This Side of Paradise Study Guide

This Side of Paradise by F. Scott Fitzgerald

BOOKRAGS

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Introduction

In the summer of 1919, after encouraging him to perform two revisions, Scribner's finally signed a contract with the unknown author F. Scott Fitzgerald to publish his first novel. Fitzgerald sold his first major short stories while waiting for the printing, but *This Side of Paradise* was his major debut, an immediate success that marked both the dawn of the Jazz Age and the dawn of Fitzgerald's turbulent career. An insider's satire of the American aristocracy and the social hierarchy of Ivy League universities, the novel turned Fitzgerald into a daring symbol for the Jazz Age, caused a sensation in the older generation, and inspired many in the younger generation to rush out and buy a copy.

The novel is much more than a sensation, however; it is a landmark in modernist fiction that challenged literary tradition and helped give a voice to a younger generation shocked by the horrors of World War I. An admittedly self-obsessed portrait of the "egotist" Amory Blaine and his intellectual development, Fitzgerald's novel is also a portrait of his own artistic development that led to his emergence as an author now considered perhaps the most important American modernist writer. Widely criticized as a haphazard collection of short stories that fail to cohere as a whole, *This Side of Paradise* does reveal some naivety in its young author, but its unique structure is also a vital part of what makes it a challenging and innovative text. In the early 2000s it was recognized as an enormously influential and compelling novel by an emerging legend of American literature.

Author Biography

Born in 1896 to an Irish Catholic family with connections to the American aristocracy, Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald grew up in the elite schools of St. Paul, Minnesota. He was a favorite of his mother's and loyal to his father despite Edward Fitzgerald's series of business failures in upstate New York that brought the family back to St. Paul. In high school, Fitzgerald wrote his first short stories and developed an intense interest in drama, but his poor grades forced him to transfer to the Newman School in Hackensack, New Jersey. He continued to write fiction and participate in drama when he entered Princeton University in 1913, and his experience there was very important to his writing, although he never graduated because of poor grades and illness and because he joined the army when the United States entered World War I.

While he was stationed in Montgomery, Alabama in 1917, Fitzgerald met his future wife Zelda Sayre, with whom he had a long and volatile relationship (due in part to Zelda's mental illness). He also began working on the first edition of *This Side of Paradise*, which was published by Scribner's in 1920 and effectively launched his success as a fiction writer. Because of his and Zelda's lavish lifestyle in New York, supported chiefly by the numerous stories he sold to magazines, Fitzgerald became known as a symbol of the Jazz Age. The couple and their daughter Scottie then moved to Paris, where Fitzgerald wrote his most famous novel, *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and the family remained there for the rest of the decade.

After the publication of *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald's relationship with his wife grew increasingly problematic, his friendship with the writer Ernest Hemingway turned sour, he developed a drinking problem, and he failed to make significant progress on a new novel, although he continued to publish short stories. The Fitzgeralds returned to the United States in 1931, where Zelda continued to be in and out of sanitariums. In 1934, Fitzgerald published *Tender Is the Night*, but the novel failed to produce the critical acclaim for which he was hoping, and his drinking problem grew more severe. Financial burdens and a desire for success caused Fitzgerald to pursue a career in Hollywood, and in 1937 he signed a contract with the production company Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. While working as a screenwriter, Fitzgerald battled alcoholism and fell in love with film columnist Sheilah Graham. He died of a heart attack on December 21, 1940, while working on his last, unfinished novel, *The Last Tycoon* (1941).

Plot Summary

Book 1: The Romantic Egotist

The novel opens with a description of Amory Blaine's mother Beatrice and her exciting life of travel with her son Amory until his appendix bursts on a ship to Europe, and he is sent to live with his aunt and uncle in Minneapolis, Minnesota. While in private school there, Armory kisses Myra St. Claire on the cheek and takes on various elitist values before Beatrice gives in to his request to go to a boarding school. After enrolling at the school, where he is unpopular because of his arrogance, Amory meets his friend and mentor Monsignor Darcy. Amory is more popular during his second year because he succeeds at football and as a writer for the school paper, and he decides to enroll at Princeton University.

At Princeton, Amory once again gradually becomes a social success by acting in plays and writing for the college newspaper, and he meets some of his most important friends, such as Kerry and Burne Holiday, and Tom D'Invilliers. He travels back to Minneapolis to meet his first love, Isabelle Borgé, at a "petting party" for upper class daughters, and they exchange long letters while Amory is at Princeton with his elitist group of friends. Then, coming back from a night out in New York, Amory is shocked and dismayed to see his friend Dick Humbird die in a car accident.

When he next sees Isabelle at the prom, they quarrel and Amory leaves her, and this is followed by Amory's discovery that he has failed math and therefore will be expelled from the editorial board of the college paper. Amory's father then dies suddenly, but this does not affect Amory deeply, and it leaves him with an inheritance despite his father's somewhat ineffective investments. After returning to Princeton, Amory encounters a disturbing and devilish man with "queer feet" who terrifies him and from whom he flees through the streets of New York.

During Amory's final two years at Princeton, many of his peers, especially Burne Holiday, begin to challenge the social institutions and traditions of the college, but Amory does little himself. He falls in love with his third cousin, Clara Page, but this comes to nothing. Amory begins to be more interested in poetry at Princeton, but then the United States enters World War I and Amory enlists in the army. This is followed by the novel's "Interlude," which consists of a letter of advice to Amory from Monsignor Darcy and a letter to Tom from Amory with a plan to meet in New York after the war.

Book 2: The Education of a Personage

Book Two begins in the format of a play to introduce Rosalind Connage, the sister of Amory's Princeton friend Alec. Amory and Rosalind immediately fall in love and become consumed with each other, but their relationship is doomed because Amory is poor and without prospects, and Rosalind leaves him for the rich Dawson Ryder. Devastated,

Amory falls into an alcoholic stupor, quits his job at a New York advertising agency, and dwindles his inheritance money. He does begin to write and read more, however, and he discusses philosophy and literature with his roommate Tom, but soon Tom must go home because his mother is ill, and they sell the apartment.

After narrowly missing Monsignor Darcy in Washington, Amory travels to Maryland to stay with an uncle, and while there he meets Eleanor Ramilly, an intelligent and passionate girl from an old Maryland family, with whom he begins a relationship. They discuss philosophy and literature, and they develop a bond that lasts long afterwards in the form of poems they send to each other, but Amory is still affected by his relationship with Rosalind, and he leaves Eleanor in a rather bitter mood. The next scene shifts to a party in Atlantic City, after which Amory wakes up in a hotel room he was supposed to be sharing with Alec Connage to discover that Alec has illicitly brought a girl back to the room and two house detectives are banging on the door to find them. Amory makes a "sacrifice" of himself in order to save Alec's reputation and then discovers in the paper that Rosalind has been married and Monsignor has suddenly died.

The last chapter of the novel describes the Amory's intellectual convictions during his attempt to walk from New York to Princeton. On the way, he is picked up by a "big man" who is revealed to be the father of his college friend Jesse Ferrenby, and with him and his companion Amory argues about socialism and the radicalism of his generation. Amory then leaves them and reflects on religion, philosophy, politics and literature, unsure about precisely what he believes or where exactly he should go with his life. As he exclaims in the last line of the book, "'I know myself,' he cried, 'but that is all?.'"

Book 1, Chapter 1

Book 1, Chapter 1 Summary

This classic novel traces the story of Amory Blaine from his boyhood and university years through his experiences in World War I, and it explores how his life and ideals unravel as he embarks on adult life. Amory Blaine is the epitome of the rich and privileged American youth that F. Scott Fitzgerald studies throughout his career as a novelist. The reader watches Amory develop into a spoiled teenager and then fall apart when he is left to fend for himself.

Amory Blaine is raised by his mother, Beatrice, who spoils him and takes him around the country looking for amusement. At age thirteen, his appendix bursts on a ship heading for Europe. After an emergency return to the U.S., he lives with his aunt and uncle in Minneapolis. In Minneapolis, he develops a reputation for speaking strangely and trying to embarrass his teachers. After arriving late to Myra St. Clair's party, he kisses her when they are left alone together. When he refuses to kiss her again, she gets angry and tells him never to speak to her again. Amory is not a good student at school and spends a lot of time with his friend, Froggy Parker.

Amory enjoys reading but often dislikes the books assigned to him in school. He develops a very high self-regard and vanity. Two years later, fifteen-year-old Amory returns to his parents' house in Lake Geneva. He believes himself to be better and more important than other people. Beatrice and Amory discuss her recent illnesses. Amory asks to go away to boarding school, and Beatrice agrees to send him to St. Regis in Connecticut.

On Amory's way to school, he stops to visit Monsignor Darcy, a former suitor of his mother's who is now a priest. Amory and Darcy become instant friends, and the older man confirms many of Amory's theories about life. Amory spends two years at St. Regis. He manages to get a place on the football team but does not do so well in his classes. Other boys dislike him because he is so arrogant. Amory and his schoolmates go to New York City for the weekend and attend a play. Aside from falling in love with the actress, Amory vows to make his adult life in New York City.

In Amory's last year at St. Regis, he defines "the Slicker" as the character type that he most wants to imitate. He chooses to attend Princeton University even though no other boys from his school are attending it.

Book 1, Chapter 1 Analysis

Amory's early years foreshadow the problems and relationships that will define his adult life. Because of Amory's social position, his process of maturity is stunted for a long time, and he has a very difficult time making friends and learning how to take his place in society. His experiences at St. Regis show his understanding that he is separated

from his peers and that this separation is his own fault. However, as he will confront throughout his life, he has a great deal of trouble overcoming his own prejudices in order to reach out to people.

The two childhood influences on Amory's relationships with women are his mother, Beatrice, and his short-term sweetheart, Myra St. Claire. Beatrice is a very self-absorbed woman, and Amory recognizes that her personality is destructive from a very early age. He deals with her constant pretend illnesses with resignation, beginning his lifelong inability to have a stable emotional relationship with a woman. Beatrice foreshadows Amory's great love for Rosalind Connage, a woman who also puts her personal needs ahead of her love for Amory.

Myra St. Claire foreshadows many of Amory's other relationships with women. He presses her for kisses, just as he does with other women like Isabelle Borge and Eleanor Ramilly. However, when she asks for something more from him, he backs away and retreats into an emotional refuge where he does not consider the feelings of the woman but only considers how he can extract himself from a burdening relationship.

Book 1, Chapter 2

Book 1, Chapter 2 Summary

Amory arrives at Princeton and tries to adjust to his new surroundings. This includes both his clothing and college slang terms. He meets Kerry Holiday, another freshman at his boarding house. He quickly develops a relationship with Kerry and his brother, Burne. His first night at Princeton impresses him and makes him long to fit in at the school. He has special hopes of joining the football team. He is successful at first but injures himself and misses the rest of the season. He and Kerry both lament their low social status at Princeton. Amory considers the possibility of a literary career to distinguish himself.

Kerry and Amory play pranks on the others at the boarding house. They also discuss the women that they know. Amory meets Tom D'Invilliers, who introduces him to many new authors and poets. Amory begins writing poetry. In his sophomore year, World War I begins. Amory joins the Triangle Club, a dramatic society. In addition to collaborating on the play "Ha Ha Hortense," Amory tours with the group to other cities and universities. During this time, he is introduced to the Petting Party, where he kisses many girls.

Amory goes home to Minneapolis to see Isabel Borges, a girl he has not seen since childhood but who has developed a reputation as a girl who is free with her kisses. Isabelle eagerly anticipates meeting Amory. Isabelle and Amory arrange for some privacy in order to kiss. At the last minute, though, they are interrupted. Both are disappointed.

Back at Princeton, Tom and Amory gain success through their literary endeavors. Alec Connage invites Armory and some others for a trip to the seaside. They arrive without any spending money and sleep at the train station. This is one of many excursions Amory and his friends make during the school year. One night, while Amory is out walking, he discovers a car accident that has killed his friend, Dick Humbird. Shortly afterwards, Isabelle begins paying visits to Princeton. She and Amory go on drives together, leading eventually to their first kiss.

Book 1, Chapter 2 Analysis

Amory's arrival at Princeton shows that despite his intense show of self-confidence, he is actually quite insecure and eager to adapt himself to his new environment. Amory's determination to make a name for himself without showing an effort in doing so foreshadows his overall life plan. Amory wants to be important and special but is anxious not to appear as though he needs or values this social role.

Amory's success at St. Regis through football is not possible at Princeton when he is injured his first season. His resentment towards this event continues under the surface

until he expresses it during his ride with Ferrenby's father. In that conversation, Amory equates losing his opportunity to play football at Princeton with the need for global equality.

The trip to the seaside also holds clues for the various characters in the story. Alec Connage shows early signs of his future behavior. His treatment of the women at the seaside town is a clear indication of his future problems with Jill and the Mann Act in Atlantic City. Similarly, his attitude toward society is shown in how he walks out of restaurants without paying. This attitude will continue when he reunites with Alec in Atlantic City and allows his friend to sacrifice himself.

Amory's character is also hinted at during this first trip to the seaside. Amory is essentially a follower. He watches his friends and does what they do. At the same time he shows the first signs of the disgust he will show throughout his life toward women who meet up with men on holidays. Amory's relationship with Isabelle further illustrates the divisions that he makes in his judgment of women, favoring those of the upper class and feeling disgusted by those of lower classes.

Book 1, Chapter 3

Book 1, Chapter 3 Summary

Isabelle and Amory have an argument at Isabelle's house. Amory leaves early the next morning and considers the relationship over. Amory is in danger of failing his classes and has to find a tutor. That fall, his father dies, and Amory returns home for a short time to help his mother settle the family finances. At Christmas, Amory visits Monsignor Darcy and expresses his wish to drop out of college. He returns to Princeton but is not interested in his studies or social life. Some of his poems are published in one of the school's literary magazines.

At the end of the year, Kerry Holiday leaves school to join the war in France. Amory goes to New York City with his friends and meets many girls who work in the theater. Amory gets drunk and backs out of a date with a chorus girl. Amory leaves the party and wanders drunkenly through the night streets. He wakes up the next morning at his hotel. He and his friend, Fred Sloane, go out again. Amory does not know how much Sloane remembers from the night before. When they walk down Broadway, Amory is disgusted by the atmosphere. He yells at Sloane and returns to his hotel room where he passes out.

When Amory regains consciousness, he goes out into the rain and takes the train back to Princeton. When he arrives back in Princeton, he is greeted by Tom, who tells him about a premonition that he had about Amory. Amory tells Tom about his scary experience in New York City. The two men comfort each other over literature.

Book 1, Chapter 3 Analysis

In this chapter, Amory's relationships with women and with his male friends come to the forefront. The contrast between his relationship with Isabelle and the one he runs away from in New York City continues to show the differences between how he views upper class women and how he views lower class women. With Isabelle, he imagines something larger than what actually is. With the girls in New York City, he develops a disgust of their painted faces.

Amory's experience in New York also sets up his emotional attachment to Princeton and the male-only world that exists there. The train trip home makes him feel better, and the sight of the campus makes him feel secure. On arriving back in Princeton, he shows that his real emotional relationship is with his friend, Tom. The two of them bond emotionally and create a private environment. Their relationship continues to develop throughout their time in Princeton and beyond. This relationship is based on literature and poetry, a continuing feature of Amory's relationships with other people.

Book 1, Chapter 4

Book 1, Chapter 4 Summary

During Amory's junior year, his friend, Burne Holiday, goes through an intellectual awakening and becomes part of a reform movement on campus. When Amory confronts him, Amory feels that somehow Burne has gotten ahead of him in the journey to find himself and believe in something. The establishment of Princeton's social clubs becomes angry that Burne has convinced so many people to resign their memberships.

Amory talks to Burne about the dislike of the student council toward Burne. The two young men talk about their world views in general and Burne's intellectual transformation in particular. Burne begins attending graduate lectures and walking around campus by himself. Amory and his other friends worry about Burne's new status on campus. Burne comes into the college newspaper to challenge the misuse of religious quotations in an editorial on sports. Amory begins writing poetry and begins enjoying college again.

Monsignor Darcy writes Amory about his third cousin, Clara Page, who is recently widowed. Amory agrees to visit her in Philadelphia. Amory falls in love with her instantly. He begins visiting her in Philadelphia every weekend. He enjoys talking with her and going everywhere with her. One Sunday, he confesses his love for her, but she tells him that she never wants to marry again.

Amory returns to Princeton and discovers that Burne has become a pacifist. Amory and his other friends, however, plan to join the war effort at the end of the school year. Soon thereafter, Tom and Amory go off to join different branches of the military to prepare to go to war. They leave each other to go to training camp.

Book 1, Chapter 4 Analysis

Burne Holiday provides one of the greatest contrasts to Amory's world view. Burne does not care about social appearances and instead launches on a long academic study of social reform movements, eventually resulting in pacifism against the war. Burne's opinions and actions are in direct contrast to Amory's. He rejects the social organizations that Amory longs to belong to. He rejects the war which Amory and his friends see as a defining experience for any man.

Burne's intellectualism challenges Amory. Amory has always considered himself smarter, better informed and overall more important than all other people. As he watches Burne outpace him, Amory feels a deep sense of disappointment in himself. This attitude foreshadows his experiences in the war and in later life as he drifts without any real purpose. The ideas he learns from Burne will also come to the forefront at the last stages of the novel when Amory engages in an argument about social reform with Ferrenby's father. Amory's muddled understanding of social reform and its place in

American academic life comes from Burne and shows his attempt to succeed in an intellectual way when he has failed in others.

Interlude

Interlude Summary

Monsignor Darcy writes a letter to Amory, who is at training camp in Long Island. He writes that Amory will come back from the war forever changed as a person. He includes a poem entitled, "A Lament for a Foster Son, and He going to the War Against the King of Foreign." Amory also writes a poem as he goes to the front for the first time. Amory writes a letter to his friend Tom, addressing him as Baudelaire. He recounts the events of the war, including the deaths of Amory's mother, Kerry Holiday and Jesse Ferrenby. He proposes a meeting in New York City and signs his letter Samuel Johnson.

Interlude Analysis

Unlike many writers of the same generation, Fitzgerald only gives World War I two letters. The first letter, from Monsignor Darcy, shows the appearance that is presented about a man going to war. Darcy writes very emotional poetry commemorating Amory's entrance into the war and assumes that Amory will be forever changed by the experience. Amory's letter to Tom, however, shows that very little has changed in Amory's life despite his activities in the war.

Amory's war experience is only mentioned briefly in this interlude. He does not discuss the experience with his friends or family after returning from the war. At the same time, however, this does not appear to be because Amory has deep-seated anxieties stemming from the war, but rather because he has no strong feelings about it at all. Like most things in his life, Amory is unable to get excited or commit himself emotionally to any of his experiences. His biggest connections, as shown in his letter to Tom, are to books and poetry, not to people or experiences.

Book 2, Chapter 1

Book 2, Chapter 1 Summary

Alec Connage has two sisters, Cecilia, sixteen, and Rosalind, nineteen. Rosalind has recently made her debut and is actively looking for a husband. She is very beautiful and spoiled by her power over men. Amory visits the Connage family home. Amory enters the room and meets Rosalind. They have a flirtatious conversation and kiss. Amory leaves, and Mrs. Connage comes in. She warns Rosalind that they do not have a lot of money and that she must marry someone who is very wealthy.

Several hours later, Rosalind is downstairs talking with some of the men that her mother wants her to be nice to. She explains her courtship rituals to one of her lesser suitors. Alec and Cecilia discuss the prospects of Amory falling in love with Rosalind. Amory breaks in on Rosalind and her suitor. Amory and Rosalind discuss their previous relationships and begin kissing again. They confess their love for each other. Rosalind and Amory fall deeply in love with each other and spend all their time together.

One of Rosalind's former suitors tells Amory that Rosalind is eccentric and recalls a time when Rosalind did a dangerous dive at a swimming party. This story draws Amory closer to Rosalind. Five weeks later, Rosalind's mother warns her that Amory has no money and that Rosalind needs to marry someone with money. Amory asks Rosalind to marry him, but she refuses because he cannot support her lifestyle. She tells him to leave, though she longs for him.

Book 2, Chapter 1 Analysis

This chapter takes a different narrative strategy in which parts are written as the script to a play. In this way, the dialogue becomes the center of the action, something that rarely occurs in other parts of the novel. One of the most interesting parts of this dramatic maneuver is when the names of the characters of Amory and Rosalind shift to SHE and HE. This shift shows the physical nature of their relationship, in which their individual personalities are reduced to their elemental sexual identities.

Rosalind continues the pattern set up by Amory's mother Beatrice. Though she professes great love for Amory, her interest in money and social position is more valuable to her. She rejects Amory in the same way that his own mother rejected him when she sent him to live apart from her so that she could nurse her imaginary illnesses. Rosalind's clear discussion of the financial objection to their marriage brings to light the financial questions that Amory wishes to conceal. In this way, Rosalind continues the same pattern as Amory's mother in that her own lifestyle is more important than her relationship to Amory or her interests in his needs.

Book 2, Chapter 2

Book 2, Chapter 2 Summary

Amory consoles himself in a bar. His friends worry about his drinking and help him find a place to sleep. He wakes up the next morning in a hotel and immediately starts drinking again. He tells his friends he wants to kill himself and begins getting in fights and altercations in bars. After several days lost in drinking, he goes to his job to quit. He tries to pick a fight with his boss, but his boss dismisses him. Amory comes home to his apartment four days later, where his friend Tom confronts him. Tom tells Amory that Alec has moved out, and they need a new roommate to make the rent.

Prohibition puts an end to Amory's drinking. He begins reading again and writes a short story that is published in a magazine. Amory avoids his old friends. He has lunch with Mrs. Lawrence, a friend of Monsignor Darcy. He enjoys speaking to her and feels like his old self. Amory and Tom manage to keep their apartment by economizing. The two discuss the various powers and motivations that go with revolution. Amory professes boredom with everything. The argument makes Tom, who has a job at a political magazine, very uncomfortable. Tom encourages Amory to find something that interests him to write about. Tom laments modern fiction and writes poems criticizing modern authors.

Amory receives a letter from Monsignor Darcy. Darcy urges Amory not to give up. The sudden death of Tom's mother breaks up their domestic life, and they go on different paths. Amory goes to Washington to visit Darcy but does not get a chance to see him. On his way back to New York City, he stops to visit a forgotten uncle in Maryland. Though he intends to stay only a few days, he ends up spending the whole summer in Maryland with a woman he meets there, Eleanor.

Book 2, Chapter 2 Analysis

Amory's depression over Rosalind threatens to destroy his life. He sinks into drinking binges to cover his pain and threatens to kill himself. His depression over his female relationship is mended by his male friends, who work to restore him to his normal self. Amory's friend Tom is a particular source of support for Amory by providing him with a stable and secure environment. His relationship carries over from Princeton and provides him with the emotional support he needs to manage his emotional life.

Amory's muddled social perspective shows itself in his confrontation with his boss at the advertising agency. Amory wants to quit his job with style and social spirit, but in reality his lectures fall on deaf ears. Amory shows himself to be a spoiled child of the rich who is not willing to work in the real world. This is in contrast to Tom, who is content to take a job in order to achieve his own financial independence. Amory's speech at the advertising agency foreshadows the even more emotional speech that he gives to

Ferrenby's father. Both incidents show the weakness of Amory's intellectual character and his quick assumption of social reform values when he feels sorry for himself.

Book 2, Chapter 3

Book 2, Chapter 3 Summary

Amory is walking through the woods when he hears a woman reciting French poetry. This turns out to be Eleanor Ramilly, a girl from a prestigious local family who was raised in France. The two of them have an instant intellectual connection. They spend many days together, laying in the grass or reading poetry together. Eleanor has a reputation in Baltimore for getting into trouble. Eleanor and Armory spend the summer together, talking to each other day and night about literature and poetry.

The night before Amory intends to leave, he and Eleanor go on a horseback ride up a hill. They approach the edge of a cliff and look over it. As they ride away from the cliff, Amory attempts to kiss Eleanor. She pulls away. She yells at him for his prudish religious beliefs. She turns and gallops back to the cliff, threatening to throw herself over it. Amory quickly chases after her. At the last minute, Eleanor veers aside, jumps off the horse and rolls on to the ground.

Amory runs to Eleanor to see if she is hurt. She is fine but deeply troubled by the experience. She tells Amory some stories from her childhood. By the time they arrive home, they hate each other but still feel strongly linked to each other. Several years later, they send each other poems commemorating their experience together.

Book 2, Chapter 3 Analysis

Amory's relationship with Eleanor parallels his relationship with Tom. Amory meets both people by chance and immediately bonds with each through literature and poetry. Their relationships are completely of the mind and also significantly removed from the real world or any of the pressures that Amory feels there. Amory's summer with Eleanor in Maryland is similar to the leisured experience he shared with Tom in Princeton.

The problem arises when the relationship shifts from intellectual to sexual. Eleanor's rejection of Amory mirrors the rejection that he has felt from every other female he has developed an attachment to. Unlike his relationships with men, his relationship with Eleanor takes on a sexual aspect, which for Amory means failure and rejection. The poems that they write to each other many years later show their attempts to bring their relationship back to the intellectual stage in which the emotions of life can be contained within a literary form.

Book 2, Chapter 4

Book 2, Chapter 4 Summary

In Atlantic City, Amory runs into Alec and some of his friends. Amory feels uncomfortable with Alec because of his past relationship with Rosalind. Alec drives the group to a deserted street and takes out a bottle of illegal bourbon from a hiding place in the car. Alec asks Amory to stay with him at the hotel. Amory leaves the group and goes in search of the hotel. When he arrives, he collapses into a deep sadness, calling out for Rosalind. He falls asleep in an armchair.

When Amory wakes up several hours later, he hears whisperings. The whisper is coming from the bathroom, where Amory can hear Alec and a girl, Jill, talking. Strong knocking pounds on the hallway door. Jill and Alec come in from the bathroom. They are afraid of being caught by the police because they are staying in the same room but are unmarried. Amory decides to sacrifice himself for his friend. He tells Alec to lie in bed and pretend to be drunk. He tells Jill to say she's been with him all night, not Alec.

The police break in and tell Amory that he has broken the law by coming to the hotel with a woman he is not married to. Amory gives his name to the police and the girl, Jill, gives her name as Stella Robbins. The police say that the hotel will not be pressing charges but that their names will be printed in the newspapers. Jill and Amory leave the hotel and part ways. Back in New York City, Amory sees Rosalind's wedding announcement in the newspaper. He also receives word that Monsignor Darcy has died.

Book 2, Chapter 4 Analysis

The incident in Atlantic City showcases Amory's inability to understand his place in the world. He is still concerned primarily with social appearances. When Alec gets caught breaking the law, Amory romanticizes the event by sacrificing himself for his friend. Both the thing he sacrifices and the gratitude felt by Alec are rather insignificant given the amount of emotional significance that Amory gives it. Amory hopes that this sacrifice will strengthen his friendship with Alec and make him a better man when really he simply assists Alec in avoiding one in a long line of mistakes.

Amory's sense of accomplishment over his sacrifice is made even more problematic when he returns to New York and sees his arrest notice in the newspaper alongside the two other great tragedies of his life. The marriage of Rosalind puts one of the final nails in the coffin of his love for her and sends him into another deep depression. The death notice of Monsignor Darcy also destroys one of Amory's last illusions about manhood and leading an important life. The combination of these events sends Amory into his second major depression, but at this point he does not have the same support system that he had during his first major depression.

Book 2, Chapter 5

Book 2, Chapter 5 Summary

Amory contemplate his future. He has no money other than the Lake Geneva estate he inherited on his mother's death. He has an inner conversation with himself to figure out what to do. He sits in New York City on a rainy day, examining his life. Amory attends Monsignor Darcy's funeral. He wishes for a life like Darcy's in which he can give security to others.

Amory gets a ride home from a stranger. The person in the car asks Amory questions about work and encourages him to find work out West. The driver ridicules idealists, intellectuals and particularly socialists. They get into an argument about class struggle. Amory begins a long lecture about intellectual freedom and the need to live outside of society's roles, particularly marriage. The person in the car is interested in hearing what Amory has to say.

Amory sets out his ideas on an ideal world based on equality. He also argues for government controlled industry. The person in the car is amused by Amory's ideas but dismisses them as impractical. Amory confesses that he has disliked every social organization he has been a part of, including the army, business and even football. Finally, the person in the car tells Amory that Jesse Ferrenby was his son. After learning that Amory knew his son, the person in the car is much kinder to him.

Amory walks toward Princeton. He thinks he is unavoidably selfish and bad. He walks along the highway, thinking about his life and how it has turned out. At nightfall, he approaches the campus of Princeton and recognizes the place he once loved so much.

Book 2, Chapter 5 Analysis

Amory's position in the final chapter pulls together many of the elements that define Amory's character. His financial situation is not truly hopeless, but Amory makes it so by refusing to live in the real world and sell his family home. It is ironic that Amory clings so strongly to a home that did not nurture him. His emotional attachment shows his inability to break from his mother and the other social ties that he feels to the life of a certain social class.

Amory's lecture to Ferrenby's father shows more about his own character than it does his knowledge of socialism or his commitment to social reform. Though Amory has come from a privileged background, he equates himself with the working classes who have struggled to attain equality. The greatest irony of this speech is when Amory mentions his failure to make the Princeton football team based on the decisions of the coach. It seems quite strange that a failed football player from an Ivy League university might illustrate the problems of the working class and shows that Amory's discussion of socialism is much more related to his own sense of failure and low self worth.

Princeton again presents itself as the symbol of innocence and security. Just as he did in the past, Amory returns to Princeton when he hits rock bottom. His connection to Princeton relates to the particular security of wealth, privilege and male bonding which has defined his life. At the same time, his image of Princeton excludes the things that have damaged Amory, including financial failure, social insignificance and emotionally crippling female relationships.

Characters

Mr. Barlow

Mr. Barlow is the president of the advertising company in whose office Amory rudely quits his job.

Mr. Barton

Mr. Barton, Amory's family lawyer, advises Amory about his inherited and mainly unprofitable property in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Amory Blaine

The main character of the novel in the process of becoming a "personage," Amory is chiefly characterized by his intense self-obsession and egotism. He changes markedly in the course of the plot, growing from a superficially clever and pretentious boy to a much more profound thinker, but his egotism remains his defining characteristic. His affairs with the four main young women of the novel, as well as his relationships with other adults and friends, are in many ways important to him only as they affect and influence his own development and desires.

Physically good-looking, but not conventionally so, and known for his "penetrating green eyes," Amory is very successful with young women and consistently manages to intrigue them. By the time of his relationship with Eleanor, however, Amory is not sure if he is able to love again after Rosalind affected him so deeply. Much of his taste for enigmatic and unobtainable women goes back to his unconventional relationship with his charming, indulgent, but often absent mother.

Like his other relationships, the young women in Amory's life represent the stages of his intellectual, artistic, and religious development, and they reflect that his own changing opinions and beliefs become more substantial as he reads more and explores himself more thoroughly. He retains something of an inability to persist in his endeavors, however, just as he remains an ambitious and romantic dreamer. Amory has become known as a Fitzgerald-type character, an elitist, ambitious, and daring youth of the Jazz Age based on the author himself.

Beatrice O'Hara Blaine

Amory's mother, with her "brilliant education," and the "exquisite delicacy of her features," is a beautiful woman from the American upper class. She is more of a companion to Amory than a mother, which is reinforced by the fact that he calls her by her first name. Nevertheless, she is extremely important to his development, babies him

throughout his youth, and carefully arranges his education. With her brilliant charm, she is also a model for the elusive and intriguing women with whom Amory continually falls in love. A heavy drinker and socialite continually in danger of another nervous breakdown, Beatrice dies while Amory is in the army, leaving half of her possessions to the Catholic Church.

Stephen Blaine

Amory's father is an "ineffectual, inarticulate" man whom Amory does not know very well and who dies while Amory is at Princeton.

Isabelle Borgé

"Capable of very strong, if very transient, emotions," Isabelle is Amory's first love. He travels all the way to Minneapolis to see her at a "petting party," during which they flirt and begin a relationship of passionate letter writing until they fall out when she comes to the Princeton prom. Isabelle is something of an actress, and she fits in well with the vanity of Amory's pre-war Princeton period because she is quite vain herself. Nevertheless, she and Amory make an exciting pair during their relationship, and she enchants Amory as much as she infuriates him.

Phoebe Column

Phoebe is Fred Sloane's friend, and it is in her New York apartment that Amory has a severe fright due to the man with the queer feet.

Alec Connage

A "quiet, rather aloof slicker," Alec is Amory's friend from Princeton and Rosalind's brother. Amory's love for Rosalind puts a strain on his and Alec's relationship, as does the awkwardness after Amory takes the blame for Alec's having illicitly brought a young woman back to their hotel room.

Cecelia Connage

Cecelia is a sarcastic and "good-humored" girl who acts as a foil, or a character whose function is to reveal something about another character, for her sister Rosalind.

Mrs. Connage

Rosalind's mother Mrs. Connage keeps close tabs on her daughter and continually urges her to marry a rich gentleman.

Rosalind Connage

Amory's most important and intense love in the novel, Rosalind is an extremely striking character. Her long description shortly into the first chapter of "Book Two," beginning "Rosalind *is utterly* Rosalind," emphasizes that all men fall in love with her except those that are afraid of her, claims that she is not spoiled despite her selfishness, and states that "*all criticism of* Rosalind *ends in her beauty*." She is spontaneous and intriguing, and her treatment of men in some ways represents a new type of liberated woman, since, she explains, she toys with men and leaves them as male lovers always used to do their female partners in the past.

Because of this pattern, Rosalind very frequently devastates men by leaving them, and there is much foreshadowing to her abandonment of Amory for the rich Dawson Ryder. Nevertheless, Rosalind seems entirely absorbed with Amory, as he is with her, during their brief and intense romance. She seems to agonize over her decision to leave Amory because he is too poor, although there is the suggestion that she does not suffer from it later as he does.

Thomas Park D'Invilliers

Tom is a Princeton friend with whom Amory begins a friendship because of their mutual interest in poetry. They remain friends and confidants after the war, and they live together in New York, where Tom has a job as a reviewer. When Tom grows tired of Princeton, he becomes more cynical, and while they are living in New York, Tom is frustrated by what he sees as a dishonest and incompetent literary community. Amory sees him as "a blighted Shelley, changing, shifting, clever, unscrupulous," who represents "the critical consciousness of the race."

Monsignor Thayer Darcy

Monsignor Darcy, an influential and successful priest in the Catholic hierarchy, is Amory's confidant and father figure. He was Beatrice's passionate lover in his youthful romantic days, but when she abandoned him for the rich Stephen Blaine, Monsignor began his career in the priesthood. Because of his charm and ability to be adored by everyone, Father Darcy earns the title "Monsignor," which is a general term of influence in the Catholic Church, and tells Amory before his sudden death towards the end of the novel that he will soon become a cardinal. Monsignor exerts a great influence over Amory, and they are very close because of their many similarities, including their elitism and their taste in philosophy and literature.

Jesse Ferrenby

Part of Amory's Princeton group, Jesse eventually gets a place at the "Princetonian," the college's daily newspaper. He dies in World War I.

Mr. Ferrenby

Known as "the big man with goggles" until his identity as Jesse's father is revealed, Mr. Ferrenby is the impressive capitalist who gives Amory a ride in his car and argues with him about socialism.

Howard Gillespie

Howard is the unhappy young man of whom Rosalind has recently become tired when she meets Amory.

Thornton Hancock

The Honorable Thornton Hancock is a historian, advisor to famous politicians, and rich intellectual from an aristocratic Bostonian family. Amory meets him because of his friendship with Monsignor Darcy and afterwards considers that he is an example of an admirable atheist.

Burne Holiday

Burne is the chairman of the "Princetonian" and a social success at Princeton until he begins to radically challenge the social hierarchy. Although Burne is busy trying out for the "Princetonian" during their first year and Amory does not get to know him until later, Amory grows to admire his enthusiasm, stubbornness, and "earnestness." Flirting with ideas of socialism and pacifism, some of Burne's ideas are muddled, but he thinks seriously about intellectual issues in a way that inspires Amory's own development. Burne comes out as a pacifist during World War I and leaves Princeton, disappearing from the novel, although Amory speculates that he could have ended up in jail.

Kerry Holiday

Amory's first friend at Princeton and Burne's dark-haired older brother, Kerry is "the mentor of the house" and an elitist such as Amory. He becomes close with Amory by planning their social rise at Princeton, and they remain friends until Kerry leaves college to enroll in the war, in which he dies. Kerry's easygoing and charming personality makes him, with Alec Connage, the "life" of their Princeton social group, and Amory likes nearly everything about him, including his snobbishness.

Dick Humbird

Dick is Amory's "quiet" friend from Princeton, who admires him as the "perfect type of aristocrat." Amory is deeply shocked by Dick's death in a car accident, and his face comes back to haunt Amory while he is running from the man with the queer feet.

Mrs. Lawrence

"A type of Rome-haunting American" who is intelligent and dignified, Mrs. Lawrence is a friend and devotee of Monsignor Darcy.

The Little Man

"The little man" who offers Amory a ride is the assistant to Mr. Ferrenby. Amory insults him and uses him as an example of ignorance in his argument about socialism.

The Man with the Queer Feet

While at a club in New York, Amory has a strange and "inexpressibly terrible" experience with a middle-aged man in a brown suit who may represent the devil. Amory has a vision of the man in Phoebe's flat that frightens him and seems to chase him through the streets, and he remembers long afterwards the "wrongness" of the man's strange pointed shoes that curl up at the end.

Mr. Margotson

The senior master at St. Regis preparatory school, Mr. Margotson attempts to advise Amory about why the other boys dislike him, but Amory walks out of his office in a fury.

Axia Marlowe

Phoebe Column's friend, Axia chats and flirts with Amory until he runs away, frightened of the man with the queer feet, from Phoebe's apartment in New York.

Clara Page

Clara is Amory's third cousin, with whom he falls in love. She is a poor widow with two children and has led a "hurried life," but she is nevertheless charming and delightful, and everyone treats her with respect. Because of the vast "goodness" that he sees in her, and her ability to bring out a different side of his narcissistic personality, Amory proposes marriage to her. Clara brushes this off, however, and they lose touch with each other at the beginning of the war.

Frog Parker

"Froggy" is Amory's closest friend during his years of private school in Minneapolis.

Rahill

The "president of the sixth form" at St. Regis, Rahill becomes a friend and "co-philosopher" of Amory's during his second year.

Eleanor Ramilly

Eleanor is Amory's final love in the course of the novel, and she is associated with wildness and nature. From a very old Maryland family, Eleanor was brought up in France and is an extremely intelligent and well-read person who is intellectually challenging to Amory. She describes herself as a "romantic little materialist," and has an inclination towards paganism in thought and literature. Although her appearance is unclear at first, she is eighteen years old and beautiful, with pale skin and green eyes. She and Amory later write poems to each other, but their relationship ends when Amory leaves Maryland.

Dawson Ryder

The rich young man that eventually marries Rosalind, Dawson is a reliable choice, and Amory has to agree that he is "a good man and a strong one." Rosalind is never in love with him, however.

Fred Sloane

Sloane is part of Amory's group of Princeton friends. He has a "happy personality," likes to drink alcohol, and is the pitcher for the baseball team.

Myra St. Claire

Myra, a girl Amory meets while he is living with his aunt and uncle in Minneapolis, give Amory his chance for his first kiss. Myra is slightly spoiled and becomes upset when Amory refuses to kiss her more than once while they are alone at her "bobbing party."

Phyllis Styles

Phyllis Styles is the socialite that Burne Holiday embarrasses very awkwardly at a Harvard-Princeton football game.

Jill Wayne

Jill, in whom Amory sees the evil of "pride and sensuality," is the young woman who Alec illicitly brings back to a hotel in Atlantic City.

Sally Weatherby

Sally is Amory's acquaintance from private school in Minneapolis, and she sets him up with Isabelle.

Objects/Places

Minneapolis

Minneapolis, Wisconsin is the home of Amory's aunt and uncle. When Amory makes an emergency return to the United States, he goes to live with them. In Minneapolis, Amory has his first awkward relationship with Myra St. Claire and becomes friends with a local boy named Froggy Parker. Amory returns to Minneapolis at various times during his education. Minneapolis appears to be Amory's childhood home, despite the Lake Geneva estate where his parents live.

Lake Geneva

Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, is the home of Amory's parents. Amory visits his mother there, usually for specific reasons concerning decisions to be made about his education or the family finances. After Amory's parents die, the house in Lake Geneva is the majority of Amory's inheritance. Amory hangs on to the house for sentimental reasons despite the fact that he needs money.

St. Regis

St. Regis is a boy's preparatory school that Amory attends from the ages of fifteen to seventeen. Amory is uncomfortable at the school because he thinks he is better than the other students and knows that the other students dislike him. He joins the football team in order to join the social network of the school. His success at football at St. Regis makes him feel that this sport is his best chance to make a name for himself, leading to his disappointment at Princeton.

New York City

Throughout Amory's high school and university years, Amory and various friends visit New York City for excitement and fun. Generally they associate with actresses and other women associated with the theater. Amory feels drawn to the excitement of New York City but is often disgusted at the seedier aspects of socializing in the city. After returning from World War I, Amory goes to live in New York City with his friends, Tom and Alec. Though his roommates move away at various points, Amory remains in New York City, falling deeper into debt and depression.

The Slicker

When Amory is in high school, he defines a code of social rules for the two categories of boys he sees in school. One category is the "Slicker," meaning someone who does not

take part in the social activities of high school but who succeeds in university. The "Slicker" is identified by a hairstyle in which his hair is slicked back with water or oil. The opposite is the "Big Man" who is extremely popular in high school but who does not do very much afterwards. The "Big Man" is identified by his lack of slicked back hair.

12 University Place

When Amory attends Princeton, he lives in a boarding house at 12 University Place. This is where he meets the majority of his friends and develops the majority of his university relationships.

Princeton

Amory chooses to attend Princeton University because he has an image of the Princeton student as lazy but intelligent. He thinks he will fit in well at the school. When he arrives at Princeton, he makes a close circle of friends but fails to make a big name for himself on campus. On of his earliest disappointments is being injured early in the football season and therefore being unable to play football. Over time, he develops some following for his literary pieces in one of Princeton's literary magazines.

Throughout Amory's life, he returns to Princeton when he is having emotional or social problems. The university represents innocence and security, as well as an environment that, in Amory's time, is completely male and removed from the social world of heterosexual relationships and their accompanying problems. At the end of the novel, when Amory feels that he has nothing and no one to turn to, he walks to Princeton in order to restore his self-esteem.

World War I

World War I, known at the time as the Great War, took place between 1914 and 1918 in Europe. The United States entered the war in 1917 after the sinking of the Lusitania. American troops fought mainly in England and France. American soldiers returning from World War I were known as the "Lost Generation."

Triangle Club

The Triangle Club is an amateur dramatic society at Princeton University. Amory collaborates on the play "Ha, Ha, Hortense" and tours universities presenting the play.

Petting Party

While on tour with the Triangle Club, Amory is introduced to the Petting Party. At these parties, young men and women from the upper classes meet to kiss different people.

Amory specializes in finding women and convincing them to kiss him based on the idea that they will never see each other again.

Guestbook

During Amory's junior year, Burne Holiday begins a social reform movement on the campus of Princeton. Many students become interested by reading various books on social reform and pledge themselves by signing Guestbooks on various social reform topics.

Prohibition

The Eighteenth Amendment to U.S. Constitution banned the sale of alcohol in America. Prohibition lasted until 1933, when the Twenty-First Amendment repealed the law. During the time of Prohibition, many illegal ways to buy and sell alcohol appeared throughout the United States, resulting in an underground bar and nightclub culture.

Maryland

Amory stops in Maryland to visit a forgotten uncle. While there, he meets Eleanor Ramilly. Amory spends the summer with Eleanor in Maryland, sharing his love of literature and poetry.

Atlantic City

Atlantic City, New Jersey, is one of the premier places to gamble legally in the United States. Amory and his friends go to Atlantic City for excitement and get involved in illegal activities such as drinking and having sex with women they are not married to.

The Mann Act

The Mann Act, also known as the "White Slavery Act," originated in 1910 to prohibit the transport of a female across state lines for "immoral purposes." The law is used against Amory's friend Alec for bringing his girlfriend Jill into New Jersey and then sharing a hotel room with her. Amory takes the blame. He is given a warning and has his name published in the newspaper.

Social Concerns

Like many first novels, This Side of Paradise is largely autobiographical.

Amory Blaine, the protagonist, is drawn from Fitzgerald's adolescence and young manhood. The narrative follows Blaine from his relatively pampered childhood, where he had a very close relationship to his mother, through the difficulties of adjusting to the outside world in prep school and then on through his development as a "romantic egoist" at Princeton. The years at Princeton represent the first genuinely realistic depiction of American college life, and suggest that life on the campus is exciting and intellectually stimulating. For aspiring collegians, the first part of This Side of Paradise was like a guidebook, offering suggestions about how to behave socially, and some sense of the curriculum, mentioning sixty-four titles and ninety-eight writers. Fitzgerald later called the book "A Romance and a Reading List," and the romantic element included Blaine's unsuccessful courtship of Isabelle Borge.

The second part of the book follows Blaine's attempt to realize his destiny through a commitment to a religious vision of morality. Monsignor Darcy, the most sympathetic character in the book, encourages Blaine's search for religious meaning; and, although he is not able to convince Blaine to go to Rome, he is able to give him a firm sense of good and evil. This moral sense is tested by two romantic interludes. Blaine is unnerved when he loses Rosalind Connage because of his meager financial resources but turns to spiritual matters for some consolation.

When he has a brief affair with Eleanor Savage, who is alluring but too wild for him, he finds similar comfort in justifying his behavior in terms of the nature of sin. His attempts to develop "personagehood" to compensate for his romantic disappointments is a kind of quest in which he hopes to fulfill his destiny by becoming a "leader" who serves humanity by his wisdom and moral guidance.

Themes

Generational Conflict

Although Fitzgerald's novel may seem less shocking now, it created a sensation when it was published because of its representation of a younger generation that perceived itself as departing entirely from the tradition of the generations before it. Amory's vanity and egotism, his flirtatious affairs with young women, his startling ideas (such as about socialism), and his vague contempt for nineteenth-century tradition all struck a chord with a generation that blamed their parents, for example, for the horrors of World War I.

This generational conflict was a key motivation for the modernist literary movement in the United States. In *This Side of Paradise*, the intellectual and aesthetic aspects of the conflict are first revealed by Burne Holiday, who inspires many of Amory's own convictions against nineteenth-century tradition. And Amory's meditations and convictions in "The Egotist Becomes a Personage," although many critics have noted that they are not necessarily well informed or even coherent, are nevertheless something of an intellectual manifesto for his generation. As Amory says while he is arguing with Mr. Ferrenby about socialism, "I'm a product of a versatile mind in a restless generation." While his specific intellectual theories are unclear, and, for example, Amory does nothing but dabble without conviction in socialism, this wavering is consistent with Amory's previous statement: "I'm in love with change and I've killed my conscience."

Such a demand for progress away from the previous generation without a clear view about the direction that this progress should take led to criticism of the novel such as that of Edmund Wilson in his essay, "F. Scott Fitzgerald": "In short, one of the chief weaknesses of *This Side of Paradise* is that it is really not *about* anything: its intellectual and moral content amounts to little more than a gesture□a gesture of indefinite revolt." Whether this revolt was "indefinite," however, it moved and excited many readers, and was key in defining Fitzgerald as a spokesperson for his generation.

Egotism

Amory's vanity and narcissism is more than a character trait; it is an emblem of the theme of "egotism" that pervades Fitzgerald's novel. When Amory says that he is an egotist, he does not simply mean that he is self-absorbed; he is revealing an essential philosophical trait of the novel, which is that the self is all-important. He best expresses this idea in the final chapter of the novel, "The Egotist Becomes a Personage," with statements such as, "This selfishness is not only part of me. It is the most living part." Like many people in his generation feeling cut off from tradition and drastically changed after World War I, Amory comes to think that his self is, in a sense, all that he has.

This idea, which is common in other important modernist texts (such as Ezra Pound's famous magazine, the *Egoist*), is influenced by Freudian psychology, by the modernist generation's disavowal of past traditions, and by the individualism that was important to many writers of the time. Often, however, Fitzgerald is also critical and satirical of Amory's egotism, and he certainly mocks its more superficial form of vanity, a trait that characterizes Amory's youth as well as his first love, Isabelle. The egotism and snobbishness of many aristocrats in the novel is also something that Fitzgerald alternatively ridicules and admires. By the end of the novel, it is not necessarily clear whether Amory fully embraces egotism, although he does seem to recognize its valuable artistic and intellectual aspects.

Elitism and the American Aristocracy

Throughout *This Side of Paradise*, Amory encounters social hierarchies, aristocratic families, elitist standards of behavior, and vast amounts of wealth that allow a unique insight into the American upper class in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Since Amory is an elitist himself, he is continually coming into contact with the institutions and practices of upper class families such as the Connages, and upper class institutions such as Princeton University. Fitzgerald offers a thorough satire of the vanity and hypocrisy of the aristocracy (such as when Rosalind rejects Amory for a wealthy husband) at the same time as he suggests its enormous allure in the form of Beatrice, Monsignor Darcy, and Rosalind, despite their faults. His satire of the "petting party," in which young upper class girls kiss and make promises to a variety of men, was particularly shocking to the aristocracy, as was his ridicule of various Princeton clubs and elitist hierarchies.

The All-Male Academic Institutions of the United States

The novel takes place in several all-male environments, including St. Regis, Princeton and World War I. Ironically, the war does not become the significant bonding experience that attending male-only academic institutions does. The environments of St. Regis and Princeton provide the sense of security that Amory longs for. They also cut him off from many of the challenges of life, including relationships with the opposite sex and the need to make a name for himself and maintain his financial status.

One of the most telling incidents at St. Regis is Amory's description of the "Slicker." The "Slicker" represents the type of person that Amory imagines himself to be and hopes to be in the future. Ironically, the "Slicker" is judged entirely within a male-only world of academia. The true test is not his popularity with women or his ability to make money. The "Slicker" is defined by his ability to succeed in university, as proof of his superiority. In contrast for Amory is the "Big Man," who is unable to compete on intellectual levels in university. When Amory meets Ferrenby's father in the fancy car, he refers to him as a "Big Man," someone who is successful in the eyes of the world but a failure in the closed-off world of Princeton.

The idealization of Princeton takes place throughout the novel. Whenever Amory is confronted with a more complicated problem relating to women or money, he runs back to Princeton, where he feels secure. Princeton University was one of the last of the Ivy League schools to become coeducational, holding out as a male-only refuge until the late 1960s. In Amory's school days, Princeton is decidedly off limits to females. His girlfriend Isabelle visits him frequently, but they never venture on campus. Similarly, the measure of success in the Princeton community is unrelated to the popularity of its students with women. Actually, the Princeton social clubs are a closed-off world of masculinity and wealth, creating deep divisions between the world of Princeton and the world outside.

The Role of Social Reform in American Life

While studying at Princeton University, Amory Blaine gets his first taste of the social reform movements that will define his generation. Burne Holiday introduces Amory to the concepts of socialism, intellectualism and pacifism. Amory's relationship to these social reform movements and the big intellectual ideals that they represent is problematic for him because they lead him to question his own self-worth and social position.

When Burne Holiday begins his social reform movement, Amory sees it within very narrow social terms on the campus of Princeton University. Without ever defining the type of reform advocated, he reduces Burne's intellectual activities to their effect on the social club at Princeton. Burne's social reform movement encourages many other students to renounce their memberships and concentrate on something other than the traditional Princeton social organization.

Amory's relationship to Burne is complicated by his own feelings of self-worth. Watching his friend venture out into new intellectual avenues, Amory feels that he has been left behind. Amory likes to think of himself as smarter and more intellectually powerful than other men. Burne's social reform movement makes Amory question his own self-worth and recognize that he is essentially a selfish and self-absorbed person who does not really believe in anything. Burne's turn to pacifism also affects Amory. Amory's interest in the war is purely selfish. He cares little about the conditions that created the war or the intellectual ideas circulating about war itself. He wants to participate in the social experience of being a soldier and feels bad for not having a more serious ambition.

Amory's conversation with Mr. Ferrenby in the car in New York brings his muddled understanding of socialism to the forefront. In Amory's mind, socialism is tangled with his own feelings of self-worth. Though he comes from a privileged background, Amory feels cheated from his birthright and equates his own personal failures with the overall struggles of the working class. His use of his football injury, in particular, as an example shows the immaturity of his political and intellectual personality.

Romantic Relationship Problems

Amory forms strong bonds with other men, creating the emotional attachments that support him when he falls into depression. His strong intellectual friendship with Tom and his attempts to bond with Alec Connage though personal sacrifice show his willingness to develop strong emotional bonds. With women, however, Amory has constant problems, resulting from his problematic relationship with his mother as well as his discomfort outside of the closed male-only world of academia.

Amory's love life falls into three periods. The first period is one of awkwardness and rejection. His first kiss with Myra St. Claire fumbles because he is unable to envision a relationship beyond kissing. This continues with Isabelle Borge. He uses his and Isabelle's kisses to create a romantic ideal of Isabelle that does not really reflect her personality. After Isabelle is Clara, the widow, who rejects Amory for her own independence. The relationship with Clara is similar to the one with Isabelle in that it was created primarily in Amory's head without really considering the woman he is dating.

The next period is defined by his relationship with Rosalind Connage. Though the affair only lasts five weeks, it symbolizes love for Amory for the rest of his life. The failure here is Amory's public ambition, or lack of it, which leads Rosalind to seek someone else to marry for a higher social position. Amory's relationship with Rosalind sends him into a deep depression from which he never fully recovers.

The third period is with Eleanor Ramilly. Here, Amory has the opportunity to fall in love with someone who shares his intellectual interests and does not expect very much from him in return, socially. In this way, Amory combines his male relationships and his female relationships for a short time. However, when the physical element presents itself, Amory is unable to handle the situation. This relationship also enters a situation similar to the first period, since they have to re-imagine it in poetry rather than reality.

Style

Dramatic, Poetic, and Epistolary Forms

This Side of Paradise is largely told by an omniscient or all-knowing, third person narrator, but many sections employ a variety of different and unique forms, from poems and songs, to lists, to letters and short notes, to the dramatic form or play that is used to portray the beginning and the end of Amory's relationship with Rosalind. These unconventional methods use a distinct style of text and layout, and they vary according to the situation that Fitzgerald is attempting to express. They are important for two reasons. First, they highlight the unsuitability of a more typical, straightforward narrative in a novel for the new generation of modernist authors; the dramatic form in particular is an innovative approach. And, second, they provide a reading experience that is slightly jarring and that inspires the reader to imagine the events and characters in a fuller, more evocative way.

Self-Conscious Narration

A predominant feature of Fitzgerald's style is the narrative voice's own insistent self-consciousness. One of the clearest examples of Fitzgerald's tendency to call attention to his own methods takes place in the "Young Irony" chapter of Book Two, after the narrator begins his story of Amory and Eleanor by describing how they remembered the affair afterwards. When he breaks off this description and states, "I see I am starting wrong. Let me begin again," the narrator surprises the readers greatly and makes them wonder why this false start has been included, if it really is "wrong."

Fitzgerald's showy style, including many of his romantic, elaborate descriptions and numerous epigrams, or brief witty sayings, is another method of drawing attention to himself as an author. Like Amory, the narrative voice often appears vain and superficially charming, and it is in this way that Fitzgerald presents himself as a daring, debut writer. In fact, this technique is part of the reason that such a large critical emphasis on *This Side of Paradise* has historically been placed on Fitzgerald's personal life. Most of the characters have some equivalent or near equivalent in real life: Amory is strikingly similar to Fitzgerald; most of Amory's Princeton friends are based on some of Fitzgerald's Princeton friends; Isabelle and Rosalind are both based, in part, on Fitzgerald's college obsession Ginevra King (although Rosalind also has much in common with Fitzgerald's wife Zelda); and Monsignor Darcy is based on Fitzgerald's friend, Father Sigourney Fay, to whom the novel is dedicated. All of these likenesses add to the intrigue of the novel, and the technique of self-consciousness is an important aspect of the period's aesthetic innovations.

Points of View

The story is told in the third person limited omniscient point of view. For the most part, the story follows the thoughts and feelings of Amory. There is little focus on dialogue, and instead there is a strong concentration on the intellectual life of Amory Blaine. Other characters fall out of the story when they do not directly affect Amory's experiences of the moment. Amory's development is explored in the details of the books he reads as opposed to the relationships he forms with friends.

The only other character who is explored at length from the inside is Rosalind. Unlike the other parts of the book, there are moments when Rosalind has conversations and participates in events that do not directly relate to Amory. The novel offers a parallel counterplot in the pressure her mother puts on her to marry from money. It is interesting to note that this break from the inner monologue of Amory is accompanied by a shift to a dramatic narrative format.

Setting

The novel takes place in various locations throughout the United States. Though Amory does go abroad to France during World War I, his experiences there are not explored in detail. Some of the places where Amory spends time include Minneapolis, Lake Geneva, Maryland, Connecticut and New York City. All of these places, though, represent only small periods of time in Amory's life and are not explored as settings in themselves.

The major setting of the novel is Princeton University. Princeton has a life of its own in the novel as place names, street names and even slang terms and fashion are used in detail. Princeton is represented as both a physical and a spiritual place for Amory, and the various landmarks are described with clear ties to Amory's emotional side. Amory has a strong attachment to Princeton and returns to it in times of trouble.

Language and Meaning

For the most part the novel uses very simple language. At some points, the novel uses slang terms from the time period that is covered in the novel, around 1910 to 1920. These slang terms are explained, usually in great detail, because the main character, Amory Blaine, learns about them in the same way that the reader does. The slang terms of Princeton University of the time period, including "jigger," "running it out," etc., are all explained as Amory adapts to life at Princeton, usually as very self-conscious attempts on the part of the characters to fit in.

The other major language issue in the novel is the continual list of books that Amory reads. Most of these books are intended to be basic books in the education of a man of Amory's social class. While the modern reader will be unfamiliar with most of these books and authors, there is no real confusion created by their inclusion. Often there is

more information given about the books that Amory says he has not read. The poetry of Walt Whitman, for example, is much more familiar to the modern reader than it was to a person in Amory's social circle at the time the novel was written.

Structure

The novel is divided into three parts. The first part represents Amory's experiences before World War I. This includes various failed romances, attendance at St. Regis and Princeton and the formation of his social character. The middle part, which consists of only two letters, represents his experience during World War I. The irony of this presentation is that the war is reduced to a very small incident while the social maneuverings of the characters are shown to be much more important.

The third part of the book represents a variety of changes in Amory's life. The war and the university experience are over, and Amory has to make it on his own. The intellectual, financial and romantic failures of this period of Amory's life are in clear contrast to Amory's earlier life, while at the same time showing the logical progression of Amory's character. This part of the novel is also very clear in showing how little the experience of fighting in World War I has affected Amory or led him to find a more meaningful path in life.

Historical Context

World War I

With tensions running very high between the major European powers, the 1914 assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and his wife in Belgrade sparked the beginning of World War I. Germany, Austro-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire formed the Central Alliance against Great Britain, France, Russia, and later many other countries, waging a devastating war on a number of fronts. The United States remained neutral for much of the war, but anti-German sentiment increased when passenger and commercial ships with American interests began to be attacked and sunk, and when Great Britain produced a decoded telegram from the German foreign minister promising Mexico control of areas of the United States if it entered the war on the side of the Central Powers.

President Woodrow Wilson declared war on Germany in April of 1917, and the American assistance on the Western front helped to overwhelm the Central Powers despite the Russian withdrawal from the war in the spring of 1918. By November of the same year, the Central Powers had been defeated, and in January Wilson delivered his idealistic "Fourteen Points" statement about international conflict resolution. Instead of adhering to Wilson's ideas, however, the embittered Allied Powers signed punitive treaties with Germany, Austro-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire by 1919 that left these countries divided and in severe debt. The 1919 Treaty of Versailles also set up the League of Nations, a body intended to resolve international disputes, but opposition in the United States Senate blocked American entry into the organization.

The Dawn of the Jazz Age

In the years following World War I, the United States was beginning to enjoy the optimism and economic boom characteristic of the 1920s. Mass-produced goods and household technology were becoming available, and people were investing in the prosperous stock market. In the final period before the Eighteenth Amendment prohibiting alcohol took effect in early 1920, jazz music was popular and the social scene was notoriously flamboyant, particularly in large cities like New York. The beginning of the Jazz Age was also an important period for women's rights: women were increasingly involved in the social scene; they had a much larger presence in the workforce; and the Nineteenth Amendment, enacted in August of 1920, gave women the right to vote.

American Modernism

The literary movement of modernism is generally considered to have coincided with World War I, an event that caused many assumptions about the world to change drastically. Writers and artists across the western world, feeling that they could no

longer express themselves in old forms, responded with experimental techniques that borrowed from a variety of other movements, most notably post-impressionism, which dealt with a simplification of form in the visual arts, and naturalism, which tended to present a deterministic universe that involved a brutal struggle for survival.

Modernism is most commonly associated with Europe, and the nucleus of modernist writers lived in Paris, where Fitzgerald later moved, and with the Bloomsbury group living in London. Perhaps the most influential modernist writer was James Joyce, an Irish author who became known for his efforts to deal with a multiplicity of viewpoints that lead to an "epiphany," or sudden moment of truth and understanding, as well as his later use of the stream-of-consciousness style. There was also, however, a group of American modernist writers, including Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and John Dos Passos, from the "lost generation" of an age to fight in World War I. Although many of them lived in Paris at some point, these writers often approached the literary movement by dealing with American social and political themes and did not necessarily identify with European modernism.

A specifically American modernist identity is noticeable in *This Side of Paradise*, for example, when Amory mentions that he did not take to Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In fact, Amory tends to group all European authors into one and deny them all, from the patriotic English poet of World War I, Rupert Brooke, to the traditionalist English writer H. G. Wells, to the visionary Victorian poet Algernon Charles Swinburne, who was known for being profoundly at odds with his age. Although it is not at all clear that Fitzgerald is actually interested in disavowing all of European tradition, his first novel does reveal a desire to be uniquely new and to develop a distinctly American literary identity.

Critical Overview

Although it took two years of revision before Fitzgerald finally obtained a publishing contract for his first novel, *This Side of Paradise* was an immediate critical and popular success. As the anonymous article, "With College Men" in the *New York Times Book Review* of May 9, 1920, read, "The glorious spirit of abounding youth glows throughout this fascinating tale," and most reviews were similarly enthusiastic. Heywood Broun's April 11, 1920, review in the *New York Tribune* found the novel little more than a "self-conscious . . . stunt," but almost all other critics acknowledged Fitzgerald's great promise as a writer.

The novel briefly topped bestseller lists, and it was particularly popular among the young generation and in colleges. But Fitzgerald's success as a short story writer and the intrigue about his personal life were equally responsible for the subsequent success that earned him a reputation as an icon of the "lost generation." Critical opinion of Fitzgerald fluctuated when his next novel, *The Beautiful and the Damned*, was largely received as a disappointment and when *The Great Gatsby* was more successful in 1925. However, the author, and his first novel, generally remained in vogue with the public and the literary community until Fitzgerald's rapid decline in reputation and subsequent bout of alcoholism that began with the tepid reception of *Tender Is the Night* in 1934. From this point until Fitzgerald's death, *This Side of Paradise* sold few copies and was largely ignored by critics.

The revival of interest in Fitzgerald began to blossom after 1951, when Arthur Mizener's analytical biography of the writer attracted attention to him and his wife Zelda. From this point onward, Fitzgerald's works were incorporated into the canon of American literature to the point that he was, as of the early 2000s, viewed as one of the most important novelists of the twentieth century. *This Side of Paradise* was perhaps less highly esteemed than *The Great Gatsby* or *Tender Is the Night*, and critics tended to find it slightly naive and less a novel than a collection of short stories. It was nevertheless viewed as a landmark achievement of the Jazz Age by the ambitious young modernist writer, however, and critics continued to write about the novel from nearly all analytical perspectives.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1

Critical Essay #1

Trudell is a freelance writer with a bachelor's degree in English literature. In the following essay, Trudell discusses the significance of Monsignor Darcy and the theme of religion and tradition in This Side of Paradise*.*

Sigourney Fay, the person to whom Fitzgerald's novel is dedicated, was a brilliant priest whom Fitzgerald met while he was in preparatory school in New Jersey, and with whom he remained close friends until Father Fay's sudden death in 1919. Fay is, of course, the basis for the character Monsignor Darcy, and although the purpose of this essay is not to speculate about the particulars of Fitzgerald's real life and their impact on *This Side of Paradise*, it is worth noting that Fay made an extraordinary impression on Fitzgerald. Their discussions greatly affected the author's intellectual and artistic development, and Fay's premature death assumed a unique significance in Fitzgerald's symbolic world.

Monsignor Darcy's death, on the other hand, is not in any way premature or untimely. It is exactly in line with Amory's development and, coming as it does in the lines immediately preceding the novel's last chapter, "The Egotist Becomes a Personage," it allows Amory to complete what the novel terms his "education." Monsignor is Amory's father figure throughout the novel; while Mr. Blaine does not so much as make an appearance, Monsignor is introduced in the first chapter as Beatrice's true passionate lover, and Amory's mother predicts: "Amory will go to him one day, I know." With Monsignor's death, which represents, in symbolic terms, the death of the father, Amory's religious faith dies as well, and he is finally able to contemplate artistic and intellectual ideas outside the European tradition.

Amory and Monsignor get along immediately when they meet during Amory's first year at St. Regis and discover an intense affinity with each other. Their relationship remains close enough for Monsignor to constantly compare their similarities and even write that he considers Amory the "reincarnation" of himself. Monsignor's description of a recurring dream of his in a letter to Amory during the novel's "Interlude" is particularly enlightening on this subject:

I've enjoyed imagining that you were my son, that perhaps when I was young I went into a state of coma and begat you, and when I came to, had no recollection of it . . . it's the paternal instinct, Amory□celibacy goes deeper than the flesh. . . .

Sometimes I think that the explanation of our deep resemblance is some common ancestor.

Not only does this dream reinforce Monsignor's significance as Amory's father figure; it helps to establish the idea that Amory's deep connection to Monsignor has been passed down from an ancient tradition of spiritual, intellectual, and artistic ideas. Like many of Amory's relationships, Monsignor is chiefly important because of what he represents about Amory and Amory's relationship with the ancient European literary, cultural, and

religious tradition. Although Amory is still fairly ignorant of literature when he arrives at Princeton (he does not know who Oscar Wilde is, for example), his interest in "English and history" sparks at about the same time he meets Monsignor, and from then on the priest serves as the cultural and intellectual mentor that Amory never finds among the faculty at Princeton. Monsignor advises him on what to read, whom to idealize ("some such man as Leonardo da Vinci," for example), and which philosophies to follow.

There is, however, a growing sense that Monsignor and Amory's ideological connection is breaking apart. Monsignor's letter in the "Interlude," while Amory is in the army, is the first and perhaps most important signal of this break. Beginning by pointing out that, "you will never again be quite the Amory Blaine that I knew," Monsignor then highlights the widening gulf between their generations: "your generation is growing hard, much harder than mine ever grew," and the letter ends with the mysterious thought: "curiously alike we are . . . curiously unlike." In his last letter to Amory, Monsignor stresses that Amory's last letter was "not a bit like yourself," and it includes the statement, "Beware of losing yourself in the personality of another being, man or woman," which refers to Rosalind but is ironic because it could be applied to Monsignor as well. Then, after Monsignor's death, Amory appears to renounce the priest's religion and moral system, counting instead on a newly discovered philosophy of reliance on the self and one's inner convictions.

In this egotistical break from tradition, Amory goes so far as to declare that the books of previous generation were all lies, and it is in ideas like these that the widening difference between him and Monsignor becomes clear. A "reincarnation" of a figure like Monsignor in Amory's generation will not, it seems, have a very similar life to the priest at all, and this is in fitting with the new artistic movement's radical goals and convictions. During the penultimate scene of the novel, when Amory finds himself in a cemetery at "the golden beauty of four," Fitzgerald reminds the reader of Monsignor's description of giving out "the genial golden warmth of 4 P.M." when he first introduces Amory to the idea of "personage." Unlike a personage of Monsignor Darcy's generation, when the egotist of Amory's age becomes a personage, it is by disavowing the generations that came before.

In addition to its generational significance, Monsignor and Amory's relationship is a metaphor for the relationship between Europe and the United States before and after World War I. American modernist writers such as Fitzgerald and Hemingway were part of the generation involved in a bloody and devastating war in Europe that, many felt, was the culmination of all that was wrong with the European tradition. The war destroyed thousands of American soldiers; it contributed to many in Amory's generation believing the "Gods dead"; and it was a significant factor in the death of the transatlantic cultural elite. Introduced as "rather like an exiled Stuart king" and a "Turner sunset," which refers to the popular nineteenth-century English painter J. M. W. Turner, Monsignor's identity as an American with firm European roots is what leads to the necessity of his death in a novel that envisions the collapse of this tradition.

The great shock of World War I led many young readers to sympathize fully with Fitzgerald's metaphor for this political break. But Fitzgerald envisioned something even

more extensive than a break with Europe's politics and literary tradition; he very purposefully uses the image of a Catholic priest to represent the separation and, therefore, firmly connects it to a rejection of this faith. Indeed, the author's agenda is much more radical than the satire and frankness about upper class America that offended many readers, because he is rejecting the very basis of Christian faith and replacing it with a boundless egotism like Amory has. The last chapter of the novel makes this atheism explicit with certain phrases, such as "There was no God in his heart," and the stark newness and deep conviction of Amory's break from the past should make the reader doubt that this atheism is simply a temporary phase.

The chapter "The Supercilious Sacrifice," at the end of which Amory learns of Monsignor's death, is the key evidence of the central importance of atheism to the intellectual content of the novel. Amory's sacrifice by implicating himself with Jill, which he believes to be divinely inspired and later recognizes, in the form of something "featureless and indistinguishable" among the curtains, to be connected to Monsignor, is a religious sacrifice. However, it is not a selfless sacrifice as in the traditional Christian understanding; in fact, it is "supercilious," or disdainful and self-important, because Alec will "secretly hate [Amory] for having done so much for him," and because it is essentially a selfish endeavor. This is reinforced by the fact that the quotation that inspires Amory's action is an incorrect version of Luke 23:28, in which Jesus says, "weep not for me, but for yourselves, and for your children," and the fact that Amory leaves out the "for yourselves" in his version suggests that he misunderstands the place of the self in the sacrifice.

The point of Amory's selfish sacrifice, which is inspired by a religious impulse but turns out to be useless and misdirected, is that it results in the subheading, "The Collapse of Several Pillars." The last of these pillars is Monsignor Darcy and, with him, the pillar of religion in Amory's intellectual and moral life. As Fitzgerald goes on to discuss more overtly in the form of Amory's thoughts and conclusions in "The Egotist Becomes a Personage," as far as the modernist egoist is concerned, religion has no place in the philosophy of the younger American generation.

In his 1952 essay, "F. Scott Fitzgerald," Edmund Wilson famously describes *This Side of Paradise* as "a gesture of indefinite revolt," and this is true in the sense that the philosophical system offered as an alternative to the tradition represented by Monsignor is inconsistent and even incoherent. As Wilson points out, Fitzgerald's literary references are often uninformed, and many of Amory's intellectual conclusions have little substance. But the novel nevertheless has tremendous intellectual importance because its "gesture" is distinctly away from the European literary, political, and moral tradition. And one of the most important aspects of this revolt that is definite and substantial is its call for the modernist generation to turn away from religion.

Source: Scott Trudell, Critical Essay on *This Side of Paradise*, in *Novels for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2005.

Quotes

"So, while more or less fortunate little rich boys were defying governesses on the beach at Newport, or being spanked or tutored or read to from 'Do and Dare,' or 'Frank on the Mississippi,' Amory was biting acquiescent bell-boys in the Waldorf, outgrowing a natural repugnance to chamber music and symphonies, and deriving a highly specialized education from his mother." (Book 1, Chapter 1)

"There was, also, a curious strain of weakness running crosswise through his make-up . . . a harsh phrase from the lips of an older boy (older boys usually detested him) was liable to sweep him off his poise into surly sensitiveness, or timid stupidity . . . he was a slave to his own moods and he felt that though he was capable of recklessness and audacity, he possessed neither courage, perseverance, nor self-respect." (Book 1, Chapter 1)

"Those who were too obviously, too nervously at home were freshmen, for as each train brought a new contingent it was immediately absorbed into the hatless, white-shod, book-laden throng, whose function seemed to be to drift endlessly up and down the street, emitting great clouds of smoke from brand-new pipes. By afternoon Amory realized that now the newest arrivals were taking him for an upper classman, and he tried conscientiously to look both pleasantly blasy and casually critical, which was as near as he could analyze the prevalent facial expression." (Book 1, Chapter 2)

"Amory saw girls doing things that even in his memory would have been impossible: eating three-o'clock, after-dance suppers in impossible cafes, talking of every side of life with an air half of earnestness, half of mockery, yet with a furtive excitement that Amory considered stood for a real moral let-down. But he never realized how wide-spread it was until he saw the cities between New York and Chicago as one vast juvenile intrigue." (Book 1, Chapter 2)

"It was not for several months that Beatrice wrote Amory the full situation. The entire residue of the Blaine and O'Hara fortunes consisted of the place at Lake Geneva and approximately a half million dollars, invested now in fairly conservative six-per-cent holdings. In fact, Beatrice wrote that she was putting the money into railroad and street-car bonds as fast as she could conveniently transfer it."(Book 1, Chapter 3)

"'A personality is what you thought you were, what this Kerry and Sloane you tell me of evidently are. Personality is a physical matter almost entirely; it lowers the people it acts on - I've seen it vanish in a long sickness. But while a personality is active, it overrides 'the next thing.' Now a personage, on the other hand, gathers. He is never thought of apart from what he's done. He's a bar on which a thousand things have been hung - glittering things sometimes, as ours are; but he uses those things with a cold mentality back of them.'" (Book 1, Chapter 3)

"He could not sleep, so he turned on his reading-lamp and, taking down the "Kreutzer Sonata," searched it carefully for the germs of Burne's enthusiasm. Being Burne was

suddenly so much realer than being clever. Yet he sighed here were other possible clay feet." (Book1, Chapter 4)

"The last light fades and drifts across the land - the low, long land, the sunny land of spires; the ghosts of evening tune again their lyres and wander singing in a plaintive band down the long corridors of trees; pale fires echo the night from tower top to tower: Oh, sleep that dreams, and dream that never tires, press from the petals of the lotus flower something of this to keep, the essence of an hour." (Book 1, Chapter 4)

"This is the end of one thing: for better or worse you will never again be quite the Amory Blaine that I knew, never again will we meet as we have met, because your generation is growing hard, much harder than mine ever grew, nourished as they were on the stuff of the nineties." (Interlude)

"If ROSALIND could be spoiled the process would have been complete by this time, and as a matter of fact, her disposition is not all it should be; she wants what she wants when she wants it and she is prone to make every one around her pretty miserable when she doesn't get it--but in the true sense she is not spoiled. Her fresh enthusiasm, her will to grow and learn, her endless faith in the inexhaustibility of romance, her courage and fundamental honesty - these things are not spoiled." (Book 2, Chapter 1)

"'I can't, Amory. I can't be shut away from the trees and flowers, cooped up in a little flat, waiting for you. You'd hate me in a narrow atmosphere. I'd make you hate me.'" (Book 2, Chapter 1)

"As the new alcohol tumbled into his stomach and warmed him, the isolated pictures began slowly to form a cinema reel of the day before. Again he saw Rosalind curled weeping among the pillows, again he felt her tears against his cheek. Her words began ringing in his ears: 'Don't ever forget me, Amory - don't ever forget me - '" (Book 2, Chapter 2)

"'How'll I fit in?' he demanded. 'What am I for? To propagate the race? According to the American novels we are led to believe that the "healthy American boy" from nineteen to twenty-five is an entirely sexless animal. As a matter of fact, the healthier he is the less that's true. The only alternative to letting it get you is some violent interest. Well, the war is over; I believe too much in the responsibilities of authorship to write just now; and business, well, business speaks for itself. It has no connection with anything in the world that I've ever been interested in, except a slim, utilitarian connection with economics. What I'd see of it, lost in a clerkship, for the next and best ten years of my life would have the intellectual content of an industrial movie.'" (Book 2, Chapter 2)

"For years afterward when Amory thought of Eleanor he seemed still to hear the wind sobbing around him and sending little chills into the places beside his heart. The night when they rode up the slope and watched the cold moon float through the clouds, he lost a further part of him that nothing could restore; and when he lost it he lost also the power of regretting it. Eleanor was, say, the last time that evil crept close to Amory

under the mask of beauty, the last weird mystery that held him with wild fascination and pounded his soul to flakes." (Book 2, Chapter 3)

"All the way back she talked haltingly about herself, and Amory's love waned slowly with the moon. At her door they started from habit to kiss good night, but she could not run into his arms, nor were they stretched to meet her as in the week before. For a minute they stood there, hating each other with a bitter sadness. But as Amory had loved himself in Eleanor, so now what he hated was only a mirror. Their poses were strewn about the pale dawn like broken glass. The stars were long gone and there were left only the little sighing gusts of wind and the silences between . . . but naked souls are poor things ever, and soon he turned homeward and let new lights come in with the sun." (Book 2, Chapter 3)

"He was in an eddy again, a deep, lethargic gulf, without desire to work or write, love or dissipate. For the first time in his life he rather longed for death to roll over his generation, obliterating their petty fevers and struggles and exultations. His youth seemed never so vanished as now in the contrast between the utter loneliness of this visit and that riotous, joyful party of four years before. Things that had been the merest commonplaces of his life then, deep sleep, the sense of beauty around him, all desire, had flown away and the gaps they left were filled only with the great listlessness of his disillusion." (Book 2, Chapter 4)

"He dropped the paper and lay down on his bed with a frightened, sinking sensation in the pit of his stomach. She was gone, definitely, finally gone. Until now he had half unconsciously cherished the hope deep in his heart that some day she would need him and send for him, cry that it had been a mistake, that her heart ached only for the pain she had caused him. Never again could he find even the somber luxury of wanting her - not this Rosalind, harder, older - nor any beaten, broken woman that his imagination brought to the door of his forties - Amory had wanted her youth, the fresh radiance of her mind and body, the stuff that she was selling now once and for all. So far as he was concerned, young Rosalind was dead." (Book 2, Chapter 4)

"It was not so bad where there were only men or else only women; it was when they were vilely herded that it all seemed so rotten. It was some shame that women gave off at having men see them tired and poor - it was some disgust that men had for women who were tired and poor. It was dirtier than any battle-field he had seen, harder to contemplate than any actual hardship molded of mire and sweat and danger, it was an atmosphere wherein birth and marriage and death were loathsome, secret things." (Book 2, Chapter 5)

"Usually, on nights like this, for there had been many lately, he could escape from this consuming introspection by thinking of children and the infinite possibilities of children--he leaned and listened and he heard a startled baby awake in a house across the street and lend a tiny whimper to the still night. Quick as a flash he turned away, wondering with a touch of panic whether something in the brooding despair of his mood had made a darkness in its tiny soul. He shivered. What if some day the balance was overturned, and he became a thing that frightened children and crept into rooms in the dark,

approached dim communion with those phantoms who whispered shadowy secrets to the mad of that dark continent upon the moon. . . ." (Book 2, Chapter 5)

Adaptations

A book-on-tape of *This Side of Paradise* is available unabridged from Bookcassette Sales, 1997.

Topics for Further Study

This Side of Paradise includes a number of poems by Amory and other characters, such as Eleanor. Reread these poems and discuss their style and themes. What role do they play in the novel, and what is their relationship to Amory's intellectual development? What do you think of the poems? Why do you think Fitzgerald includes them? How do they go about expressing themes such as traditionalism, radicalism, paganism, or other themes that you can see in them? Is their style similar to that of the novel itself? Are they modernist poems? Explain why or why not.

Fitzgerald's personal life has long fascinated critics. Read Arthur Mizener's biographical work *The Far Side of Paradise* (1951) or another biography of Fitzgerald paying particular attention to his life before 1920, and discuss how what you have read affects your understanding of *This Side of Paradise*. How are the personalities and experiences in Fitzgerald's life directly or indirectly included in his first novel? Discuss why you think Fitzgerald used certain events from his life in the novel, and how you think critics should treat knowledge of an author's life when they are discussing his or her writings.

Amory is characterized as a self-absorbed egotist in the novel. Do you think this is an undesirable trait? What are its positive aspects? By the end of the novel, does Amory think it is undesirable? Does Fitzgerald? Do you think Amory's personality will change? Why do you think Fitzgerald wrote a book about such a character? How is egotism important to the novel's place in literary history?

Two of the most important scenes in *This Side of Paradise* are written in the format of a play. Find a cast of characters and act out these scenes. Afterwards, discuss how this experience adds to your understanding of the novel, as well as how these scenes affect the rest of the book. Why you think Fitzgerald chose to use the dramatic form? Is it a success, and does it work well in the book? Why or why not?

Compare and Contrast

1920: Many young soldiers have come home to the United States from a devastating war abroad to a mood of increasing isolationism and a desire to enjoy a prosperous economy.

Today: American soldiers remain in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the United States military remains engaged in international initiatives, although they are nowhere near the scale of World War I.

1920: The younger generation in the United States shocks parents with kissing and flirting that was very liberal for the time, as displayed in Fitzgerald's novel.

Today: Although the United States has the highest rate of teen pregnancy in the western industrialized world and teenagers in the early 2000s might not find the romance in *This Side of Paradise* very shocking, younger generations are probably not any more sexually liberal than their parents were at their age.

1920: Private Ivy League universities such as Princeton are elitist institutions dominated by and populated with the upper class.

Today: Financial aid and diversity initiatives have made Ivy League colleges somewhat more accessible to high-achieving lower and middle class students.

1920: Women make up one-fourth of the workforce (a dramatic increase from before World War I) and begin to vote for the first time.

Today: Women make up nearly half of the workforce and show an increasing presence in managerial and professional positions.

What Do I Read Next?

Fitzgerald's most famous novel, *The Great Gatsby* (1925), is the story of the rise and fall of Jay Gatsby together with the boredom, seduction, and moral irresponsibility of the American aristocracy.

Algernon Charles Swinburne's *Selected Poems* (1987), edited by L. M. Findlay, is an excellent introduction to the nineteenth-century visionary poet who refused to be categorized into his time.

Ernest Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast* (1964) is a compelling autobiographical account of the expatriate modernist writing community living in Paris in the 1920s, and it includes stories of Fitzgerald and his wife Zelda during their time in Europe.

The Time Machine (1895), by H. G. Wells, is a science fiction novel about an inventor who claims to have traveled to the distant future to learn in what direction nineteenth-century ideas are taking humankind, and its political and social commentary influenced Fitzgerald.

Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927) is a brilliant modernist novel that, like *This Side of Paradise*, is divided into two parts in order to dramatize the political, social, and artistic break from the past that followed World War I.

Key Questions

Many readers have found in this youthful performance by Fitzgerald a sense of the author's testing his talent, trying to determine which narrative strategies "work" and which fail. Discussion could focus on the ways in which the author seems to be attempting various approaches to the task of creating a worthy text: for example, a quote from "Casey Jones," the use of subheads (as with "The Philosophy of the Slicker"), and the inclusion of "poetic" passages at the close of chapters (in italics).

Since the book is clearly "experimental," some thought could be given to the question of its length. Given the tightness of a The Gatsby (1925), readers, when considering This Side of Paradise, might consider whether the novel is too long (more than twice the length of Gatsby) and, if so, what parts could be excised, without damage to the thematic effects.

When thinking of characterization, readers often try to judge whether a given personage in a novel is truly "round" or simply "flat," in E. M.

Forster's terms. For instance, are the female characters truly "developed" or simply convenient devices in the creation of Amory's personality and experience?

1. Is Amory's attempt to achieve "personage" comparable to the efforts, sometimes seen today, of many people to attain "self-actualization," or a similar advanced state of personality development?

2. Is the book a genuine bildungsroman? Is the "quest" theme adequately developed?

3. Are the digressive "asides" of verse and drama too distracting to allow a clear grasp of the text? Is the plot excessively episodic?

4. Is the picture of college life in the 1920s too idealized? Is the notion of a true "liberal education" so outmoded that Fitzgerald's vision seems like ancient history — or, is it still relevant today?

5. How might Amory's relationships with Rosalind and with Eleanor be contrasted? Do the surnames Connage and Savage suggest any symbolic intent by the author, such as "to connote, or mean" and "untamed"?

6. Does the element of Catholicism in the novel seem fully sincere (especially in view of Fitzgerald's own lapse of commitment to his faith)? Does the element provide an added dimension of moral significance to the book?

Further Study

Bryer, Jackson, Ruth Prigozy, and Milton R. Stern, eds., *F. Scott Fitzgerald in the Twenty-First Century*, University of Alabama Press, 2003.

This collection of critical essays, presented at the F. Scott Fitzgerald conference at Princeton University in 1996, offers a variety of new approaches to Fitzgerald's work.

Eble, Kenneth E., ed., *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Collection of Criticism*, McGraw-Hill, 1973.

Eble presents a useful collection of criticism on Fitzgerald, including the key essays from the 1960s and early 1970s.

Miller, James E., Jr., *The Fictional Technique of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, Nijhoff, 1957.

Miller provides a sophisticated analysis of Fitzgerald's style and overall career.

Mizener, Arthur, *The Far Side of Paradise*, rev. ed., Houghton Mifflin, 1965.

Winner of the National Book Award, this biographical and critical study of Fitzgerald is widely influential and highly respected.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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