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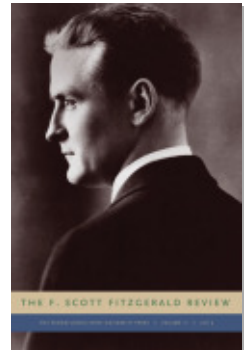
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## Proof of Hard Striving

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## PROOF OF HARD STRIVING

### *Fool for Love: F. Scott Fitzgerald*

by Scott Donaldson

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012. 262 pages

### *Fitzgerald's Mentors: Edmund Wilson, H. L. Mencken, and Gerald Murphy*

by Ronald Berman

Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012. 119 pages

### *Readings of Trauma, Madness, and the Body*

by Sarah Wood Anderson

New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 210 pages

### "F. Scott Fitzgerald"

by Jackson R. Bryer

Oxford Bibliographies

New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. Online

Reviewed by Kirk Curnutt

The University of Minnesota Press has reissued Scott Donaldson's *Fool for Love: F. Scott Fitzgerald* just in time for its thirtieth anniversary. This unconventional biography originally appeared in 1983 from Congdon & Weed, a boutique imprimatur whose co-founder, publishing fixture Thomas Congdon—attention trivia buffs—was the man responsible for ushering Peter Benchley's *Jaws* (1974) into print. Because Congdon & Weed folded a mere six years after its

1979 founding, *Fool for Love* never had the opportunity to build the long-term readership enjoyed by other Donaldson biographies such as *John Cheever: A Biography* (1988) or *Edwin Arlington Robinson: A Poet's Life* (2007). Donaldson himself made a paperback version available in the early 2000s through iUniverse, but its reappearance was overshadowed by the success of his *Hemingway vs. Fitzgerald: The Rise and Fall of a Literary Friendship* (1999), whose sterling, 20,000+ sales surprised its own publisher, Overlook Press. Unlike the Robinson biography or Donaldson's *Archibald MacLeish: An American Life* (1992), *Fool for Love* has also suffered from having to share a stage crowded with competing treatments of its subject's life. Never intended to challenge Arthur Mizener's *The Far Side of Paradise* (1951) or Matthew J. Bruccoli's *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur* (1981) for the vaunted status of the "standard" biography, *Fool for Love* likewise eschews the melodrama and sensationalism of popular treatments of the Scott and Zelda story. As a result, the book can seem almost self-effacing in presentation, especially if read alongside James R. Mellow's *Invented Lives: F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald* (1984) or Jeffrey Meyers's *Scott Fitzgerald: A Biography* (1994). That impression is misleading, however, and the great benefit of the University of Minnesota Press reissuing the book is to discover with fresh eyes just how many insights it offers.

What makes *Fool for Love* unique is its thematic as opposed to chronological organization. Although the chapter sequence does follow the biographical trajectory from St. Paul to Hollywood, Donaldson is less interested in timeline than topics. Thus, the opening section, "A Man with No People," focuses on Fitzgerald's ambivalence toward his parents, Edward and Mollie Fitzgerald, and his somewhat softer disregard for his hometown and the Midwest in general. Granted, any reliable biography will acknowledge the family drama of the failed businessman father and the comparatively monied mother dismissed as "neurotic" (Fitzgerald, *Letters* 99). Freed from plotting the analysis year-by-year, however, Donaldson's approach allows the author to venture laterally as opposed to linearly. Discussing Edward Fitzgerald's financial woes, the critic can cite in rapid succession a *Ledger* entry for August 1905 (written retrospectively, of course), the 1937 essay "Early Success" (Wilson, *Crack-Up* 85–90), the 1931 memorial "The Death of My Father" (unpublished until 1951; Fitzgerald, *Apprentice Fiction* 175–82), and a 1930 letter home without worrying about drawing from them out of sequence (4–6). Similarly, a much later chapter called "Demon Drink" on Fitzgerald's alcoholism enables Donaldson to trace his subject's earliest dalliances with liquor by citing within consecutive paragraphs the 1929 *New Yorker* essay "A Short Autobiography" (Fitzgerald, *Short Autobiography* 105–8), a Princeton-era letter to a girlfriend, and 1921

correspondence with Maxwell Perkins (161). The thematic focus is especially useful in discussing romance, allowing Donaldson to compare Fitzgerald's feelings for Ginevra King and Lois Moran despite the decade separating his relationships with them (55). It is also an appropriate technique for bridging the various Hollywood periods (1927, 1931–32, and 1937–40) without needing to narrate the major events separating them.

Scholars well-versed in extant criticism will recognize that Donaldson is by no means the first Fitzgeraldian to take this tack. In spirit and form, *Fool for Love* is indebted to Henry Dan Piper's overlooked *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Critical Portrait* (1965). Not inappropriately, Piper is cited several times throughout the book. Yet even Piper's critical study relies on the chronological determinism that comes with assessing that vague concept we call "development." Throughout his examination, one finds judgments on novels and stories influenced as much by entrenched perceptions of Fitzgerald's aesthetic peaks and valleys as by the intrinsic presence or absence of craft. Thus, Piper's explanation of why *All the Sad Young Men* is "heavily padded with second-rate material" (an assessment with which many critics would disagree): "Although it was published in 1926, a year after *The Great Gatsby*, all but one of the stories dated back to the period between 1922 and 1924. Therefore, the contents deserve to be included in any consideration of Fitzgerald's early or 'pre-*Gatsby*' fiction" (79). In other words, if "The Baby Party" (1925; *All the Sad* 66–77) or "The Adjuster" (1925; *All the Sad* 113–34) do not seem up to artistic snuff, it is because Fitzgerald had yet to learn the control and concision he would exercise in his most celebrated novel—and *not* because commercial short-story writing required a different type of style from a modernist novel. To a certain extent, Donaldson avoids such pitfalls by sidestepping the question of quality and focusing instead on mindset. Even so, *Fool for Love* is blessedly free of bias against efforts such as "The Unspeakable Egg" (1924) and "A New Leaf" (1931). When they are cited, it is because they illustrate Fitzgerald's sensibility, not because they reflect the lamentable demands of commerce and lucre over art.

Perhaps the most representative chapter in the book is its eleventh, "The Worst Thing," which brilliantly assesses Fitzgerald's self-loathing. "Scott Fitzgerald did not think highly of himself," this section begins (177), and for readers familiar with his subject's fetishizing of disappointment ("I talk with the authority of failure," Fitzgerald famously wrote [*Notebooks* 318]), Donaldson provides a succinct but persuasive diagnosis of the writer as a "histrionic personality" (188). The term is borrowed from psychiatrist Avodah K. Offit, whose *The Sexual Self: How Character Shapes Sexual Experience* (1977) is an intriguingly left-field authority to cite. Offit (who would turn to fiction writing in the

1990s) was among the first wave of post-sexual revolution clinicians to popularize the titillating term “sex therapist,” and while no one will mistake *The Sexual Self* for a Molly Bloom soliloquy, her work helped legitimize the discussion of desire, fantasy, and behavior for the post-Kinsey world. That said, *The Sexual Self* also speaks with a decidedly 1970s ring, and it would be interesting to ask Donaldson how he happened upon this source or what twenty-first century authority he might invoke instead were *Fool for Love* written in 2013. The most interesting point made by reading Fitzgerald through Offit’s lens is to note how histrionic personalities “tend to be women” (189), thereby reinforcing Fitzgerald’s own misgivings about his masculinity and the question of how feminine his sensibility was. As Offit writes, histrionics are dramatic, but they also exude great charm, instinctively demonstrating “intuitive insight into the ways of engaging other people” (qtd. in Donaldson 189). Offit’s definition provides Donaldson a device for reconciling those two opposing sides of Fitzgerald’s personality: the showy, self-promotional extrovert and the anxious, depressive obsessed with his own failings. “The closest tie of all,” Donaldson notes, applying Offit’s definition to Fitzgerald, “lies in the area of performance. Throughout his life Fitzgerald thought of himself as a dramatist. . . . ‘I’m an actor,’ he’d say. Or ‘I have two sides: the worker and the showoff. I like to show off’” (189).

Again, what most dazzles in *Fool for Love* is Donaldson’s range of reference. Whether pulling from his hat an anecdote from Fitzgerald’s childhood, a casual observation from an acquaintance, or a textual example, he demonstrates such a thorough familiarity with his subject that one wonders how he organized and catalogued his research during the writing process. The insights could no doubt make for a useful course in how to write a book such as this. In the meantime, *Fool for Love* at thirty remains not only a great read but also a great teaching tool. Instructors needing a quick overview of Fitzgerald on money or Fitzgerald on romance, among other topics, can do no better than to consult the book—just one more reason we should be happy to have it in a readily available edition.

If *Fool for Love* takes us back to 1980s Fitzgerald scholarship, Ronald Berman’s *Fitzgerald’s Mentors: Edmund Wilson, H. L. Mencken, and Gerald Murphy* inevitably recalls the 1990s. It is hard to fathom that nineteen years have passed since Berman’s *The Great Gatsby and Modern Times* (1994) made the texture of the Jazz Age in Fitzgerald’s most famous novel seem fundamentally alive, sending us all scampering back to silent movies, mass magazines, and other popular-culture artifacts for parallels and analogues to the book. In the years since, Berman has published five subsequent studies to create one of the most distinct bodies of work in Fitzgerald scholarship. Whether addressing

the 1920s, modernism, or concepts such as progress and time, he has branded an approach and style that is at once deep in implication and swift in delivery. There are times when reading his work—and I mean this entirely as a compliment—where one grips the armrests and holds on for the ride. Most of us lay a great deal of groundwork in getting to our point, hoping the foundation sustains our wilder reaches. Berman's arguments in many ways are self-authorizing, assertive, and light on their feet. They exude a limberness few of us have the flexibility or ingenuity to attempt.

"Fitzgerald was at the receiving end of quite a lot of advice about the written word," Berman begins. This is not a study of influence, however, but of mentoring, a term that the author is careful to define. Influence may be agonistic, as Harold Bloom insisted, but it is a contest often staged in the imagination, with a writer playing out an Oedipal complex with a forbearer decades or centuries removed. (Think of Keats's influence over Fitzgerald, so admirably explored most recently in Lauren Rule Maxwell's *Romantic Revisions in Novels from the Americas* [2013], which will be reviewed in next year's *F. Scott Fitzgerald Review*). Mentoring, by contrast, is a two-way street and requires "a record or statement and response. [It] has to take place consistently and over a measurable period. It may well deal with moral as well as textual matters but needs a conclusion; some specific idea has to find its correlative. In short, it takes place over time, has an object, and requires substantiation" (3). Fitzgerald was both blessed and burdened by the three mentors Berman focuses on: Edmund Wilson, H. L. Mencken, and Gerald Murphy. None were shy about instructing Fitzgerald, and all were far from flawless in their taste. Wilson famously declared Fitzgerald "stupid," albeit via Edna St. Vincent Millay (Wilson, *Literary Essays* 30), and absurdly praised *The Vegetable* for keeping on point more than Fitzgerald's fiction (Wilson, *Letters* 84)—clearly he never sat through Act 2. Mencken, meanwhile, laughably declared *The Great Gatsby* did not belong on the same bookshelf as *This Side of Paradise* (Bryer 212), and Murphy could not always look past Fitzgerald's lack of personal discipline to appreciate his artistic rigor. Fitzgerald took what he needed from each of these men yet "often rejected guidance" (3), leaving his mentors to see him as failing his promise because he did not take their advice. Learning, as Berman insists, often involves "resistance" as much as assimilating, creating a dynamic that this book wonderfully characterizes in a single sentence: "Fitzgerald found his mentors often to be admirable, but that was no reason to believe them" (28).

Edmund Wilson has been a consistent presence throughout Berman's studies of the 1920s, most thoroughly in *Fitzgerald-Wilson-Hemingway: Language*

and *Experience* (2003). What is interesting is how inexhaustible the subject seems, even as *Fitzgerald's Mentors* cites fairly familiar confluences between the two writers (Fitzgerald's appreciation of Wilson in *The Crack-Up* [79]; Wilson's "A Weekend at Ellerslie" from *The Shores of Light* [1952; 373–83]). The key conflict in the mentoring relationship concerned the relevance of experience to the intellect. As is well known, Wilson considered Fitzgerald a poseur when it came to ideas, deriding Amory Blaine as "a fake of the first water" (Wilson, *Letters* 45). While Fitzgerald tolerated Wilson's condescension, he also wrote something of a secret history of their friendship into stories and novels with instruction scenarios. These allowed him to parody and poke fun at the very idea of tutelage in order to assert the primacy of individual experience as opposed to received ideas. Thus, while Amory did not live up to Wilson's ideas of the exalted intellect with a command of Latin, philosophy, and history, Fitzgerald shows his alter ego grappling to make subjective sense of concepts and theories.

As opposed to this "reconstructive" or interactive approach to learning (39), Wilson's seems downright stodgy and pedantic. The range of texts in which Berman explores this theme of how one learns is diverse and unpredictable: the thought that "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" (1920) or the Basil and Josephine stories (1928–31) might even at an allegorical level find Fitzgerald working through Wilson's overbearing assertions of aesthetic certitude is eye-opening. Yet the argument works as the author deconstructs the presumptive authority of the term Fitzgerald most famously applied to the critic: "conscience" (Wilson, *Crack-Up* 79). Despite Fitzgerald's declared reverence for Wilson, Berman shows how he depicted role models exemplifying this quality as inhibiting as much as inspiring intellectual formation, as in the relationship between, say, Basil Duke Lee and the Princeton recruiter John Granby in "The Perfect Life" (1929). "Granby is by no means Edmund Wilson," Berman writes in analyzing this tale, "but he does represent the will to fill other minds as if they were unoccupied spaces" (44). Ultimately, conscience for Fitzgerald impinged upon personal experience, making the self the receptacle of somebody else's "meddling" (45).

Although Fitzgerald was more dependent on Mencken than Wilson for his early success, he was less needy of approval or acceptance from the Sage of Baltimore. Fitzgerald seems to have recognized the limitations of social determinism even as he dabbled in naturalism in "May Day" (1920) and *The Beautiful and Damned*. Specifically, Fitzgerald believed that "personality was fluid" (59) instead of cast from social types (despite his evocation of those types). At the heart of the disagreement is the notion of democracy, the worthiness of

every self to invent itself—or at least try—in the romantic crucible of aspiration. For Mencken, such a notion was sentimental hooey, but the alternative for Fitzgerald was intellectually bleak and limiting. Ultimately, he dealt with Mencken's circumscribed worldview by parodying it, creating a kind of reverse bumptiousness in the character of Harry Bellamy in "The Ice Palace" (1920), whose prejudices against the South echo Mencken's famous decimation of Dixie, "The Sahara of the Bozart" (1917; *Prejudices* 69–81). Even in "May Day," Fitzgerald's most successful distillation of Mencken's social theory, he undermined the inelastic taxonomizing to which the editor of *The Smart Set* was prone, insisting through the character of Edith Bradin in particular, as Berman observes, that "personality [is] too complex to be reduced to formal categories like aristocrats, boobs, and mob" (51).

One of the interesting if not immediately obvious facts about Berman's work is that it has exhibited little interest in *Tender Is the Night*. Asked about that aversion over the years, he will usually express hesitation about its more inchoate characteristics (I paraphrase very badly here) and argue that *Gatsby* and select short stories offer a more fertile field for abstracting Fitzgerald's philosophy. Such avoidance is impossible when addressing mentoring from Gerald Murphy, of course, for the obvious reason that both the painter and his wife Sara are essential to understanding Dick and Nicole Diver (at least in book 1). So Fitzgerald's second most-famous novel is analyzed here mainly in terms of theatricality and the performance of charisma, as Dick is so adept at before his descent (88). "It appears that Gerald Murphy endured the usual mentorial fate," Berman writes, analyzing a scene in book 2, chapter 21, in which Dick Diver eschews "authenticity of feeling and style" for a contrived bid for attention: "[Murphy's] ideal of emotional authenticity becomes comic theater. His friends—Diver's friends—become in that acute phrase, an 'entourage' or audience for whom he performs. In the 1920s and 30s, Murphy hoped to instill in Fitzgerald the awareness of distinction and value in others. Yet Freud had already written that 'a social sense' and our respect for admired figures have a short and illusory lifespan" (88). In other words, Fitzgerald did not migrate away from Diver's Murphysque qualities to turn the doctor into an image of his own (failed) self, as extant criticism would have it. Instead, throughout the novel the portrait subtly critiques Murphy's notion of character as essentialism, a "substantiation" of the self's inherent value. It is a fascinating idea and one well worth exploring in closer detail by subsequent critics.

Berman is interested in other texts as well. Responses and sometimes even challenges to the Murphy's surface in texts as surprising as "Jacob's Ladder" (1927), "The Last of the Belles" (1929), and "Babylon Revisited" (1930). As in



the chapters on Wilson and Mencken, Fitzgerald did not engage his friends' ideas "to allow himself the last word" (89). Indeed, he was far more willing to allow his conception and theories to morph and evolve than his three mentors ever were. With this latest book in his unique shelf of Fitzgerald analyses, Ronald Berman demonstrates that his subject is far deeper and more complex than these three mentors ever understood.

*Readings of Trauma, Madness, and the Body* is Sarah Wood Anderson's first book, the fruition of her graduate work under Linda Wagner-Martin at the University of North Carolina. This debut demonstrates once again Wagner-Martin's eye for talent, for Anderson joins an already stellar group of Fitzgerald scholars nurtured by the now-retired legend that also includes Doni Wilson, Kate Drowne, and Timothy Galow, among others. Although Anderson's study also examines Ernest Hemingway and H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), the core chapters for our purposes address *Tender Is the Night* and Zelda Fitzgerald's *Save Me the Waltz*. Attention to the latter is especially appreciated; in addition to belonging to the Wagner-Martin coterie, Anderson is also part of a renewed wave of interest in the actual writings of Mrs. Fitzgerald as opposed to her tragic legend. (That interest was signaled most recently by an American Literature Association panel Anderson organized in May 2013 to explore possibilities for taking Zelda Fitzgerald's work seriously in its own right.) Those who think critical interest in *Save Me the Waltz* begins and ends in biographical background will do well to read Anderson's chapter to appreciate the novel's rich texture.

As the key word of its title suggests, this study overall partakes of literary critics' expanding interest in trauma theory. The discipline dates back to the mid-1860s as physicians began noting that victims of injuries often suffered psychologically far longer than physically. A few decades later, definitions of trauma broadened as the medical field turned its attention to "ailments" of the mind, most notoriously, "hysteria" in female subjects such as Freud's Dora. As Anderson notes, today's field—which strives to do away with the gender prejudices that so taint Victorian efforts at assessing suffering—began in the 1980s with studies of Vietnam veterans' post-traumatic stress disorder, Holocaust survivors, and domestic abuse victims. As its definition has expanded to encompass nearly any source of depression or disaffection, trauma itself has become a device for challenging normativity, with theorists viewing grief and anguish as responses to the social pressure to conform to social standards. For her part, Anderson narrows her scope specifically to "domestic trauma," or trauma that develops in reaction to institutions of marriage and the home. As with most literary forays into the subject, her interest dovetails with problems

of narration. This is because the experience of trauma is tied up in such enigmas of telling as remembering, witnessing, testifying, and other modes of verbal accounting. Anderson readily admits that few of her primary texts are traditionally defined as “trauma narratives,” in part because the drama of coping in these modernist efforts is often less foregrounded than in contemporary fictions about rape and abuse such as Dorothy Allison’s *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1992). As she writes, “For the authors I discuss, trauma was a character tool, one that may have inadvertently revealed social and political circumstances even if doing so was not the primary goal of the authors” (9). Despite that qualification, there has indeed been a healthy, ongoing interest in what we might call “the trauma of modernity” for some time now, even if a particular title may not employ the T word. Especially in her chapters on the Fitzgeralds, Anderson’s original contribution lies in refocusing our attention away from “madness” as a psychological condition of “the modern” to it as a specific response to inflicted trauma.

Not surprisingly then, her reading of *Tender Is the Night* attempts to free Nicole Diver from the layers of unreliable narration that “posit her illness at odds with Dick Diver’s success in life” (91). The most exciting part of that project involves Anderson’s reading of Rosemary Hoyt. The ingénue’s presence in book 1 serves to prejudice the reader against Nicole by reducing her to a sublimary of Dick’s charisma. Whether admiring Nicole’s body, glamour, wealth, and even her tan, Rosemary idolizes all the wrong things about the wife in order to turn her into a rival for Dick’s affection, effectively positioning herself as the “normal” one. Of course, Rosemary has no knowledge of Nicole’s “malady,” as Fitzgerald calls it (*Tender* 168), so it would be wrong to expect her to admire and support Nicole’s struggle to overcome her father’s heinous, incestuous crime. Still, Anderson argues that Rosemary’s attraction to Dick “clearly influences the reader’s lack of attachment to Nicole” so the image of Mrs. Diver as a burden becomes “one quite easy for readers to accept without resistance” (93). The author then examines how this framing extends into books 2 and 3 as the focus shifts to the Divers themselves. Exploring Nicole’s fragile mental state, the novel dramatizes three major outbursts that take the onus for her condition off of Dick’s behavior and lays it squarely on her past history—effectively exonerating the good doctor. Nicole’s adultery with Tommy Barban is likewise staged in a way that keeps the dramatic focus on Dick’s fall instead of his wife’s recovery. Rather than “recognize the freedom that Nicole has for the first time in her life,” the narration insists “that she *should* feel guilty for her affair, although Dick suffers no remorse for his” (107). Not even in the “telescoped” passage in book 2, chapter 2, that supposedly voices Nicole’s perception is she truly allowed to

speak for herself. In this short, three-page interlude, her “voice is rambling, scattered, purposeless . . . a further indication of how Fitzgerald wants us to view her”—namely, as “unstable” (109).

Some readers will chafe at Anderson’s implication that Dick Diver’s fall is less tragic than Nicole’s illness. This chapter serves as a corrective, however, not a concerted attempt at balance, so the emphasis is appropriate. That said, I think most aficionados will be more excited by the *Save Me the Waltz* chapter, if only because close readings of the novel are so rare. As Anderson notes, first-time readers, primed for a *roman à clef*, are often shocked to discover that the narrative is not about mental illness per se. Zelda Fitzgerald defers her own trauma immediately before and during her stay at Les Rives de Prangins in 1930–31 by fashioning a story of the body, not the mind. In her obsessive attempt at becoming a professional ballerina, Alabama Beggs Knight does not degenerate into the type of hysteria entrapping Nicole Diver: “Alabama’s loss of power results from a physical injury, so that her body, which she initially identified as a space of creative freedom and emotional power, fails her. She is once more made useless and unproductive, but *not* through a loss of rational thinking, like her counterparts in the male authors’ texts” (114). The physicality is only one device for resisting the sort of stereotype Nicole would embody. Alabama’s early performativity, her coquettishness, is another means of creative expression. Even more interesting, however, is her cultivation of an inner self that provides a safety net when her body cannot sustain her drive: “By presenting Alabama’s journey as one of emotional development”—a *Bildungsroman* pattern we again do not see in Nicole Diver—“Fitzgerald provides her [protagonist] the space to experiment with life without reducing her to a state of madness when she fails” (120). The chapter is full of rich insights into the novel’s dynamics, especially in the sections devoted to Alabama’s dedication to dance and the transformation of her body, which becomes “the locus of healing” from the trauma of her unsatisfactory marriage: “Something to be molded and reshaped through brutal exercise, the human form can thus contain and control emotions” (133).

Or so we would like to believe. In the end, Alabama’s physical injury returns her to the state of dependency she has struggled to escape. Noting the novel’s downbeat, defeated ending, Anderson points out how the Knights’ return to Alabama’s hometown is enveloped in an eerie silence that symbolizes the protagonist’s loss of agency and initiative: “Here [in Montgomery], there are no sounds, no language, no words. There is no medium for Alabama to present her consciousness to the world. The silence that marked the novel’s omission of mental illness surrounds and engulfs her as she returns to the deep South, the site of her childhood lessons about her place in a male world” (147). Anderson’s

reading brings into relief the double bind Zelda Fitzgerald faced in plotting her novel. On the one hand, to subject Alabama to the mental illness with which the author herself was struggling risked restricting the character to the realm of the irrational woman that Nicole Diver would shortly emblemize. And yet repressing that story did not free her. In fact, Anderson argues, it denied the character the opportunity to de-stigmatize what the culture calls “madness” through the testimony of healing.

In the end, Alabama’s physical breakdown reinforces nothing more than a *different* gender stereotype, for even if we imagine her obsessive ballet training as creative discipline, what ultimately hobbles her are her “material desires” (145)—namely, the ballet shoes that Alabama fails to disinfect properly, resulting in blood poisoning through an infected blister. Zelda Fitzgerald may have thought she was eluding the female insanity narrative, but she ends up reinforcing women’s supposed susceptibility to the consumer marketplace, with Alabama’s fancy, Milan-made shoes implicating her in the same “very simple principles, containing in herself her own doom” that entangle Nicole Diver as she shops in book 1, chapter 7 (*Tender* 55). As obvious as it may seem that *Save Me the Waltz* had to end in “overpowering silence” (147), Anderson rightly asks why eschewing mental illness still had to doom Alabama’s *Bildungsroman* to defeat—why, in other words, Zelda Fitzgerald could not imagine her alter ego succeeding at integrating creativity, maturity, and autonomy even if the author herself was incapable of it. It is an intriguing question, for as *Readings of Trauma, Madness, and the Body* reminds us, there was already enough of a departure from autobiography to justify an alternative ending. That Zelda Fitzgerald could not picture doing so suggests just how deep her despair truly was.

Finally, we want to note here a resource for Fitzgerald scholarship that should be a starting point for all of us in the field. I review Jackson R. Bryer’s Oxford Bibliographies Online (OBO) entry “F. Scott Fitzgerald” ([www.oxfordbibliographies.com](http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com)) with some obvious caveats. First and foremost, I am on the founding editorial board for the OBO’s American Literature series and commissioned several of its modernist entries; I also wrote the Gertrude Stein entry. Admittedly then, I am not the most impartial reviewer we could have chosen for this task. Yet after a healthy debate about editorial principles we have decided to include an assessment of this very thorough contribution to the OBO for two basic reasons: (1) no one is more qualified to assess Fitzgerald criticism than Bryer, who remains the dean of Fitzgerald bibliographers both in principles and practice; and (2) his bibliography is hands down the most useful and expedient starting point for surveying the entire field since the Fitzgerald Revival of the 1940s.

What makes OBO entries particularly useful is their organization. As with all contributions to the series, Bryer's is divided into Overviews, Reference Works, Bibliographies, Biographies, Personal Reminiscences, and Journals before addressing primary texts and select themes (Fitzgerald and Other Writers, Women in Fitzgerald's Works, etc.). Each of these divisions is prefaced by a summary that measures the merits of the items listed under it. For a student or apprentice scholar confronting a shelf of Fitzgerald biographies for the first time the summary alone is an invaluable resource. To be able to learn in one hundred words that "Mizener [*The Far Side of Paradise*] remains, after nearly a half-century, the best scholarly biography, although Bruccoli [*Some Sort of Epic Grandeur*] adds much new documentary material" and that "[o]f the more recent biographies, Donaldson [*Fool for Love*] is the most reliable and evenhanded, and West [*The Perfect Hour*] is similarly worthwhile for its account and documentation of a brief but significant period of Fitzgerald's life" is an immense time-saver. Even in cursory form, such encapsulations allow beginners an immediate understanding of what is considered reliable and what one should avoid. Bryer's judgments are scrupulously evenhanded, too; while his entries are opinionated, they are not prejudiced. Here he is on Nancy Milford's *Zelda* (1970): "First and still the best biography of Zelda Fitzgerald, with much well-researched information, based on interviews and archival material, on the marriage and thus on Fitzgerald. Less successful as analysis of the fiction and other writing than as a documentation of the life." I doubt many Fitzgeraldians would disagree; Bryer certainly avoids conveying the perception of some of our crustier colleagues who blame Milford for the "anti-Scott" sentiments of feminist critics. The only possible element missing from this overview is some statement of the cultural impact of *Zelda*. Then again, that impact may be superfluous to the mission at hand of evaluating a text's scholarly merits.

Many entry summaries contain information even seasoned scholars may not know, or at least remember. Matthew J. Bruccoli and Margaret M. Duggan's *Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (1980) "[i]ncludes drafts of letters probably not sent, [and] now unlocatable letters printed in dealer and auction catalogues." I wonder, meanwhile, how many of us have even heard of Henry Claridge's four-volume *F. Scott Fitzgerald: Critical Assessments* (1991), which is "[b]y far the most comprehensive collection of reprinted Fitzgerald commentary, but prohibitively expensive, issued in a limited quantity by a British publisher, and thus very difficult to obtain." In fact, the chief benefit of the bibliography for many of us old-timers will be to point us toward essays we may have overlooked in our careers. I am embarrassed to admit I was

unfamiliar with Amy J. Elias's 1990 essay, "The Composition and Revision of Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned*" from the *Princeton University Library Chronicle* ("Required reading for anyone interested in Fitzgerald's writing process"). Similarly, I had never heard of Lois Tyson's *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (1999), a textbook that, from its description, ought to be a favorite for those of us who dabble in theory: "A little-known but worthwhile study that uses *Gatsby* as the subject of brief essays that illustrate each of the ten approaches to literary study Tyson covers—psychoanalytic, Marxist, feminist, New Critical, reader-response, structuralist, deconstruction, new historicist and cultural, gay and queer, and postcolonial and African American." (And before we blame our ignorance on the book's being out of print, I will simply note that a Kindle version of this five-hundred-page behemoth is currently listed at Amazon.com for \$31.16.)

One benefit aside from utility that the bibliography offers is to remind us of the great names that have passed on: the contributions of John Kuehl, James E. Miller Jr., Alfred Kazin, Milton A. Stern, Robert Sklar, and, of course, Matthew J. Bruccoli are all rightly remembered and credited for their influence. The entries also represent a range of sources, from full-length studies to essay collections to single journal articles in publications as remote as *Proof*, *Bucknell Review*, and *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory*. Similarly, for every Cambridge University Press or Oxford University Press citation there is reference to Liverpool Hope, Susquehanna, Loyola, and other deserving academic publishers. I should note as well that with the entries come links allowing one to save, export, or e-mail each citation. Links are likewise provided to both WorldCat and Google Books allowing scholars to find texts in nearby libraries. (The closest copy of Claridge? The Bibliothèque interuniversitaire Sainte-Genève in Paris, only 4,500 miles away!) The fact that the OBO is online makes it easy to avoid the fate of most print versions of this type of resource, which is to become out-of-date almost immediately. The concluding sentence of Bryer's entry on the *Ledger* reads, "A goldmine for scholars but issued in a limited edition and thus difficult to find." In fact, this past summer the University of South Carolina posted the entire *Ledger* online at <http://library.sc.edu/digital/collections/fitzledger.html>, making this goldmine accessible to anyone with an Internet connection. Fortunately, Oxford plans to update the bibliographies on a regular basis, ensuring Bryer's entry will remain an evolving entity and guaranteeing its usefulness.

The four resources reviewed here have little in common beyond quality. Combined they demonstrate the breadth of excellence in Fitzgerald scholarship

and the range of topics available to critics for exploration. Reviewing *The Beautiful and Damned* in *The Smart Set*, Mencken amended his misgivings about the story of Anthony and Gloria Patch with an acknowledgment of Fitzgerald's ambition and craft: "There are a hundred signs in [the novel] of serious purpose and unquestionable skill. Even in its defects there is proof of hard striving" (Bryer 107). That final phrase is the refrain that echoed in my mind as I pored over this quartet of works. These efforts by Scott Donaldson, Ronald Berman, Sarah Wood Anderson, and Jackson R. Bryer are all exemplary evidence of how hard Fitzgerald scholars indeed strive for new information, insights, and interpretations.

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