Among Ash-Heaps and Millionaires*. It would later be called *Trimalchio; The High-Bouncing Lover* and, very nearly, *Under the Red, White, and Blue*.

"In my new novel," Scott wrote to Maxwell Perkins, his legendary editor who later edited Ernest Hemingway and Thomas Wolfe, "I'm thrown directly on purely creative work, not trashy imaginings as in my stories. This book will be a consciously artistic achievement."

In May 1924, when the Fitzgeralds arrived in France, Scott went right to work — although

there were distractions in France too. A reporter for *The New Yorker* who encountered him and Zelda that summer wrote: "That the Fitzgeralds are the best-looking couple in modern literary society doesn't do them justice." Another reporter mentioned that they looked as though they had stepped out of the pages of Fitzgerald's novel.

...By August Scott was full of instructions for the launch of his most monumental work. He wrote to Perkins that he had practically finished *The Great Gatsby*. He added that he wanted no blurbs on the book jacket and no mention of earlier work: "I'm tired of being the author of *This Side of Paradise*." Unfortunately, soon he would be lucky to be known for any work at all.

*The Great Gatsby* was published on April 10, 1925, and fell short of the success Scott had hoped. Several distributors cut back on their orders because of the shortness of the book. Some critics were laudatory but just as many dismissed the novel as a reworking of earlier material. A prominent reviewer called it a dud.

This disappointing launch was the beginning of a slow downward spiral. With the stock market crash in America, in October 1929, the glamorous chapter of my grandparents' lives ended. Scott's fee for a short story fell to \$400 from a high of \$4,000. As the Depression deepened, struggling farmers were more fashionable subjects than rich people. It was harder to place his stories, and Scott could no longer deliver the desired happy ending (which he often hadn't done anyway).

In April 1930 Zelda suffered her first nervous collapse. She was treated in hospital and diagnosed with schizophrenia — a diagnosis that is still debated today. My mother, Frances Scott "Scottie" Fitzgerald — their only child — had been born in 1921. Scott was now

supporting a sick wife and a daughter in Paris on a trickle of royalties in an adverse economy.

By the middle of the Depression Scott was mired in ever-mounting debt to his publisher, his agent and to his friends. He wrote pot-boilers to stay afloat. *Tender Is the Night* was published in 1934 but the story, set in Europe and focused on a mentally ill heiress, was dismissed by critics. Once again, sales were disappointing.

Scott's spirits lifted somewhat when *The Great Gatsby* was reissued, but the reprint sold sluggishly. Many publishers felt that he was washed up as a writer. Most of the press forgot Fitzgerald too, except for one particularly cruel reporter, Michael Mok, who in 1936 interviewed Scott for his 40th birthday. He described Scott's "jittery jumping off and on to his bed, his restless pacing, his trembling hands, his twitching face with its pitiful expression of a cruelly beaten child."

My mother was now 15 and Scott was serving as a single parent in the grip of acute alcoholism. She was all too aware of her parents' difficulties, but Scottie had learnt to largely ignore his troubles. She had grown used to her father's complaints of poverty before producing funds at the eleventh hour.

She both loved and hated him. "In my next incarnation," she wrote in 1965, "I may not choose again to be the daughter of a Famous Author. The poor writer is free to do whatever he chooses; if he chooses to get drunk, who can fire him? Between himself and doom stands no one but his creditor."

I never met Scott or Zelda — I was born two months before she died. But through my mother, and later through reading their letters, I came to know them as mythical and



benevolent ancestors who needed our protection from harsh judgments.

A letter my mother wrote showed that she was well aware too of Scott's suffering. "During the last five years of my father's life he couldn't have bought a book of his in any book store; he probably couldn't even have asked for one without getting a blank stare from the saleslady." And what was worse was that he knew it. "My God, I am a forgotten man," Scott wrote to Zelda in March 1940.

My grandfather died months after writing that letter, at the age of 44. He was almost broke, with just enough cash to cover his funeral. Scott died knowing his public had turned its back. The author of the Twenties had been forgotten in his lifetime.

...Zelda was not well enough to travel to Maryland for Scott's funeral. Over the next few years, when strong enough, she spent months at a time with her mother in Alabama. Zelda had written to my mother that she longed to see the new baby (myself) but we never met. She died in a fire at Highland Hospital, North Carolina, in 1948.

It wasn't until I was 11 that I realized my grandparents were famous. A photographer for *Life* magazine came to our house in 1959 and snapped us grandchildren in the attic, looking at Zelda's ostrich feather fans and her vibrant paper dolls. My mother hadn't spoken to us about them; perhaps we were the one preserve in her life where she wasn't "the daughter of ...." I felt a huge embarrassment when classmates and teachers asked me about Scott and Zelda and began to realize that I'd better read his books.

Today *Gatsby* has sold millions of copies and has the respect it deserves. But Scott did not live to see any of it.

## Frances Turnbull Kidder Dies

Frances Turnbull was the daughter of Bayard and Margaret Turnbull, who owned La Paix, the cottage Scott and Zelda rented in Maryland in 1932; her brother was Andrew Turnbull, who wrote a biography, *Scott Fitzgerald* (1962). Frances herself, who died April 11, 2013, at 96, had been a playmate of Scottie Fitzgerald. Mrs. Kidder, in an interesting coincidence, had a real estate license and worked for the firm of Chase, Fitzgerald and Co.

*Submitted by Jackson Bryer*

## Gatsby's Girls

Curtis Publishing Co., publisher of *The Saturday Evening Post*, took advantage of the *Great Gatsby* movie publicity by publishing *Gatsby's Girls*, a collection of short stories by Fitzgerald that originally appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post*. The stories included are "Head and Shoulders," "Myra Meets His family," "The Camel's Back," "Bernice Bobs Her Hair," "The Ice Palace," "The Off-Shore Pirate," and "The Popular Girl, Parts 1 and 2" There is an introductory essay by Fitzgerald — "Who's Who and Why" — a brief essay called "Fitzgerald's American Girl" by Jeff Nilsson, historian for the *Post*, and the original illustrations and cover art from the *Saturday Evening Posts* in which the stories first appeared. \$14.24 from Amazon.

## Cover Wars

Julie Bosman, in the *New York Times*, April 26, 2013, described the ongoing marketing campaign by Scribners to issue two different covers to *The Great Gatsby*: one, the traditional Cugat cover; the other, the art deco poster for Baz Luhrmann's movie, with Leonardo DiCaprio prominently featured:

"So far this year, sales of the paperback with the original jacket art — a glowing cityscape and a pair of floating eyes — have been extraordinary. On Thursday, it was the top-selling book on Amazon.com. At Barnes & Noble stores last week, no other paperback book sold more copies. It has landed on best-seller lists for independent bookstores.

"At ... Barnes & Noble, with its nearly 700 outlets, both editions will be available. But at Walmart, only the movie tie-in edition will be stocked, a tacit acknowledgment that the discount chain's customers want books that appear fresh and new (even if they happen to have been released in 1925).

"Scribner, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, typically sells 500,000 copies each year, but in 2013 it has already shipped 280,000 copies, according to the publisher. E-book sales have been skyrocketing, too: in 2012, about 80,000 e-book copies of *Gatsby* were sold. So far this year, sales have surpassed 125,000.

"But Scribner also has high expectations for the movie tie-in edition: it is printing more than 350,000 copies."

In response to this article, Charles Scribner III (actually the fifth of that name) wrote a letter to the *Times* on the same day (April 26, 2013):

"Regarding 'Judging *Gatsby* by Its Covers' (front page, April 26), I'd like to add a historical note:

"The famous Francis Cugat cover art from 1925 featuring those celestial eyes in the sky disappeared from the book during the four decades of new editions after F. Scott Fitzgerald's death in 1940.

"In 1979 I discovered the original artwork (hanging on loan to the Princeton Club), took it back to my office at Scribner, and had it put

on the classic it has adorned ever since. (The art department complied less because I was the resident art historian, more because my dad was running the publishing house!)

"Yet I confess to liking the Leonardo DiCaprio cover, too (the new movie tie-in). I would not be ashamed to be seen reading it on the subway, but then I'm a Gemini."

It is impolite, but I'll say it anyway: The DiCaprio cover will sell more books and make more money for Scribners.

### **The Gatsby Collections from Tiffany's and Brooks Brothers**

In coordination with Baz Luhrmann's film of *The Great Gatsby*, which opened May 10, 2013, Tiffany jewelers advertised a Great Gatsby collection of jewels. Featured in Tiffany's ad is a daisy brooch, appropriate, with white diamond petals and stem and a yellow diamond center, a diamond and seed pearl bracelet, and the Savoy headpiece, "evoking a Native American headdress" — perhaps less appropriate. However, both the brooch and the headpiece are based on period-specific Tiffany designs. Such headpieces were all the fashion in the 20s. Also, the Buchanans would certainly have frequented Tiffany's.

And not one to miss out on a good thing, Brooks Brothers is also putting out a line of clothing "inspired by the costumes designed by Catherine Martin" for Luhrmann's film. The Gatsby Collection includes: jackets, pink (and other colored) suits (\$658 for the pink), shirts, ties (regular [one is \$98.50] and bow), blazers, boaters (straw hats, \$198), cardigans, vests (\$248), two-tone loafers (\$598), white eyelet shoes, two-tone eyelet shoes, suspenders, patent leather pumps, velvet slippers, a tux with accessories (studs, cuff links), and a cane.

*Submitted by Elizabeth Lloyd-Kimbrel*

## **Review of *Z—A Novel of Zelda* by Therese Ann Fowler**

In the *New York Times* Sunday Book Review section of April 19, 2013, Penelope Green has this to say about *Z*:

They were, arguably, the first celebrity couple of the modern age, Jazz-era avatars running wild in a new century. She was a precocious, spoiled Southern belle and bad girl; he was a Midwesterner and Princeton dropout who had turned his experience into the novel “This Side of Paradise.” In the 1920s, Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald careened through New York City and Great Neck, Paris and the South of France, leaving in their wake a trail of splintered Champagne glasses and glittering *bons mots*. Their tragic, slow-motion falls—she to madness and a series of mental institutions, he to alcohol and an indifferent public—seemed inevitable, and drawn from the pages of one of his novels.

Despite its racy, one-letter title, “*Z*” is a rather tame affair, dutiful but somehow distant, as is sometimes the case when one’s material is so well-known. Fowler has determinedly imagined her own dialogue and written her own versions of Zelda’s letters, and the voice she has given her is that of a perky helpmeet to her husband: a can-do girl saddled with a hopeless drunk, jollying him along, deflecting his alcoholic rage and attendant social embarrassments with quips delivered over her shoulder as she leads him away from the bar or the dinner table.

Fowler imagines cause and effect with a scene in which a boorish Hemingway comes on to Zelda and she rebuffs him, insulting his manliness.... This Zelda is brisk and rather incurious, and she hurries the reader along, with no stopping for self-analysis.... When, in “*Z*,” she falls in love with a French pilot,

she notes blandly, “Everything Scott said rankled; everything Édouard said reigned. I was a woman possessed.”

“*Z*” leaves us with the last line of “The Great Gatsby,” the epitaph written on Scott and Zelda’s tombstone, the one we can all recite by heart:

“So we beat on, boats against the current,  
borne back ceaselessly into the past.”

It’s a bummer, not because the line is so sad or by now even something of a cliché, but because it reminds you of the precision and delight of Fitzgerald’s words, the remarkable voices of the real Zelda and Scott—and the much flatter sound of *Z* and her man.

*Submitted by P. Michael McCulley*

## **F. Scott Fitzgerald Creates a List of 22 Essential Books, 1936**

In 1936, perhaps the darkest year of his life, F. Scott Fitzgerald was convalescing in a hotel in Asheville, North Carolina, when he offered his nurse a list of 22 books he thought were essential reading. The list, just released by the University of South Carolina, is written in the nurse’s hand.

Fitzgerald had moved into Asheville’s Grove Park Inn that April after transferring his wife Zelda, a psychiatric patient, to nearby Highland Hospital. It was the same month that *Esquire* published his essay “The Crack-Up,” in which he confessed to a growing awareness that “my life had been a drawing on resources that I did not possess, that I had been mortgaging myself physically and spiritually up to the hilt.”

Fitzgerald’s financial and drinking problems had reached a critical stage. That summer he



fractured his shoulder while diving into the hotel swimming pool, and sometime later, according to Michael Cody at the University of South Carolina's Fitzgerald website, "he fired a revolver in a suicide threat, after which the hotel refused to let him stay without a nurse. He was attended thereafter by Dorothy Richardson, whose chief duties were to provide him company and try to keep him from drinking too much. In typical Fitzgerald fashion, he developed a friendship with Miss Richardson and attempted to educate her by providing her with a reading list."

It's a curious list. Shakespeare is omitted. So is James Joyce. But Norman Douglas and Arnold Bennett make the cut. Fitzgerald appears to have restricted his selections to books that were available at that time in Modern Library editions. At the top of the page, Richardson wrote, "These are books that Scott thought should be required reading."

- *Sister Carrie*, by Theodore Dreiser
- *The Life of Jesus*, by Ernest Renan
- *A Doll's House*, by Henrik Ibsen
- *Winesburg, Ohio*, by Sherwood Anderson
- *The Old Wives' Tale*, by Arnold Bennett
- *The Maltese Falcon*, by Dashiell Hammett
- *The Red and the Black*, by Stendahl
- *The Short Stories of Guy de Maupassant*, translated by Michael Monahan
- *An Outline of Abnormal Psychology*, edited by Gardner Murphy
- *The Stories of Anton Chekhov*, edited by Robert N. Linscott
- *The Best American Humorous Short Stories*, edited by Alexander Jessup
- *Victory*, by Joseph Conrad
- *The Revolt of the Angels*, by Anatole France
- *The Plays of Oscar Wilde*
- *Sanctuary*, by William Faulkner
- *Within a Budding Grove*, by Marcel Proust
- *The Guermantes Way*, by Marcel Proust
- *Swann's Way*, by Marcel Proust

- *South Wind*, by Norman Douglas
- *The Garden Party*, by Katherine Mansfield
- *War and Peace*, by Leo Tolstoy
- *John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley: Complete Poetical Works*

*Submitted by Allen Pierleoni*

## F. Scott Fitzgerald in the Comics

In the December 2012 issue of *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Society Newsletter*, James L. W. West III provides an interesting and thorough summary of the 1956 adaptation of "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" in an issue of the *Mickey Mouse* comic book ("Mickey, Goofy, and the Diamond Mountain"). West notes that he "had never seen [this] mentioned anywhere until recently."

This comic book actually entered scholarly discussion in my essay, "F. Scott Fitzgerald in the Funny Papers: The Commentary of Mickey Mouse and Charlie Brown," published in *F. Scott Fitzgerald in the Twenty-first Century*, edited by Jackson R. Bryer, Ruth Prigozy, and Milton R. Stern (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), pages 223-237. That essay, in turn, had originated in a paper I read at the International Fitzgerald Conference held at Princeton University in 1996.

Besides the Mickey Mouse, another comic book adaptation discussed there is a 1976 issue of *Tweety and Sylvester* in which the famed cat of animated cartoons played out a parody called "The Great Catsby." Among other comics-related discussions of reflections of Fitzgerald in comic strips and cartoons, I also comment on Charles Schulz's special fondness for bringing *Gatsby* characters and quotations into *Peanuts*. The novel was his favorite book. The matter is given fuller discussion in my essay "Two Boys from the Twin Cities: Jay Gatsby and Charlie Brown," *Comic Art*

No. 6 (Spring 2004), 64-69. It has been reprinted in *A Comics Studies Reader*, edited by Jeet Heer and Kent Worcester (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), pages 94-100.

To my knowledge, these remain the two main discussions of Fitzgerald in the comics. Further work remains to be done, however, especially in the graphic novels based on his fiction, such as the versions of *The Great Gatsby* and “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” that have been reviewed in the pages of *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review*.

*Submitted by M. Thomas Inge*

### **Fitzgerald and his Town House**

“What does it take to throw Jazz Age parties like Scottie and Zelda?” asks Carolyn Kellogg, in a January 30, 2013 *LA Times* piece. “Bathtub gin? A Victrola playing the Charleston? How about their very own Baltimore town house? F. Scott Fitzgerald’s town house at 1307 Park Ave. in Baltimore is up for sale. For \$450,000, it could be yours.”

While Ms. Kellogg seemed to have some difficulties distinguishing between the names of Fitzgerald and his daughter, her article goes on to provide some historical and biographical context for the newly-listed property:

From the photographs, it looks as if the town house has retained many of its early 20th century appointments. It’s easy to imagine that it looks much as it did ... when Fitzgerald lived there; it was his home from 1933-35.

Zelda was with him only part of the time. It was their second home in Baltimore, where they had moved so she could receive psychiatric treatment – the first was damaged in a fire Zelda set when burning papers in a fireplace. Fitzgerald was also in a bad place; liv-

ing in Baltimore meant he could dry out at Johns Hopkins Hospital, which he tried to do more than once.

While Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* is often called the Great American Novel, at the time Fitzgerald was feeling a failure. When his follow-up, *Tender Is the Night*, was published in 1934, it didn’t sell as well and wasn’t well-received by critics. Around that time, Fitzgerald wrote to his editor, Maxwell Perkins, “I have drunk too much and that is certainly slowing me up. On the other hand, without drink I do not know whether I could have survived this time.”

The Park Avenue town house carries more Depression-era heritage – to say nothing of depression – than Fitzgerald’s earlier high-flying Jazz Age party life. Nevertheless, it was a home where he lived, and a fairly grand one. Built in 1900, the town house has four bedrooms over four levels, including a basement. It has porches in the front and back, two full bathrooms, two half baths, at least three decorative fireplaces, a carriage house/garage, built-in bookshelves and a decorative plaque that notes F. Scott Fitzgerald lived there.



Photo: Estate.com and Associated Press

## The Faces of Gatsby

The *New York Times* Style magazine published a page by Jeff Oloizia (April 14, 2013) featuring twenty-one book covers of *The Great Gatsby* from the late Matthew Brucoli's personal collection at the University of South Carolina. As Oloizia says, they reveal eighty-three years of book design. Eighteen of the book covers are in English, including Cugat's familiar dark blue, with eyes over a carnival, and the Scribners' Student Edition, with green and white bars on a black, striped background. There is a washed-out, pale green version of Cugat's cover, with no apparent title, and one of the two Bantam paperback covers includes an acknowledged Alan Ladd, with a more muscular chest than he actually displayed in the 1949 movie version, obviously published to coincide with the movie. One cover features a picture of Scott Fitzgerald. French and Spanish titles are obvious even to this linguistically challenged editor; I will leave for others to identify nation of origin for "Den Store Gatsby," "Veliki Getsbi," "De Grote Gatsby," and "Marele Gatsby." Most intriguing for this editor is a Magritte-style cover from Compact Books, featuring a pin-striped charcoal business suit, white shirt and pocket handkerchief, red polka dot tie, and bowler hat—but no face or hands, just the proper-appearing suit—forcing us to guess who or what's inside.

*Submitted by Jackson Bryer*

## Digitization of *The Great Gatsby* Autograph Manuscript and Galleys

On May 24, 2013, the Princeton University Library announced the digitization of the autograph manuscript and corrected galleys of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925),

which were donated to the Princeton University Library in 1950 by Scottie Fitzgerald Lanahan, the daughter of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Zelda Fitzgerald. These manuscripts are part of the F. Scott Fitzgerald Papers (C0187), the best-known, comprehensive author archive in the Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections. We can see Fitzgerald at work on his third novel over a four-year period: (1) *Ur-Gatsby* (2-page fragment), the author's abandoned effort, conceived in 1922 and written in 1923; (2) *The Great Gatsby* autograph manuscript (302 pages), which he largely wrote in France and completed by September 1924; and (3) corrected galleys of "Trimalchio," the novel's working title when it was typeset by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1924, only to be much reworked by the author early in 1925.

The digital images are online in the Princeton University Digital Library (PUDL), with the permission of the F. Scott Fitzgerald Literary Trust (copyright holder), acting in consultation with Harold Ober Associates (literary agency representing the Fitzgerald Literary Trust) and Simon & Schuster (owner of the Scribner imprint). The digitized manuscript and galleys were online in time for Princeton University's Commencement 2013, a century after F. Scott Fitzgerald (Class of 1917) became a freshman at Princeton in 1913. Digitization is particularly timely because of intense popular interest in the author and his great novel as a result of Australian movie director Baz Luhrmann's recent film version of *The Great Gatsby*, released on May 10, 2013.

Fitzgerald conceived and crafted his novel in layers over a three-year period. In June 1922, living at White Bear Lake, Minnesota, he began planning his new book, which Fitzgerald specialists now refer to as the *Ur-Gatsby*.

He started writing this novel in June 1923 and produced some 18,000 words. It was set in the Midwest around 1885 and did not have Nick Carraway as its narrator. Two pages of this manuscript survive at Princeton quite by chance, since Fitzgerald attached them to a letter that he sent to Willa Cather. But much of the *Ur-Gatsby* text was discarded or published elsewhere, such as the short story "Absolution" (June 1924). By April 1924, now living in Great Neck, New York, Fitzgerald began working on the novel again, but now set it in 1922. Fitzgerald completed the autograph manuscript in France by September 1924. The draft was just over 250 pages, almost always only on rectos. Fitzgerald customarily wrote in pencil, as we can see in a brief bit of grainy 1920s film footage showing him writing in a garden. He did not type and therefore had a secretary prepare a typescript from the manuscript.

In November 1924, Fitzgerald sent the typescript to his legendary Scribner's editor Maxwell Perkins, who had galleys set from them. Unfortunately, this typescript and subsequent typescripts and carbon copies do not survive. The "Trimalchio" galleys were sent to Fitzgerald in Rome, where he corrected and revised them during the first two months of 1925. The author corrected the galleys in pencil but also pasted on long typed additions of text. As James L. W. West III has noted in his edition of *Trimalchio*, the book in the original galleys was not the same novel as *The Great Gatsby* as finally published. Despite similarities, there are crucial differences. Fitzgerald conveyed or recommended additional corrections and changes to Maxwell Perkins by letter and telegram. Among other things, the author considered alternative titles, such as "Among the Ash Heaps and Millionaires" and "Gold-Hatted Gatsby." By spring 1925,

Fitzgerald settled on "Under the Red, White and Blue." However, by the time he had communicated this to Perkins, the book had already been published (April 10, 1925) as *The Great Gatsby*, the title Perkins liked best. Fitzgerald had hesitated about the title because he said there was nothing great about Jay Gatsby and felt that the title, using a surname, might remind people of Sinclair Lewis's novel *Babbitt* (1922).

Matthew J. Bruccoli suggested that some portions in a smaller hand were copied from the earlier manuscript draft, while others in a larger hand were first draft. Fitzgerald made innumerable changes in the story line and inserted new text at many points. Clearly visible on nearly every page of the autograph manuscript are his corrections (from entire passages and paragraphs to cross outs with interlinear replacements of a word or phrase), erasures (some decipherable, others not, leaving gaps in the text), instructions (with arrows), handwritten additions on additional sheets of paper, and other changes. The creative process is also much in evidence with the galleys, which the author corrected in pencil, as well as adding typed sheets of revised text tipped onto particular galleys. Bruccoli argued that the author "regarded galleys as a special kind of typescript or trial edition in which to rewrite whole scenes as necessary." Of the many letters and telegrams from Fitzgerald to Perkins that are preserved at Princeton in the Archives of Charles Scribner's Sons (C0101), most relate to progress on the book, but some sent from Rome and Capri list corrections. Even after publication, Fitzgerald continued to think of making more changes or additions in later printings, and for this reason corrected a personal copy of the first edition, which is preserved in his papers.

*Submitted by Don Skemer*



## The Great Gypsy

The Hempstead school district on Long Island issued a list of summer reading for its students. The list contained some 30 spelling errors, including calling Fitzgerald's classic *The Great Gypsy*.

*Submitted by Peter Krynicki*

## Anatomy of a Hotel Room: The Plaza's Fitzgerald Suite

Another commercial venture leaped onto the *Gatsby* bandwagon stimulated by Baz Luhrmann's movie: the Plaza Hotel in New York, a destination for Scott and Zelda — including dips in the fountain in front — and setting for a scene in both movie and novel, as Sarah Firshein reported on *curbed.com* on June 24, 2013.

"... the Fitzgerald Suite, which opened in April in advance of the film's debut, will be a permanent fixture at New York's Plaza Hotel. The 700-square-foot space was designed by Catherine Martin, the Oscar-winning designer responsible for *Gatsby*'s sumptuous sets, and aims to celebrate the movie as well as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *actual* history with the hotel — the author and his wife, Zelda, were both regular cocktail-drinkers here ('orange blossoms spiked with bootleg gin,' Zelda's biographer once told *New York*)." Firshein notes that the suite, "which has been quoted at \$2,795 a night," features a \$2,995 chandelier from Restoration Hardware, pictures of the movie's stars (Carey Mulligan below), pictures of Scott and Zelda in the hall, and playing cards from *Tiffany's*, complete with Jay Gatsby's monogram, the letters JG inside a stylized daisy.



The Plaza's Fitzgerald Suite. Photo: Restoration Hardware

## From the Catalogs

Locus Solus Rare Books (New York) in its catalog 7 for Spring 2013 offers *The Evil Eye* (John Church Company, 1915), the two-act musical comedy produced by the Triangle Club at Princeton, for which Fitzgerald wrote the lyrics, Edmund Wilson the book. First edition, 92 pp., in original stiff wrappers. The book, which was sold at the performances, contains the music (composed by Paul D. Dickey, '17, and F. Warburton Guilbert, '19) and lyrics to *The Evil Eye*, Fitzgerald's second Triangle Club show, but not Wilson's dialogue. \$2000.

Peter L. Stern (Boston), in its Winter 2013 catalog, lists two Fitzgerald items: the first edition of *Fie! Fie! Fi-Fi* (Cincinnati: John Church Co., 1914), with the musical score and the lyrics by Fitzgerald, along with the script printed for the cast, \$3000; and a first edition, first printing, second state of *Taps at Reveille* (New York: Scribners, 1935), with dustjacket, \$2250.

Between the Covers (Gloucester, NJ) in its March 2013 catalog offers *En Man Utan Skrupler* (Stockholm: Wahlstrom and Widstrand, 1928), the Swedish translation of *The Great Gatsby* by Siri Thorngren-Olin. Only three translations were made during Fitzgerald's lifetime: French, German, and Swedish. Only two other extant copies of this book are catalogued, in the national Library of Sweden, and at the University of South Carolina. With illustrated wrappers, \$5500. [Ed.: My Swedish is non-existent, but if the title translates to "a man without scruples," and is about *Gatsby*, then I think it is misleading.]

In their November 2013 catalog (#189), Between the Covers offered three more items: a first edition, first issue of *The Great Gatsby* (New York: Scribners, 1925), sans dustjacket, \$4200; the first Modern Library edition of *The Great Gatsby* (New York: Modern Library,

1934), with dustwrapper, \$500; and a very rare radio script for *This Side of Paradise* (United States Steel Corporation presents the Theatre Guild of the Air, 1951). It was adapted for radio by Dailey Paskman for a performance starring Richard Widmark and Nina Foch, directed by Theatre Guild founders Lawrence Langer and Theresa Helburn. \$2500.

Nate D. Sanders Fine Autographs and Memorabilia auctioned on April 2 two lyrical poems and a signed first edition of *Tender Is the Night* (New York: Scribners, 1934). The book was signed to Helen Hayes and her husband, Charles MacArthur, simply as "Scott." The two handwritten poems were for the MacArthurs' daughter Mary, who died of polio in 1949 at the age of 19. The first poem, dated 1931, reads: For Mary MacArthur. "'Oh Papa — My Papa — / Say Papa' / So! / 'Is Papa / Your Papa / My Papa?' / No! / So Spoke You / Why Joke You? / Just For To-day / Our Word is / (Like Birdie's) / Plenty to Say." Signed F. Scott Fitzgerald / Feb. 13. 1931. The second poem appears on the back of the same sheet, titled "Addenda (seven years later)," when Mary would have been close to eight. It reads: "What shall I do with this bundle of stuff / Mass of ingredients, handful of grist / Tenderest evidence, thumb-print of lust / Kindly advise me, O psychologist / She shall have music — we pray for the kiss / of the gods on her forehead, the necking of fate / How in the hell shall we guide her to this / '-Just name her Mary and age her till eight.' / What of the books? Do we feed her our bread / of the dead, that was left in their tombs long ago? / Or should all the fervor and freshness be wed / To next year's inventions? Can anyone know? / How shall we give her that je ne sais quoi — / Portions of mama that seem to be right / Salted with dashes of questionable pa? / '-Age her till eight and then save me a bite.' / Solve me this dither, O wisest of lamas / Pediatrician — benevolent buddy /

Tell me the name of a madhouse for mammas/  
Or give me the nursery —let her have the  
study/How can I pay back this heavenly loan/  
Answer my question and name your fee/ Plan  
me a mixture of Eve and St. Joan/ ' —Put her in  
pigtales and give her to me.'"

No word on what the auction price was.

Royal Books (Baltimore, MD) in their catalog 41 for March 2013, offers the first printing of Modern Library's *The Great Gatsby* (New York: Modern Library, 1934), with an introduction by Fitzgerald, with dustjacket, \$3850.

Raptis Books (Brattleboro, VT) in its Spring 2013 catalog number 299, lists a signed and inscribed first edition of *Tender Is the Night* (New York: Scribners, 1934) original green cloth, inscribed by the author, "For the unknown, unmet parents of Clare [note: double underlined]. Knowing her, I hope you will find something to like in this present. Best wishes, F. Scott Fitzgerald." In a very good unrestored first issue dustjacket and in a custom clamshell box, \$65,000. Also offered is a first edition of *Taps at Reveille* (New York: Scribners, 1935), inscribed by the author, "For Isabel Owens Hoping we'll both be able to look back to this winter as a bleak exception, in a business way from F. Scott ("Old Scrooge") Fitzgerald." Isabel Owens worked full-time as Fitzgerald's Baltimore secretary from 1932-36. She continued part-time in this role until his death in 1940. In addition to her secretarial duties, Owens acted as a foster mother to the Fitzgeralds' daughter Scottie and companion to Zelda. With dustjacket and clamshell box, \$45,000.

Quill & Brush (Dickerson, MD) offers The Certificate of Recognition from Princeton University/For World War I Military Service/Awarded to F. Scott Fitzgerald. This unique historical document was given to Fitzgerald in recognition that he left his studies at Princeton to serve in the military during WWI. It states, in Latin:

... since it is just and completely in accordance with reason that those students of the arts and sciences deserve recognition from the state and the university who leave our halls in the heat of war to carry out deeds in the name of freedom, worthy of public honor —let it be known to all that we are pleased by the well-deserving youth F. Scott Fitzgerald who advanced along the path toward his baccalaureate degree which he would not have left except for the cause of his country. We believe him worthy and do present him with this testimony of our trust and goodwill. God save the Republic. We have given this in the Wassace Hall of Princeton 1918 . . .

Fitzgerald received his commission as a second lieutenant in the Army October 26, 1917, and was assigned to Camp Sheridan near Montgomery, Alabama (where he met Zelda in 1918). Before he was deployed overseas, the war ended. He was discharged on February 14, 1919. It has long been known that Fitzgerald dropped out of Princeton after four years of on-and-off-again study to join the Army and that he was not the best of students. We understand that one of the advantages of the certificate was that it conferred passing grades in all current classes on the student to whom it was awarded. While it was certainly well deserved, it does bring to light a possible factor in the timing of his decision to join the war effort.

Provenance: The Fitzgeralds rented a house in Bolton Hill, Maryland, from the owner, who was their landlord. When the owner died in 1967, the certificate was discovered among her things.

Price: \$15,000.

*Submitted by Jackson Bryer*

**News and Notes is compiled by  
Peter L. Hays**

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Society dues are \$30 (\$25 for students and retirees). Please send inquiries about membership and dues to Prof. Kirk Curnutt, English Department, Troy University, Montgomery Campus, Montgomery AL 36103-4419. For more about the Society, please visit the **F. Scott Fitzgerald Society Website:**

<http://www.fscottfitzgeraldsociety.org>

#### News and Notes:

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