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## Albert McKisco's Role in Dick Diver's "Intricate Destiny"

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ALBERT MCKISCO'S ROLE IN DICK DIVER'S "INTRICATE DESTINY"

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of English  
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

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by

Laura Hampton Terry

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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
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## ABSTRACT

Dick Diver disintegrates in F. Scott Fitzgerald's Tender is the Night. The disintegration is indisputable. What is disputed, however, is whether Fitzgerald sufficiently prepares the reader for Diver's collapse. The purpose of this study is to argue that Fitzgerald's careful plan for his complex novel does, indeed, work.

Several of the minor characters in the novel help prepare the reader for Diver's decline; they revolve about Diver, reflecting each of his weaknesses in isolation. One such character is Albert McKisco. McKisco reflects Diver's betrayal of his profession, but unlike the other minor characters, McKisco's role goes beyond merely mirroring one of Diver's weaknesses. There is, in a sense, a reversal of roles between McKisco and Diver--McKisco surges to success as Diver drifts into obscurity.

McKisco first appears in the novel as a social, professional, and physical failure. His ineptness accentuates the smooth aplomb of the controlled and sophisticated Diver. But by the end of the novel, the two men have reversed roles, and this reversal performs two functions: it testifies to Fitzgerald's definite plan for the novel and demonstrates both the disintegration of an individual and the destruction of a class.

**ALBERT MCKISCO'S ROLE IN DICK DIVER'S "INTRICATE DESTINY"**

F. Scott Fitzgerald carefully planned Dick Diver's disintegration in Tender is the Night, and he resented his critics' contention that he hadn't. According to Matthew Bruccoli, "The attacks on the verisimilitude of Dick's decline appear to have troubled Fitzgerald more than anything else the critics wrote" (Composition 7). Fitzgerald had reason to be bothered. The consensus of the 1934 reviews was that the novel was a "bewildered giant" (Gray 64); it was hastily slapped together and exuded a "vague depression" that increased "in an exact ratio to the growth of our confusion as to the precise reason for the hero's disintegration" (Troy 81). Reviews of the early 1940s merely echoed these complaints, but articles that followed the publication of The Crack-Up essays in 1945 indicated that a re-evaluation of Tender is the Night was developing.

The 1950s brought a Fitzgerald revival. It was led by two works, Mizener's biography of Fitzgerald and Cowley's revised edition of Tender is the Night, and ushered in a period of fervent Fitzgerald criticism that has yet to abate. With few exceptions, readers of the past three decades have had no trouble identifying the causes of Diver's decline and have rejected the charges of the earlier reviews as absurd.<sup>1</sup> It took a while, but most of the critics have come to their senses. Dick Diver does have an "intricate destiny" in Tender is the Night, one that is deliberately and carefully planned.<sup>2</sup> Many of the characters help document Dick's decline, and Albert McKisco is one such character who plays a significant though largely overlooked role in preparing the reader for Diver's disintegration.

In Book I of Tender is the Night, Albert McKisco is a loser. He's a "scrawny, freckle-and-red man of thirty" whose rough ineptness accentuates Dick Diver's smooth aplomb (6). Socially, physically, and professionally, McKisco flounders

in failure and inferiority. But by Book II, after an absence of one hundred and fifty-five pages, a different McKisco appears, one who is "having a vogue" (205).

He has become an extremely successful novelist, though his books are only "pastiche of the work of the best people of his time" (205). For the few critics who address McKisco's role in Tender is the Night, it is this "corrupted talent" which integrates him into the novel; his infidelity to his profession mirrors Dick's betrayal of psychiatry and therefore adds another dimension to the "intricate destiny" of Dick Diver.<sup>3</sup> But there's more to McKisco's role than that.

A number of the minor characters are involved in the "mirror or echo structure" of the novel (Miller 95); each revolves around Dick, reflecting one of his weaknesses in isolation. Considerable attention has been paid to Abe North's part in precipitating and predicting Diver's decline. North has been called Diver's "alter ego" (Roulston 90), his "double" (Fetterly 115). He is readily acknowledged as the character who "prefigures Dick's decline" (Lehan, Craft 124), and who "leaves his legacy of disintegration to Dick" (Sklar 279). Based on Ring Lardner, North is a creative musical genius who has a precocious beginning but squanders his talent and energy on alcohol. And when Abe dies, "Dick takes over his role as senseless and destructive drinker" (Miller 97). Diver and North are also connected by their names; both are linked to the Civil War. Abe's name suggests Lincoln (in an earlier version, he was Abe Grant), and Dick is explicitly compared to General Grant. They travel in the same circles, they drink too much, and they both "go to pieces" (99).

Albert McKisco also prepares the reader for Dick's decline, but very little has been said about his less obvious, though equally important role. Like Abe North, Albert McKisco mirrors one of Diver's weaknesses. But unlike North, McKisco's role goes beyond merely reflecting Diver's dissipation. There is, in a sense, a reversal of roles between McKisco and Diver in Tender is the



Night--McKisco surges to success as Diver drifts into obscurity. The reversal testifies to Fitzgerald's definite plan for Dick and functions on two levels: it demonstrates both the disintegration of an individual and the destruction of a class.

McKisco represents diligent mediocrity; his talent is limited and his work is average, but entertaining. That suits the taste of the controlling public perfectly. For after the war, control passes from the gracious European aristocracy to the crass American rich, and in the process, popular tastes become debased. In this new environment, the mediocre McKisco is able to succeed while the idealistic Diver, who wants to teach the rich about decency, not to entertain them, is doomed to extinction.

Fitzgerald wrote seventeen drafts of Tender is the Night over a nine year period, and Albert McKisco's place in the novel was secure from the start. Both he and his wife, according to Matthew Bruccoli, were "beacons shining over the seas of change in the manuscripts; their characters and actions [were] unalterably fixed in their first appearance in the manuscripts" (Bruccoli, Composition 29). That Fitzgerald had such a definite notion about one of his minor characters when so many others shifted and changed is interesting. This certainty about McKisco could, in part, have resulted from a strong model from Fitzgerald's life; Bruccoli suggests that the name Albert McKisco was intended as a reference to Robert McAlmon, an expatriate writer with whom Fitzgerald quarrelled in 1925 (Composition 97). Similarities between McKisco and McAlmon certainly do exist. For example, both are writers interested in James Joyce. In his autobiography Being Geniuses Together, McAlmon, a friend and drinking companion of Joyce's, claims to have typed part of Joyce's manuscript of Ulysses (131). He also wrote a critical essay on the work entitled "Mr. Joyce Directs an Irish Word Ballet" which first appeared in a 1929 number of transition. As for McKisco, his wife brags to Rosemary that "'my husband

wrote the first criticism of Ulysses that ever appeared in America" (8). And McKisco's first novel, she continues, is "on the idea of Ulysses" (9). McKisco and McAlmon's musical interests are also similar. McAlmon convinced Lady Ellerman to subsidize the work of the composer George Antheil (Knoll 16), and Violet McKisco, always voicing Albert's ideas, snubs North and says, "Antheil's my man" (8).

The most striking similarity between the two, however, is their shared resentment towards those more successful than themselves and their nasty attempts at revenge. McAlmon envied Fitzgerald's and Hemingway's success. In a letter to Maxwell Perkins, Fitzgerald says about McAlmon: "By the way, McAlmon is a bitter rat and I'm not surprised by anything he does or says. He's failed as a writer and tries to fortify himself by tieing [sic] up to the big boys like Joyce and Stien [sic] and despising everything else" (Kuehl and Bryer 158-59). McAlmon accused both Hemingway and Fitzgerald of being homosexuals. The charge was the cause of Fitzgerald's argument with McAlmon and the gossip had serious consequences. Fitzgerald believed that the story helped spoil his friendship with Hemingway ( Bruccoli, *Grandeur* 289), and Zelda, physically estranged from Scott in 1929, taunted her husband with the accusation (Milford 154).

The derisive McKisco is also a bitter rat. In Book I, he is contemptuous of Diver's popularity, and like McAlmon, he lashes out with childish accusations. McKisco accuses Diver of pulling a "pansy's trick" when he emerges from a dressing tent "clad in transparent black lace drawers" which were actually "lined with flesh-colored cloth" (20). The influence of the McAlmon incident on the McKisco one is made perfectly clear by Fitzgerald in one of his letters to Hemingway. Responding to Hemingway's letter about the recently published Tender is the Night, Fitzgerald explains the book's "dying fall"; he says that he did not want to leave the reader "in a condition of a frustrated woman in bed.

(Did that ever happen to you in your days with McCallagan and McKisco, Sweetie?)" (Turnbull 310). The statement obviously names Robert McAlmon as the model for Albert McKisco, and with the flip "Sweetie" remark, it points to the homosexual accusation as Fitzgerald's point of departure. Fitzgerald probably added a "Mc" to Morley Callaghan's name to connect him to McAlmon; Hemingway believed that Callaghan had repeated McAlmon's ridiculous gossip. Though these similarities are interesting, McKisco is more than a caricature of Robert McAlmon, and the likenesses that exist between the two "Mc's" are infinitely less important than Albert McKisco's role as a foil to Dick Diver.

The McKisco of Book I, an unpublished writer "finishing his first novel, you see," is painfully insecure (8). He's part of a group on Gausse's beach whose hand- parasols (instead of beach umbrellas) and white flesh tag them as markedly "less indigenous to the place" than Diver's group (4). McKisco's companions include his wife, two homosexuals, and a woman clad in garments from the previous evening--all of whom function as a gallery to Dick's show. Dick plays the hero in what McKisco's group, as outsiders, calls "the plot," and when Rosemary asks about it, Mrs. Abrams replies, "'We're not in it. We're the gallery'" (6). Dick deftly orchestrates the show. He leads his group in their revelry: "Even the children knew that excitement was generating under that umbrella and turned toward it--and it seemed to Rosemary that it all came from the man in the jockey cap" (9). In contrast, McKisco is socially inept. He barks aggressively at his wife when she persists in discussing "the plot": "'For God's sake, Violet, drop the subject!' exploded her husband. 'Get a new joke, for God's sake!'" (7). And he burns visibly--"a grayish flush had spread over his face, dissolving all his expressions into a vast ineffectuality"--when he becomes vaguely conscious of his social inadequacy (7).

Physically, McKisco is equally unimpressive; he struggles in front of Violet

and Rosemary when he tries to hoist himself onto a raft. "She [Violet] turned to her husband who after two unsuccessful attempts had managed to climb on the raft, and having attained his balance was trying to make some kind of compensatory flourish, achieving only an extra stagger" (8). To mask his insecurity, McKisco scorns everyone else. He remains detached and aloof, "derisively without" the covering of the parasol. And later at the Diver's dinner party, he contrives to be the "unassimilated member of the party," antagonizing a host of characters in rapid succession (31). He taunts Abe North for forgetting their meeting in Paris (28), addresses Earl Brady with "several withering remarks about the movies" (31), and stares at Diver "with an expression of devastating irony" (31). With the false courage of champagne, McKisco ultimately provokes an argument with Tommy Barban. The argument precipitates a duel between the two men--a duel which marks the beginning of a new Albert McKisco.

In an earlier version of Tender is the Night, Draft #7, Section #16, the duel is caused by the attentions Tommy Barban, then Gabriel Brugerol, pays to Violet (Brucoli, Composition 99). In the final version, however, Nicole is the pivotal force. The duel occurs because of an untimely meeting between Violet and Nicole. On a trip to the bathroom, Violet sees Nicole during one of her schizophrenic attacks. Excited by her discovery, she returns to the party and begins to unload her "crop-full of news" (35). Barban, obviously in love with Nicole, sharply advises Violet to keep quiet. When she continues to prattle, Barban turns to McKisco and cries "in a voice that shook everybody," "You've got to shut up and shut your wife up!" (43). With drunken courage, McKisco challenges Barban to a duel. The following morning, Abe acts as McKisco's second and Campion and Rosemary watch from the bushes as McKisco and Barban exchange shots. They stand at forty paces "to vindicate their honor" and both shots miss (45).

Critics have consistently belittled the duel scene. Richard Lehan calls it "implausible" and claims that Fitzgerald was "over-reaching...trying to make the sensational believable, and never quite succeeding" (Craft 147). James Miller accuses the scene of taking place "with consequences more ludicrous than serious" (90), and Sister Mary McNicholas calls it "ridiculous...from beginning to end" (44). The only value attributed to it is that it "confirms the solidarity of the Divers' position in the world over which they reign" and "underscores Fitzgerald's contempt for the shallow pretension of the Violet McKiscos of the world" (McNicholas 44). Dismissing the scene so lightly is overlooking its primary function: the duel scene marks the turning point in Albert McKisco's life. Despite the fact that McKisco drinks brandy to excess before the duel and vomits afterwards, he does defend his honor and he does regain his wife's respect and his own self-respect, as well. As the narrator states in Book II, "Indeed, his success was founded psychologically upon his duel with Tommy Barban, upon the basis of which, as it withered in his memory, he had created, afresh, a new self-respect" (206). In two ways, then, the forces that work in McKisco's favor work against Dick. Nicole's illness leads to the success of Albert McKisco, but to the destruction of Dick Diver. And following their respective confrontations with Tommy Barban, the former emerges victorious, in control of himself and his relationship with his wife, while the latter drifts into obscurity, having lost both himself and his wife.

The struggle for dominance between men and women is fierce in much of Fitzgerald's work, but in Tender is the Night, "the battle escalates to full-scale warfare" (Donaldson 119). Albert McKisco must face Tommy Barban; if he doesn't, his wife will have the upper hand. Just before the duel, McKisco considers his situation: "Of course even now I can just leave, or sit back and laugh at the whole thing--but I don't think Violet would ever respect me again" (45). Rosemary replies, "Yes, she would...She'd respect you more." But

McKisco knows better. He "had created his wife's world, and allowed her few liberties in it" (8), and he is determined to stay in control. When Violet speaks out of turn, he shushes her (9). When she throws sand in his face, he rubs her face in the sand (19). And when she calls him a coward, he knows that he must take action.

"No--you don't know Violet. She's very hard when she gets an advantage over you. We've been married twelve years, we had a little girl seven years old and she died and after that you know how it is. We both played around on the side a little, nothing serious but drifting apart--she called me a coward out there tonight." (45)

Nicole echoes Violet's accusation just before Diver's confrontation with Barban. "'You're a coward!'" she tells Dick (299). But while McKisco wins his battle and the advantage, Diver loses both. The outcome of each struggle, however, seems to suit the women. After the showdown between Barban and Dick, Nicole "felt happy and excited" (308). Violet, however, seems content to let Albert keep the advantage. Violet is not as hard as Nicole; flowers are not as hard as nickels. In the days of Albert's "new self-respect," Violet "was happy, though her husband still shushed her when she grew violently naive" (206).

If Dick's downward plunge and Albert's upward surge were plotted on a graph, the actual point of intersection would be Book II, Chapter 14, the voyage on the transatlantic steamship. In the four years since the duel, McKisco has succeeded while Diver has degenerated. Dick is drinking heavily, on a three month "leave of abstinence" (as Franz puts it) from the clinic. The near-disastrous car wreck has left him spinning; "'This last has knocked me sideways'" (194), he tells Franz. Dick knows that he is slipping: "He was in love with every pretty woman he saw now, their forms at a distance, their shadows on a wall" (201), and he chastises himself, "God, I might as well go back to the Riviera and sleep with Janice Caricamento or the Wilburhazy girl"(202). News

of Abe North's violent death at a speakeasy also strikes a blow, and Dick mourns the loss of his friend as well as the loss of "his own youth of ten years ago" (200).

He had lost himself--he could not tell the hour when, or the day or the week, the month or the year. Once he had cut through things, solving the most complicated equations as the simplest problems of his simplest patients. Between the time he found Nicole flowering under a stone on the Zurichsee and the moment of his meeting with Rosemary the spear had been blunted. (201)

The ultimate blow is his father's death. When Dick buries his father, a man who believed that "nothing could be superior to 'good instinct,' honor, courtesy, and courage" (204), he severs his ties to his spiritual moorings and bids farewell to his moral heritage: "Good by, my father--good-by, all my fathers" (205).

Albert McKisco, however, is just arriving. The "arriviste, who had not arrived" (32) in Book I is now a success. He's "labelled by the newspapers as its [the ship's] most precious cargo"; he's "having a vogue" (205). "Success had improved him and humbled him" and he has shed his "annoying sense of inferiority" (206). In the final version of the novel, the new and improved McKisco sharply contrasts with the dulled and weakened Diver. But in the serialized version, published in Scribner's Magazine from January to April in 1934, the contrast is less obvious. Fitzgerald substantially revised the serial version, probably at his own expense (Brucoli, Composition 195). He deleted a large section from the shipboard section--three scenes comprising approximately twelve hundred and fifty words. Two of the scenes contribute to the documentation of Dick's decline, but as Brucoli observes, they are weak (Composition 126). In one scene, Dick has mysteriously become involved with a woman with "corn-colored hair" who claims, "'Of caus [sic] I'm ruined with four of my best friends. But you were really so polite that I had to find out more

about you" (Scribner's 220). In the other scene, Dick tries to help a young man who has jumped overboard on a dare and to whom, for a moment, "there were just as many reasons for dying as for living" (§ 220). Diver, however, supplies the young man with more liquor than counsel. Though these scenes help trace Dick's dissipation, they detract from the Rome material; as Fitzgerald observed, they are "irrelevancies" (Turnbull 346).

The deletion of the McKisco scene, however, seems more relevant, for by omitting it, Fitzgerald sharpened the contrast between Diver and McKisco. In the serial version, McKisco is not as new and improved as he is in the novel; in Scribner's, he displays more of his former fatuousness and pomposity. Rather than appearing humble, McKisco flaunts his fame and advertises his presence by bringing his typewriter on deck each day to work in public. He draws attention, but also mockery:

He had chosen it as the most convenient place to work, but he was not unaware that considerable fluttering went on behind him as he typed away, passings-by, with attendant glances over his shoulder to see what he was doing; snickerings and grimacings, burlesquings of him upon imaginary typewriters. By functioning in public he had become the most noticeable figure on the ship. (§ 219)

Albert also becomes miffed when a rival novelist tries to steal his show. She brings her typewriter on deck and sets up at the desk opposite McKisco's, and his immediate response is "'I'll be damned!'" Dick tries to distract McKisco from "the delicate matter" by treating him to "a little medical sensation" (§ 219). The omission of this material helps emphasize Albert's improvement. In the final version he appears more modest, more comfortable with his success.

McKisco's attitude about his work provides another example of how he has succeeded where Diver has failed. McKisco's success is meretricious; most of his ideas are second-hand and his books are merely imitations of better writers.



What's unusual about McKisco is that he admits it:

He was no fool about his capacities--he realized that he possessed more vitality than many men of superior talent, and he was resolved to enjoy the success he had earned. "I've done nothing yet," he would say. "I don't think I've got any real genius. But if I keep trying I may write a good book." (206)

Writing is important to McKisco. Just before his duel, he says to Rosemary, "I never have finished my novel. That's what makes me so sore...I'm primarily a literary man." He made a vague discouraged sound and shook his head helplessly. "I've made lots of mistakes in my life--many of them. But I've been one of the most prominent--in some ways-----"

He gave this up and puffed at a dead cigarette. (44-45)

McKisco blusters, then lets his ego subside. He recognizes his limitations, and he won't quit just because he isn't a genius. He's a man of vitality and he plans to "keep trying," which is more than can be said for Dick Diver.

The young Dr. Richard Diver is full of promise. He's "too valuable, too much of a capital investment" to be sent off to war (113). He studies at the best schools, Yale, Johns Hopkins and Oxford, and he goes to Vienna where he lives ascetically "with the fine quiet of the scholar" during what becomes his "heroic period" (114). He's said to be brilliant, but doubts soon creep into his mind; could it be more luck than genius? At New Haven, someone calls him "lucky Dick" and "the name lingered in his head" (114). In Vienna, he shares an apartment with a young man, the second secretary at the Embassy, and doubts take root.

His contact with Ed Elkins aroused in him a first faint doubt as to the quality of his mental processes; he could not feel that they were profoundly different from the thinking of Elkins--Elkins, who would

name you all the quarterbacks in New Haven for thirty years. (114) Diver lacks the self-awareness that McKisco has, and early on, a young Rumanian intellectual tries to warn Dick about this. "That's going to be your trouble--judgment about yourself" (115). The Rumanian tells Dick about a man who worked on the brain of an armadillo for two years. The Rumanian argued with the man about his work, warning him "that he was not really pushing out the extension of the human range" (115). Neither does Dick. He lets his ego get the best of him, lying awake at night thinking, "God, am I like the rest after all?...Am I like the rest?"(132), and he quits, it seems, because he lacks the energy to prove he's not.

Dick's writing reveals the most about his lack of vitality and his somewhat qualified success. His books sell, but they are popularizations. When he tells his partner Franz Gregorovius about his plans to assemble his pamphlets into a book called "A Psychology for Psychiatrists," Franz calls it "rash business," but concedes:

"All right... You are an American. You can do this without professional harm. I do not like these generalities. Soon you will be writing little books called 'Deep Thoughts for the Layman,' so simplified that they are positively guaranteed not to cause thinking." (137)

McKisco's work is popular for that very reason. He possesses "a gift for softening and debasing what he borrowed, so that many readers were charmed by the ease with which they could follow him" (206). As Miller observes, "The enormous irony in McKisco is that his work is simply a pale reflection of Dick's own 'serious' books in his professional field: they too are pastiches and popularizations, representing no genuine contribution"(97). McKisco, however, plans to "keep trying."

Dick gives up his writing. His decision is not wholly conscious, nor is it entirely his fault. Nicole is partially to blame. She seduces Dick with adulation

and wealth, and once married, she saps his energy, "dry suckling at his lean chest" (276). Dick, however, allows it to happen. He exchanges the noble, ascetic life of the scholar for a life of "grace and adventure" (132). Before he marries Nicole, he plans a major scientific treatise because he feels he "had outgrown the book; he wanted now to do more spade work" (145). The new project would sport a sonorous fifty word title that "would look monumental in German" (145). The plan is one of several self-subscribed "antidotes"; he wants "plenty of routine" to help extract himself from his emotional involvement with the young Nicole. He considers it as he bikes to the Jugenhorn where he accidentally encounters Nicole and her sister. And it's forgotten by the end of the trip when Dick seals his future with Nicole and realizes that "her problem was one they had together for good now" (156).

The rest of his writing, even his work on the "little book," soon follows suit. He doesn't consciously abandon the work, it just slips away through his self-deception. One afternoon in his Villa Diana work-room, Dick stands amidst the "ordered confusion" and considers another project, "a great amplification of his first little book" (164). But Dick comes to an uneasy realization: "Like so many men he had found that he had only one or two ideas--that his little collection of pamphlets now in its fiftieth German edition contained the germ of all he would ever think or know" (164-65). Dick rationalizes and tells himself that he'll first "brief the work in its present condition" and publish it as an "introduction to more scholarly volumes to follow" (165). In reality, he quits. As Brian Way says about this scene, "Fitzgerald's insight into the psychology of subtle evasion and self-deception is incomparably sensitive and precise" (137). Dick convinces himself that he's made a good, professional decision and in celebration, he sweeps the room, repairs a window, orders a book, and drinks an ounce of gin (165). At the end of the novel, however, nothing has been done. Nicole hears that Dick "bicycled a lot, was much admired by the ladies,

and always had a big stack of papers on his desk that were known to be an important treatise on some medical subject, almost in process of completion" (312).

Dick fails in his writing simply because he won't write. He tries to fool himself, stilling self-doubts with bogus plans for important projects, and he fools others with his charm. In the Francis Melarky version of the novel, Abe (then Grant) recognizes Dick's pose. Francis tells Abe that he is charmed by Seth (Dick) and by his dedication to making people happy and to demanding so little in return. Abe sharply replies:

"Young man, don't get the idea that Seth asks so little. He's lived all his life on better minds than himself. There's not an idea or an attitude of his that you can't trace to somebody or something--the St. Mark's School-Harvard-Porcellian attitude, Legendre the painter, and Parkinson, the works of Coué which is probably the only book he ever read, my ideas about music until somebody put him on to Antheil."  
(Mizener, "Note" 703).

The scene is considerably changed in the novel, but the essence is the same. During the celebration before Abe's departure, Abe feels patronized by Dick and goads him in return: "Something tells me I'll have a new score on Broadway long before you've finished your scientific treatise" (61). Dick placidly says that he hopes so and that he may actually abandon the scientific treatise. Before he can add, "--abandon it for another one," Mary and Rosemary respond in shock. It's a glimpse at Dick's limitations and at this point, no one wants that. But Diver does abandon his work. "Lucky Dick" has great potential, but unlike McKisco, a man of meager ability who invests his energy in his work, Diver invests his energy in his wife. Dick expends his vitality on Nicole and on others, and he thereby sacrifices his work to his need "to be loved" (132).

Dick and Albert disembark from the steamship at cities symbolic of their respective conditions. The McKiscos get off at Gibraltar, rock-sure in success, and Dick goes on to Rome, a city, like Dick, that represents "all that has been great and all that has become debased in Western civilization" (Roulston 96). Albert, however, makes one final appearance. Diver has come to Rome because of Rosemary; she is "the person for whom he had made the Mediterranean crossing" (207). And as the catalyst for Dick's decline, Rosemary provides a fitting measure of how far he has fallen during the four years since their last meeting. Dick visits Rosemary in her room, and when a phone call interrupts them, he notices two novels on her bedside table--one by Edna Ferber and one by Albert McKisco. The phone clamors again and as Rosemary answers it, Dick "strolled into the bedchamber and lay down on her bed, opening Albert McKisco's novel" (210). Rosemary had snubbed McKisco on Gausse's beach in Book I; the presence of his book in her room attests to his new acceptance and success.

By Book III, Diver becomes what McKisco was in Book I, and the reversal is complete. It is now Dick who is socially inept, physically debilitated, and professionally weakened. To Franz's relief, Dick leaves the clinic. Alcohol, in part, precipitates the move. A patient reports to his father that "'he has smelt liquor on his [Diver's] breath'" (251), and the parent, creating a scene, angrily withdraws his son from the clinic. The incident is the immediate cause of the break in Franz and Dick's partnership, but Dick "had long felt the ethics of his profession dissolving into a lifeless mass" (254). And like the McKisco of Book I, a writer without a novel, Diver is now a psychiatrist without a practice.

The Divers return to the Riviera, stopping on the way to visit the former Mary North, currently the wife of the Conte di Minghetti, a ruler-owner of manganese deposits in the Near East. During the visit, Dick blunders in social ineptness. He insults his host, using the word "spic" in front of him (258), tells

Mary that she's "gotten so damned dull" (262), and breaches etiquette by asking the Conte's sister to clean his son's tub. The bathtub incident is particularly interesting. It is the first time that trauma in the bathroom isn't Nicole's fault, and the incident recalls Violet's bathroom encounter with Nicole that spoiled an earlier dinner party. The Divers' son Lanier tells his parents that he had to take a bath in dirty water, in water in which a sick child had just been bathed. Dick mistakes the Conte's sister for the maid and informs her that bathing his son in a sick child's water is "out of the question," and he tells her that her "mistress would be furious" (259). The accusation is so offensive that the Conte and his entourage leave in the morning because "[h]is honor makes it necessary" (260). The episode is Dick's fault; if he hadn't been drunk, he would have heard Mary's explanation about her sister-in-law's position and he could have avoided the social "blunder" (262).

But Dick was often drunk those days. Nicole wonders, "Why so many highballs?" (258), and notices that he is forever unrolling "a long scroll of contempt for some person, race, class, way of life, way of thinking" (265). At a party they attend uninvited on T. F. Golding's motor yacht, Dick offends Lady Caroline Sibly-Biers with "a particularly vehement pronouncement" and utters some slur which causes Nicole to think, "Again he had offended some one--couldn't he hold his tongue a little longer?" (269). Even Rosemary, "who had thought of him as all-forgiving, all-comprehending," is surprised by Dick's bitterness (284). Dick has become "fuddled" with drink, and scornful and sardonic, he has "untipped the capped barbs of his irony" (270).

Back on Gausse's beach at the end of the novel, Dick is the pathetic observer. "Like a deposed ruler secretly visiting an old court," Dick derisively watches the new royalty, his "old friend, Mrs. Abrams, playing duchess to Mary North's queen" (283). He is now the "unassimilated" member on the beach, and Rosemary remembers hearing someone say that Nicole Warren "had

thrown herself away on a dissipated doctor. 'He's not received anywhere any more,' the woman said" (285). Nicole, Rosemary, and Dick join Rosemary's friends on a speed boat and although the young people are "polite, deferential," Nicole notices "an undercurrent of 'Who are these Numbers anyhow?'" (280). Once on the boat, Dick proves himself to be almost as physically inadequate as McKisco was in Book I; his attempt to perform a stunt while aquaplaning smacks of McKisco's earlier attempt to climb onto a raft. Diver wants to show off for Rosemary with his "lifting trick," a stunt that involves standing on a board with a man on one's shoulders. Dick "had done the thing with ease only two years ago," but on this occasion, he flops. The trick is much harder than McKisco's task, but like McKisco, Dick makes three attempts, and hoping for a flourish on the third attempt, he collapses.

Dick becomes the loser--bitter, disliked, and insecure. And in the final confrontation with Barban, Diver's failure is again accentuated by McKisco's success. McKisco's duel with Barban "was the first thing he had ever done in his life" (46); it established his self-respect and identity. But after a similar confrontation with Barban, Dick fades into obscurity. Both confrontations occur with unusual trappings. McKisco and Barban's duel is performed on a golf course before two unlikely spectators, Rosemary and Campion. They sprawl in the nearby shrubbery and after the shots are fired, Campion lies gasping on his back, "the only casualty of the war," while Rosemary bursts into hysterical laughter and kicks at Campion with her espadrilles (50). Dick's confrontation with Barban also has farcical trappings. The Tour de France provides the backdrop to the meeting that features Dick with a half-shaven beard and Nicole with half-washed hair. The bikers swarm by them, "in a harlequinade of faded color, legs caked yellow with dust and sweat" (307), drowning out Tommy's attempts to create a row. A light truck follows the bikers to pick up "the dupes of accident and defeat" (307), and in this race, Dick is one of the defeated.

Barban wins the confrontation. While McKisco walks away from his duel a new man, Dick leaves the race and melts into obscurity; his figure becomes "a dot mingled with the other dots in the summer crowd" (308). Albert McKisco, "with the name that sounds like a substitute for gasoline"(19), accelerates to success while Dick Diver plunges into failure.

The reversal of roles between McKisco and Diver attests to Fitzgerald's definite plan for Diver's "intricate destiny." But as part of the whole, it also illustrates what James Miller terms the dual motion of Tender is the Night: the novel moves outwardly, examining the "breath of sickness of a society and a culture"(99), as well as inwardly, dissecting the workings of an individual. There's no blinking the fact that Albert McKisco improves as a human being. When he squelches his "annoying sense of inferiority" he becomes very pleasant. In contrast, Dick turns bitter. But on the social and historical level, McKisco's success and Diver's failure take on special significance. McKisco succeeds because he doesn't try to save society, he simply entertains it. Diver, however, is the "homme épuisé"; he sacrifices himself for a new society that's not worth saving, for a society that chews him up and spits him out, draining him of his energy and learning nothing in the process. Albert's success and Dick's failure, then, are more than individually important; they also represent the emergence of the crass American rich and the decay of the gracious European and American aristocracies.

For Fitzgerald, the decay of the west was a particularly compelling theme, and Oswald Spengler's The Decline of the West fueled his interest in the subject. In a 1927 letter to Maxwell Perkins, Fitzgerald wrote, "Did you ever read Spengler--specifically including the second volume? I read him the same summer I was writing The Great Gatsby and I don't think I ever quite recovered from him" (Turnbull 289-90). The Decline of the West traces the growth and decay of great civilizations and concludes that the turning point of each culture



occurs when control passes from the landed aristocracy to the urban money center. As Richard Lehan interprets Spengler's ideas: "The rise of a new breed of money brokers turns the old world upside down...In historical terms, Culture gives way to Civilization; in human terms, Faustian man gives way to Enlightenment man--the priest-king is replaced by the new Caesar, the man of money and power" ("Romantic Destiny" 140). Spengler's ideas have special significance in Tender is the Night; the novel depicts decay on both the historical and individual levels. In his General Plan for the novel, Fitzgerald wrote, "The novel should do this. Show a man who is a natural idealist, a spoiled priest, giving in for various causes to the ideas of the haute Bourgeoise..." (Brucoli Composition 76). In human terms, Diver (the priest figure) is spoiled by Warren money, and in historical terms, the new-moneyed class takes control, turning the old world aristocracy upside down.

A greedy paper-seller "of sinister aspect" (306) serves as a fitting herald for the influx of the new American rich. He's a "thin-faced American, perhaps thirty, with an air of being scarred and a slight but sinister smile" (92). He makes two appearances in the novel. In the first, he pesters Dick in Paris and presents him with a cartoon that "showed a stream of Americans pouring from the gangplank of a liner freighted with gold" (93), and he claims he's going to get a piece of the proverbial pie. The Warren (war-end?) money gives the new rich control (Lehan, "Romantic" 137), and the newspaper salesman wants some of the action. The vendor makes his second appearance five years later. He interrupts Nicole, Tommy, and Dick during their confrontation at the cafe and again trumpets the arrival of the wealthy Americans with his cartoon. It's a fitting announcement of Tommy and Nicole's victory over Dick, of the victory of the barbaric East and the rich West over the old world. World War I brought the end of the old world. As Dick says at a WWI battlefield cite, "'All my beautiful lovely safe world blew itself up here with a great gust of high explosive love'"

(57). But the damage continues long after the battles end. Like carpetbaggers, the new rich ravage Europe, and Dick becomes one of the victims of their exploitation.

The new Americans are a powerful, but classless class. Doctor Dohmler aptly characterizes them when he calls Mr. Devereux Warren, of the Warren family of Chicago, "Peasant!" (128). Like Tom and Daisy Buchanan, this new class is "careless"; they smash up people and things as they wantonly spend their money. Consider, for instance, the hostess at the art gallery, "another tall rich American girl, promenading insouciantly upon the national prosperity"(73) and, of course, Baby Warren, "the American Woman" who "had broken the moral back of a race and made a nursery out of a continent" (233). They perform a cheap imitation of the old European aristocracy, acting out a "grotesque and vulgar charade, a ludicrous burlesque of forms and manners which had been mimicked without being understood" (Way, 36). And they scoff at "the maturity of an older America" (100). When Dick's father dies, Dick realizes, "he was one of those about whom it was said with smug finality in the gilded age: 'very much the gentleman, but not much get-up-and-go about him'" (204). The "gold-star muzzers," the mothers of soldiers who fought and died in the war, also embody the dedication and honesty of the old America. As Dick dines with Rosemary and Nicole, he observes these women:

Over his wine Dick looked at them again; in their happy faces, the dignity that surrounded and pervaded the party... For a while the sobered women who had come to mourn for their dead, for something they could not repair, made the room beautiful. Momentarily, he sat again on his father's knee, riding with Moseby while the old loyalties and devotions fought on around him. Almost with a effort he turned back to his two women at the table and faced the whole new world in which he believed. (100)

Dick gets lost in the immaturity of the new race. He gives up the older America to commit himself to Nicole's cure; as Fitzgerald writes in the General Plan of August 1932, "He has cured her by pretending to a stability & belief in the current order which he does not have" (Brucoli, Composition 77). In the process of the cure, Dick realizes that "he had been swallowed up like a gigolo, and somehow permitted his arsenal to be locked up in the Warren safety-deposit vaults" (201). His mistake is believing that he could teach "the rich the ABC's of human decency" (201), and he wastes eight years trying. The new rich don't want to be educated; they are the leaders of "a nation that for a decade had wanted only to be entertained" (213). And that, in part, explains why McKisco succeeds and Diver fails.

McKisco puts no stock in the "princely classes" (35). He considers Barban to be the "end product of an archaic world and as such, worthless" (35). Albert McKisco is "one of those for whom the sensual world does not exist" (46). He is practical, tough-minded, and in this sense he is much better equipped to deal with the new American rich than Dick is. William E. Doherty views McKisco as one of the "anti-Romantics" in Tender is the Night and states, "The incapacity for illusion gives these people an advantage in the world" (204). The Romantics, Dick and Abe, become victims because they feel too deeply. As Doherty observes, "They [the Romantics] are the salt of the earth--charming, gifted people, but overmatched in the struggle against the cold, shrewd frauds who are inheriting the earth. Tender is the Night deals with the passing of an attitude toward life, or rather with the last remnants of that life, 'the oldest inhabitants gnawed by rodents'" (205). McKisco succeeds because he doesn't try to educate the new American rich and he isn't fettered to the romantic illusions that haunt Dick--"illusions of eternal strength and health, and of the essential goodness of people" (115).

Rosemary and McKisco entertain in the same manner; both offer

"paper-dolls" for the public, chewing-gum for the mind. While in Paris, the Norths, the Divers, Rosemary, and Collis Clay go to Franco-America Films to watch Rosemary's movie, and she appears on the screen, "embodying all the immaturity of the race, cutting a new cardboard paper doll to pass before its empty harlot's mind" (68). Paper dolls are flimsy, light--just the right material for the new class that wants to be entertained, not made to think. In fact, paper objects and dolls become a motif for the immaturity and shallowness of the rich Americans. The distasteful American women at the Decorative Arts Exhibition have "small heads groomed like manikins' heads" and the girl with whom Rosemary talks is a "poster of a girl" (72). In Paris, Rosemary, Collis Clay, and the Norths cavort with a wealthy "manufacturer of dolls' voices from Newark"(78) and Nicole, who is "poster-like" (171), listens with Dick to a recording of "The Wedding of the Paper Doll" (250). The new class likes "cardboard paper dolls"; it wants nothing more challenging.

Dick, however, is incapable of entertaining without educating. He puts on shows, but they are designed to teach as they charm. After watching "Daddy's Girl," Dick praises Rosemary for her talent, but when she announces that she has arranged a screen test for him, he firmly refuses. "'I don't want a test,'" he says. "'The pictures make a fine career for a woman--but my God, they can't photograph me'" (69). Teased and pressured by Mary and Nicole, Dick closes the subject "with a somewhat tart discussion of actors: 'The strongest guard is placed at the gateway to nothing,' he said. 'Maybe because the condition of emptiness is too shameful to be divulged'" (69).

This "condition of emptiness" is rampant in the new class. The hordes of wealthy Americans don't care about decency or talent, just money. Even in the medical profession, American doctors have nothing to offer except "colossal gifts" (195); they command respect only because of their wealth and power. Dick tells Franz that he's going to a Psychiatric Congress in Berlin. But he

actually has "no intention of attending so much as a single session of the congress" because he can imagine only too well "the half-derisive respect" that American ideas would receive "for no more reason than that America was such a rich and powerful country" (194). Dick pictures the strong guard the Americans would place before their dearth of genuine medical contribution:

At first there would be an American cast to the congress, almost Rotarian in its forms and ceremonies, then the closer-knit European vitality would fight through, and finally the Americans would play their trump card, the announcement of colossal gifts and endowments, of great new plants and training schools, and in the presence of the figures the Europeans would blanch and walk timidly. (195)

The Americans storm the old continent with their immaturity, their mediocrity, and their money, enjoying entertainment but rejecting education.

McKisco's work is popular because it demands little of the reader. He does improve as a human being and he plans to improve as a writer, but the public likes his books as they are--easy to follow. As yet, McKisco's books are mediocre, and Fitzgerald emphasizes their mediocrity by pairing the fictional McKisco with the real Edna Ferber. Fitzgerald thought little of Ferber's work, though it was quite popular with the public. In a letter to Perkins, Fitzgerald says that "in an inferior, cheap way Edna Ferber's are the only American fiction in over two years that had a really excellent press" (Kuehl and Bryer 89). And three years later in December, 1929, he writes Hemingway, "Louis Golding stepped off the boat and said you and I were the hope of American Letters...but aside from that things look black, 'old pard'--Brommy is sweeping the West, Edna Ferber is sweeping the East and Paul Rosenfeld is sweeping what's left into a large ornate waste-basket" (Turnbull 302). The public wants cheap, trashy, "paper doll" material. McKisco provides it; Dick does not. Dick tangles

with the powerful new class, trying to teach them something about decency, trying to give them something they don't want, and as a result, he loses the battle and himself. And as for McKisco, he is probably better off never writing a really "good book," for as long as he feeds empty thoughts to the public's "empty harlot's mind," he will continue to succeed.

Fitzgerald does prepare the reader for Dick Diver's disintegration. The hero's destiny is an intricate one and cannot possibly be explained with one certain cause, in one simple phrase. Like Tolstoy, Stendhal, and Eliot, Fitzgerald knew that "a multiplicity of factors contribute to the ruin of a human life" (Way 122) and to expect Fitzgerald to provide a pat reason for Diver's decline is purely absurd. Failure to understand the break-up is the critic's problem, not Fitzgerald's fault. He does his part. Fitzgerald reflects--and thereby magnifies--Diver's weaknesses in other characters, and he counters Diver's steps into obscurity with McKisco's steps to success. The integration of the minor characters, the reversal between McKisco and Diver, and the examination of the historical implications of such a reversal testify to Fitzgerald's definite plan for his novel.

Fitzgerald is at his best in Tender is the Night. He knew it, but most of his contemporaries didn't. As Peter Monro Jack suspected in 1937: "Tender is the Night is a ghost wandering by its former triumphs. But instead of crying Revenge! it is still wondering why it was so foully murdered...As one reads Tender is the Night, with its charming and evocative writing, one feels how badly Fitzgerald was served by his contemporaries" (Jack 152). The novel and Fitzgerald have both been vindicated. Fitzgerald knew what he was about; his careful plan for the novel and its hero works.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Stern 6. See Stern 1-16 for a thorough discussion of the development of Fitzgerald criticism from 1934 to the 1980s.

<sup>2</sup> F. Scott Fitzgerald, Tender is the Night (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934) p. 117. Throughout the essay, references to Tender is the Night will be from the 1934 version of the novel. The page numbers alone will be used in subsequent references.

<sup>3</sup> For examples of this interpretation, see Miller 97 and Mizener 113.

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