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UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

THE TREATMENT OF ADOLESCENCE
IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LITERATURE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

Of the Graduate School of the University of Louisville

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Of Master of Arts

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by

Goldie Mae Fertig

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INTRODUCTION

The scope of fiction treating adolescence in contemporary American fiction was found, upon investigation, to be so extensive that it would have been unwise to attempt to analyze it in its entirety; consequently it was necessary to put certain limitations upon the range of study. Thus, certain arbitrary exclusions were made: (1) novels written by any other than American authors; (2) novels written by women authors; (3) novels about adolescent girls; (4) novels about foreign adolescents; and (5) novels having the scene laid in a foreign country even though written by American authors.

Even with this limitation, it was still necessary to establish certain standards for selection. Standards adopted were: (1) inclusion only of authors whose fiction presented serious treatment of adolescence; (2) inclusion of authors representative of different sections of the country; and (3) inclusion only of authors representative of the period between wars.

This selection automatically eliminated (1) authors of the elder generation, such as Theodore Dreiser, Edgar Lee Masters, and Sherwood Anderson; (2) books dealing predominantly with childhood on the one hand and with young manhood on the other, such as Farrell's A World I

Never Made and Judgment Day and Fitzgerald's The Beautiful and the Damned; (3) nostalgia for youth such as Robert T. Coffin's Lost Paradise; (4) sensational episode as is found in Norman Lindsay's Every Mother's Son and in Dan Wickenden's two novels The Running of the Deer and Walk Like a Mortal; (5) specialized scene, as Phillip Stevenson's Gospel According to St. Luke's and J. T. Foote's Change of Idols; and (6) mystery and adventure as Edwin Granberry's Erl King and Edgar Lee Master's Mitch Miller and Kit O'Brien.

The application of these standards enabled a sifting down of some fifty books to six books by five authors representative of five milieus: (1) Floyd Dell (1887), Moon-Calf (1920), adolescence of a Mid-Western bohemian; (2) Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (1896-1940), This Side of Paradise (1921), adolescence of a Mid-Western Princetonian; (3) Thomas Wolfe (1900-1938), Look Homeward Angel (1929), adolescence of a southern mountain rebel; (4) Vardis Fisher (1895), In Tragic Life (1932), adolescence of a western frontiersman; and (5) James T. Farrell (1904), Young Lonigan (1932), adolescence of an Irish Catholic type-character of a metropolis; and Father and Son (1940), adolescence of an Irish Catholic personage of a metropolis.

The method of discussion of these authors will be (1) summary of pertinent facts about the author; (2) comparison of the fictional character with the author; and (3) a study of the more serious problems of adolescence treated in the fiction, that is, family, institutions, associates, and sex.

The method determined the organization of the chapters by individual authors rather than by topics. These are presented in chronological order in order to give a sense of the literary movement from 1920 to 1940 as reflected in the treatment of adolescence.

CHAPTER I

FLOYD DELL'S MOON-CALF

CHAPTER I

FLOYD DELL'S MOON-CALF

Adolescence in a Mid-Western Town

The problem of this chapter is to discuss Moon-Calf, 1920, by Floyd Dell, to discover his view of adolescent problems as portrayed by his fiction. Moon-Calf is the first of two novels--the sequel is Briary-Bush, 1921--in which Dell goes on from the problems of childhood and youth to those of young manhood.

Floyd Dell was chosen as a representative of the early 1920's along with Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald, because both authors give significant treatment of adolescence of that period. Dell's treatment is significant because it interprets adolescence from a definite point of view--that of a small-town member of the middle class developing into a Bohemian rebel but coming to look back on his adolescence as that of a moon-calf. The Briary-Bush was omitted in this discussion because it places the emphasis on young manhood rather than on adolescence.

I. THE AUTHOR

The materials available on Floyd Dell are an anonymous article in the American Bookman, "Floyd Dell,"¹

1. Anonymous, "Floyd Dell," American Bookman, March, 1923, pp. 65-71.

1925, which presents all the essential facts about Dell; an autobiography, Homecoming,² 1933, an elaboration of his novel, Moon-Calf, which is itself heavily autobiographical.³

Dell moved from Barry, Illinois, his home-town, to Davenport, Iowa, where he started his career as a journalist; from there he went to Chicago, where he continued this work; from Chicago he went to New York where he became an editor and an author.

Dell and George Cram Cook, known to a small group then as a novelist, became the centers of a small society devoted to art. Dell and Cook had met in Davenport and for a year or so they were partners on a truck farm. Their vision of living from the farm and writing soon faded; they were unsuccessful. Among the group around these two was Sherwood Anderson who hails Dell as his discoverer. Other members of the group were Theodore Dreiser on his visits to Chicago, Vachel Lindsay and Carl Sandburg, yet unknown to fame, and the little Theater Company with its group. The group disintegrated

2. Floyd Dell, Homecoming (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1933), 368 pp.

3. See infra, p. 4. A portrait of Dell by Sinclair Lewis, American Bookman, May 1921, p. 245, adds nothing essential. For further references see Fred B. Millett, Contemporary American Authors (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1940).

as its members left Chicago.

Dell went from Chicago to New York, became editor of "The Masses," lived in Greenwich Village and produced one-act plays. They were presented by the Liberal Club in the village and were in a sense, the means that initiated the little theater movement in New York. An offspring of this club was the Washington Square Players' organization, which gave birth in time to the Provincetown Players and the Theater Guild.

As editor of "The Masses" which opposed the war, he also wrote scathing articles published in another socialist magazine, "The New Review," attacking German imperialism. He was indicted along with others for criticising the government; the specific charge was an article defending conscientious objectors; however, when he himself was drafted, he did not become a conscientious objector. Dell explains this deviation from his course in his autobiography:

When after The Masses trial, I was called up as a conscript, I offered no conscientious objections to a war which, as I felt, had now become a war against the chief enemy of Soviet Russia, and I was sent to the training camp at Spartanburg, South Carolina.⁴

He was psychoanalyzed during 1917 and 1918 and married B. Marie Gage in 1919; his first novel, Moon-Calf

4. Dell, Homecoming, p. 321.

was published in 1920.

In 1929 the Meguire Prize for comedy was awarded to Little Accident, written by Dell and Thomas Mitchell. In 1937 he was working on a W.P.A. job in Washington.

Moon-Calf was his first novel, although he had previously written some plays and essays. Since then he has published and edited about fifteen books in addition to short stories and a number of essays and studies.

The main lines of his life, then are these: (1) he moves from a small town to the metropolis; (2) he becomes successively journalist, editor, and author; (3) he affiliates with George Uram Cook and the Chicago group; (4) he becomes psychoanalyzed and settles down into married life.

II. COMPARISON OF FICTIONAL CHARACTER WITH THE AUTHOR

According to the anonymous article Moon-Calf is autobiographical.

His own early life is more or less given to us in his first novel. He was born, in fact, near Davenport, Iowa, he did work in a candy factory, then on a newspaper--from which he was discharged not for his own short-comings but because the house which the proprietor gave his daughter for a wedding present cost more than the estimate and necessitated retrenchment--and he did leave Davenport for Chicago, where he obtained a job as a reporter on the "Evening Post."⁵

5. Anonymous, op. cit., p. 65.

A comparison of Felix Fay with the author bears this out. Felix Fay, the moon-calf, comes from a small western town, works as a newspaper reporter, is interested in socialism, writes his first novel living on a farm--but destroys it--then moves on to become a Chicago Bohemian, gets married and settles down. Floyd Dell, the author, similarly comes from a small western town, works as a reporter on a paper, moves on to Chicago Bohemia, experiments with living on a farm and writing, moves on to New York, gets married and settles down.

The early scene of Moon-Calf is laid in western Illinois; Felix Fay, the hero, spends his childhood in the middle-west. After the dissolution of the Fay family, due to the mother's illness, the hero went to live with his married brother, Ed, in Port Royal, where, at the end of school, he worked in a candy factory. After Christmas he was laid off and subsequently obtained employment as a reporter on the "Port Royal News." He was discharged from this position because he had used the word "Jew" in an article; his employer was a Jew and objected to the use of the word in his paper. He was rehired on the merits of a human interest story, but discharged later again.

Floyd Dell, the author, was born near Barry, Illinois, 1887. In his youth he worked in a candy factory,

and later became a reporter on a newspaper, from which he was discharged because of a tendency of the paper to economize.

Felix Fay, the moon-calf, involved in a love affair with Janet Tenet and having a desire to marry, looked determinedly for another place, without success. Disappointed and desiring to write, he went with Tom Alden to the latter's farm and remained for a while. Janet, despairing of Felix's financial success and ability to marry, accepts a wealthier suitor, and Felix, dejected, leaves for Chicago.

BRIARY-BUSH continues the story of Felix's life in Chicago. Here he obtained work first as reporter, then as dramatic critic for the "Chronicle." The job was as substitute for another editor, Hawkins, who was away on leave of absence writing a play. The thought of losing his job on Hawkins' return worried him some; also the possibility of going to New York suggested itself.

. . . and what if Hawkins did come back and take away his laurels? There were other jobs in the world. If not in Chicago, then--yes, in New York--

It didn't make any difference what happened. He had been silly to worry about anything. Rose-Ann was right. One must live fearlessly . . .6

Floyd Dell, the author, likewise, left Davenport for Chicago where he obtained employment as reporter for the "Evening Post." Later he became editor of the "Friday Literary Review" of the "Post."

Other parallel experiences of both hero and author were that both tried living on a farm and writing; both were social misfits, and both became more normal characters in later years.

Felix's farm experience has been mentioned before. His first novel, which he did not publish, but burned, --written on the farm--shocked Tom Alden's cousin as did Dell's frank and often rude remarks the society of his time.

"Is that nasty young man Felix Fay really a friend of yours? I think he had better leave Port Royal quick. The story of that horrible chapter is all over town and --well, if you knew the things Gloria was saying about him?"⁷

The author similarly did not get along with people. Coming in late to a gathering of which George Burman Foster was host and at which an artist was giving a talk on art, Dell seated himself inconspicuously near the door. At the close of the lecture the speaker offered to answer questions; Dell shocked the guests by asking, "What is the difference between art and apple-butter?"

⁷. Ibid., p. 19.

It established him as rude, insulting, egotistic, unprincipled, and dangerous.

Both the character and the author became less radical later; both married and settled down. After Felix and Rose-Ann made up their quarrel, they decided to build a house near the sand dunes; they argued that other people built houses; so why shouldn't they? It is said of Dell, the author:

With the publication of his first novel, Moon-Calf, some of his friends were surprised to find no trace of the ardent rebel, the stringent social critic that they knew, in its pages. The rebel, the social critic appears, it is true, in the person of the hero, Felix Fay--but the novel seemed to be rather a criticism of him than a justification. . . .

. . . the author . . . is now enjoying an old-fashioned domesticity at Croton-on-Hudson, with his wife and son, Anthony . . . he is said to appear on social occasions in conventional dinner-clothes.⁸

Events told in his autobiography which he did not make use of in his fiction are (1) personal contacts, and (2) psychoanalysis.

Among the persons with whom he came in contact that do not appear in the novel are the authors, Susan Glaspell, Arnold Bennett, Theodore Dreiser, Eugene O'Neill, Louis Untermeyer, Edna Millay, Arthur Davison Ficke, Sherwood Anderson, Upton Sinclair, Vachel Lindsay, and Carl Sandburg; editors, Llewellyn Jones and Lucian Cary;

8. Anonymous, op. cit., p. 70.

and socialist leader, Margaret Sanger.

His psychoanalysis, presumably, was to aid him in adjusting his sex-life. Divorced by his wife after three love affairs, these were followed by numerous others. Desiring to marry, even before he met B. Marie Gage, he sought the aid of a psychoanalyst. About his psychoanalysis, he says:

My psychoanalyst gave me no interpretation of my dreams, but let me interpret them myself; nor did he tell me I had a terrific mother-complex, and was narcissistic, had a great deal of unconscious homosexuality, and a variety of other frightful-sounding traits; I found all that out myself and told him. He offered me no advice on my private life; it was my own idea that I should not have any love affairs while I was being analyzed--though this decision was not carried out with complete consistency.⁹

Fictional episodes not occurring in his real life are the friendships with Wheels and Rose Hendron. Wheels represents any of the older men who were willing to give time and fatherly advice to youths. Rose Hendron was put into the novel at the suggestion of a woman that a girl-character be introduced. She represents an attic dream-girl, a personification of his day-dreams.

In commenting on his novel in his autobiography, Dell said that some of the characters were invented, as Wheels; Felix Fay was represented as a sensitive, shy, lonely youth, and not as the aggressive fellow he was sometimes, partly because of faded memory; and his family

9. Dell, Homecoming, p. 295.

he broke up so as to avoid talking about it. As to the identity of the characters, he said that when nobody would be hurt, he merely changed people's names, and described them exactly as they were; but his sweetheart at the end of the book (Joyce Tennant) he disguised thoroughly, giving her the appearance of B. Marie Gage, whom he found it a pleasure to describe.

Conclusions to be drawn on the basis of this comparison are (1) that the fiction is actually heavily autobiographical; (2) that Moon-Calf is a frank account of the youth of a mid-western radical; (3) that his radicalism is viewed largely as social and psychological maladjustment; (4) that his intellectual radicalism, however, is not so regarded.

This background serves to explain Dell's treatment of the major problems of adolescence.

III. TREATMENT OF MAJOR PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENCE

1. Treatment of Family

The treatment of family turns on (1) economic insecurity; (2) indifference to culture; (3) mother-dependence. It is a picture of a talented boy outgrowing a lower middle-class background.

The immediate cause of the break-up was the illness of the mother, but this disruption seemed the logical climax of a number of factors. The father's

quarrelsomeness, sternness, and inability to get along with people in a business capacity was the forerunner of reduced financial circumstances. This in turn caused frequent movings which contributed to the instability and restlessness of the members of the family. The financial insecurity of the family forced the mother to take over some of the household duties herself and thus deprive her children of her influence.

They had moved into a large house in the middle of town, and they had a hard-fisted hired girl to help with the work, but there was more to be done than two women could do. And the children, who had at first shared with her their griefs and hopes and tasks, began to grow up, out of her confidence, out of her life. They let her cook and wash and mend for them but they kept their secrets to themselves. They were no longer, in the way they had been, hers.¹⁰

The father's disregard for the finer arts, although the mother, a former school-teacher, favored them, was the predominating influence in the Fay home. When the children were small, Mrs. Fay had said they should have a piano. Mr. Fay's answer was in the form of a hilarious war story; --he was an ex-soldier and delighted in telling boisterous stories--the story ended in a Yankee's using the piano stool to smash the piano to splinters.

¹⁰ Floyd Dell, Moon-Calf (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1920), p. 20.

Hed played for an hour, I guess, and we all sat absolutely quiet listening to him, and some of the boys was crying.

And then when he finished he got up and swung the piano stool over his head and smashed that piano to smithereens!

"Oh! don't!" Ellen cried out, horrified.

"Well," said Adam, "it wasn't me did it--and anyway, why should we leave it for those rebels? There wasn't much left of the whole place when we got through with it."

"But why the piano?"

As a matter of fact, Adam had been shocked by the destruction of the piano, at such a moment at least. But he felt obliged to take a strong masculine attitude on the subject.

"A piano's no different from anything else," he said.

"You wouldn't do such a thing," she flashed.

He laughed. "Oh, I don't know about that."

"You wouldn't," she reasserted, but she was silent all the way home. She returned several times to the subject on succeeding days, until he declared that he was sick of hearing about that "Gol-darn'rebel piano."¹¹

Ed's talent and desire to paint were undeveloped and were treated indifferently; Felix found the symbols of this frustration hanging on the wall of Ed's house in Port Royal--the picture of a wounded hawk, falling from the sky and a copy of someone's celebrated painting of Pharoah's horses, two of his former paintings.

11. Ibid., p. 17.

Because of the alienation of her older children, the mother had wished for a baby to take their place and Felix was the fulfillment of this wish. It was possibly due to the estrangement of the older children that she was so solicitous of his welfare, waiting up for him if he were out at night, asking where he was going, where he went, what he was looking for, etc. Felix resented this maternal anxiety. It was this desire to keep him dependent upon her that forced him to wear curls until he was eight years old.

Of his odd appearance with his belated curls Felix was utterly unconscious. He might have worn them forever without protest. But his brothers criticised, his sister mocked, and at last when he was eight years old, and had been chosen to "speak a piece" at a school entertainment, his father said that the curls must go. The piece was "Sheridan's Ride," and his father said that it would look silly for a boy who looked more like a girl than a boy to speak it.¹²

Felix received some of the encouragement the older children were denied. Ed was working in the mill when Felix was a child, and the older brother was kind to the young one, bringing him pictures which the child stored away greedily, pieces of bright-colored woollens, and taking note of progressive signs. Jim, also kind to Felix, contributed his interest.

Encouragement was given by all the family except

12. Ibid., p. 47.

Ann.

"I can read! I can read!" he cried.

Hardly less excited than Felix, she [the mother] sat down with him, and he demonstrated the use of his new magic power before her eyes.

"You shall go to school this fall," she said, and kissed him fondly.

When his father came home, the demonstration was repeated for his benefit. "You will be going to school before we know it," said his father, patting Felix's head.

Jim said he was a little scholar, and that he would have to learn to keep his face clean when he went to school.

Ed gave him five pennies.

Only Ann refused to be an audience to his accomplishment.¹³

It was generally accepted that Felix was to get an education.

The social status of the family, the middle-class level, without doubt, influenced Felix's later life and caused him to look with displeasure on a future as a factory-hand.

He must live in the world of reality. And that meant that he must go to work. At what? But here realism failed him.

He could not choose between different kinds of work, because he hated them all. He would work at anything. And that meant going to work in some factory.

13. Ibid., p. 36.

He envisaged himself as a factory-hand. He had no illusions about being able to rise from the ranks. He would remain a factory-hand, and an ill-paid one. . . . He saw himself falling in love with some girl at a factory; marrying her, having children, and living in a little house like his brother's just like all the others on both sides of the street up and down the block. His backyard could be different if he wanted to plant a garden there, like his brother's. His brother's garden was better than any of his neighbours'. Felix realized that his garden would be different, too-- it would be the worst garden on the block in which he lived. It would be worse because he would be thinking of poetry instead of potatoes. And if he thought of poetry his pay envelope would be too small for his wife to get along on, and she would nag him. By that time she would have ceased to be pretty . . .¹⁴

The uneasiness that he felt at the dinner in his honor given by Mrs. Thomas Alden and sponsored by Helen Raymond, was due to the more elegant surroundings than those to which he was accustomed; his ignorance of the use of the cutlery as well as his refusal of salad-dressing, because he did not know what it was, were also due to lack of home-training.

This lack of being at ease remained with Felix through the sequel to Moon-Calf, Briary-Bush; it is manifested in his dislike for meeting new people, and in his inability to dance with certain people, while with other more kindred spirits he could dance enjoyably and gracefully. He never became fully at ease in the

14. Ibid., p. 165.

practice of social conventions.

2. Treatment of Institutions and Beliefs

Dell's treatment of institutions and beliefs turns on his hero's adoption of a "radical" outlook in place of the conventional one; i.e., (1) rejection of the Baptist religion in favor of atheism; (2) secular education in socialistic activity; (3) the library and school as a means of self-education.

Atheism came upon Felix rather suddenly. He explained to Stephen Frazer that the source of it was joining the church. He had caught cold when he was baptized, had been confined to his home for a month, and had read a book brought to him by the minister refuting the higher criticism. He explained as follows:

"It began with my joining the church," he said. "There was a boy at school that I was chumming with--Walter Edwards, you know him--and he wanted me to go to Sunday School with him at the First Baptist Church down here. I went, and it was rather interesting, so I kept on going. Then the whole class was going to join church, and they wanted me to join too. I didn't see any reason why I shouldn't--so I did. And I was baptized, and caught cold, and had to stay at home a month. And the minister came to see me, and left a book for me to read. It was a volume of sermons refuting the higher criticism. I had never heard of the higher criticism before, but the more I read the more it appealed to me. I read the book three times--and made notes on the margins of the pages as I read. The third time finished me. I was what the book called an infidel. . . . And that's all," he finished.¹⁵

15. Ibid., p. 114.

Socialism had the force of a religion with him. He may have become a convert through his extensive reading--he was introduced to the works of Robert G. Ingersoll by Stephen Frazer, and he learned about the existence of a socialistic party from Margaret, a factory employee in Vichley; --certainly his early instability could have influenced his views.

The benefits he derived from his socialist activity were chiefly social and educational, participating in the programs and attending the many social events of the Vogelsangs; also it again brought him in contact with Tom Alden, with whom he had common views and interests.

Although Felix did not graduate from high school, it played an important part in his life. It focused attention on his literary ability and brought him recognition. A poem he was revising was discovered by his history teacher; through him it fell into the hands of Helen Raymond and there followed a period of poetry composition that challenged his talent. A poem of his, "Ballad of the Moors' Expulsion," was accepted for the World's Fair Book, a "magnificent volume in green tooled leather," and Felix enjoyed the appreciation accorded it.

The period of greatest development and most activity for the boy had occurred previously in Vichley

at the Jefferson School. Felix had attracted public attention when he spoke in favor of forming a literary and athletic club.

But it did not embarrass Felix. For the first time since he had first come to Jefferson School, he felt at home. He knew all about meetings. He had read Hill's Manual on the subject. So when no one responded to the Principal's invitation to get up and speak, he rose unabashed and talked five minutes. He spoke of the desirability of forming a permanent organization, to express the spirit of Jefferson School, to enable them to get better acquainted with each other, and to develop their physical and mental "potentialities." The roomful of boys and girls listened in awed silence. They were not aware that Jefferson School had a spirit to express, they all, except Felix, knew each other quite well, they had developed painfully and unwillingly all the potentialities they thought they could stand. They only wanted to play baseball and basketball. Nevertheless, after their first shock of seeing some one do something that wasn't done, namely, get up and make a speech, they felt constrained to admire and applaud his nerve.¹⁶

He subsequently became chairman of a committee, president of the organization, engaging in debates and taking part in a play given to raise money for the organization. The dark hour came when a dispute arose as to whether the money should be spent for the library or athletic equipment; the majority decided against him in favor of athletic equipment and Felix became a dejected victim of his organization.

The library was the formative force of Felix's early and adolescent life. Going to the library was a

16. Ibid., p. 102.

large part of his recreation and it was also the means of his acquaintanceship with Stephen Frazer and Helen Raymond.

It was only when she began to talk of books that his tongue untied itself. He discoursed eloquently of his enthusiasms. In poetry--when she had succeeded in drawing him away from biology and ethnology--he showed singular gaps in his reading. He had read all of Southey and nothing of Keats! Of Shelley, he liked best the *Masque of Anarchy*; the *Sensitive Plant* had bored him, and he had never finished it. He disliked Shakespeare. He had a curious admiration for Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. He had never heard of W. B. Yeats; yes, he had, too--only he had supposed the name was pronounced "Yeets."¹⁷

His intimacy with the library goes back to early childhood. It was after his second year at school that he discovered the library and began visiting it frequently.

Then one day he picked up on the counter a book whose pictures interested him; he clung to it, and was reluctant to take the *Oliver Optic* book which the librarian had ready for him. The librarian glanced at the book, smiled, and said, "You don't want that book--it's too old for you." --A wicked idea came into Felix's head, and swallowing hard, he asked, "Could I take it for--for my mother?"

"Oh, certainly," said the librarian, and gave him both books. After that, Felix carried home two books each time, one of some standard series for children, and one wildly experimental choice; the strangest of these choices was a volume of *Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy*,¹⁸ and the most fascinating of them *Les Misérables*.¹⁸

In summary, socialism was a philosophy of great

17. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

force in Felix Fay's life and he remained loyal to its principles through adolescence and young manhood. Atheism, which he professed, plays a less important part in the formation of his ideals. The library is the most educative force in his life, while the school offers the means of self-development.

3. Treatment of Associates

His treatment of associates emphasizes the contacts instrumental to his new education. Felix's male associates can be classed into two groups: (1) older men to whom he was attracted, and (2) youths of his own age. Friendship with both groups was based on common interest; with Tom Alden it was literature and socialistic theories; with Franz Vogelsang it was socialism; with Wheels it was philosophy; and with the youth Stephen Frazer, it was atheism.

Felix's first meeting with Tom Alden, arranged by Helen Raymond, engendered nothing. Their friendship began when they met again at a free thinkers' meeting, Felix as a reporter for the "News" and Tom as an auditor. When Felix suggested the "Monist Society" as a name for the organization, it was heartily applauded by Tom and their friendship was renewed. They discovered a mutual friend in Mrs. Miller, who humorously labelled the new

society "the Moonist Society" with them as the chief "Moonists." This pun may help to explain the title, in part at least. In subsequent visits to Tom's garret room they discussed women, literature, and socialism. Later, when Felix lost his job on the "News," the two escaped to Tom's farm in the country, each with the intention of writing a novel.

Felix had introduced himself to Vogelsang after overhearing a conversation between him and another man about socialism. The casual acquaintance became more intimate after contacting each other at the meetings. Vogelsang was a leader in the organization and he managed to have Felix nominated to a programme committee with Comrade Emily Ross, in which capacity Felix engaged in debates and took part on programs. Vogelsang characterized himself as well as Felix when he criticised some of the latter's poetry.

"That is why," pursued Comrade Vogelsang, "you have come to me--to be told the truth. You have been mooning about writing verses about life, instead of living. You have been afraid to live. Most people are. Something stands between them and life. Not only economic conditions: something else--a shadow, a fear. Perhaps it is safer not to try, they think. So do you. These poems are your consolations for not living. That is why I called you an old maids' poet. If this young man is content with nothing, why shouldn't I be? That is what they think when they read your poems. That is why they like your poems. You have a future--a great future--as a consoler of weak souls. If you just go ahead, you will become famous. But I don't think you will. I don't think you want to be a--"

"'A pet lamb is a sentimental farce,'" quoted Felix. "No, by God, I believe you're right! Go on!"¹⁹

Wheels, whom Felix had also met by chance, philosophises on most subjects and on most occasions.

"Is failure also only a mood?" he [Felix] asked.

"There you have it! That is the cheering aspect of pessimism. Yes, failure is also an illusion. . . Tell me, what has happened to you?"

"I am under the depressing illusion that I have lost my job," said Felix.

Wheels laughed. "A particularly absurd illusion," he said. "It is impossible to lose your job. You only seem to do so. The fact is that what we flatteringly call society insists upon our working. It may appear for a moment to relax that demand, but never fear, it will be at you again. Even if you try to unfit yourself for work by drink and drugs, it will rummage for you in the gutter, take infinite pains to put you in working shape again, and insist upon your performing some of the idiotic motions which conduce to its sense of collective self-respect. I shouldn't wonder if presently society decided to abolish drink altogether, because it interferes with work. Not that I should mind!"²⁰

With Stephen Frazer, a fellow high-school student one year older than Felix, the common ground for friendship was atheism. They attracted each other's attention when they found themselves in a line before the library wicket carrying respectively the first and second volumes

19. Ibid., p. 218.

20. Ibid., p. 262.

of Haeckel's "History of Creation." They found they were kindred souls. They did not believe in God. They confided how they had come to arrive at their views; Stephen recommended Robert G. Ingersoll's books, and those of Maurice Maeterlinck, who also did not believe in God. Felix commended "The Octopus" which dealt effectively with labor and capital. Frequent meetings in Joe's place followed and many subjects were discussed; this friendship was interrupted by Felix's removal to Port Royal.

Associates offered two values to Felix Fay; (1) educative, and (2) socialistic. Tom Alden proffered his knowledge of literature and scope of reading; Stephen Frazer offered his opinions of religion and his reading experience. Franz Vogelsang's contribution was chiefly socialistic but he provided a means of self-development by being a critic of his poetry and encouraging his participation on programs; Wheels' contribution was also of a socialistic nature in the form of conversation and companionship. All the men were frank and firm in their views and offered the opportunity for argumentative discussion and encouraged research and self-development.

4. Treatment of Sex

The treatment of sex turns on (1) mother-dependence and consequent fear of women; (2) his adjustment to conventional marriage.

Felix Fay is extremely interested in women; he is making contacts at all stages of his life. The emphatic phases of his attitude toward sex are (1) women as a problem to him that he has difficulty in solving; (2) the return to conventionality of his attitudes toward love and marriage; (3) his interest in women as friend and lover, and the extension of the mother-attraction.

The outstanding problem of Felix is to find a girl to whom he can make light love and who is near enough his own intellectual level to enjoy the subtle wit of a good play. He tells Tom Alden that his demands would be met if he could find a girl "that can be talked to and that can be kissed. And I want it to be the same girl." He complained that he felt freer with the latter type but that he despised them when they laughed at silly jokes and missed the subtle wit. He admits that he is afraid of girls.

"It's true," he said, thinking aloud. "My attitude is juvenile. Perhaps I am--really--afraid of girls. Of course, every young man pretends to be very wicked. So do I, when I am with them. I don't know whether they are lying or not. But I am. Perhaps I'm really a Puritan. But I can't help

taking those things very seriously. I want real love, and I want a real girl to be in love with."²¹

This fear and shyness of women might be traced to his earlier school life when he felt that girls were "a race apart." At the school he attended the girls and boys had separate playgrounds and the "two tribes seldom mixed."

It might also be traced to the family teasings he experienced when he walked home occasionally from school with a little girl-friend. Exclamations like, "Well, Felix is growing up. He's got a sweetheart already. I suppose he'll be staying out late at night, next!" terrified him. He felt that something more was expected of him; being undecided what that something was, he ceased his attentions and avoided his would-be companion. Or, it might be traced to an embarrassing situation when Felix had to sit with a little girl when there was a shortage of seating space in the school.

One exception to this fear of women was an attachment to Rose Henderson; perhaps this was due to the unconventionality of their meeting and to the frank advances made by the girl. She came upon him reading in a garret of a house inhabited by the two families and asked him to

21. Ibid., p. 294.

read to her. His embarrassment disappeared, and they became friends. Later they went into the open and into the woods; Felix told stories and she recited for him speeches from a play taught to her by her mother. Her praise of his story-telling flattered him greatly, and her beautiful play-acting intoxicated him. They discovered they were two people who could give to each other things they valued without being laughed at.

His standards for love and marriage were put to a test when he met Joyce Tennant and a mutual love affair resulted. Joyce enjoyed the play--one of his standards for women--and he was pleased; her cleverness, however, at avoiding a discussion of Shaw overshadowed any prejudices he might conceive against her, and the love affair progressed. That she was above the average intellectually justifies his identification of her with his ideal.

But he refused to be deceived by her enthusiastic enjoyment of the play into regarding her as a fellow adept in the Shavian mysteries. He realized for the first time how much sheer unintellectual fun there was in a Shaw play--and how much plain hearty common sense such as anybody ought to enjoy. He perceived and liked, the spiritual robustness which rose to the call of Shaw's humour; but that did not mean that she necessarily realized or approved the ultimate significance of his ideas. Not that it made any difference!

"Do you think," he asked, as they left the theater, "that Shaw overdoes this idea of the man-hunting woman?"

She laughed lightly. "I suppose not," she said and took his arm. "Let's walk home, if you don't mind. I'd rather."²²

He was not aware of a discrepancy between the live object of his affections and the blurred ideal of his imagination which grew dim and pale in the presence of the "warm reality of the girl."

Fundamentally Felix Fay has very conventional ideas about love and marriage, although at his first meetings with Joyce he thinks he does not believe in marriage; he took pains to explain to her his views against marriage. But after their love had reached its climax and they had surrendered themselves to each other, Felix found his theory unsatisfactory; he had "secret qualms of conscience," he felt himself to be a "liar and a cheat," and he about-faced on his own theory in favor of plans for a conventional marriage.

As he stood there in the telephone booth waiting for his number, he realized suddenly that once he talked to Joyce, it was all over but the actual ceremony of marriage; and that they would commence to plan tonight! He realized it with a vast relief. Of course! What was the use of pretending? They were already married, and their talk tonight would be merely to arrange for a public and ceremonial acknowledgment of the fact . . .²³

His adherence to convention is also reflected in

22. Ibid., p. 311.

23. Ibid., p. 355.

his irritation at Joyce's deliberateness in calling vulgarities by their common-place rather than by their scientific name. This tendency goes back to his childhood when at school he resented coarse talk about girls and avoided sex talk with hauteur. The author tells us that he knew a great deal about sex scientifically--more than the other children--from an old doctor-book which the family owned.

His sex attraction as lover has already been mentioned. His capacity for friendship with women is illustrated in his comradeship with Emily, a co-socialist. Felix thought her agreeable and congenial and even at times felt a need for her company. Sometimes he thought he was in love with her, but when he compared this emotion with the one he had felt in Margaret's presence, he realized it was not love.

The mother-attraction was extended to Helen Raymond, librarian at Port Royal, and to a less degree, in Mrs. Miller, whom he had met at the home of a Rabbi whom he had interviewed for the "News." Helen's interest inspired him to write poetry--he liked to visit her, yet did not dare to do so unless he had something to show her--and gained for him introductions to two literary men of her acquaintance--Tom Alden, novelist, and Doyle Clavering, a poet. Clavering helped him to

complete a poem which was sold to a magazine for twenty dollars while still an adolescent in Port Royal; Tom Alden's acquaintance was renewed later.

Mrs. Miller, more of a flirtatious person than Helen Raymond, attracted and held Felix's interest for a time, but she proved to be more of a casual acquaintance than a vital or influential friend.

Women had always constituted an enigma for Felix; he had not solved this problem until he had made up his quarrel with Rose-Ann, already his wife, in Briary-Bush. Believing himself an unconventional person in regard to love and marriage, he discovered when put to the test, that he was as conventional as any and believed in conventional marriage as others did.

SUMMARY

In conclusion: (1) while Moon-Calf is fictional it is heavily autobiographical; (2) it shows the forces that shaped a gifted youth of the lower middle class in the Mid-west before the war: (a) the religious and social outlook of his parents was inadequate for him; he drifted toward the metropolitan centers; (b) he sought for modern education among free thinkers and socialists; (c) social pressure developed psychological conflicts; (3) the conception of the young radical Bohemian as a moon-calf indicates the detachment the author had achieved.

CHAPTER II

FRANCIS SCOTT KEY FITZGERALD'S
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Adolescence in an Eastern Prep School and College

This Side of Paradise, 1920, by Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald, is a singular treatment of adolescence; it interprets adolescence from the point of view of a mid-western small-town aristocrat developing into a more democratic youth and coming to look on his adolescence as a period of reshaping both in prep school and in college.

I. THE AUTHOR

The studies of Fitzgerald by his college companions John Peale Bishop and Edmund Wilson and an anonymous article appeared during his lifetime; articles by Malcolm Cowley and John O'Hara after death.¹

1. John Peale Bishop, "The Missing All," Virginia Quarterly Review, January, 1937, pp. 107-21.

Edmund Wilson, "Imaginary Conversations, Mr. Van Wycke Brooks and Mr. Scott Fitzgerald," The New Republic, April 30, 1924, pp. 249-254.

Anonymous article, "F. Scott Fitzgerald," American Bookman, March, 1922, pp. 20-25.

Malcolm Cowley, "Of Clocks and Calendars," The New Republic, March 17, 1941, p. 376.

John O'Hara, "In Memory of Scott Fitzgerald II," The New Republic, March 3, 1941, p. 311.

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was an exceptionally vain person especially about his age, according to John Peale Bishop. He was fair and blond, anxious to give the impression of being an extensive reader--he was even willing to misrepresent to achieve this impression--with a habit of scribbling, drowsing, and stalling in class. According to Mr. O'Hara, who wrote of Fitzgerald after he had become an author, he was not a lovable man but a friendly one. But if you saw him too long at a time he consciously embarrassed you by making you aware of your ordinariness. He was an aloof person and Dorothy Parker referred to this characteristic thus--his private hell was so enormous that he really would have gotten little relief from sharing a little of it.² He was conscious of passing time and Mr. Cowley characterizes his works as being distinguished by a sense of passing time.

He was haunted by time, as if he wrote in a room full of clocks and calendars. He liked to begin his paragraphs by stating, "this was the year when . . ." after which he would tell what everybody wore and said, and sang and how everybody made love in that particular year. He worked hard and patiently to find the exact color of a season that would never be repeated.³

Fitzgerald left Princeton without a degree and became a second lieutenant in the army during the first

2. John O'Hara, op. cit., p. 311.

3. Malcolm Cowley, op. cit., p. 376.

World War. He wrote the Romantic Egoist on week-ends at the officers' club at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

The revised edition of this novel, This Side of Paradise, was called the collected works of F. Scott Fitzgerald by T. K. Whipple, a former Princetonian fellow-student, because not a line of the poems scribbled in lecture halls by the author had been wasted; they had all been included in this novel.⁴

Fitzgerald and Hemingway belong to what the press called the Younger Generation; the ones who had seen service in the army. When they returned, it was in revolt against Puritanism. Both Fitzgerald and Hemingway succeeded in communicating their revolutionary attitudes to their contemporaries.

Edmund Wilson, another schoolmate, presents an imaginary conversation between Van Wycke Brooks and Mr. Scott Fitzgerald, in which the latter reads the former a letter written by the Younger Generation. It is farcical in content; it starts off congratulating Mr. Brooks on the occasion of the Dial award, then proceeds to criticise his various attitudes. It is humorous in that it takes advantage of the occasion to present the views of the Younger Generation to him rather than to get his

4. Bishop, op. cit., p. 109.

criticism. It is also in keeping with Fitzgerald's habit of reverting all conversations to himself.

Fitzgerald's novels stress wealth. Bishop says:

Though love is always in the foreground in the sentimental words of Fitzgerald, no allure is so potent as money.

"The rich are not as we are." So he began one of his early stories. "No," Hemingway once said to him, "they have more money."

This belief, continually destroyed, constantly reasserted, underlies all that Fitzgerald has written. It made him peculiarly apt to be the historian of the period.⁵

This Side of Paradise, 1920, was the first novel published by Fitzgerald. Between 1920 and his death in 1940 he published four novels, five short stories, one play, and collaborated with Edmund Wilson and John Schmfalk on two musical comedies.

Summary: (1) Fitzgerald's chief characteristics were egotism and ambition; (2) he developed from snobbishness to a more broadly human attitude; (3) his education was received at prep school and at college.

II. COMPARISON OF FICTIONAL CHARACTER WITH THE AUTHOR

This Side of Paradise is obviously autobiographical. The central character, Amory Blaine spends his early

5. Ibid., p. 115.

childhood in the mid-west, goes east to preparatory school, thence to Princeton. He leaves college to join the army where he serves as a second lieutenant. After the war he holds a job as advertising agent, but gives it up and goes back to Princeton. The author, Scott Fitzgerald, spends his early childhood in the mid-west, goes east to preparatory school, thence to Princeton, serves in the army as a second lieutenant, works as an advertising agent after the war, and gives up his job to rewrite his novel.

Amory Blaine, the hero of This Side of Paradise, was born near Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, in the spring of 1896, thus granting him the mid-western background of Fitzgerald himself. He was also of Irish descent, his mother being Beatrice O'Hara; at five he was already an agreeable travelling companion for her, a glorious creature beset with real and imaginary frailties, and whom he addressed by her given name. He attended St. Regis's private school in Connecticut, because some acquaintances he had made in Minnesota were going away to school, and the idea appealed to him. After finishing St. Regis' he went on to Princeton.

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald, the author, was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, of Irish and Maryland English

stock, September 24, 1894. He travelled during his early years with his family, and, due to his inclinations to write rather than to study he was sent to the Newman School in Hackensack, New Jersey, in the hope that he would put more time on his studies. Here he became interested in musical comedy, and it was due largely to this interest that Fitzgerald entered Princeton.

Amory Blaine, the fictional character, attained a prominent place at Princeton, getting a part in the musical comedy, "Ha-Ha-Hortense," which travelled for two weeks at Christmas time, making one of its stops at Louisville. He acquired a place on the Princetonian Board, contributed articles to the Nassau Literary Magazine, and made a fraternity. The hero failed to make a mathematics credit, and lost his place on the Princetonian board and his chance to be on the senior council.

Fitzgerald, the author, entered Princeton in 1913. In his freshman year he met John Peale Bishop. The latter says that when they first met, Fitzgerald was about seventeen, although he had lied so often about his age that he would have to refer to his nurse to find out his exact birth date. Bishop accused Fitzgerald of

taking seventeen for his norm; Fitzgerald agreed, except that he thought fifteen would be preferable. Bishop said of him that "even then he was determined to be a genius and since the most obvious characteristic of genius was precocity, he must produce from an early age. He did, but wanted through vanity to make it even earlier."

Bishop described their first meeting which took place in the Peacock Inn; they talked of books--those Bishop had read, which he says were not many, and those Fitzgerald had read, which were even less, and those he said he had read, which were even more. This meeting is identical with the fictional meeting between Amory Blaine and Tom D'Invilliers:

"Ha! Great stuff!"

The other freshman looked up and Amory registered artificial embarrassment.

"Are you referring to your bacon buns?" His cracked, kindly voice went well with the large spectacles and the impression of a voluminous keenness that he gave.

"No," Amory answered. "I was referring to Bernard Shaw." He turned the book around in explanation.

"I've never read any Shaw. I've always meant to." The boy paused and then continued: "Did you ever read Stephen Phillips, or do you like poetry?"

"Yes, indeed," Amory affirmed eagerly. "I've never read much of Phillips, though." (He had never heard of any Phillips except the late David Graham.)

"It's pretty fair, I think. Of course, he's a Victorian." They sallied into a discussion of poetry, in the course of which they introduced themselves,

and Amory's companion proved to be none other than "that awful high-brow," Thomas Parke D'Invilliers who signed the passionate love-poems in the Lit. . . . They didn't seem to be noticing, so he let himself go, discussed books by the dozens--books he had read, read about, books he had never heard of, rattling off lists of titles with the facility of a Brentano's clerk. . . .

"Ever read any Oscar Wilde?" he asked.

"No. Who wrote it?"

"It's a man--don't you know?"

"Oh, surely." A faint chord was struck in Amory's memory. "Wasn't the comic opera, 'Patience,' written about him?"

"Yes, that's the fella. I've just finished a book of his, 'The Picture of Dorian Gray,' and I certainly wish you'd read it. You'd like it. You can borrow it if you want to."

"Why, I'd like it a lot--thanks."⁶

The author, like the fictional character, was dropped from class in his freshman year; as Bishop puts it, "like so many precocious literary talents, he, I believe, had a tendency toward tuberculosis."⁷ Fitzgerald got into things in Princeton. He had a hand in three productions of the Triangle Club, collaborating on a libretto with Edmund Wilson, and once acting as a chorus girl in a show. He contributed stories and poems to the Princetonian Tiger and to the Nassau Literary Magazine,

6. Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 55.

7. Bishop, op. cit., p. 109.

and was a member of the editorial board of each.

Neither hero nor author graduated. Both left college to join the army, and both became lieutenants. Fitzgerald did not go abroad. He spent his week-ends writing a novel, The Romantic Egoist, which featured some of the Princetonian group, but which did not succeed in being published. After the war was over both the character and the author held poorly paid jobs as advertising writers. Fitzgerald left his job in 1920 when he had sold a story for thirty dollars, and went home to rewrite his novel. In two months he had finished This Side of Paradise, which was highly successful. With the success of this novel, his days of struggle were over. Blaine, the hero, likewise gave up his job as advertising writer, and the novel leaves him, hitch-hiking toward Princeton from New York, with only twenty-four dollars in his pocket.

From this comparison the following conclusions can be drawn: (1) This Side of Paradise is largely autobiographical; (2) that it is a romantic account of a mid-western Princetonian; (3) that romanticism is viewed largely as a tendency to project himself into the wealthy class.

III. TREATMENT OF MAJOR PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENCE

1. Treatment of Family

In contrast to the other authors, Fitzgerald's treatment of family is limited to mother and son. This treatment differs from that of the other authors discussed in that their treatment is of the youth in relation to other members of the family as well. The mother-son relationship is presented from three points of view: (1) characteristics of the mother; (2) the mother's influence on the son; (3) the emancipation of the son.

Amory Blaine's mother was a very wealthy, self-indulgent, pampered woman. The author tells us that as a young lady she was of an exceptionally wealthy family, had delicate features, and showed good taste in dress. She had obtained a brilliant education abroad, was known in high social and religious Roman circles as a fabulously wealthy American girl, had travelled in Europe, visiting England and Austria and had obtained a vast knowledge of arts and traditions "barren of all ideas." She was critical of ex-western American women, complaining to Amory that "they had accents--not southern nor Boston, nor accents attached to any particular locality; just accents."

She boasted to Amory that doctors had told her that if any man had done the consistent drinking that she had, he would be completely shattered and long since dead. In regard to religion she professed Catholicism, but having discovered that priests were more attentive to and interested in those who were in process of losing faith, she posed as the latter type.

Though she thought of her body as a mass of frailties, she considered her soul quite as ill, and therefore important in her life. She had once been a Catholic, but discovering that priests were infinitely more attentive when she was in process of losing or regaining faith in Mother Church, she maintained an enchantingly wavering attitude. Often she deplored the bourgeois quality of the American Catholic clergy, and was quite sure that had she lived in the shadow of the great Continental cathedrals her soul would still be a thin flame on the mighty altar of Rome. Still, next to doctors, priests were her favorite sport.⁸

The author tells us that at five Amory was already a delightful companion for her. Some of her self-indulgence is bestowed upon her son.

"Dear, don't think of getting out of bed yet. I've always suspected that early rising in life makes one nervous. Clothilde is having your breakfast brought up."

"All right."

"I'm feeling very old to-day, Amory," she would sigh, her face a rare cameo of pathos, her voice exquisitely modulated, her hands as facile as Bernhardt's. "My nerves are on edge--on edge. We

⁸. Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise, p. 7.

must leave this terrifying place tomorrow and go searching for sunshine."

Amory's penetrating green eyes would look out through tangled hair at his mother. Even at this age he had no illusions about her.

"Amory."

"Oh, yes."

"I want you to take a red-hot bath--as hot as you can bear it, and just relax your nerves. You can read in the tub if you wish."⁹

Her egotism, posing, and flare for foreign airs is reflected in the son when he rehearses his entrance into the parlor of Myra St. Claire, who has invited him on a bobbing party, while he is in Minneapolis visiting his uncle. He would be late, of course, since he thought his mother would favor it.

He would cross the floor, not too hastily, to Mrs. St. Claire, and say with exactly the correct modulation:

"My dear Mrs. St. Claire, I'm frightfully sorry to be late, but my maid--he paused here and realized he would be quoting--but my uncle and I had to see a fella--Yes, I've met your enchanting daughter at dancing-school."

Then he would shake hands, using that slight, half-foreign bow, with all the starched little females, and nod to fellas who would be standing 'round, paralyzed into rigid groups for mutual protection.¹⁰

His egotism and consciousness of clothes are

9. Ibid., p. 5.

10. Ibid., p. 10.

described as he returns home from Minneapolis. He was wearing his first pair of long trousers, set off by a purple accordion tie, purple socks, and a handkerchief, edged with purple, protruding from his pocket. The strikingness of their appearance caused his mother to speak of them as a "set" and ask if his underwear were purple also.

The emancipation of Amory is effected in part by St. Regis's preparatory school, and completed by Princeton University. When Amory entered St. Regis's he is explained as being a composite of Amory plus Beatrice. Again he did a great deal of posing and was not well liked; but by the time he left St. Regis's, the author tells us, Beatrice had been drilled out of him, and he had become St. Regis plus Amory.

From the scoffing superiority of sixth-form year and success Amory looked back with cynical wonder on his status of the year before. He was changed as completely as Amory Blaine could ever be changed. Amory plus Beatrice plus two years in Minneapolis--these had been his ingredients when he entered St. Regis'. But the Minneapolis years were not a thick enough overlay to conceal the "Amory plus Beatrice" from the ferreting eyes of a boarding-school, so St. Regis' had very painfully drilled Beatrice out of him, and begun to lay down new and more conventional planking on the fundamental Amory. But both St. Regis' and Amory were unconscious of the fact that this fundamental Amory had not in himself changed.¹¹

11. Ibid., p. 35.

By the time he had entered Princeton, he had become completely emancipated from his mother. His egotism, nevertheless, persisted, and as he must be in the limelight, he set about to accomplish this; he decided to be one of the gods of his class.

During his college career, Monsignor D'Arcy, a friend of his mother's had replaced Beatrice and his influence evoked self-criticism in the youth. Confidences were exchanged between the two, and the older man helped the younger in self-analysis.

Amory talked; he went thoroughly into the destruction of his egotistic highways, and in a half-hour the listless quality had left his voice.

"What would you do if you left college?" asked Monsignor.

"Don't know. I'd like to travel, but of course this tiresome war prevents that. Anyways, mother would hate not having me graduate. I'm just at sea. Kerry Holiday wants me to go over with him and join the Lafayette Esquadriile."

"You know you wouldn't like to go."

"Sometimes I would--to-night I'd go in a second."

"Well, you'd have to be very much more tired of life than I think you are. I know you."

"I'm afraid you do," agreed Amory reluctantly. "It just seemed an easy way out of everything--when I think of another useless draggy year."¹²

12. Ibid., p. 112.

The mother had passed on her snobbishness, impatience, posing, egocentricity to her son, to the extent that he was generally intolerable among other youths. His associations at school had stripped him of his undesirable characteristics and had fashioned him into a person more apt to make friends at college. At college, family had dropped completely into the background and had been replaced by the influence of the school, the associates, and of the Catholic clergyman, Monsignor D'Arcy.

2. Treatment of Institutions

The treatment of institutions is limited to the two schools, St. Regis' Preparatory school and Princeton College. Religious adherence, although only slightly alluded to, is emphasized by the friendship between Amory and the Catholic prelate, Monsignor D'Arcy.

The importance of the influence of St. Regis' school is that it made him aware of his defects and began the emancipation from his mother.

Amory's attitude toward St. Regis' was lackadaisical and he took only superficial interest in his work. This fact is borne out by the small amount of space given to its discussion in comparison with the number of pages many times as great devoted to the

discussion of progress at Princeton.

The influence of St. Regis' can be summed up best by the author's statement at the time of his entrance to this school.

Amory's two years at St. Regis', though in turn painful and triumphant, had as little real significance in his own life as the American "prep" school, crushed as it is under the heel of the universities, has to American life in general. We have no Eton to create the self-consciousness of a governing class; we have instead, clean, flaccid and innocuous preparatory schools.¹³

And again:

Years afterward, when he went back to St. Regis', he seemed to have forgotten the successes of sixth-form year, and to be able to picture himself only as the unadjustable boy who had hurried down corridors, jeered at by his rabid contemporaries mad with common sense.¹⁴

In contrast to this, his years at Princeton are filled with activity, companionship, successes and failures. In his freshmen year he decides that he must be among the leaders. Calculating shrewdness, egotism, and ambition are reflected in his evaluating the organizations to which he preferred to belong. He decided that writing for the Nassau Literary Magazine would get him nothing but being on the Daily Princetonian would get any one a great deal. He submerged his desire to

13. Ibid., p. 29.

14. Ibid., p. 40.

act with the English Dramatic Association when he found that ingenuity and talent concentrated in the Triangle Club, an organization which took an extensive Christmas trip each year. His attitude toward the student body is summarized here:

"We're the damned middle class, that's what!" he complained to Kerry one day as he lay stretched out on the sofa, consuming a family of Fatimas with contemplative precision.

"Well, why not? We came to Princeton so we could feel that way toward the small colleges-- have it on 'em, more self-confidence, dress better, cut a swathe--"

"Oh, it isn't that I mind the glittering caste system," admitted Amory. "I like a bunch of hot cats on top, but gosh, Kerry, I've got to be one of them."

"But just now, Amory, you're only a sweaty bourgeois."

Amory lay for a moment without speaking.

"I won't be--long," he said finally. "But I hate to get anywhere by working for it. I'll show the marks, don't you know."¹⁵

Amory's egotism and vanity were gratified when he obtained a place on the Princetonian during his sophomore year and fell into the caste of "Ha-Ha-Hortense!" as Boiling Oil, a private lieutenant. He thought afterward of sophomore spring as the happiest time of his life. His social life was enviable with his friendships, with

15. Ibid., p. 50.

occasional auto trips to New York and other near-by places, and with participation in fraternity activities. These successes suddenly reversed and his inflation collapsed when he failed to make a mathematics credit and lost some of the places of honor he had won.

"No--I'm through--as far as ever being a power in college is concerned."

"But, Amory, honestly, what makes me the angriest isn't the fact that you won't be chairman of the Prince and on the Senior Council, but just that you didn't get down and pass that exam!"

"Not me," said Amory slowly; "I'm mad at the concrete thing. My own idleness was quite in accord with my system, but the luck broke."

"Your system broke, you mean."

"Maybe."

"Well, what are you going to do? Get a better one quick, or just bum around for two more years as a has-been?"

"I don't know yet. . . "16

That he was not devoid of religious attachment or sentiment is evidenced by his friendship with Monsignor D'Arcy. Numerous visits to the older clergyman, frequent and lengthy correspondence, exchanges of confidences and ideas, all hint at a fundamental religious tendency. Their close relation is expressed in a letter dated January, 1918, and written by the Monsignor to the youth,

16. Ibid., p. 108.

then a second lieutenant in the 171st Infantry, Port of Embarkation, Camp Mills, Long Island.

Amory, I've discovered suddenly that I'm an old man. Like all old men, I've had dreams sometimes and I'm going to tell you of them. 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. . . .¹⁷

The priest's death made Amory aware of the clergyman's importance to people--their trust in his faith, in his cheerfulness, in his attitude toward religion, and in his dependability. This contemplation made him aware of his own great desire which he had hitherto not recognized--to be necessary to people.

Amory's sojourn at St. Regis' made him more likeable and prepared him for a more satisfactory and successful career at Princeton. At Princeton his ambition and talents won him enviable places of honor; but in common with the frivolous youth of the "Younger Generation," with which the author is identified, he threw away these honors rather than apply himself to study to remove the mathematics condition negligence had brought upon him.

The self-indulgence of the mother still persists with him; as long as honors are won with little or no

17. Ibid., p. 171.

effort, he accepts them and becomes a part of the glittering world; but as soon as an obstacle is encountered that requires perseverance to overcome, he swerves and suffers defeat and finds it necessary to change the course of his life. The problem here encountered is a direct result of his early pampering and indulgence.

3. Treatment of Associates

Apart from Monsignor, Amory Blaine's associates are school associates; those of St. Regis' and those of Princeton. Amory Blaine had few or no associates during his early years. His mother was his closest companion, with the exception of a few acquaintances made in Minneapolis when he visited his uncle; these contacts were only superficial.

At St. Regis' he again made few friends. His approaches were not such as to conduce friendship.

He went all wrong at the start, was generally considered both conceited and arrogant, and universally detested. He played football intensely, alternating a reckless brilliancy with a tendency to keep himself as safe from hazard as decency would permit. In a wild panic he backed out of a fight with a boy his own size, to a chorus of scorn, and a week later, in desperation, picked a battle with another boy very much bigger, from which he emerged badly beaten, but rather proud of himself.¹⁸

18. Ibid., p. 30.

His unpopularity was emphasized by a conference to which Mr. Margotson, a professor, summoned him on the last night of his first term. The professor was about to explain the cause of his unpopularity when Amory interrupted:

"I know--oh, don't you s'pose I know." His voice rose. "I know what they think: do you s'pose you have to tell me!" He paused. "I'm--I've got to go back now--hope I'm not rude--"

He left the room hurriedly. In the cool air outside, as he walked to his house, he exulted in his refusal to be helped.

"That damn old fool!" he cried wildly. "As if I didn't know!"¹⁹

The schooling at St. Regis' presented Amory's first close contacts outside his own family. It was to be expected that he would have trouble; but the drilling having been thorough, he was better prepared for a new start at Princeton. At Princeton his difficulties with friendship disappeared, and he began making friends immediately. His associates at Princeton are discussed as to (1) their identities; (2) their activities; (3) their influence. His first friends at Princeton were the Holiday brothers, Burne and Kerry. They often expressed their innermost thoughts to each other.

19. Ibid., p. 32.

"I can't drift--I want to be interested. I want to pull strings, even for somebody else, or be Princetonian chairman or Triangle president. I want to be admired, Kerry!"

"You're thinking too much about yourself."

Amory sat up at this. "No. I'm thinking about you, too. We've got to get out and mix around the class right now, when it's fun to be a snob. I'd like to bring a sardine to the prom in June, for instance, but I wouldn't do it unless I could be damn debonaire about it--introduce her to all the prize parlor-snakes, and the football captain, and all that simple stuff."

"Amory," said Kerry impatiently, "you're just going around in a circle. If you want to be prominent, get out and try for something; if you don't, just take it easy." He yawned. "Come on, let's let the smoke drift off. We'll go down and watch football practice."²⁰

Amory's introduction into the higher and more exclusive circles began with his friendship with Tom D'Invilliers. It was during the second half of his first year that he met "that awful highbrow, Thomas Parke D'Invilliers," who wrote passionate love poems for the "Lit."

Tom D'Invilliers became at first an occasion rather than a friend. Amory saw him about once a week, and together they gilded the ceiling of Tom's room and decorated the walls with imitation tapestry, bought at an auction; tall candlesticks and figured curtains. Amory liked him for being clever and literary without effeminacy or affectation. In fact, Amory did most of the strutting and tried painfully to make every remark an epigram than which, if one is content with ostensible epigrams, there are many feats harder.²¹

20. Ibid., p. 52.

21. Ibid., p. 57.

Another friend of no little import was attracted at this time, Alex Connage. Alex was a friend of both Tom and Amory. These three shared an apartment after the war, and it was while he was with them that he had his serious love affair with Rosalind, Alec's sister; worked as an advertising writer, and began his career as a writer.

The activities of these college associates were those common to any college; fraternity dances, week-end trips, discussions on various subjects, and participation in various clubs. On one trip, taken with all of them penniless, it was remarkable how they manoeuvred to eat, sleep, and attend movies, without paying. On another week-end trip to New York an accident occurred in which one of their companions, Dick Humbert, was killed.

Their activities were varied:

Mostly there were parties--to Orange or the Shore, more rarely to New York and Philadelphia, though one night they marshalled fourteen waitresses out of Childs' and took them to ride down Fifth Avenue on top of an auto bus. They all cut more classes than were allowed, which meant an additional course the following year, but spring was too rare to let anything interfere with their colorful ramblings. In May Amory was elected to the Sophomore Prom Committee, and when after a long evening's discussion with Alex they made out a tentative list of class probabilities for the Senior Council, they placed themselves among the surest.²²

22. Ibid., p. 88.

Their discussions were sometimes personal, and sometimes on such subjects as snobbery of fraternities, religion, literature, or writers.

Late hours and gambling proved to be Amory's downfall; they were the cause of his failure at the end of his sophomore year.

Tom D'Invilliers and Amory walked late in those days. A gambling fever swept through the sophomore class and they bent over the bones till three o'clock many a sultry night. After one session they came out of Sloane's room to find the dew fallen and the stars old in the sky.

"Let's borrow bicycles and take a ride," Amory suggested.

"All right. I'm not a bit tired and this is almost the last night of the year, really, because the prom stuff starts Monday."

They found two unlocked bicycles in Holder Court and rode out about half-past three along the Lawrenceville Road.²³

At Princeton his associates are more numerous and more exclusive; they belong to the leaders and to the wealthiest families. With their backing and his own talents he is swept to high offices; also through them and their indiscretion in gambling late hours he loses his prestige and must needs revise his course of progress.

When the war is over, the three friends, Alex Connage, Tom D'Invilliers, and Amory share an apartment

23. Ibid., p. 91.

in New York. After his disappointing love affair, when he has thrown over his job, is practically penniless, and is undecided about his future, the friends break apart--for various superficial reasons--and Amory, alone, leaves New York for Princeton.

4. Treatment of Sex

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 widespread it was until he saw the cities between New York and Chicago as one vast juvenile intrigue.²⁴

The sex experiences of Amory Blaine are discussed with reserve. His associations with women range from the superlative degree of sublime love through friendships to drunken brawls with women companions.

His most serious love affair was inspired by Rosalind Connage, sister of Alex Connage. Love was immediate and mutual; it lasted about five weeks. In spite of the passionate declarations between the lovers, Rosalind was persuaded by her mother to look at the material side of marriage. She finally agreed with her mother that Dawson Ryder, wealthier than Amory, would make her the better husband. Amory engaged in a three

²⁴. Ibid., p. 65.

weeks' alcoholic spree which wore him out emotionally. The author tells us that Amory had subsequent love affairs, but none of them had the vehemence and passion of this one.

His relations with Isabelle Borge, Clara Page, and Eleanor Ramilly are in the nature of more serious friendships. Isabelle, a butterfly type, had fired Amory's imagination to the extent that he stayed over a day longer on his Christmas vacation to renew his acquaintance with her. Their friendship grew into young love. This emotion was intensified by Isabelle's attending a dance at Princeton as Amory's guest. The thunderbolt came when Amory's stud made a red place on Isabelle's neck while he was kissing her--on a visit to her home. This started a series of quarrels that ended in Amory's departure the next morning before the Borge family had risen.

Clara Page, a third cousin and a widow living in Philadelphia, was an exact opposite to Isabelle. She was domestically inclined, settled, and more mature. Amory proposed to her; she refused him, declaring she wanted to save herself wholly for her two children. She assured him that he did not love her, and he agreed that the cause of his emotion was the moonlight.

With Eleanor Ramilly the reaction was responsive

friendship rather than love. Amory met Eleanor dramatically, taking shelter from a storm in a load of hay, while he was visiting his aunt. They swam, rode, conversed, and played together during a summer. Their last night was punctuated by a dramatic climax when Eleanor declared she was going to jump her horse over a cliff, turned, rode madly for it, then tumbled off as the beast leapt over the brink, destroying itself.

A scandal occurred in connection with Alex Connage involving Amory. In this episode he played the sacrificing friend, taking the rap that Alec was entitled to take. Amory, Alex, and Jill, a friend of Alec's, took rooms at a hotel in Atlantic City. Faced with a surprise visit of the house detectives, Amory made Alex pose as being dead drunk, assumed the responsibility of having Jill as his companion and admitted the detectives. He got off without suffering any of the consequences of the Mann Act but with a promise of unpleasant publicity. True to promise, a statement of his disgrace appeared in the newspaper simultaneously with the announcement that Rosalind Connage was to be married to Mr. J. Dawson Ryder, of Hartford, Connecticut.

In comparison with the experiences of Vridar Hunter or of Studs Lonigan, Amory Blaine's sex experiences are presented with propriety and reserve.

IV. SUMMARY

Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise (1) is largely autobiographical; (2) it shows the forces that shaped gifted youth of the wealthier class in the mid-west before, during, and after the war; (a) there is less interest in religion than in social and educational accomplishment and in association with influential people; (b) the more wholesome goal of adolescence is a democratic attitude.

CHAPTER III

THOMAS WOLFE'S LOOK HOMeward ANGEL

CHAPTER III

THOMAS WOLFE'S LOOK HOMEWARD ANGEL

Adolescence in a Southern Mountain Town

The problem of this chapter is to discuss the adolescent problems portrayed by Thomas Clayton Wolfe in his novel, Look Homeward Angel, 1929. The sequel to this novel, Of Time and the River, 1935, goes on from the problems of childhood and youth to those of young manhood and is therefore omitted.

Among the writers of the late 1920's Thomas Wolfe offers a significant treatment of adolescence. It is a romantic treatment of youth in violent reaction against life in a boarding-house in a southern mountain town.

The principal materials available for the life of the author are a number of articles¹ and his own

1. Hamilton Basso, "Thomas Wolfe, a Portrait," The New Republic, June 24, 1936, pp. 199-202.

Jonathan Daniels, "Thomas Wolfe," Saturday Review of Literature, September 24, 1938, p. 8.

Clifton Fadiman, "Thomas Wolfe," New Yorker, March 9, 1935, pp. 68-70.

Cemille J. McCole, "Thomas Wolfe Embraces Life," Catholic World, April 1936, pp. 42-48.

Thurston McCauley, "Thomas Wolfe, a Writer's Problems," Publisher's Weekly, December 24, 1938, pp. 2150-2152.

autobiographical account of his writing of his first novel and of its reception.²

The section on the author is omitted in this chapter because (1) the materials are more concerned with the author's works than with his life; (2) in contrast to the writers whose fiction omits much that is known about their lives, Wolfe's Look Homeward Angel nearly covers his. For this reason it does not seem necessary to present the outline of his life separately.

I. COMPARISON OF FICTIONAL CHARACTER WITH THE AUTHOR

The preface "To the Reader" of Look Homeward Angel establishes it as autobiographical:

This is a first book, and in it the author has written of experience which is now far and lost, but which was once part of the fabric of his life.

Robert Penn Warren, "A Note on the Hamlet of Thomas Wolfe," American Review, May 1935, pp. 191-208.

John Donald Wade, "Prodigal," Southern Review, July 1935, pp. 192-198.

George Stephens, "Always Looking Homeward," Saturday Review of Literature, June 24, 1939, pp. 5-6.

Ann Preston Bridgers, "Thomas Wolfe, Legends of a Man's Hunger in his Youth," Saturday Review of Literature, April 6, 1935, pp. 599-609.

Ernest Sutherland Bates, "Thomas Wolfe," English Journal, September 1937, pp. 519-527.

2. See infra, p. 65.

If any reader, therefore, should say that the book is "autobiographical," the writer has no answer for him; it seems to him that all serious work in fiction is autobiographical--that, for instance, a more autobiographical work than "Gulliver's Travels" cannot easily be imagined.³

But Look Homeward Angel is more directly autobiographical than Gulliver's Travels, as Wolfe saw at the time he wrote You Can't Go Home Again. Eugene Gant, fictional hero, grows up in Altamont, Catawba, attends state university, graduates, attends Harvard, teaches at the New York University, visits Europe, returns to his position and publishes his first novel.

Thomas Wolfe, the author, grows up in Asheville, North Carolina, attends the state university, then Harvard, teaches at the University of New York, visits Europe, writes his first novel, and returns to the United States and publishes it.

Eugene Gant, the hero, was born in Altamont, Catawba. He is the son of W. O. Gant, a native Pennsylvanian and a wanderer for many years. He is none other than Wolfe's father; and Eliza, from the native Pentlands family is none other than the mother.

Thomas Clayton Wolfe was born on October 3, 1900, at Asheville, North Carolina. His father was William

3. Thomas Wolfe, Look Homeward Angel (New York: The Modern Library, 1929).

Oliver Wolfe, a native Pennsylvanian, who had learned the craft of stone-cutter in Baltimore. He had roamed restlessly over the country for many years, drifting finally to Asheville, where he set up a shop. He was a man of great physical strength and of extravagant appetites. In time he married Julia Elizabeth Westall of a family native to that section for several generations.

Eugene Gant, the central character, spent his childhood and youth at Altamont, which is none other than Asheville. The child and youth, though uncomplaining, did not show signs of happiness. He had some companions with whom he played, but this aspect of his life was negligible. The friendly separation of his parents, Gant staying at home and Eliza taking over Dixieland, constituted a problem for him. Being the youngest he was taken to Dixieland with Eliza, although he preferred his father's home and spent much time there. Being forced to sell the Saturday Evening Post, because of Luke's ambition and success, was distasteful to him and hurt his pride.

Thomas Wolfe, the author, grew up at Asheville. His youth was not a happy one; incessant struggle between his strong-willed parents made his home-life unsettled, and his brothers and sisters had little use for him.

Hamilton Basso states in his article:

"I guess the only real sympathy and understanding I had during this period of my life," he said one evening, "came from my brother Ben." This brother, of course, is the Ben Gant of the novels; the Benjamin Harrison Wolfe to whose memory is dedicated the book of shorter pieces, "From Death to Morning."⁴

In the novel, Mrs. Gant conducted a boarding-house at Dixieland for tourists. She often exhorted Eugene "to drum up trade," which he resented. The boarders here answered most every description--insane people, tuberculars, drinkers, adventuresses, and a pregnant woman seeking escape from her own community; this motley crowd caused Helen to wonder where her mother got them all.

Mrs. Wolfe also opened a boarding-house for tourists of more moderate means; these guests were drab, futile, and empty. Tom ran errands before and after school and helped around the house. School offered him no more escape than his home. His school-mates thought him queer, as did his brothers and sisters. Hamilton Basso says:

They find it difficult today to find he has become an important American writer. I met one of his school-mates in Asheville. "We all thought Tom was cuckoo," he said. "I can't get over his success."⁵

4. Basso, op. cit., p. 199.

5. Basso, loc. cit.

Tom Wolfe found his escape in books, in the world of poetry and ideas. His father had a taste for literature and passed this heritage on to his son.

Eugene Gant, the hero was ready for college before he was sixteen; he entered State University. Here he read a great deal; he kept up his required reading in English, but outside of that, he read what he pleased. He held himself aloof to a great extent from associates, but during his last year he gained some prominence. He received his A. B. degree, W. O. and Eliza attending his graduation. At the end of the succeeding summer he announced his intention of attending Harvard. After an unpleasant home scene, he bade his mother good-bye and left for the east.

Tom, the author, was also ready for college when he was fifteen. He entered the University of North Carolina, where, after four years, he obtained his A. B. degree. At college he was editor of the University paper, and the college magazine; in his last two years he was a member of a play-writing class. During this period of his interest in drama at Chapel Hill, he wrote three plays: The Return of Buck Gavin; The Tragedy of a Mountain Outlaw (in the production of this play Tom played the title role); Deferred Payment, and The Third Night--a ghost play of the

Carolina Mountains. His opinion is that none of these were worth anything as literature. After graduation, Thomas Wolfe also went to Harvard.

At the University of North Carolina Thomas Wolfe was implicated in a hazing that resulted in the death of one of his fellow-students. He, along with the other participants, was suspended from the University for a time, but was later reinstated. This event is omitted in Look Homeward Angel, probably because the horror was yet too much imprinted on his memory. But he mentions this event in You Can't Go Home Again in a fictional letter written to his publisher. The purport of the letter is an explanation as to why he must change publishers; one phase of it is the expressed desire to dispel any feeling that he was a bitter young man because of this catastrophe.

He says:

It was recalled how five of us (and God have mercy on the souls of those others who kept silent at the time) had taken our classmate Bell out to the playing field one night, blind-folded him, and compelled him to dance upon a barrel. It was recalled how he stumbled and toppled from the barrel, fell on a broken bottle-neck, severed his jugular, and bled to death within five minutes. It was recalled, then, how the five of us--myself and Randy Shepperton, John Brackett, Stowell Anderson, and Dick Carr--were expelled, brought up for trial, released in the custody of our parents or nearest relatives, and deprived of the rights of citizenship by legislative act.

All this was true. But the construction which people put upon it when the book appeared was false. None of us, I think, was "ruined" and "embittered"--and our later record proves that we were not.⁶

His autobiography, The Story of a Novel recounts his reactions to writing. In decrying the literalness of his first novel, Wolfe says:

For although my book was not true to fact, it was true to the general experience of the town I came from, and I hope, of course, to the general experience of all man living.⁷

This autobiography pictures the anguish, torture, dejection, and obsessiveness he experienced in writing Of Time and the River, and pays tribute to the trust, patience and encouragement given by his editor, Maxwell Perkins.

His death on September 10, 1938, brought his writing to an abrupt end.

Following the publication of Look Homeward Angel, 1929, three other novels, a short story and an autobiographical sketch followed.

Summary: (1) Wolfe's fiction is more directly autobiographical than that of any of the other writers except Fisher; (2) it is an unusually full analysis of

6. Thomas Wolfe, You Can't Go Home Again (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1934), p. 712.

7. Thomas Wolfe, The Story of a Novel (New York: Scribner and Sons, 1936), p. 22.

the author-hero's mind; (3) it shows violent reaction against his confining background; (4) it tends to romanticize his father's family; (5) a very important incident, the hazing episode, is not mentioned.

II. TREATMENT OF MAJOR PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENCE

1. Treatment of Family

In Look Homeward Angel the treatment of family turns on (1) emphasis upon lineage; (2) the strong characteristics and primitive impulses of the individual characters.

The Gant family was very strongly divided by the two parental sides of the house, those showing Gant tendencies and identities on the one side, and those showing Pentland characteristics on the other. The Gants are W. O. Gant, the father; Helen, Luke and Ben, Eugene's sister and brothers. The Pentlands are Eliza, the mother; Daisy and Stephen, Eugene's sister and brother, and Eugene. Helen Gant, in a rage, reminded Eugene of his likeness to the Pentlands, Eliza's side of the house:

"You little freak. You nasty little freak. You don't even know who you are--you little bastard. You're not a Gant. Any one can see that. You haven't a drop of papa's blood in you. Queer one! Queer one! You're Greely Pentland all over again."

She always returned to this--she was fanatically partisan, her hysterical superstition had already

lined the family in embattled groups of those who were Gant and those who were Pentland. On the Pentland side she placed Steve, Daisy, and Eugene--they were, she thought, the "cold and selfish ones," and the implication of the older sister and younger brother with the criminal member of the family gave her an added pleasure. Her union with Luke was now inseparable. It had been inevitable. They were the Gants--those who were generous, fine, and honorable.⁸

The outstanding characteristics of the Gant side of the house were boisterousness, unbounded vitality, ambition, licentiousness, and primitive appetites. Gant was a man of strong appetites, boisterously good-humored at times, enjoyed abundance in everything, disliked avarice, liked the theater, had some knowledge of literature, and enjoyed the respect of his fellow-townsmen in spite of his drunken debauches. He held no bitterness against Eliza for leaving him, although he occasionally referred to her as having deserted his "bed and board." He frequently visited among the boarders at Dixieland, discussing politics and topics of the day.

Helen possessed feverish energy, held an inexhaustible store of self-pity, imagining herself imposed upon by her family but becoming enraged if not included in everything that concerned it. She was the self-appointed nurse and housekeeper for her sick father, and when Eliza moved to Dixieland, she automatically

⁸ S. Wolfe, Look Homeward Angel, p. 238.

remained behind with Gant. She was the keeper of his health and welfare, and she considered herself a victim of any misfortune that assailed him. She was tolerant of her mother's caprices, harbored unconsciously a rivalry for Gant's esteem, and held a humorous contempt for Eliza's boarding-house.

Luke was a stutterer, a most persistent salesman, and a possessor of the characteristic qualities of the Gants.

On the side of the Pentlands were Eliza, Daisy, Stephen, and Eugene. Eliza had a mania for the acquisition of property, and her foresight and intuition for good buys in realty eventually made her large profits. Her avarice and continued reference to herself and her family as poor, irritated Ben, who was the embodiment of generosity. She was not overly scrupulous about the boarders she harbored at Dixieland, but on occasions showed generosity toward unfortunates. In the case of the pregnant woman without funds, she boarded her and paid her doctor bill.

Daisy married early in the novel and went to Birmingham to live, thus dropping into the background. Stephen was a licentious, drinking, cursing, ne'er-do-well, who eventually married an older woman, one of Eliza's boarders, and went to Indiana to live. Ben was

a silent, steady plodder, working in a newspaper office. He was the soul of generosity and considered the gifts he made to those he liked as favors to himself rather than to them. He blushed at their expressed appreciation; answers and comments to most opinions were "Well, what do you know about that!" Eugene was very much like Ben, and there was a comradeship between the two that Eugene did not feel toward any of the other family.

W. O. Gant's attitude toward Eugene was kindly, and interested. He took him to shows, to visit Daisy, gave him money for ice-cream sodas, and encouraged his education, seeing in him his last hope to make the name prominent, as he hoped, politically. Helen was at times affectionate and at times abusive toward him. It amused her and fed her egotism when he would desert Dixieland and come to the Gants, and she enjoyed to the utmost her arguments with Eliza when the latter eventually called, demanding his return. Luke considered his younger brother lazy, and exhorted him to sell more Saturday Evening Posts, for which he was an agent. He routed him from the public library, when he found him resting or loitering there; he instructed him in his own salesmanship tactics; his measure for Eugene was his sales ability.

Eliza had an indifferent affection for Eugene as

her youngest child. She took him with her to Dixie-land, and occasionally reminded him of being her baby. She saw however, no reason why he should not work and earn his keep; consequently she encouraged him in the sales of the magazines, berated him when his earnings did not measure up to expectations, exhorted him at all times under all conditions to "drum up trade" for her boarding house, and "to throw his shoulders back and make people think he was somebody."

He was more attached to Ben than to any other member of his family. They were more nearly alike in feelings and attitudes, and the brothers felt this closeness.

Both Ben and Eugene were by nature aristocrats. Eugene had just begun to feel his social status--or rather his lack of one; Ben had felt it for years. The feeling at bottom might have resolved itself simply into a desire for the companionship of elegant and lovely women: neither was able nor would have dared, to confess this, and Eugene was susceptible to the social snub, or the pain of caste inferiority: any suggestion that the companionship of elegant people was preferable to the fellowship of a world of Tarkingtons, and its blousy daughters, would have been hailed with heavy ridicule by the family, as another indication of false and undemocratic pride. He would have been called "Mr. Vanderbilt" or "the Prince of Wales."⁹

Ben had an affection for and understanding of his younger brother that the others lacked. Eugene cherished

9. Ibid., p. 123.

for years the watch given as a birthday present by the older brother. Meeting him on the street, Ben often cuffed him affectionately, then took him into a restaurant for something to eat. He criticised the family's negligence of the youth, and later, when Eugene was ready for college, advised him to take his parent's money for expenses rather than work his way through.

Eugene's attitude toward his family was alternating toleration and bitterness. He resented Eliza's mannerisms.

He writhed as he saw himself a toughened pachyderm in Eliza's world--sprucing up confidently, throwing his shoulders back proudly, making people "think he was somebody" as he cordially acknowledged an introduction by producing a card setting forth the joys of life in Altamont and at Dixieland, and seized every opening in social relations for the purpose of "drumming up trade." He hated the jargon of the profession, which she had picked up somewhere long before, and which she used constantly with such satisfaction--smacking her lips as she spoke of "transients," or of "drumming up trade." In him, as in Gant, there was a silent horror of selling for money the bread of one's table, the shelter of one's walls to the guest, the stranger, the unknown friend from out the world; to the sick, the weary, the lonely, the broke, the knave, the harlot, and the fool.¹⁰

He lacked Luke's enthusiasm for selling and disapproved of his tactics. He liked to hear the jingle of coins in his pocket, but the thought of walking along the street

10. Ibid., p. 160.

carrying a pack on his back was unbearable.

Later, when Eugene was approaching young manhood he expressed the long suppressed bitterness toward his family which had been accumulating since childhood.

"I'm sorry I jumped on you, Ben. You," he said to the excited sailor, "jumped on my back like a coward. But I'm sorry for what's happened. I'm sorry for what I did the other night and now. I said so and you wouldn't leave me alone. You've tried to drive me crazy with your talk. And I didn't," he choked, "I didn't think you'd turn against me as you have. I know what the others are like--they hate me!"

"Hate you!" cried Luke excitedly. "For G-G-God's sake! You talk like a fool. We're only trying to help you, for your own good. Why should we hate you!"

"Yes, you hate me," Eugene said, "and you're ashamed to admit it. I don't know why you should, but you do. You wouldn't ever admit anything like that, but it's the truth. You're afraid of the right words. But it's different with you," he said, turning to Ben. "We've been like brothers--and now, you've gone over against me."ll

There was no unity of love or common interest in the Gant family; it was divided into groups based on likenesses or differences. Toleration of each other was the only basis of unity. The one group, the Gants, were strong in their emotions, in their appetites, and in their ambitions. The other group, the Pentlands, were, on the whole, less expressive, and more suppressive of emotions and appetites. A notable characteristic of the

ll. Ibid., p. 501.

brothers, as a whole, was the lack of harboring bitterness after fist fights, of which there were several. Most of them ended in acknowledgement of error and an apology for causing the eruption.

2. Treatment of Institutions

The institutions in Look Homeward Angel are educational, religious, and social; that is, the schools, the church, and the theater. Eugene's most effective school training was received with the Leonards and at the State university.

The Leonards gave him the impetus for developing his inherent talents, and the means for enlarging his knowledge and indulging his interest in literature. When he was selected as a prospective pupil of Mr. Leonard's private school, the Gant family snorted, identifying him with Mr. Vanderbilt and assuring him he would be ruined. The Leonards took the interest in him that they would have taken in an own child, watchful of his health, his habits, sometimes indulgent; they were the blazers, opening up the way for him to the great classics and to the inspiring body of literature they themselves knew and loved. Eugene learned easily, sometimes entangling Leonard himself with clever questions, and he read ravenously,

guided by Margaret Leonard herself. Of Margaret Leonard, the author says:

The wine of the grape had never stained her mouth, but the wine of poetry was inextinguishably mixed with her blood, entombed in her flesh.¹²

His university experience hinges on his eccentricities and the peculiarities of his conduct. During his first year he had a rebellious attitude; when the English professor interviewed him about outside reading and required a report on Barrie, Eugene agreed outwardly but resolved inwardly that he would read anything he pleased. His Latin professor accused him of using a pony; he had not done this, but he resolved now to do so.

During his second year he engaged in a series of juvenile pranks. He delighted in ringing door-bells, announcing himself as Thomas Chatterton looking for Mr. Samuel T. Coleridge, and then enjoying the consternation produced. Sometimes other equally ridiculous impersonations were assumed. He was called queer and criticised for not taking baths, and for not changing his underwear more often, but he sneered at these attitudes; he thought of himself as a genius. He took walks at night, sometimes letting out weird animal

12. Ibid., p. 308.

yells.

He progressed from evasion in his first year to sociability in his last. He joined everything, and being of a neutral group he was welcomed. At the commencement exercises which Eliza and W.O. attended, he gave the valedictorian oration. He was sad at leaving the university.

During one of his years he took part in a hazing in which a fellow-student was killed; this incident worried him, although he did not mention it in Look Homeward Angel nor in Of Time and the River. It was not until the last volume, You Can't Go Home Again was published that he summoned courage to put it in print.

His attitude toward church during his early years is described in the novel, but adolescent and mature attitudes are not expressed. As a child he liked the romantic aspects of the Presbyterian Church that he had attended for several years and was awed by the solidarity and solemnity of it. In the Sunday school he liked the singing of the mixed voices of such songs as "Throw out the Lifeline," "Shall We Gather at the River," and "Onward Christian Soldiers."

The author subtly voices his own attitude

toward the various churches in the following:

Harry Tarkinton and Max Isaacs were Baptists, as were most of the people, the Scotch excepted, in Gant's neighborhood. In the social scale the Baptists were the most populous and were considered the most common; their minister was a large plump man with a red face and a white vest, who reached great oratorical effects, roaring at them like a lion, cooing at them like a dove, introducing his wife into the sermon frequently for purposes of intimacy and laughter, in a programme which the Episcopalians, who held the highest social eminence, and the Presbyterians, less fashionable, but solidly decent, felt was hardly chaste. The Methodists occupied the middle ground between vulgarity and decorum.¹³

Eugene's participation in this Sunday devotion was shadowed by his isolation from it. He was deeply attracted and moved by its gloom, the music, the prayers, and the pictures of Christian mythology which he collected as a child. From these forms he felt there was something deeper and greater than exterior decency.

The theater impressed Eugene immensely. His first visit to a theater was in Augusta while on a visit with his father to his sister, Daisy. The play was founded on the story of Saul and Jonathan. He whispered to Gant from scene to scene the trend of coming events; this sophistication and enthusiasm pleased his father greatly.

13. Ibid., p. 139.

The school experiences of Eugene Gant are marked by attainment rather than by enjoyment or sociability. His college experiences, in addition to attainment, emphasized eccentricities that probably caused him to be considered as queer and peculiar. These singularities were certainly the basis of problems, as they were probably responsible for his lack of associates and for the loneliness that is an ever recurrent allusion throughout his novels.

The church experiences emphasize his sensitivity to criticism, and a romantic tendency to admire and applaud the beautiful in the service and in the church organism.

3. Treatment of Associates

The associates of Eugene Gant in Look Homeward Angel hinge on his isolation in college and on his lack of associates as a child. In college, before his first year had ended, he had changed his lodging four or five times. His last room was large, bare, and carpetless. Here began an isolation that was hard to bear at first, but which became necessary to him later both physically and mentally.

His closest associate was Jim Trivett, son of a rich tobacco farmer in the eastern part of the state.

Jim's nickname for Eugene was "Legs," and it was he who was Eugene's companion when he had his first sex experience. This attachment, however, was neither strong nor lasting.

In his second year he was congenial with his roommates and popular in general, yet again he had no close associates.

He was happier than he had ever been in his life, and more careless. His physical loneliness was more complete and more delightful. His escape from the bleak horror of disease and hysteria and death impending, that hung above his crouched family, left him with a sense of aerial buoyancy, drunken freedom. He had come to the place alone without companions. He had no connections. He had, even now, not one close friend. And this isolation was in his favor. Everyone knew him by sight; everyone called him by name, and spoke to him kindly. He was not disliked. He was full of expansive joy, he greeted everyone with enthusiastic gusto.¹⁴

In his final year, though still popular, his aloofness was still predominant; he was considered queer.

Further, it annoyed and wounded him to be considered "queer." He exulted in his popularity among the students, his heart pounded with pride under all the pins and emblems, but he resented being considered an eccentric, and he envied those of his fellows who were elected to office for their solid golden mediocrity. He wanted to obey the laws and be respected; he believed himself to be a sincerely conventional person--but, someone would see him after midnight, bounding along a campus path, with goat-cries beneath the moon. His suits were baggy, his shirts and drawers got dirty, his

14. Ibid., p. 487.

shoes wore through--he stuffed them with cardboard strips--his hats grew shapeless and wore through at the creases. But he did not mean to go unkempt--the thought of going for repairs filled him with weary horror.¹⁵

This isolation is merely a repetition of his experiences as a child. He had only a few associates as a child. Max Isaacs and the Tarkintons are about the only ones mentioned as his childhood playmates. Except for a few boyish pranks such as chasing Jews and negroes, or exchanging wild west books, very little is said of his early play life. The meagerness of his play life is striking; he is portrayed as a brooding child rather than as a frolicking boy participating in games and sports.

Thus, pent in his dark soul, Eugene sat brooding on a fire-lit book, a stranger in a noisy inn. The gates of his life were closing him in from their knowledge, a vast aerial world of phantasy was erecting its fuming and insubstantial fabric. He steeped his soul in streaming imagery, rifling the book-shelves for pictures and finding there such treasures as "With Stanley in Africa," rich in the mystery of the jungle, alive with combat, black battle, the hurled spear, vast snake-rooted forests, thatched villages, gold and ivory; or Stoddard's "Lectures" on whose slick heavy pages were stamped the most-visited scenes of Europe and Asia; . . .¹⁶

When he moved to Dixieland, he lost connection with his former friends and had only a few sporadic

15. Ibid., p. 589.

16. Ibid., p. 83.

associates who bored and wearied him. Only children of boarders of Dixieland, or Tim O'Doyle, whose mother ran the Brunswick, or children here and there who held his interest for a short time were his playmates. Dull children vexed him, and he was more annoyed with tedium in the lives of others than in his own. It angered him to observe them satisfied with monotony and tedium.

He played games badly but was nevertheless interested in them. He admired Max, even after their friendship had cooled, for his excellence in baseball, for catching gracefully what seemed to be impossible balls, and for his precision as a hitter. Eugene tried to imitate his chum but failed because of his clumsiness.

At the Leonards, although he is congenial with the other pupils, casual associations rather than intimate friendships ensue.

The boys he met at Sunday School were mere contacts; their lives did not touch his during the week; they living on Montgomery Street--the more fashionable part of town. At times they jibed him, saying, "Do you want to buy a Saturday Evening Post, mister?"

Associates in Look Homeward Angel are noticeable

by their lack rather than by their presence. Loneliness, brooding, and isolation characterize his social life, although these attributes do not prevent him from being popular and well-liked. They are self-invited rather than enforced.

4. Treatment of Sex

Wolfe's treatment of sex turns on (1) mental conflicts; (2) solution of the sex problem. The sex experiences in Look Homeward Angel were more of sensual intoxication than of fleshly pleasure. As Eugene ordered the negress in Niggertown to strip and dance before him, he looked on fascinated.

Her skirt fell in a ring about her feet. She took off her starched waist. In a moment, save for her hose, she stood naked before him.

Her breath came quickly, her full tongue licked across her mouth.

"Dance!" he cried. "Dance!"¹⁷

He looked on until the negress approached too close, then seized with fear he managed his escape.

His next major sex experience was as nearly mental as the first and came to as ineffectual an end. It occurred while he and the little waitress, Louise, along with others, were on a trip to Charleston. The

17. Ibid., p. 305.

two had remained behind in the hotel desiring to sleep, while the others had gone to visit the Navy Yards. Louise had gone to Eugene's room to wake him. A conversation ensued in which Louise asked Eugene what kind of build he liked in a girl and won a confession from him that he admired her build. Breaking down the reserve gradually and becoming more familiar, an impassioned love scene ensued, but ended as flatly as did the experience with the negress. The youth's emotion dissolved itself in tears.

"Why, you're all excited, dear. There. Why, you're shaking like a leaf. You're high strung, honey. That's what it is. You're a bundle of nerves."

He wept soundlessly into her arm.¹⁸

A third experience ended in like manner. With Jim Trivett, who had taken him to see a prostitute, Lily Jones, he was seized with illness and forced to retch in the gutter.

A determination to conquer this fear, or revulsion, ended more successfully in a fourth attempt when he visited Lily Jones' house alone and asked for the other prostitute, Thelma. Dire results followed; he contracted a venereal disease which frightened him until he went

18. Ibid., p. 364.

home Christmas; through Ben's aid he sought a doctor's help and recovered.

He had one serious love affair with Laura James, a boarder at Dixieland, which approached sex experience, but never progressed beyond the love stage. Climbing into her room through a window at night, they made love ecstatically. He relieved Laura's fears by tucking her in bed.

He stooped, thrusting his arm under her knees, and lifted her up exultantly. She looked at him frightened, holding him more tightly.

"What are you doing?" she whispered. "Don't hurt me."

"I won't hurt you, my dear," he said. "I'm going to put you to bed. Yes. I'm going to put you to bed. Do you hear?" He felt he must cry out in his throat for joy.

He carried her over and laid her on the bed. Then he knelt beside her, putting his arm beneath her and gathering her to him.

"Good-night, my dear. Kiss me good-night. Do you love me?"

"Yes." She kissed him. "Good-night, my darling. Don't go back by the window, you may fall."¹⁹

Their love still remained unsullied by sex fulfillment, as they lay on the ground enveloped by impassioned emotion--they were on a picnic alone. A dramatic and

19. Ibid., p. 443.

tragic end befell their romance when Laura left at the end of June and wrote him a little later, announcing her marriage to another man.

III. SUMMARY

In conclusion: (1) Look Homeward Angel is a violent reaction against the small town; (2) a conspicuous tendency to romanticize the hero, his father, and his father's family is shown; (3) the institutional influences it presents are these: (a) the religious outlook is negligible; (b) educational equipment is necessary for achievement; (c) family and social maladjustment develop psychological conflicts; (3) the romantic attitude toward the family combined with the isolation of the youth indicate the exaggerated perspective the author has attained.

CHAPTER IV

VARDIS FISHER'S IN TRAGIC LIFE

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Adolescence in the Western Frontier

The problem of this chapter is to discuss the attitudes toward adolescence as portrayed by Vardis Fisher in his In Tragic Life, 1932, the first volume of a tetralogy consisting of In Tragic Life, 1932; Passions Spin the Plot, 1934; We are Betrayed, 1935; and No Villain Need Be, 1936. The latter three novels were omitted from this discussion because they go on from adolescence to young manhood and then to adulthood.

Vardis Fisher was chosen to represent the late 1920's along with Thomas Wolfe because his treatment of adolescence presents a different pattern from that of the other authors discussed; that of a western adolescent in conflict with frontier life, who emerges successfully, becomes a college professor and author and comes to look back on his adolescent period as a most terrifying experience which influences his whole life.

I. THE AUTHOR

The materials available about the author are

an autobiographical sketch in Authors Today and Yesterday,¹ an article by John Peale Bishop, "The Strange Case of Vardis Fisher,"² and his fiction. The fiction is decidedly autobiographical.

His autobiographical sketch mentions his preference for certain authors and discusses his private life as a writer and his attitudes. He states that he takes pleasure in the impetuous headlong rhetoric of Thomas Wolfe, the superb craftsmanship of William Faulkner, the whimsical tenderness of Robert Nathan, and the oblique and penetrating realism of James Branch Cabell. He writes three or four hours in the morning doing about eight hundred words in the rough, revises them once, twice, or three times, but is still dissatisfied with his effort.

The predominant influences that have shaped his life according to his own analysis are the Bible, Puritans, moralists, college teachers of all sorts, and a persistent observation of his fellowmen. He stated that he tries to portray life as he sees it,

1. Stanley J. Kunitz, Authors Today and Yesterday (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1933), pp. 239-241. This contains a statement about himself.

2. John Peale Bishop, "The Strange Case of Vardis Fisher," The Southern Review (Louisiana: The Louisiana State University Press, 1937-1938), pp. 348-359.

and has seen it, that his books have been called brutal and ruthless because he has seen so much brutality and believes that all aspects of life belong in a serious novel. He has no vision of a Utopia, hopes he preaches no morality, believes that the only good book is an honest one, that romance is an adolescent attempt at escape from life, and sees no reason for assuming virtues which we do not possess, or look with shame on those impulses which repudiate those imaginary virtues. The titles of his tetralogy are taken from George Meredith's famous lines in "Modern Love" (Stanza XLIII):

In tragic life, God wot,
No Villain need be! Passions spin the plot;
We are betrayed by what is false within.³

Fisher states that his tetralogy, not yet completed at this time would "proceed from bewilderment and chaos into negativism, and then to a very positive attitude toward life."⁴

John Peale Bishop's article "The Strange Case of Vardis Fisher" establishes Fisher's tetralogy as autobiographical and discusses it from the viewpoint of the frontier. The heroic age of the frontiersman is past,

3. Kunitz, op. cit., p. 241.

4. Ibid., p. 241.

he says, but because Fisher observed it honestly, his work has value. He declares that the name "Vridar Hunter" is a most transparent disguise for Vardis Fisher and that there are even more definite indications that the works are strongly autobiographical in character. His criticism is that the form of fiction is carefully preserved through the first two volumes but breaks down in the last two, becoming only a documentation of Fisher's opinions on a variety of topics in the last. He states:

. . . the story of Vridar is essentially one of fear and the struggle against a fear of life, whose causes, he would have us believe, lie back of his birth. It is increased in his poverty-bitten boyhood by a pioneer up-bringing, at once brutal and idealistic, undisciplined and repressed.⁵

Mr. Fisher shows an earnestness in portraying life as he finds it, including men, women, and children; his men are the fearless, sensual, willful, love-starved type; the women are the lewd, coarse, fearless, superstitious and puritanical type; his children are the brutal, sensual, emotional and both fearless and cowardly type. He does not wince at the brutality and cruelty that impregnate that life; he portrays the wildness and beauty of nature as a thing that becomes imbedded in

⁵. Bishop, "The Strange Case of Vardis Fisher," p. 350.

the people.

Fisher had written two novels and some poems previous to his novel In Tragic Life; subsequent to this publication he wrote seven novels, one short story, an essay, and collaborated with others in a Guide Book and an Idaho Encyclopedia, prepared by the Federal writers' projects of the Works Progress Administration.

Summary: (1) the tetralogy is a vivid account of an impressionable youth who became a victim of frontier life; (2) it is a significant account of frontier life.

II. COMPARISON OF THE FICTIONAL CHARACTER WITH THE AUTHOR

Vridar Hunter, the fictional character is born, reared, and attends school in Idaho, attends Wasatch University in Utah, serves in the army, graduates, gets his A. B. degree, then his Ph.d., teaches in the University of New York, then resigns to become a writer. He marries Neloa Doole while still in college, they have two children, and she commits suicide when she is sure Vridar intends leaving her to go with Athene Marvel, an instructress at Wasatch College.

Vardis Fisher, the author, is born, reared, and receives his early education in Idaho, attends the

University of Utah, serves in the army, marries, and his wife dies. He remarries, teaches in the University of Utah, then in the University of New York; he resigns from this position to return to Idaho to write.

Vridar Hunter, the fictional character, was the son of Joseph and Prudence Hunter, pioneers in the Antelope hills in Idaho. The wild country at once fascinated and held him with fear. He feared the river that rushed by their farm, the storms that roared through the trees, and the loneliness of the night. He wrote verse early; it was the one common purpose of his parents that their children should be educated, and toward that end both parents worked hard and for long hours.

Vardis Fisher, the author, was born in Annis, Idaho, March 31, 1895, the son of Joseph and Temperance Thorton Fisher, pioneers, and also the descendants of pioneers. Kunitz⁶ states that he wrote a complete novel while in high school, which he burned, and enough bad verse for a complete edition. Facts about his early life and schooling are not available; however, except from his fiction.

The hero's and his brother Mertyl's early

6. Kunitz, op. cit., p. 240.

schooling was obtained under adverse conditions. Due to its remoteness they had to live away from home, spending an unpleasant year at Annis with their Aunt Agnes; the following years were spent "batching" in an old shack and in a crudely constructed hut until the high school course was completed. The following year Vridar entered the University of Utah. After his first year he married Neloa Doole, a childhood school-mate. She returned with him to Salt Lake City; during his second year he joined the army and was sent to California. Dissatisfied and feeling the inferiority of his clothes to that of his associates he asked to be discharged. This was granted, and he returned home, saw his new-born son, and was subsequently drafted. After the war was over he returned home, became successively garage manager, bootlegger, and taxi-driver. He decided to return to college and graduated, and was offered a place on the faculty in the English department provided he would attend the University of Chicago during the summer.

This summer marked the beginning of Vridar's and Neloa's quarrels that eventually led to her suicide. On the faculty at the college was Athene Marvel who became friendly with Vridar and promised to leave with him.

This information was given to Neloa by Vridar, who wished above all things to be honest with her; she apparently accepted the outcome but drank poison and died when he finally bolted.

Fisher, the author, served in the United States army in the World War; he was married in 1918 to Leona McMurtry; they had two children, Grant and Wayne. His wife died and he married Margaret Trusler in 1929. He received his A. B. degree from the University of Utah in 1920, his M. A. from the University of Chicago in 1922, and his Ph. d. from the University of Chicago in 1925. After three years as instructor in English at the University of Utah he went as English instructor to the University of New York in 1928.

Vridar resigned his professorship at the University of Utah and went with Athene to Washington, where he worked in the Library of Congress on his thesis for a Ph. d. degree. Returning to Chicago he submitted his thesis and received his degree. He went back to the University of Utah as English professor and resigned after three years to go to New York, teaching at the University in the same capacity. After several years he resigned here to return to Idaho to write and to cheer his aging parents.

Summary: (1) The novel is heavily autobiographical; (2) both author and character are born and reared in Idaho; both (3) attend the University of Utah; (4) marry, have two children, and their wives die; (5) serve in the army; (6) obtain A. B. degrees, then Ph. d.'s; (7) remarry, teach in the University of Utah and New York, and resign to return to Idaho to write.

III. TREATMENT OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENCE

1. Treatment of Family

The family relations of the novel are three-fold: (1) the ancestry; (2) the immediate family; (3) the paternal relatives. The first explains the beginning of the Hunter clan in Idaho, the second presents the family at the time of the writing of the novel, and the paternal relatives give a picture of the frontiersmen.

The Hunter clan descended from the union of Joe Hunter and Rose O'Rourke, an Irish maid of Salt Lake Valley, whose parents had gone westward with Brigham Young. The couple settled in Idaho about 1870. The fearlessness which characterized the family was demonstrated by this ancestor; armed with only a knife

he slew a monstrous bear which was mutilating a man.

The characteristics of Joe Hunter, the son of the pioneer and the father of the boy, Vridar, were sternness, silence, sensitiveness, and at times cruelty, fearlessness and ruggedness; in contrast to these he had a secret passion for poetry and literature, and, the author tells us, might have been a poet if work had not taken him to the fields. Vridar caught a glimpse of this strange side of him while he watched his father's reaction to a novel which Prudence read. He felt then what he learned in later years that the father's silence and scorn were only masks for a hunger for love and tenderness. His one goal, the stubborn purpose which was mutual between him and his wife, was to educate his children.

Vridar's attitude toward his father, during these early years, was a strange alloy of reverence and fear. The man for him was a powerful giant, lost in silence and work. His scowl was black and terrible; in fits of rage he swept everything from his path. His stubborn will was as invincible as a ledge of stone. Never within Vridar's knowledge either now or in later years, did Joe admit himself to be defeated or brutal. He met accusation with rage. When feeling too deeply his stupidity or guilt, he would try to curse it out of him, or he would be driven by shame to the abuse of some defenseless creature.

7. Vardis Fisher, In Tragic Life (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1932), p. 68.

This picture of Joe Hunter is in direct contrast to the one Thomas Wolfe gives of W. O. Gant in Look Homeward Angel:

Gant was a great man, and not a singular one, because singularity does not hold life in unyielding devotion to it.

As he stormed through the house, unleashing his gathered bolts, the children followed him joyously, shrieking exultantly as he told Eliza he had seen her "wriggling around the corner like a snake on her belly," or, as coming in from freezing weather he had charged her and all the Pentlands with malevolent domination of the elements.

"We will freeze," he yelled, "we will freeze in this hellish, damnable, cruel, and God-forsaken climate. Does Brother Will care? Does Brother Jim care? Did the old Hog, your miserable old father care?

.....
 "But they can eat!" he shouted, plunging suddenly at the kitchen door. "They can eat-- when someone else will feed them. I shall never forget the old Hog as long as I live. Cr--unch, cr--unch, cr--unch," --they were all exploded with laughter as his face assumed an expression of insane gluttony, and as he continued, in a slow, whining voice intended to represent the speech of the late major: "'Eliza, if you don't mind, I'll have some more of that chicken' when the old scoundrel had shovelled it down his throat so fast we had to carry him away from the table."

As his denunciation reached some high extravagance the boys would squeal with laughter, and Gant, inwardly tickled, would glance around slyly with a faint grin bending the corners of his thin mouth. Eliza herself would laugh shortly, and then exclaim roughly: "Get out of here! I've had enough of your goings on for one night."⁸

The mother of Vridar Hunter, Prudence Hunter, was of a kindlier disposition than her husband, but sternness, capacity for work, and fearlessness were her chief traits also. Unlike the father, she felt instinctively the fears that beset her son, and to him she was a symbol of security. She was utterly right, the son thought, and to will a thing was to perfect its accomplishment. Complaint was foreign to her, even though her life was lonely in the desolate wilderness where they lived, and though her work was the hard toil of the frontier woman.

The Hunter family, especially Vridar's Aunt Agnes Hunter, his father's sister, were coarse, lewd, profane, prejudiced, and delighted in malicious jokes. It was these tendencies that prompted Agnes to cook only the plainest food for Vridar and Mertyl when they stayed with her, then secretly to rise at midnight and produce rich and spicy foods for her and Borg, her husband; it was also the basis for her mirth when Vridar suffered from a rash contracted by pulling up poison ivy around her door at her request; Vridar was bitter because she knew what the weed would do, while he was ignorant of it. The following quotation gives a characteristic picture of Agnes:

Agnes rose with voluptuous laziness and yawned. When she approached the hairy man he yanked her sprawling to his lap. He pushed her back, broke her over his knees; and Vridar stared at the two mounds of her breast. With a finger then the man probed at the abdomen, and he made a fierce amorous sound full of z's and b's. She lay prone, abandoned, her arms and hair falling to the floor.

"Agnes!" Prudence cried. "I want your help, please!"

She fumbled upward, yawning, crying "oh-oh!"

"You big lazy Swede," said the hairy man, "go make yourself useful. A hell of a wife you'll be."⁹

The father, Joe Hunter, inspired Vridar with admiration for his courage, apprehension of his wrath, cruelty, and bluntness, and a reverence toward him when his kindlier moods moved him to render tender care to injured or sick animals. His general attitude toward his father was shyness and silence in his presence, evasion, and forced respect. Toward his mother he felt complete faith in her wisdom, admiration for her capacity for work, and misery and insecurity in her absence. Toward the paternal relatives he felt repugnance, distrust, and dislike, especially for his aunt.

Toward Mertyl, his brother, he had assumed the role of guardian. He had early appointed himself as

9. Fisher, In Tragic Life, p. 178.

his brother's keeper, and their association was the nearest to a congenial companionship that Vridar enjoyed.

Summary: (1) The fearlessness demonstrated by the first Joe Hunter was characteristic of the whole clan of frontiersmen; (2) the fearlessness of the father, Joe Hunter, inspired in the youth admiration and fear of the father but contempt of his own fear; (3) his relatives did not arouse his admiration; (4) he was closest to his mother.

2. Treatment of Institutions

The institutions and spiritual influences treated in In Tragic Life are religious and educational. The religious influences are the Bible and the church; the educational institutions are the grade schools and high school.

Religious experiences hinge on sex curiosity, reading the Bible, and expiation for sex-sinning. Passages in the Bible referring to sex aroused sex curiosity; his affiliation with the church caused him to decide to go to the missionary field to atone for his practice of masturbation. Vridar had early acquired an extensive knowledge of the Bible, and had meditated on its teachings; he often pondered over

verses, words, and sexual references. Before he had started formally to school he had read first the children's, then the adult edition. He confided in his mother that when he grew up he wanted to be a prophet. He imagined himself a prophet and then Jesus himself, and had faith that he could move mountains. He put this ability to a test; the results were doubtful after watching several days to see if the mountain moved, but he decided it must have moved because it would be sinful to distrust the ability of divine power to manifest itself in him.

He had visions at this time; later he explained these as cataleptic trances. In one vision he saw a great lamb with seven eyes and seven tails against a background of red and white; on an altar sat a great white God surrounded by angels; four horses entered; one red, one black, one green, one blue. They raced around the throne, stars fell, the moon turned black, and the sun became a basketful of blood; the beasts knelt before the throne, and it began to hail drops of blood; trees withered and when the beasts arose they had the heads of wolves.

Far above he saw a white splendor walking; when it spoke, plagues fell and devils ran frantic

through fogland. He heard the voice of seven thunders. Bodies lay dead upon the earth, and people danced around them; then the bodies rose and went to God. He saw himself borne upward with Mertyl clinging to his feet; then Mertyl loosened his hold and fell to a graveyard of dead things. He went on to the temple's door, angels swarmed around him, and he was given a book which tasted like honey. Then he walked to the throne and knelt, and a crown of gold was placed on his head.

When he was in Rigby he went to church and was baptized, because most people went to church. His opinion of church-goers, nevertheless, was similar to that of his father--that is, that they went to church on Sunday and sinned the rest of the week. When he was in high school, he decided to go to Spain as a missionary in expiation of his sex-sinning; this resolve, however, did not materialize.

His passion for truth is illustrated in his Christmas experiences. The first Christmas in his wilderness home was a wondrous occasion; he had received a new cap, a harmonica, some peanuts, licorice, and a big red apple. The second Christmas, he found in his mother's stocking--hung up because he had none

of his own--the old cap and harmonica with some peanuts and candy. Humiliation and disappointment crushed him; he would rather have had only the peanuts than to be led to believe in Santa Claus and then deceived in this manner.

His school experiences offered more hardships and disappointment than it did pleasure and enjoyment. In addition to the unpleasantness of living away from home, he had to establish his security in every school he attended by fighting--a necessity that sickened him with fear and frenzy.

His attempt at verse-writing in high school ended in frustration. The principal had commented favorably on some of his verse; thus encouraged, for three weeks he hung anonymous verses on the blackboard; finally the principal advised him to discontinue this practice, because the school was laughing at him; Vridar was wretched at this rebuke.

Several pleasant experiences intervened to make his school days bearable. Once he was victorious in a spelling-match, in which he out-spelled Nelo Doole; again he conquered his shyness sufficiently to make friends and a skating companion of a girl named Helen; a third enjoyable occasion was Helen's birthday party.

His inability to present a birthday present threatened embarrassment, but he was saved from this calamity by Helen's quick thinking. Asked by Alvin Kress where his present was, she answered for him that he was having his made to order and would give it later.

Summary: The reading of the Bible gave his imaginative mind food. This accomplishment at an early age, his visions, and his tendency to impersonate a prophet and God, mark him as precocious and sensitive rather than rational and normal. His baptism and church attendance show a desire to be like other people, and his will to go to foreign fields as a missionary show an over-developed sense of sin. His convulsive fights at school reveal a queerness in his mental complex, probably due to former lack of associates. They open a way for future companionship and bolster his will to overcome his mental handicaps. His pleasant experiences make the more unpleasant ones endurable. The treatment of institutions emphasizes the meagerness of the youth's opportunity to form pleasant associations.

3. Treatment of Associates

The treatment of associates hinges on the hostility of the contacts afforded. Vridar Hunter's associates consist of two groups: (1) his neighbors

and his cousin; (2) his school associates.

"Oh, so that's what you want a-see me for!" Alvin laughed. "Sure, I remember. I said he was a little cross-eyed son-of-a-bitch!"

This was what Vridar had wished for; words that would come like a blow. Suddenly, swiftly, the world lost all meaning and he went mad. He gave a cry, an insane gurgling yell; he leapt like a tiger but without knowing that he leapt. He knew nothing, indeed, until several moments later, when he found himself struggling like a wildcat and screaming. Ollie and Doag and Mike were talking in his ear, pleading with him, and they were trying to hold his violent arms.

A little way off sat Alvin, with blood running from his mouth, with blood soaking his white shirt and his hands.¹⁰

This scene is a characteristic one of both groups. The reasons for his fights were (1) necessity from having a fight forced upon him; (2) for avenging insults to himself, to his mother, or to Mertyl; (3) dissuading attentions of other boys to girls he admired; and (4) because of his cousin's cruelty to dumb creatures.

With the children of his own neighborhood, the necessity for fighting was an acute problem. His only neighbors in his wilderness home were the Bridwells, and before he started to school he received a thrashing from Jed Bridwell. Jed accused him of

10. Ibid., p. 331.

tattling to Charley Bridwell about the mistreatment of his sister--throwing her down and exposing her body to the boys--and causing him to get whipped. Jed's revenge bore painful and cowering effects upon Vridar.

Jed did not wait longer. He leapt forth and broke the cowering lad to earth. He knelt on him, pinned his arms in deep soil, and fed soil into his mouth. He stuffed his mouth full, pounded the earth in with his fists; until he saw Vridar's face darken, his eyes bulge. Then he sprang up, ran softly to the river's brink, sank under it, and disappeared.¹¹

With his cousin, Hanke, although his association was comparatively peaceful, he fought because of Hanke's cruelty to dumb things. Hanke robbed bird's nests, cut the legs off frogs and left the mutilated bodies to die, and split a magpie's tongue, declaring that it would thereby talk. This cruelty sickened Vridar's sensitiveness, and they fought, Vridar victorious.

At the first school he attended he avoided fighting for a time by ignoring insults to his mother and most times remaining indoors at recess. Caged and forced to fight, he struck like lightning, routing his foe and winning freedom. Emboldened by his first fight he engaged in another to make a boy desist from paying

11. Ibid., p. 173.

persistent attentions to Neloa Doole, whom Vridar secretly admired. In his second school at Annis, he felt he had to proffer a fight to Ollie Bitt to clear his honor after Ollie had leered at Mertyl's crossed eyes. But Ollie took to his heels, relieving Vridar of the necessity of fighting. High school was an exception to this routine; he was freed from the necessity of fighting to establish himself; he made no close friends, however. He admired girls secretly, his shyness not permitting spontaneous friendship.

Summary: The treatment of associates is characterized by (1) fights with neighbors and schoolmates; (2) shyness in regard to girl associates with one exception.

4. Treatment of Sex

The treatment of sex is significant because of (1) its range and intensity; (2) fear of women; (3) sexual jealousy. The author treats the sex problem as one of the most serious of adolescence. It occupies a prominent place in the first three novels of the tetralogy. The intensity of Vridar's emotions is proportionate to his early interest in sex and his emotional instability is the result of his early training. His interest in sex had been aroused by Bible passages; by

animal birth, by the obscene pictures and inscriptions on school toilets, and by the sensual caresses of the older boys and girls. In his early adolescence he had practiced masturbation, schooled in it by his cousin, Hanke. This practice he considered sinful, and he refrained from it until his will-power could no longer resist. Discovering in an old book that such practice led to insanity he subsequently imagined himself becoming insane. Unable to sleep at night, or waking, drenched with perspiration, he frequently spent the remainder of the night wandering aimlessly.

The advice of two people was helpful in freeing him from this fear of dementia; Dr. Gunn, to whom Vridar had gone in a state of agitation, had given him understanding:

"Most young men do what you have done. Maybe you got the idea you were the only person in the world doing such a thing. That's a very silly idea. Nearly everybody does it at some time in his life. Didn't you know that?"

Vridar stared at him. He knew that denial was useless now.

"You mean--? Oh, but that can't be true! My God, I know that isn't true!"

"It is true. But most of them don't get upset. They don't think they're going crazy and all that tommyrot. Realize that. You've been listening to silly stories or reading quack books. Haven't you?"¹²

12. Ibid., p. 452.

He advised him to work hard, until he was tired enough to go to sleep, and to keep his mind off himself. The other person was one of his teachers named Turner who had met him one morning after one of his all night jaunts and guessed the reason. Turner laughed at his intention of becoming a missionary so heartily it became contagious, and Vridar laughed also. His remedial advice was to commune with nature, smell flowers, lie in the grass and look at the sky, and meditate on the beauties of nature. Vridar tried this suggestion and found it helpful.

The basis of Vridar's struggle with sex is the attitude of sex-suppression in his home--the puritanical views of his parents and the misrepresentations made to him in early childhood. From the mother's point of view sex was a thing of shame, not to be discussed. Her method of dealing with sex questions was to give evasive or fabulous answers. Her explanation of animal-birth was that the mother dug the infant out of the ground; failure to discover such holes shook Vridar's faith in his mother's veracity. Happening on a cow giving birth to a calf convinced him of the falseness of her explanations. Fear of her blushing or hesitancy in answering had often caused him to refrain from asking questions.

His association with women was not of an intimate nature. Opportunities were rejected often at the crucial moment because of his early training. A half-dozen women came within his reach, but none were ever touched. The reason is given in the following quotation:

But Vridar barely heard. He was absorbed by the fight going on within. He prayed that something would snap and set him free, so that he could take this girl, so that he could rise to manhood and claim his right. But he was only a fool, terrified by a woman's mouth. When a girl offered herself, he quaked and ran cold, as if his veins were filled, not with blood, but with embalming fluid . . .¹³

Some of Vridar's adolescent delinquencies are without doubt closely connected with sex-suppression. His petty thefts, stealing cigarettes and beer during his high-school days, his and McClintock's dishonest scheme for getting free groceries while in college, their plan for getting new clothes under false pretenses, and his participation in drunken debauches are the companions of emotional upheavals and the outlet of sex-impulse in lieu of sex-indulgence.

A neurotic attitude toward sex is shown by his insane jealousy of Nelo Doole, his fiancée.

¹³. Vardis Fisher, Passions Spin the Plot (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1934), p. 333.

"Neloa, it's not the truth! Darling, say it's not the truth!"

"It is the truth," she said.

"No!" He grasped her shoulders and for a moment he intended to choke her. "It isn't, I tell you! It isn't!" He was frantic now. He wanted to kill her and he looked round for a club but he could see nothing at all. Screaming at her, he said, "Tell me it isn't!"¹⁴

The above quotation is an outburst of his enraged jealousy when Neloa confessed to having had sex relations with other men. His frantic attempt to clear her name of the taint these associations had given it, occupied six weeks of a summer's vacation. Frequently their bitter and emotional quarrels reduced Neloa to tears, and in later years he decided that he had three reasons for exciting this emotional upheaval; (1) that their mutual tears stirred and softened his sexual hunger; (2) he believed that tears purged her of sexual sins; and (3) the artist in him demanded that all things be dramatized.

Vridar's struggle with sex problems form the basic struggle of his life. It hinges on the puritanical attitude of his mother, the lack of confidence between father and son, forbidding open discussion of sex; the early misrepresentations, forcing the boy to

14. Ibid., p. 189.

make his own deductions, and upon an over-developed sense of the sin and consequences of masturbation.

IV. SUMMARY

In conclusion: (1) In Tragic Life is heavily autobiographical; (2) it shows a youth in violent conflict with his environment; (a) the influence of the Bible is emphasized rather than that of the church; (b) the aim of education was to avoid the frustration of the parents; (c) sex-maladjustment developed mental conflicts; (d) the brutality and hardship of the frontier were emphasized; (3) the portrayal of the hardship and brutality of the frontier indicate the bitterness of the author toward his adolescent period.

CHAPTER V

JAMES T. FARRELL'S
YOUNG LONIGAN AND FATHER AND SON

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Adolescence in an Irish Catholic Neighborhood
of Chicago

Young Lonigan and Father and Son are the only two novels by the same author included in this study. Each is that part of a trilogy that deals specifically with adolescence; in the former adolescence is seen at the beginning of the trilogy, the latter at the end of a line of development. Both deal with the adolescence of Irish Catholic boys in a mid-western metropolis. Studs Lonigan is middle-class; Danny O'Neill is lower middle-class. Studs affords a study of a type-character portraying some of the tendencies of the period; Danny O'Neill is more immediately autobiographical--more the portrait of the author in adolescence.

I. THE AUTHOR

Farrell himself was born in 1904 and is of Irish Catholic stock of Chicago. He went from St. Anselm Grammar School to St. Cyril High School and on to De Paul University and to the University of Chicago, once a Baptist, now a secular institution, where he developed

into a socialist and a creative writer. Though a Marxist in politics he does not believe that literature is purely propaganda. The aim is not tracing the economic origins of social and cultural movements, but the assimilation and presentation of life.¹

The writing of the Studs Lonigan trilogy was the result of studies at the University of Chicago.² In the spring of 1929 he took a course in advanced composition from Professor James Weber Linn at the University of Chicago. He wrote thousands of words--impressions, anecdotes, book-reviews, and essays--most of them relating to death and disintegration. One of these stories was entitled Studs, a story of a wake told in the first person, which was originally printed in "This Quarter." The corpse was a young man from the Fifty-Eighth Street neighborhood who died suddenly at the age of twenty-six. The group of mourners recall with nostalgia the past years and relate details of their current life. Professor Linn read the story enthusiastically to the class; Farrell asked Professor Lovett to read and criticise it. The latter suggested that he

1. Charles I. Glicksberg, "Contemporary Criticism," South Atlantic Quarterly, October, 1936, pp. 455-457.

2. James T. Farrell, "A Novelist Begins," Atlantic Monthly, September, 1938, pp. 330-334.

develop it at greater length. The trilogy with Studs Lonigan as the hero was the result.

I saw in the character of Studs Lonigan, who was growing in my mind, a number of tendencies at work in a section of American life which I happened to know because it had been a part of my own education in living. I began to see Studs not only as a character in imaginative fiction but also as a social manifestation. In the early stages of writing this work, I analyzed my character as I considered him in relation to his own world, his own milieu. I set as my aim the unfolding of the destiny of Studs Lonigan in his own words, his own actions, his own patterns of thought and feeling. I decided that my task was not to state formally what life meant to me, but to try to recreate a sense of what life meant to Studs Lonigan.³

Studs Lonigan represented to Farrell a type of Irish Catholic youth that Farrell saw developing within his own experience. Studs was the son of Irish Catholic immigrant parents of the bourgeois class who expected the church and the school to direct the spiritual and educational welfare of their children. With this direction, supplemented by good example at home, they expected the children to attain a higher plane than they had reached.⁴ Studs is also typical of the youth of Farrell's experience who are the victims of the Prohibition evils. Drinking had become a ritual, a gesture of defiance, and the disasters that befell Studs are

3. Farrell, "A Novelist Begins," op. cit., p. 332.

4. Ibid., p. 333.

skin to those that befell other youth--blindness and impaired health.

The Danny O'Neill series which followed the Studs Lonigan trilogy, represent an effort to look more deeply into himself without ceasing to recall objectively and to observe.⁵ Danny O'Neill represents to Farrell a youth more akin to Farrell himself--one who responds in a degree to the teachings of church and school, but who finds in the end that they are insufficient for his needs.

Charges were brought against him by the Society for the Suppression of Vice,⁶ which counted seventy-five indecent passages in A World I Never Made, the first of the Danny O'Neill series, and issued a warrant to have the remaining copies impounded at the publishers and the latter sued. The magistrate threw the case contemptuously out of court, after a roster of outstanding writers had issued an indignant eulogy in Farrell's defense. Libraries, nevertheless, were scared into taking his novels off their shelves, and a store selling his books, in Milwaukee, was raided by Socialist police backed by a Socialist mayor. Again

5. Earle Bierney, "The Fiction of James T. Farrell," Canadian Forum, April, 1939, p. 22.

6. Ibid., p. 23.

Farrell was defended against the Milwaukee leaders by a rally of artists. His defense against "the bad smell of the world lay in the title, A World I Never Made."⁷

He received a Guggenheim fellowship award for the purpose of finishing A World I Never Made;⁸ and in 1936 the Book-of-the-Month Club gave him one of the \$2500 prizes presented to authors whose work was both distinguished and insufficiently recognized. The following week the New York Times, after having refused space to advertise Farrell's books, ran a large advertisement for Studs Lonigan.

Farrell's literary works consist of eight novels, numerous short stories, and a literary criticism.

Summary: (1) Farrell has developed from an Irish Catholic background into a socialist; (2) he regards literature, however, as a means of presenting experience rather than of advancing economic theories; (3) his frankness has led to prosecution and vindication of his fiction about adolescence.

II. COMPARISON OF THE FICTIONAL CHARACTER WITH THE AUTHOR

The Danny O'Neill series are autobiographical.

7. Ibid., p. 23.

8. Loc. cit.

Danny O'Neill, our hero, is born and reared in Chicago, is interested in sports, especially baseball, attends Catholic schools, and studies at the university. He has the experience of working at a service station and at an express office after he graduates from high school.

Farrell, the author, was born in Chicago, attended parochial school and graduated from a Catholic high school, attended De Paul University and the University of Chicago, but did not obtain a degree from either. He also had the experience of working as service employee and as clerk in an express office.

In the Danny O'Neill trilogy the setting is in a Catholic locality in Chicago. Danny is interested in baseball and football in his grammar school days, and this interest continues into high school. He is especially interested in baseball and later in football. Along with his interest in sports he is also a good student, making good grades and hoping to win a scholarship to a Catholic high school. He does not succeed in doing this, but attends high school nevertheless. One is impressed with the extent and exactness of baseball knowledge Danny has at an early age, and according to Bierney⁹ these facts are produced entirely from Farrell's

9. Ibid., p. 24.

memory.

Two out already in this inning. God was helping Ed Walsh. Riggert up. Out. Oh, you Ed Walsh. God wouldn't let him hit Walsh now. He stood on his seat, yelled himself hoarse, clapped his small hands, and Walsh walked into the bench, receiving a thunderous ovation. And it increased as he walked out, bat in hand, to start the White Sox half of the inning. He laced out a single, and the bat boy ran around to first base carrying a blue sweater for him to wear on the bases so that his arm didn't get cold. Danny watched Ed Walsh, his foot on first base putting on his sweater. With eyes of adoration he followed Walsh's fingers while the big fellow buttoned his sweater. And he clapped his hands when Ping Bodie, with two out, smacked a single, and Walsh scored.¹⁰

Danny goes on to high school and becomes an outstanding football player. His work goes down in proportion, he often copies his assignments from more industrious students, and is frequently reprimanded by the brothers for not producing a better quality of work.

Farrell, the author, also reared in Chicago, had no literary or intellectual interests in his boyhood. His interests were chiefly athletic,¹¹ and he worked hardest at baseball at St. Anselm Grammar School. He took letters in football and basketball at St. Cyril High School.

¹⁰. James T. Farrell, A World I Never Made (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1936), p. 38.

The college career of Danny, the hero, is not discussed in the fiction. Father and Son leave him after graduation from high school working as clerk in the express office, where his father, who had just died, had worked before him. At this point of his life there was not much hope of his going on to college, where he had dreamed of winning honors as an athlete. The father's death, leaving a large family whose support depended on the two older boys, Bill and Danny, left no prospective college career for Danny to hope for. In addition, Bill's interest in a girl, whom he introduced to Danny as a future sister-in-law, thrust a college career still farther into the background. Yet Danny did attend college, as Farrell, the author did, because in the "Studs Lonigan" trilogy he is referred to thus:

A disturbing sense of loneliness caused Danny O'Neill to close the copy of Theory and Business Enterprise which he was studying for one of his courses at the University. The elation of intellectual discovery and stimulation, the keenness of feeling mental growth within himself, the satisfaction of having uncovered additional proofs to buttress his conviction that the world was all wrong, which he had derived from his reading, suddenly eased.¹²

Farrell, the author, went on to De Paul

12. Farrell, Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan (New York: The Modern Library, 1938), p. 369.

University and to the University of Chicago; at the latter he began writing and made up his mind to become a writer. He never obtained a degree from either university,¹³ and his college interest centered chiefly on writing. He enrolled in various classes only to drop out before the term was finished.

Similar experiences in work listed are that of clerk in the express office and service station employee.

The conclusions drawn from this comparison are (1) that the Danny O'Neill series are autobiographical; (2) that this trilogy is an honest effort to portray a more normal side of Irish Catholic adolescence in contrast to that of Studs Lonigan.

III. TREATMENT OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS OF ADOLESCENCE

1. Treatment of Family

In the Studs Lonigan trilogy, Studs is portrayed as rebellious against his family. Emphasis is on the failure of family, both parents and brothers and sisters, to do anything for Studs. In the Danny O'Neill series, Danny is portrayed as a link between two families at somewhat different spiritual and economic levels. The emphasis is on the normal development of Danny from childhood through adolescence.

13. Farrell, "A Novelist Begins," op. cit., p. 330.

The Lonigan family was of the bourgeois artisan class; his father was the manager of a small paint business. Both parents were of Irish descent, without educational background, deeply religious, and ambitious for their children. The family enjoyed financial security, a good social standing among their neighbors and other parishioners, and were inclined to be critical of the mannerisms of people less fortunate than they. They criticised Mrs. Reilly as being "common," a "green-horn," whose English was "awfully bad." Patrick Lonigan spoke disparagingly of Dinny Gorman for "sticking up his nose and actin' like he was a highbrow, lace-curtain Irish, born to the purple." He asserted he had known him when he "didn't have a sole on his shoe." Mrs. Lonigan remembered the patronising manner of May Gorman when she invited her to tea but requested her to call first because they had so many engagements.

Studs' attitude toward his family was rebellious.

A red flush from the slap he got appeared on Studs' left cheek. Uncontrolled tears welled forth. He wanted to hit back. He was afraid of his father. He sniffed without will.

The old man dropped back to his rocker, held his head in his hands. Studs looked at him and imagined himself smashing the old bastard's face till it bled and swelled. He stood impotently.

"You heard me! Tomorrow! Now get the hell out of my sight before I give you the trimming you

deserve, you dirty little whelp!"¹⁴

Thus the father and son quarreled because Studs, imitating Weary Reilly, had been insolent. After much buoying of his bravado, he staged a hold-up with his old rusty pistol, and was mocked by his victim. At two o'clock in the morning he was approached by his father at Fifty-Eighth Street.

"Bill?"

Studs stepped.

"Come on home, Bill," the man said with kindness. Studs walked beside him.

"Bill, you don't ever want to be doing a thing like this again. Your mother's heartbroken." Studs was glad to be going home.¹⁵

Studs felt only contempt and revulsion for his family. He scorned his father because of his inability to get to the point; because of his habit of intending to do things rather than doing them, and because of the attitude he had toward the youth's future, to go to school and get ahead. He deceived them whenever he deemed it convenient, kept them in the dark about his personal affairs, and tolerated them because of necessity, but kept them in the background. Toward his mother he

14. James T. Farrell, The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan (New York: The Modern Library, Random House, Inc., 1938), p. 54.

15. Ibid., p. 60.

felt an impatience at her wanting him always to pray to see if he had a vocation and to do menial things around the house, dust rugs, etc. His impulse was to get away from the house to avoid her nagging. Toward his sisters he felt contempt for their effort to live on a higher level than he, to attend high school and fraternity dances; toward his younger brother, Martin, he felt indifference. As an older brother, occasionally he felt it a duty to criticise his sisters' escorts and to warn Martin against drinking.

The daughters were solicitous that they associate with the right people, do the correct things, and that the family make a good appearance. They resented Studs' staging public scandals; Frances deplored a scene in which she and her escort met Studs on Christmas Eve, drunk and profane, and resentful of their offer to assist him home.

"Never as long as I live will I feel towards him again as a sister, or recognize that he is my brother!" Fran said with appropriate melodrama.

"After all I've done for my children, and suffered!" the mother exclaimed.

Fran went to her bedroom, and returned with Studs' Christmas present of six pair of silk stockings.

"Till my dying day I'll hate you . . . you . . . you . . . brute!" she said, returning the present.¹⁶

16. Ibid., p. 187.

The sisters resented Studs' interference with them in any way, inconveniencing them, criticising their friends or anxious about their conduct, they feeling their own judgment to be superior to his. Studs and Fran were most always at odds with each other. Occasionally the sisters teased him in a patronizing manner; this exasperated him.

Danny O'Neill, with a more detached attitude toward family, shuffled between the two families, the O'Neills, his immediate family and the O'Flaherty's, his mother's family--making the best of uncontrollable situations and developing normally. Bill shows the influence of his proletarian parents; Danny falls under the more bourgeois influence of the grandmother's family.

Lizz O'Neill, Danny's mother, was a slovenly, gossipy, untidy housekeeper. She was over-zealously religious, attending church, going to confession, and praying; this devotion, however, did not lessen the caustic of her tongue. She delighted in attending wakes, remaining with the corpse several days if possible, gossiping with the mourners. She was an enthusiastic defender of her family, her motherhood, and her faith.

Jim O'Neill, Danny's father, a truck driver, and father of a large family, was proud of his family, resentful toward the O'Flaherty's, critical of his wife, and inclined to drink; but on the whole was a more wholesome person than his wife. At the time of this third novel, Father and Son, the O'Neill family enjoys more financial security than in the two preceding novels, due to the fact that Bill, the eldest son, was now working at the express company, also. Jim whipped the boys severely when he caught them swearing or misbehaving; he was bitter against the poverty that made it necessary for Danny and Margaret to live with the O'Flaherty's, and he blamed Dr. Mike Gerharty for the death of a son because of his refusal to come when called because of previous unpaid bills. He was mildly religious, given to occasional drunks, when he sought fights and boasted about them later; indignant at his wife's untidiness--he bought her dresses and cleaned the house himself on numerous occasions; he was critical of her extravagance and exhorted her to save. He was tolerant and encouraging toward Bill, prompting him to go to night school, now that he was working.

The parental attitude of the O'Neill's toward Danny was varied. Lizz's attitude toward him was at

times indifferent, possessive, protective and boastful. She was exultant at his decision to study for the priesthood. Jim was contemptuous of the fact that Danny was becoming something of a dude, and cautioned him to get such notions out of his head. He felt that Danny should work during vacation and on Saturdays and give part of his money to them; he was mildly congratulatory when Danny graduated from St. Patrick's and from St. Stanislaus High School.

Danny's attitude toward his parents was toleration, tinged with shame and evasion. Danny was ashamed of the poverty of the O'Neill family and of the roughness of his father.

Danny walked beside his father, clutching his diplomas. Papa was like some of the fathers of kids in the schools, with rough hands and rough skin on his face, but he was different from Glenn's father, and Roslyn's, and Billie's. They were all more like Uncle Al, business men and not like workingmen.¹⁷

Again we have this reflection:

Papa looked like a workingman. Many of the fathers of fellows at school looked and dressed like business men. Whenever any one at school asked him what his father did, he always said his father was in charge of wagons and trucks at the express company, speaking of it in a way that made papa's job sound much bigger than it was.¹⁸

17. James T. Farrell, Father and Son (New York: The Modern Library, 1940), p. 135.

18. Ibid., p. 172.

He resented having his associates see printed in the church paper that his father subscribed only one dollar while others gave one hundred dollars. He was cramped and ill at ease when he was alone with his father or visiting at the O'Neill home.

The O'Flaherty's were more financially secure than the O'Neill's, and for that reason, Danny and his sister, Margaret, lived with them. The family was composed of Mother O'Flaherty, Aunt Margaret, Uncle Al, Uncle Ned, and the two children.

The grandmother's chief weakness was drinking beer, and getting the crying jags. When Danny was smaller, he dreaded these sprees, and was afraid when she left him alone to refill her pitcher with beer. She was watchful of other people's usage of things Al paid for; she nagged Margaret about her drunken sprees and about her lack of shame; she was a good house-keeper, jealous of Danny's appearance and cleanliness, a tireless listener to murder stories in the newspaper and to Lizz's gossip.

Aunt Margaret was a nervous, irritable girl, a paramour of Larry Robinson, and an addict to drink to drown her gloom. She was the mother of an illegitimate imbecile child by Larry Robinson, she had deserted her

church, did not believe in God, resented Ned's unemployment, feeling that the weight of the family expense was on her shoulders, and sometimes fought with her mother while intoxicated. She was kind to Danny and Margaret, however, and often lavished money and affection on them.

Uncle Ned, living with the O'Flaherty's after the death of his wife, was inclined to be tolerant, but sometimes rebuked Danny sharply. His unemployment was a constant source of bickerings between him and Margaret. He had lagged in his religious faith; he believed that most things could be accomplished by concentration.

Uncle Al was a traveling shoe salesman. He was a devout Catholic, a devoted supporter of his mother and her household, a peace-maker between irritated members of the family, and a jealous guardian of Danny's welfare. He shouldered a great responsibility and did not shirk from his duty toward it. Though his means of self-improvement were meager, he read good literature, focusing his attention on words and ideas that would help him. He had plans for Danny's future; he felt toward him as he would toward a son. He, together with the others, resented Lizz's untidiness.

her extravagance, and her gossiping.

Danny's preference between his two homes was with the O'Flaherty's. He had made that choice while still a child, when Jim O'Neill had been forced to rise late at night and take him home to his grandmother, he cried so hard. Danny was ashamed of his Aunt Margaret's drunken sprees, afraid of the fights between his grandmother and Aunt Margaret, and fearful of displeasing Uncle Al; aside from this his home life was complacent.

Summary: (1) The Studs Lonigan trilogy portrays the disintegration of an immigrant Irish Catholic family under the influence of metropolitan life; (2) the Danny O'Neill series portray a better integrated Irish Catholic immigrant family, on a higher economic and social level, one closer to Farrell's own family background, though still dealing with poverty and all its entailments.

2. Treatment of Institutions

The treatment of institutions in the Studs Lonigan trilogy emphasizes aversion toward school, adherence to the church through fear, the predominance of the poolroom, and the ineffectiveness of the playground. In the Danny O'Neill trilogy the emphasis is

on Danny's interest in the athletics of school with a more detached devotion to church, superficial interest in the poolroom, and a more genuine interest in the playground.

The school was the least influential of the institutions with which Studs came in contact. Studs looked upon the parochial school as a jail; he made spiteful and sarcastic remarks about the sisters, and felt a sense of release when he was graduated. When his high school education was considered at home, he determined he was not going to high school and sought to extract a promise from his father to employ him in his business instead. Enrolled at Loyola by compulsion, he played truant most of the year and was subsequently taken in hand by his father and put to work in his business.

The church bond was a binding one in spite of the drunken, sex-ridden life Studs led. It held him through fear of death and by habit more than by any benefit to be derived in this life. His devotion to the church was most always aroused after he had committed a sin or before a hazardous undertaking.

He thought of himself, out on the football field for tomorrow's game. The kickoff. Studs Lonigan running the first kickoff back a hundred and three yards. He wasn't going to be hurt

either. But suppose he was. Well, he was going to confession so he wouldn't be. He'd be afraid to enter that game tomorrow if he didn't, because he had that kind of a feeling.¹⁹

The poolroom was the most influential factor of Studs Lonigan's life. It was the meeting place of his gang, the place where empty and lewd gossip was engaged in, where the fellows got drunk, and primarily it was a place to spend idle time. The limited means of Studs' recreation, and his inclination to play the part of the hero and to be admired was the chief reason for his attachment to the poolroom.

He walked on towards the poolroom, wishing he was going out with Lucy, a girl. Maybe they'd all go to a can house. He was afraid to do that; no, he wasn't. He smiled at Sammy Schmaltz the newspaper man, hoping Sammy would comment on his new lid and clothes. Sammy was too busy selling papers.

Self-conscious, he joined a gang before the poolroom, and smiled deprecatingly when they kidded that he was all dolled up. Then they went back to kidding Paulie Haggerty, the married man, they said, who was too young to stand the gaff.²⁰

The poolroom had supplanted the playground in Studs' life as a meeting place for the gang. During the years previous to seventeen the gang had used the street and Washington Park to perpetrate its activities;

19. Farrell, Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan, p. 110.

20. Ibid., p. 67.

play at sports, chase and fight with Jews and negroes, look for girls, or just walk around lazily, or sit and jibe.

The movie sometimes became a substitute for, or a consequence of the poolroom. It seemed to while the time away; however, it served an additional purpose, which was to gratify the egotism of the youth. Studs frequently pictured himself in the role of the hero, and soliloquized as to what he would have done under the same circumstances.

In contrast to Studs' aversion to school, Danny O'Neill manifested great interest in school, especially in athletics. His scholarship standing had been lowered in favor of athletics, and Father Michael had reprimanded him for it.

"All sports and no study won't make you a bright boy, you know. It will hamper you from gaining the benefits of schooling for which you are here. You are capable of doing much better in your studies than you have been doing. In your first two years here your general average ranged between 85 and 90; this year it is ranging between 80 and 85. That would be very good for most pupils. But you have already proven you can be a 90 student."²¹

This same negligent attitude was present when he was thwarted in copying Samuel Howard's Latin homework but succeeded in copying Smilga's.

²¹. Farrell, Father and Son, p. 152.

School athletics played an important part in Danny's adolescent life. Various attitudes were expressed in his family, and Danny was fearful lest they make him give it up. Jim O'Neill was opposed to it until he thought there was a possibility of Danny's getting on a professional team and making money; his grandmother worried about the hypothetical doctor bill Al would have to pay if Danny got hurt; his Uncle Ned laughed at his self-deception when he said he played for his school; and Uncle Al did not approve, although he did not strenuously object.

The high school fraternity proffered to Danny his major social activities. The dances, although they left him dejected at his inability to impress girls, were enthusiastically attended, and the fraternity brothers, although they were often only casually friendly, offered companionship.

Danny's attitude toward the church was one of devotion tinged with hero-worship and intermingled with self-criticism. His devotion and self-criticism are best illustrated by his attitude toward a vocation, after Sister Magdeline had talked to his class about entering the priesthood. When he talked to Sister it was easy for him to feel that he had a call to be a

priest, but when he was alone and thought of becoming a priest, a gloom settled on him at not being able to marry or become a big leaguer; when he finally decided he was not cut out for the priesthood, he felt a weight lifted off him, the lightness of elation. He liked to meditate on himself, however, as St. Dennis O'Neill. When his Uncle Ned asked him why he wanted to enter the priesthood, he had no answer, and readily agreed with him that he was not suited to it.

His devotion, too, was often mingled with routine, as illustrated by his promise to God to say a decade of the rosary for his Uncle Al's recovery from his operation. His promise was kept, but the "hail mary's" were accompanied by thoughts of Roslyn and the party both had recently attended.

His sincerity was sometimes self-convincing, even though it was colored with personal attitudes.

He had to stop thinking of how he would feel when he got it over with, and get on with the examination of his conscience. He was sorry for his sins. But was his sorrow pure? He ought to be sorry for his sins because they offended God. But he was also sorry for his sins because in a couple of minutes he had to acknowledge them to a priest; and some of his sins were intimate and painful.²²

After his confession his faith in his redemption

22. Ibid., p. 160.

from sin and in his religion is naive.

Danny came out of the confessional box, feeling as if he had actually lost weight. Yes, it was over. His soul was in the state of grace. He wished that he could take wings and fly.²³

His final attitude toward his school education is summed up in the following:

He felt that there was something important in his high school career that was lacking. He did not know what it was, but he felt some lack, something important that was missing. And those four years, they were all gone now. Time was fast. Four years had gone and he had gotten so very little out of them. Perhaps it was his own fault. But he had expected so much more, dreamed of getting so much more, and all he had graduated with was a little false glory. He had really been a failure in school, a failure as a student, a failure as an athlete, too.²⁴

Summary: (1) For Studs Lonigan the important institution is the poolroom. He is a rebel against school and the church means nothing to him. (2) For Danny O'Neill there is a temporary spell of the priesthood. But the strongest influence is the school, particularly in opportunities for athletics and social life.

3. Treatment of Associates

The treatment of associates in the Studs Lonigan trilogy hinges on gang influence; in the Danny O'Neill

23. Ibid., p. 164.

24. Ibid., p. 570.

series the emphasis is on school associates. The aspects of the gang influence are (1) its origin; (2) its influence on Studs; (3) his reaction toward it.

The final results of Studs' association with the gang was his death in Judgment Day, caused from effects of pneumonia, contracted from a New Years' party arranged to bring the old gang together once again. At the close of the drunken, sex-infused celebration, Studs was found lying on the sidewalk in the snow in a drunken stupor and Weary Reilly was arrested for assault and battery on his girl companion and later given a prison term; the girl victim was left a hopeless invalid.

The gang traces its origin to days preceding and succeeding the graduation from St. Patrick's parochial school. The early amusements of its members were fighting Jews and negroes and each other; gathering some place and talking sex--sometimes including girls in these frank discussions; engaging in sports in the park; stealing convenient objects such as swimming suits or bananas; and playing truant from school. Later these included collecting around the poolroom, shooting pool, drinking, exchanging

lustful stories, and making lewd remarks about the sex appeal of passing women.

Studs' association with the gang became so consuming that he became dependent upon them for his entertainment and recreation. He had no hobbies or interests with which to occupy himself when he was alone; he was always looking for someone to help him pass the time; most of his activities are presented in company with members of the gang. Under its influence he chewed tobacco, seeing how far he could expectorate, smoked cigarettes, fought for the pleasure of being termed a hero, was initiated in sexual intercourse, and played truant from high school for a whole term. As time passed he joined the poolroom crowd in its time-wasting enterprise. The attitude of the gang outweighed any home influence; it fed his egoism.

His reaction to the gang was one of imitation, admiration, and desire for its approval of his performances. He was easily led by it; whatever was suggested he welcomed; to try to join the army, go swimming, play baseball or football, go to a show, drink, go to the park, or just hang around the poolroom and gossip. He admired Weary Reilly's independent manner with his parents; he applauded Kenny Killarney's witty rejoinders

to everything he heard, and he liked to listen to the vulgar, obscene remarks made in the poolroom crowd. It was the influence of Weary Reilly and the bravado infused by the gang that caused him to defy his father, quarrel with him, and attempt a hold-up, armed with an old revolver. It was also to win their praise and gratify his own egotism that he fought and whipped Weary Reilly; this fight remained in Studs' memory as an outstanding accomplishment as long as he lived. Other occasional associates were Danny O'Neill and Davey Cohen. Studs always regarded Danny as a "punk," and a sissy. Davey was a Jew, and was often embittered by being snubbed and reminded of his nationality.

With Danny O'Neill gang influence is negligible; his fraternity brothers and team-mates were more influential than the neighborhood group. The relationship between Danny and his fraternity brothers engendered inconsequential friction; nevertheless it persisted.

He had been reading in the papers about flaming youth, modern youth, jazz-age youth, and he was beginning to think he was missing something. He wanted to be a flaming youth himself. That was why yesterday at the basketball game he'd told Hugh McNeill he wanted to get reinstated in the fraternity. He could learn to wear classy clothes and be as doggy as young fellows like Phil Rolfe

and young Rocky who hung around the Greek pool-room at Fifty-Eighth Street.²⁵

Danny sometimes felt contemptuous of the boys who snubbed him, as he did for the condescending Glenn while he was waiting to be reinstated in the fraternity; and sometimes he felt dejected, as when they failed to include him in their groups at the fraternity dance. But his relationship with them improved somewhat, as evidenced by his and Natalie's going with Red Keene, and Ike Dugan in Red's old Ford to the second fraternity dance. He chummed with members of the fraternity at various times, but always seemed to be an outsider, or was a butt for their teasing.

In athletics he became a good football player and was captain of his team, but the boys lacked the proper respect for him and paid little heed to his comments or suggestions.

A comprehensive view of his associations is that he is accepted by other boys, and liked, possibly because he is good at sports, or because he is a good target for their jokes. Proofs of this attitude are his captaincy of his team, his reinstatement in the fraternity, his picture in the paper because of out-

25. Ibid., p. 181.

standing athletic performance, and the request for a speech from him at the football banquet.

His attitude toward his fraternity brothers was solicitous--a desire to be approved, to be included in their group, to dance as gracefully as others, and to be popular. A puerile envy consumed him when these desires were frustrated.

His contact with the neighborhood gang was only occasional. Their treatment of him was ironically contemptuous.

Danny stood by himself in front of the poolroom, wondering what to do. Studs Lonigan and a few of the older fellows were grouped together a few paces away from him.

"Hey, O'Neill, you better let it alone. You don't want to go to the booby hatch, do you?" Studs Lonigan yelled at him.

"Yeh, O'Neill, you ain't got them pimples on your face for nothing," Big Slug Mason said.

Danny walked by them without saying a word, hearing them laugh. The big bastards! Studs Lonigan used to like him when he was a punk. Now Studs hardly ever spoke to him, except to make some wisecrack at his expense.²⁶

Summary: (1) In Studs we have in fictional form one of the fullest studies of the influence of gang life upon modern youth. In Danny O'Neill the influence of the fraternity and its associations is studied. (2) Both

26. Ibid., p. 277.

emphasize typical rather than personal associations.

4. Treatment of Sex

The treatment of sex in the Studs Lonigan series hinges on Studs' obsession with sex. In the Danny O'Neill series it hinges on Danny's fear of girls of his own class accompanied by a freer disposition toward girls of looser morals.

Studs Lonigan is an over-sexed boy and he continues to be so through the trilogy, which covers his life from about fourteen until his death in his early thirties.

They walked on along the tennis courts on South Park Avenue, talking away. Studs didn't listen to them. He thought of Iris. He prayed that he would get her soon. He had to, because he couldn't think of anything else these days; and even that shutter trick wouldn't work to get the thought out of his mind.²⁷

This quotation is typical of Studs' attitude toward sex throughout the volume.

The enumeration of his thoughts on sex exceed the actual sex experiences. His sex thoughts involve his sister, Frances, when she appeared before him in a thin chemise;²⁸ Helen Shires, when she tells him of the "can house" about which she had learned and of

²⁷. Farrell, Young Lonigan, p. 178.

²⁸. Ibid., p. 62.

Weary Reilly's advances to her;²⁹ the "show-party,"³⁰ staged by a group of younger children including Helen Shires' sister; the old woman against whom he was jammed on a crowded el;³¹ the "broads" he met in the park or in a restaurant, or saw passing the poolroom.³²

His actual sex experiences involve Iris, a girl about fourteen;³³ Elizabeth Burns whom he picked up in Washington Park, whose father followed her and chased Studs with a horse whip;³⁴ the girls at the New Year's party,³⁵ and the married woman picked up in Phil Rolfe's--now his brother-in-law--bookmaker quarters.³⁶

The early effect of his sex thoughts or acts was a feeling of remorse, a feeling that he had committed a sin, and he prayed for forgiveness or went

29. Ibid., sec. II, p. 75.

30. Ibid., p. 106.

31. Farrell, Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan, p. 31.

32. Ibid., p. 298.

33. Farrell, Young Lonigan, p. 180.

34. Farrell, Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan, p. 81.

35. Ibid., p. 406.

36. Farrell, Judgment Day, p. 236.

to confession. This attitude was repeated as he grew older, although with less frequency.

At home, Studs' conscience bothered him, and he still worried lest Iris would snitch. But there was nothing to do, unless he wanted to be a damn fool and spill the beans. He tried to pray, promising the Blessed Virgin that he wouldn't never fall into sin like that again, and he'd go to confession, and after this he'd go once a month and make the nine first Fridays. But he couldn't concentrate on his prayers.³⁷

The feminine attitude most frequently expressed was a willingness to yield but a fear of the consequences.

The results of his uncontrolled sex urge was the loss of Lucy Scanlan,³⁸ with whom he had been in love since early adolescence, and the ruin of Catherine,³⁹ the girl whom he was expecting to marry. Lucy resented and repelled his advances on the way from the fraternity dance, and cleverly escaped him when she reached home, but would never risk making another engagement. Catherine, yielding herself to him in a moment of tenderness after a quarrel, was left pregnant at the time of his death, to bear the fate of an unmarried mother with an illegal child.

³⁷. Farrell, Young Lonigan, p. 189.

³⁸. Farrell, Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan, p. 293.

³⁹. Farrell, Judgment Day, p. 417.

In contrast to Studs' obsession with sex and his freedom with girls, Danny found girls an enigma and was only casually interested in sex. This interest was two-sided: (1) he was concerned chiefly with the impressions he made on girls of his own group; (2) he showed the usual interest in "pick-ups" in the park.

He was not a success with girls socially; he found it difficult to secure a second engagement. He was at a loss for conversation when talking to them and was unable to express the things he wanted to say. Most of his remarks consisted of the platitudinous question and answer arrangement. Being a poor dancer, he stepped on girls' toes at fraternity dances and thus failed to reap the benefits due an adept at this social diversion.

"Would you like to dance?" Danny asked, sitting beside Anna.

"No, thanks, I'm tired."

Some couples were dancing, and others, including Mike Flood and Marty, were standing a few feet away in a gay and laughing group. None of them turned to ask Anna and him to join them. All night, most of his fraternity brothers had scarcely paid the slightest attention to him.⁴⁰

His attempt to impress Natalie at another

40. Farrell, Father and Son, p. 247.

fraternity dance ended as futilely. His imagination built beautiful romantic dreams around the girls he liked, but he was never able to express these thoughts aloud.

The park was quiet. Even the wind seemed romantic. Here he was, doing what he had hoped and dreamed of doing, going to parties, taking a girl home in a cab, and tomorrow getting his chance to be a football hero. And still it wasn't like he had hoped it would be.

"Tommy Collins was to Ireland this summer," he said.

"Yes, I heard he was. It must be fun to travel."

If only he could say to her, wouldn't it be fun if he and she were married and could travel to Ireland and all around the world on a honeymoon, and make love in the moonlight on a ship in the middle of the ocean.⁴¹

With the girls he met in the park he felt freer, and although the affair turned out to be only a lark, he was able to express himself better. After roughly kissing his "pick-up" and being repulsed in more intimate advances they joined the other couple, sitting on a bench. The following scene developed.

Danny led his pick-up into the Japanese house, and stood in a corner with her. He embraced her.

"Don't."

41. Ibid., p. 370.

"Why?" he asked, his voice a trifle husky.

"We'll be seen."

He roughly pulled her to him and kissed her. It was his first kiss since he had been in the eighth grade. The contact emboldened him, drove him on, excited him with desire

"Let's go back," he said, walking beside her on the path away from the Japanese house.

"No."

"Why?"

She didn't answer him. He linked his arm in hers and they strolled on

"Give me a kiss."

"Not in public."

"There's no one around."

"It's not nice. I don't even know your name."

"Sam. Just call me Sam."

"I don't believe it's Sam."

He grabbed her and tried to kiss her.

"You're rough," she said, laughing and freeing herself from him.

"Let's go in the bushes," he said.

She giggled.

"Come on," he said, grabbing her again.

She pushed him away.⁴²

42. Ibid., p. 230.

Summary: (1) Studs is obsessed with thoughts of sex-indulgence; Danny is more interested in the social side of sex and in friendship with girls; (2) Studs is initiated early into sex-experience; (3) Studs recognizes no barriers to sex advances; Danny refrains from making advances to girls of his own social strata but is freer with girls of a lower social level; (4) Danny has the adolescent fear of women emphasized by the other authors.

IV. CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing the following conclusions can be drawn: (1) Young Lonigan is not autobiographical; it is a tragic character-type study of the author's generation; (2) it is historical in that it shows some of the vicious tendencies of his era; (a) the extensive drinking that characterized the prohibition era; (b) the moral let-down in regard to sex; (c) the break-down of the school, the church, and the playground; (3) the portrayal of the dissipation of youth indicates the author's detached observance of the social scene; (4) the Danny O'Neill series are autobiographical; the author's attitude toward adolescence is that a normal response to church, school and family influence produce a wholesome adolescent.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis presented in these chapters points to the following conclusions:

(1) Five of the novels discussed are autobiographical, and the sixth one is biographical. The five are portraits of the artists as youths. This tendency toward autobiography in fiction is a characteristic of the period following the World War--a rebellion against the repression of individualism that has characterized the machine age.

(2) In contrast to Mark Twain or Booth Tarkington these younger writers are interested in those forces that shape the artist in his youth: family, institutions, associates, and sex.

(3) The treatment of family brings out (a) emphasis on hereditary strains, (b) reaction against the family as more of a hindrance than an aid to the youthful artist: exceptions to this general pattern are the attempts of Dell, Wolfe, and Fisher to heroize the father, and of Fitzgerald to romanticize the mother.

(4) The treatment of institutions emphasized the influence of schools in contrast to that of the church. Vardis Fisher is influenced by the tradition of Bible-reading and Fitzgerald by a churchman rather than by

the church. All the authors with the exception of Dell have laid emphasis on schools as a means of achieving their goals, and even he pays tribute to their influence to a large extent. In the tragic case of Studs Lonigan the most potent institution was the poolroom.

5. Associates are treated in terms of their aid to the personal and artistic development of the heroes. There are authors, journalists, and socialists with Dell; schoolmates and a churchman with Fitzgerald; and schoolmates with Farrell in Danny O'Neill. Wolfe, however, emphasizes the aloofness of his hero and Fisher the scarcity and hostility of associates on the frontier. In the tragic case of Farrell's Studs Lonigan, it is the gang.

6. The most striking new problem for these writers is that of sex. All of them deal with it, Fitzgerald more reticently, the rest very outspokenly. A recurring theme is adolescent fear of women with variations in individual experience. There is great emphasis on mental preoccupation with sex and a strong tendency to present realistically sexual experience. All in all these fictional treatments of outstanding youths give a great deal of insight into the minds of

modern youth.

The trend of fiction, after the World War, as illustrated by these authors, is toward a more realistic and naturalistic portrayal of adolescence. Mark Twain wrote about adventure in Huckleberry Finn and in Tom Sawyer, giving the atmosphere a romantic and heroic color. Booth Tarkington showed the same romantic tendency in Seventeen even though his novel described in a ludicrous and humorous manner the struggles of adolescence; his attitude was sympathetic even though amused. The post-war authors portray life out of their own experiences without attempting to soften the outline.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Analysis of Novels of Adolescent Life 1920-1940

The following list of novels was obtained from the Book Review Digest, 1920-1940.

DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR
1920	<u>Moon-Calf</u>	Floyd Dell (1887-)
	The analysis of this novel is given in Chapter I, page 1.	
1920	<u>This Side of Paradise</u>	Francis S. K. Fitzgerald (1896-1940)

The analysis of this novel is given in Chapter II, page 30.

1920	<u>Mitch Miller</u>	Edgar Lee Masters (1868-)
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Skeets Kirby and Mitch Miller became friends and adventurers. They observed a fight between Jack Plunkett and Rudy Hedgepath to see who was the best man, they dug for treasure in Montgomery's woods, discovered Nancy Allen's treasure in the cellar of the Bender house and they started on a journey to see Tom Sawyer. They were key witnesses in the Doc Lyon murder trial and also in the Temple Scott-Joe Rainey murder trial. The fathers of the two boys took them to see Tom Sawyer, a fat butcher in Hannibal; Mitch's disillusion was unbearable. He was injured fatally hopping freight cars.

Mitch Miller is a novel of adventure similar to Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer. It is less romantic in that it represents Tom Sawyer as an unheroic butcher.

1921	<u>The Beginning of Wisdom</u>	Stephen Vincent Benet (1898-)
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Philip Sellaby, a native of California, spent

most of his early life in a boarding school. At Yale he met Millie, daughter of a shoddy dentist, fell in love with, and married her. She died soon afterward from pneumonia. He tried to join the Royal Air Force in Canada, was refused because of tuberculosis, and went west to recover. He became involved in an I.W.W. strike and went home to California, where he quarreled with his father and left for Los Angeles. He got into the movies, was operated on successfully for his tubercular trouble, joined the army and was about to be sent over when the armistice was signed. He returned to California and married his cousin, Sylvia.

This novel is autobiographical, featuring an I.W.W. strike in Nevada.

1921 The Briary-Bush Floyd Dell (1887-)

This novel is the sequel to Moon-Calf. Felix Fay quit the "News" in Port Royal and went to Chicago where he got a job on the "Chronicle," met Rose-Ann and married her. To encourage Felix to write, his wife persuaded him to rent a room apart. Here he met Phyllis, an acquaintance, and thought he was in love with her. He and Rose-Ann quarreled about her, and she went home. When she returned, the magazine publishing house for which she worked moved to California. Felix had an affair with a Little Theater actress, Elva, decided to go to California to see about having his play produced, met Rose-Ann and they became reconciled.

Briary-Bush is autobiographical and continues the story of Felix Fay's life through young manhood and the early part of his marriage.

1922 The Beautiful and the Damned Scott Fitzgerald
(1896-)

Anthony Patch, grandson of a multi-millionaire, led a wild and aimless life. At twenty-five he met and married a beautiful girl. They led a fast life, and he was disinherited by his grandfather; in the end the court restored his grandfather's fortune to him, but he was a physical and mental wreck.

This novel emphasizes the extravagances of a wealthy young man immediately preceding and during the early years of marriage.

- 1923 Young People's Pride Stephen Vincent Benet
(1898-)

Oliver Crowe broke his engagement with Nancy because she was more successful than he in obtaining satisfactory employment. At a house party at Peter Piper's he persuaded Elinor, Peter's sister, to marry his friend Ted Billett and rescued Ted from an embarrassing situation with Mrs. Severance, an attractive widow, where Mr. Piper, Peter's and Elinor's father was involved. He became reconciled with Nancy and after their marriage they sailed for Paris where he was to assume a position with the American Express.

This novel features the quarrel of an engaged couple, interweaving another romance and the liason between an elderly married man and a young attractive widow.

- 1923 Skippy Bedell O. M. Johnson (1878-)

Skippy and his roommate, Snorky, survive many strange inventions, the fruit of the fertile imagination of Mr. Johnson's youthful hero; they fall in love; they wear their first dress-suits, they quarrel and make up and go through various other unfailingly amusing vicissitudes. Mr. Johnson rivals Booth Tarkington at his best in some passages of Skippy's history, and the book belongs pretty close to Seventeen in entertainment.

Skippy Bedell is about the boarding-school episodes of two youths who jump from one entanglement to another.

- 1925 An American Tragedy Theodore Dreiser (1871-)

In this novel Theodore Dreiser presents the story of a moral coward. The youth, son of poor mission parents, obtains employment in a hotel.

In company with some other bell-hops he enjoys an excursion in a stolen car, they run down a child, and he has to flee. In another city, employed in a hotel, he meets his wealthy uncle, who eventually gives him employment in his factory. At the factory he becomes infatuated with a girl and seduces her. In the meantime he has met a girl of his uncle's social circle who leads him on. He plans to murder the pregnant girl; her body is found, he is tried, found guilty, and electrocuted. The first volume deals with his youth, the second with the crime and its punishment.

The novel is biographical and features a youth in crime and its punishment.

1926

Spring Running

F. W. Bronsen (----)

Charles Hammar is attracted to Deborah Stirling in childhood. When his father dies and his mother remarries he is comforted by Mrs. Stirling. Deborah considers becoming a nun but changes her mind. As a youth, staying with his sister, Regis, in New York, he studies for college exams but fails to pass. He worked at various jobs, then met Irene Gilbey, manager of a book store. After frequent engagements, they become engaged, and he persuaded her to leave her employer, Mr. Drain, with whom she had admitted being familiar. He went to his mother to ask for money to open a book store, and returning, found her with Mr. Drain. At Regis' wedding he met Deborah again, now courted by a handsome young man, Jim Birch. Returning to Halcyon with her, he sponsored a campaign to get a new road built. He worked so hard he began to cough; Deborah had agreed to marry him, but feeling he was not being fair to her to marry in his condition, he went west without telling her. She followed him to the Flying-Q Ranch.

This novel is biographical and features the episodes and love affairs of the youth, ending with his return to his childhood love.

1926

The InnocentsHenry Kitchell Webster
(1875-)

Edward Patterson was interested in inventing

an attachment for a phonograph to convert it into a radio. It was successful; through Agatha Willard he got an order to attach his invention to the Willard phonograph and stayed at the Willard home during the summer. Many other orders followed. Edward had a love affair with the school teacher who was governess to the Willard twins, but in the end he turned back to Agatha. Marital trouble between the Patterson elders was also solved satisfactorily.

The Innocents interweaves a boy's invention, a youthful romance, and reconciliation of his parents into the space of one summer.

1926

Tar

Sherwood Anderson (1876-)

Tar Moorehead, son of a southerner, was reared in Ohio. His father, a harness-maker, had fought in the Civil War for the North; he was a great story teller and entertainer. The family became poorer and poorer, and moved from place to place. Tar, through bravado, out-butted the champion butter, visited the race-horse farm of Tom Whitehead on Sundays, fell in love with Esther Farley, was loved in turn by Mary Thompson, and sold papers. His mother died, and with her death he realized he was leaving his childhood behind and entering adolescence.

Tar is centered around the childhood of Tar Moorehead, is biographical, and portrays the childhood episodes of a boy in a small Ohio town.

1927

Springboard

Robert L. Wolf (----)

Brian Hart was the son of a railroad magnate. The Hart family moved from Chicago to Cleveland, Ohio. At school Brian was bullied and nicknamed "Fairly" because he had said he played tennis fairly well. His father wanted him to study law; he preferred journalism. At Harvard he was snubbed by a man, Lonsdale, whom the boy liked very much; he made friends with Eric Camden, and they argued all questions at all times. At times his father was appalled at his views. He became enamoured of Dolly MacGean and worked the next summer on her father's paper; he met Mary Dixon Gillette the next year; they became engaged and

married; he was offered a position in the university as instructor and accepted it.

Springboard is biographical and hinges on father-son antagonism. The boy's final decision to become a college instructor instead of a lawyer, his father's chosen profession for him, is the climax.

1927 Kit O'Brien

Edgar Lee Masters (1868-)

Kit O'Brien is liable to arrest for stealing a pie. He, George Heigold, and Charley King were on their way to St. Louis to get work when the pie was taken. The other two were caught and arrested; Kit escaped and got to St. Louis. He succeeded in rescuing Miss Siddons from her insane husband and bringing her back to Petersburg, her home. George Montgomery, with Hardy Kirby's help, succeeded in putting Miss Siddon's husband, "Master," in the insane asylum and extricating the boys from their entanglements.

Kit O'Brien is a sequel to Mitch Miller and features the adventures of Kit O'Brien and the arrest of the three friends of Mitch Miller for stealing a pie.

1928 Rampant Age

Robert S. Carr (1909-)

Paul Benton, moving from the small town of Westfield to a larger town, gets in with the high school's wild set. On a date with "ritzie," he runs down an old man on an icy street and does not stop. He really likes Doris Bulen, a quiet decorous girl, but Fritzie holds him through her knowledge of the accident. Happening on another accident in which Doris was involved, he took her in his car to the doctor in the nearest town. The doctor recognized Paul as the hit-and-run driver whose car had struck him. He had him arrested, but Paul's father proved a friend in need and extricated him. His first choice of a college had been a flashy one, Brighton U; his last choice under the influence of Mr. Bulen was Abbott, a more reserved, scholarly one.

Rampant Age is built around the adolescent age and emphasizes the licentiousness of a high-school group.

- 1929 Look Homeward Angel Thomas Wolfe (1900-1938)

For the analysis of this novel see Chapter III, p. 58.

- 1929 October's Child Donald Joseph (----)

Lucius Deering spends his childhood living with his mother, a widow, and his Uncle Lanny, who is wild and unsettled. The adolescent stage is reached at the time of Eleanor Overton's visit--invited by Mrs. Deering in hopes that she would capture and marry Uncle Lanny. Lucius enters college, makes friends with Julian Daneau, who becomes his roommate, and with Kay Merrill. His relation with these two is, on the whole, congenial. After the Christmas holidays his mother writes to him that she is going to marry Mr. Pendleton, her attorney. Other letters inform him that the wedding has taken place, that she has accompanied Mr. Pendleton to Philadelphia for an operation and taken cold. An illness keeps Lucius in a delirium for a week. When he becomes himself he is informed his mother has died. He leaves college to recuperate with his aunts at Live Oak Farm.

October's Child is a biographical novel projecting the reactions of a sensitive youth to the episodes of his life.

- 1929 Plundered Host Fowler Hill (----)

Peter Brush lived with his aunt Rebecca Henderson in New York. Vacations were spent on the country estate at Stockton. When Peter was ready for college his aunt announced that she had sold Stockton, and that Peter was to spend his vacation working in a factory at Akron. He liked the workers and especially Peggy. At college he joined a fraternity but decided he would rather be with the rough crowd. Tom Wilson introduced him to the undecorous women across the river. Home in New York, upon the death of his father, he wandered, in a drunken stupor, through a gate in a quiet street and entered the room of an artist. They came to know and to depend on each other and were married.

This is a biographical novel and consists chiefly of the impressions made upon Peter by all the things with which he came in contact.

1929 Frantic Young Man Charles Samuels (----)

Arthur Gordon is sensitive because he is still a virgin. He attempts to cover up this fact with other boys by posing as a person of numerous sex experiences. He attempts to overcome this handicap by getting Tess of the Bronx intoxicated, only to find that Tess can stand more liquor than he, and he became intoxicated first. He held jobs as clerk, newspaper reporter, advertiser, and sales promoter. Acceptance of a story gave him aspirations to write. In Florida an attempt to make friends with Sylvia was futile, but with her roommate, Mrs. Ericson, he was more successful; he lost his virginity. Returning to New York, he intended to flout his accomplishment before his lady friends but found Tess away on a trip to Europe, Vera married, and Mildred reconciled with her husband and expecting a baby.

This novel deals with young manhood and emphasizes the efforts of a young man to lose his virginity.

1929 Growing Pains John Peter Toohey (1880-)

Wilbur Jones escaped from one dilemma, only to fall into another. His first was a love affair with an actress from which he was extricated by his father. Then he became a champion exposé of communist meetings, summoning the chief of police to the boat club where the members were found innocently dancing. Then he persuaded his mother to sell their car to help him pay a gambling debt of honor, telling the father that the car had been stolen. The climax came when the father recognized the car in another town, became involved in an argument and landed in jail. The car was recovered. In the end he begins to show more practical judgment.

Growing Pains is similar to Booth Tarkington's Seventeen in that it presents the episodes in which the youth becomes involved as ludicrous and humorous.

1930 The Obelisk

William Rollins (1897-)

The Obelisk is a novel in which a story of the obelisk has impressed Louis Rasy so much that the impression reaches into adulthood. The grandmother tells him of the obelisk in the Forest of Fontainebleau from which roads lead in all directions; he always has a desire to go there. He meets an artist by chance, visits her regularly, and they plan to go to Europe to visit the obelisk. He defers his plans until it is too late, and marries a girl chosen by his family; one day he receives a card without any signature but with a marble slab in the center surrounded by trees from which three roads led away. He recognized the import of the card. After abstractedly watching the boats in the harbor, he returned to his routine duties.

The Obelisk is a biographical novel that portrays a youth as a dreamer, lacking the urge to go forth and realize his dreams.

1930 End of RoamingAlexander Kinnon Laing
(1903-)

Richard Melville admired his Uncle Robert, who had poetic tendencies without much cash, and of whom the father, George, did not approve. After a quarrel the uncle left and was lost at sea. At school Richard exploded stink bombs to get the school a holiday to see a football game. About to be expelled, a member of the school-board helped him and his chum to have access to a laboratory to expand their experiments in chemistry. At college he pursued chemistry and had an ardent but disappointing love affair with Patricia Chappel; he was dismissed because of too many cuts. He went to Ruth Buzzini, his former high school art teacher, who was with an art colony. He was informed of his father's death. He and Ruth eventually became intimate; he finally returned to New York, to find his mother had moved to Long Island. He obtained work with desultory results. He embarked on a merchant ship; in London he met Doris Montagne, a writer. Back in New York, an editor, Mr. Malcolm, interviewed him about his Uncle Robert with the intention of

publishing his works. He married Doris, and gave up painting for chemistry.

End of Roaming is biographical and emphasizes the choice of a profession, the youth shifting from interest in chemistry to art and back again to chemistry.

1930 Every Mother's Son Norman Lindsay (1879-)

Robert Piper embarrassed his family because he drank and associated with the town rowdies. He read Don Juan in church and seduced the parson's daughter; he is steered straight by his instructor and friend, Mr. Bandparts. Ethel, his sedate and secretive sister, has a romance with a married man, but succeeds in winning Dr. Niven from her sister, Hetty, and marrying him.

Every Mother's Son emphasizes the escapades of Robert Piper and of his sedate sister, Ethel.

1930 Other Man's Saucer J. K. Winter (----)

Shaw Latimer is shocked at his sister Sadie's misconduct, saddened by his brother Mac's death, and is lonely at college. He accepted friendship without giving it. He enslaved Tony, hindering him from his work and was criticised by John, another student, for his bad handling of Tony; he won Tony's girl secretly. Orm Lind, an athlete, got on his nerves at college, followed him home, and met Yolande, whom Shaw wished to marry. Shaw saw him kiss her, became infuriated, and tried to drown him, but barely escaped drowning himself.

Other Man's Saucer is biographical and emphasizes the domination of a youth over his companions at school and at home.

1930 Erl King Edwin Granberry (1897-)

Over John Littlepage, scion of an aristocratic southern family, a mysterious doom hangs from his birth. The ghost of the mythological Erl King haunts him, and follows him when he takes his sweetheart, Ellen Clyde, over the reefs in a sail boat. The story ends with the tragic death of

hero and heroine. Its setting is the southern part of Florida.

Erl King is partly biographical and portrays the feeling of being haunted by the Erl King and the tragic end of the youth.

1931 Leaf is Green

J. V. Craven (1889-)

Dan was expecting Lois for the game. She came, and announced that she was going to be married. Dan drank and was expelled from Princeton for drinking and telling a lie to shield his companion. On his way home he picked up Vickie and took her to New York for a few days. At home, he told his uncle he did not want to go to work but wanted to spend the summer at Fawn Lake. There he met a girl who looked like Lois, and courted her; he had a light love affair with Ellen, then with Catherine. All the time he was hoping to see Lois. At the end of the summer she came, accompanied by her husband; their meeting was brief; after she left he told his uncle he was ready to return to go to work.

Leaf is Green features the frustrated love affair of a young man and his change of attitude--a desire to go to work--after meeting the girl as the wife of another man.

1931 Gospel According to St. Luke's Philip Stevenson
(1896-)

Ethelbert Speed was afflicted with an inferiority complex and with an impediment in speech when he was sent away to St. Luke's boarding school alone. On the train he met Tony Stone and his father, who took him in charge. At the school he was nicknamed "Ethel," but by degrees he won the friendship of his group; "Speed" was substituted for "Ethel," and he played well in athletics. His most outstanding accomplishment was to participate in a chapel debate on student government. When he graduated he received a reward for outstanding achievement. He entered college; his mother remarried, his sister became engaged, and he decided to join the army.

This novel emphasizes the unfolding and successful accomplishments of a youth in a boarding school.

- 1932 In Tragic Life Vardis Fisher (1895-)

For the analysis of this novel see Chapter IV. p. 85.

- 1932 Young Lonigan James T. Farrell (1904-)

For the analysis of this novel see Chapter V. p. 111.

- 1932 Flesh is Heir Lincoln Kirstern (1907-)

This novel is made up of a series of episodes in the life of a boy and young man during the 1920's. The first episode deals with life in a boy's boarding school, the others with experiences in Paris, and Venice, as a worker in a stained glass shop and at college. Roger Baum is an affluent Jew, sensitive, shy, and very impressionable.

This novel is biographical, recording the reactions of a Jewish boy to the episodes of his life.

- 1932 · Toward Romance Rollo Walter Brown (1880-)

The youth of this novel dreams of a more romantic world than he finds in an Ohio mining district. He eventually realizes the beauty of living even in sordid surroundings. He finally set out to discover what the world is like outside.

Toward Romance records the reactions of a youth to his mining town environment, resulting in a desire to explore the outside world.

- 1934 Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan James T. Farrell
(1904-)

This novel is a sequel to Young Lonigan and continues the biography of Studs Lonigan. Studs, Red Kelley and Kenny eat bananas to increase their weight so that they would be accepted in the marines.

but are rejected. Studs envisions himself as a daring captain; he joins the crowd in celebrating when the armistice is signed. Other episodes are that he stages an amateurish hold-up, goes to work for his father, meets Elizabeth Burns in the park and is chased by the girl's father. Paulie Haggerty dies, and Studs, fearing death, goes to confession. The gang visited a dance hall of ill fame and teased Vince Curley, who was girl shy. Studs attends Frances' sorority dance, taking Lucy Scanlan and is rebuffed by Lucy because of his advances. The Lonigans move because the negroes are taking the neighborhood. On New Years the gang gets together to celebrate; drinking, fighting, and sex indulgence ensue; Studs is found next morning on the sidewalk in the snow and is taken to the hospital, where it is discovered he has pneumonia.

This novel continues the biography of Studs Lonigan dealing with the years of young manhood.

1934 You Can't Go Home Again Thomas Wolfe (1900-1938)

George Weber records his love affair with Esther Jack, a scenery designer. He publishes his first novel, Home to Our Mountains, and records the bitter reaction of his home town. When he breaks with Esther he goes to the Brooklyn and lives in seclusion for several years, writing another novel. To avoid the unpleasantness that might accompany its publication he goes abroad again. The book meets with public approval and has a good sale. In England he records his experiences with his housekeeper, Daisy Purvis, and with the author, Lloyd McHarg. At the end he writes to his editor, explaining the necessity of a change of editors. In his commentary he explains that his first novel was not the work of an embittered young writer, as many supposed, bitter because of his experiences at college, where he was implicated in the death of a fellow student by hazing, and suspended, but later reinstated.

You Can't Go Home Again continues the autobiography of Thomas Wolfe after his return to

America from Europe, featuring his love affairs and the publications of his first two novels.

1934 Passions Spin the Plot Vardis Fisher (1895-)

This novel is a sequel to In Tragic Life and is autobiographical. Vridar goes to Wasatch College in Salt Lake City and rooms with Stanley Trout. They quarrel and he makes friends with A. M. McClintock, who seduces most of his girl friends. Vridar discovers his fear of women. He works as clerk in a grocery store, and is fired because his honesty incurs the dislike of the other clerks. During his vacation he confessed his love for Neloa, became engaged to her and spent the summer quarreling with her. The next year, he, Mertyl, and McClintock engaged in drunken brawls and trickery, Vridar learned to dance, and enlarged his experience with women. During his second vacation he married Neloa.

Passions Spin the Plot continues the autobiography of Vardis Fisher during his first two years of college, emphasizing his young manhood, his engagement, and marriage.

1934 Lost Paradise Robert Tristram Coffin
(1892-)

Peter Winship goes to school in town. His visit home delayed a week, he lives in his imagination every detail of life on the beloved farm. When he again visits the farm, he realizes the picture is connected with his childhood, and that now it has changed; he has left his childhood behind him.

Lost Paradise portrays a boy's dream of the beauties of his farm home and life.

1935 Judgment Day James T. Farrell (1904-)

This novel is the third of the Studs Lonigan trilogy. The gang are on the train returning from Indiana where they have attended Shrimp Haggerty's funeral. Studs has to watch his health; he proposes to Catherine when he reaches home. He secretly buys stock with his savings and is

discouraged when it falls. Loretta has married Phil Rolphe, who is a book-maker; Frances has also married. The depression is on, and the stock continues to fall. The father tells Studs he may need a loan; Studs does not tell him of the stock. Studs joins the Order of Christies so as to get insurance; his father asks for the loan and first learns of the stock; he is disappointed. Studs has a hemorrhage on the beach with Catherine, now pregnant. The doctor tells him he must give up painting; he tramps in the rain all day looking for work; in the evening he stumbles home ill, and dies.

Judgment Day continues the biography of Studs Lonigan into adulthood until his death, featuring the disastrous results of his libertine life.

1935 Of Time and the River Thomas Wolfe (1900-1938)

Eugene Gant attends Harvard, renews his acquaintance with his Uncle Bascom and his Aunt Louise, two eccentric, interesting characters. He meets and makes friends with Philip Starwick, an intellectual, and instructor at Harvard. He accepts a position teaching at the University of New York, but finds it tedious. He visits a wealthy co-student at Harvard and records his impressions of the vastly wealthy. Getting leave of absence from the university, he goes to Europe, stays for a time in England, but does not make friends; in Paris he meets Starwick with his two women companions and makes nightly rounds of cafes with them. The four are planning a trip when quarrels ensue. He returns to Paris, and thence home.

Of Time and the River, the autobiographical sequel to Look Homeward Angel, continues the story of Eugene Gant through Harvard University and to the end of a trip to Europe.

1935 We are Betrayed Vardis Fisher (1895-)

This is the sequel to Passions Spin the Plot. Vridar Hunter and Nelo go to Salt Lake City, where Vridar attends the university. He goes out for football and makes the team. During the year he enlists in the aviation division of the army

and is sent to California. Feeling his inferiority in ability to buy uniforms and grasp the meaning of mechanics, he asks for a discharge and receives one. Later he is drafted; Mertyl enlists with him, and they again are sent to California; the armistice is signed before they go across. Back home, he helps manage his father's garage, run a taxi, and bootleg. He decides to return to Salt Lake City and finish college. After graduation he is offered a position teaching in the college if he attends summer school at Chicago. Quarrels ensue between him and Neloa, he meets Athene Marvel, becomes infatuated with her, and plans to leave Neloa. The latter, aware of his intention, commits suicide.

We are Betrayed, the third of Vardis Fisher's tetralogy, is autobiographical and continues the story of Vridar Hunter through college till the death of his first wife.

1935 Louder than Words Hugh MacMullan (----)

The youth in this novel suffered under educational theories of two men, his father and his uncle, after his mother's death. He was almost incapable of making his own way when he reached prep school, but finally gained his independence.

Louder than Words is biographical and hinges on the queer educational theories of an uncle.

1935 Act of Darkness John Peale Bishop (1891-)

John, a growing boy, reflects the experiences of his Uncle Charlie, a handsome man married to a delicate wife. One of his uncle's experiences was the seduction of a young girl, Ardista, working for his wife. The girl died, and Charlie settled with her father for money. Another, more difficult to handle, was the rape of Virginia Crannock, a mature spinster. To save her reputation, although she had kept calmly silent about it, she had Charlie prosecuted. Charlie treated the case lightly at first, but it ended in a penitentiary sentence for him; however, he hoped to be pardoned by the governor.

John left for school; he was leaving his adolescence behind, and he knew that when he returned, he would be a different person.

Act of Darkness features the sensational rape of a mature woman and the trial of the aggressor, with the youth as observer.

1935 Change of Idols J. T. Foote (1881-)

The youth is taken to the coast to fish with his father and uncle. The girl at the lodge allows him to caress her. He prefers to stay around the lodge, hoping for a few minutes with the girl, to fishing. One day, when the weather is favorable for fishing his father makes him go out. It is the day the girl has promised to walk through the wood with him. He catches a large fish and is so completely absorbed in his adventure he forgets the girl completely.

Change of Idols illustrates diversion of an adolescent's interest in sex by replacing it with an interest in fishing.

1935 Red Sky in the Morning R. P. Coffin (1892-)

The novel is the story of Will Prince whose ancestors had been sea captains for generations. His boyhood was spent on a barren island, to which his father had moved because of needless jealousy of his wife. When David, his father's favorite son, died, Will went with his mother to the mainland to live in the old Prince home. He became his mother's guardian. When his father's cousin apparently became enamoured with Mrs. Prince, and she seemed to return the affection, Will took the relative out to sea on a windy day; the boat was capsized and they were both drowned.

Red Sky in the Morning is biographical and features a youth's jealous guardianship over his mother, ending in a tragedy.

1936 A World I Never Made James T. Farrell (1904-)

This is the first novel of the Danny O'Neill series. Danny starts to school, but does not

like it. Mrs. O'Flaherty, on a visit to see Lizz O'Neill's new baby, Catherine, informs her that Larry Robinson, Margaret O'Flaherty's married suitor, is in town. Margaret meets Larry at a hotel, tells him of her shortage of one hundred twenty-five dollars at the hotel, and receives some money with a promise to get more. At the O'Flaherty's, Bill steals Margaret's emerald ring and cigarettes, skips school the next day, sells the ring, and meets with an accident. Margaret accuses Bill and fights with her mother. The O'Neills receive three hundred fifty dollars from the accident and plan a big Christmas celebration.

This is an autobiographical novel and treats the early years of Danny O'Neill until he is ready to start to school, emphasizing the family background.

1936 No Villain Need Be Vardis Fisher (1895-)

This is the last of Fisher's tetralogy, starting with In Tragic Life. Neloa had committed suicide. Vridar and Athene left Chicago for Washington. Vridar approached insanity because of Neloa's death, but evaded it. In Washington he finished his thesis for a Ph.d., returned to Chicago and obtained his degree. He obtained a position at Wasatch College, but later resigned because his freedom of speech was hampered. He went to New York and taught in the university there. He and Athene were married, he resigned his position, and returned to Idaho to write and to be with his aging parents and his sons.

No Villain Need Be is the fourth autobiographical novel of Vardis Fisher's tetralogy, and portrays Vridar Hunter's life after the death of his first wife, emphasizing his reaction to her death and his experiences as college professor.

1936 Rider in the Sun E. Ware (1900-)

Dan ran away from his home in pursuit of his ideal--a strong man on a horse--the rider in the sun. He met the replica of his dream on a western ranch but discovered him to be a horse thief. A second quest cost him his arm. He returned to his eastern home satisfied.

Rider in the Sun portrays a boy's experiences in the west in search of his ideal, the rider in the sun.

1936 A Tree Grown Straight Percy Marks (1891-)

In the prologue the author introduces Perry Lane, a famous novelist haunted by an undeveloped idea for a story, and Andrew Ross, a totally undistinguished, but very likable young American business man. In Ross, Lane sees the character he has long wished to portray and the story that follows is the story of Andrew, his wise and loving parents, and the ways in which they labored that the tree should grow straight. Andy makes a confidant of his parents; his father explains sex to him and his friends, and his mother helps him to adjust his love affairs.

A Tree Grown Straight is biographical and illustrates the wholesome development of a youth in a home environment of love, trust, and guidance.

1936 Flamethrowers Gordon Friesen (1909-)

Peter Franzman came with his mother and father as refugees from Russia. In escaping, his little brother, Joseph, was drowned. The mother always hated Peter afterward. In their new home in Kansas, Jacob thrived and became grasping. Theresa, the mother, and old Liese tried to force Peter into the Menonite church, but he would not be forced. He was alert at school and went to college, attending Fenrow's college at Honorovia City. Here he won the friendship and understanding of Duane Terrison, history instructor. Both parents died poverty-stricken; Peter, alone except for his brother, David, went to Duane Terrison. Throughout the novel the youth is haunted by the terrible eyes of the guide who smuggled them out of Russia.

Flamethrowers is biographical and features the development of a Russian born youth in Kansas in the face of mother and community antagonism.

1936 SpringstormAlvin Saunders Johnson
(1894--)

Julian's life had been one of wanderings when they settled in the west. He learned the elements of farming. He became involved with a neighbor's young wife, and left for a college in the East to escape a worse entanglement.

Springstorm combines the experiences of farming in the west with a love-entanglement between a young married woman and a youth.

1937 The Running of the Deer Dan Wickenden (----)

Events take place during Christmas week. Mel's mysterious Uncle Christopher appears for Christmas; the father loses his job. The uncle solves all their problems by arranging to have his sister, Miriam, buy the house, the parents take a trip abroad, Ada marry him, Mel accompany them to California, and Fred go back to college.

This novel emphasizes the episodes of a family during Christmas week and the successful solution of the problems encountered.

1937 A Lamp on the Plains Paul Horgan (1903--)

This novel relates the story of Danny Milford's adolescent years in a little sun-baked town in New Mexico--Danny's friendship with Newt Jimson, his experiences as protege of the Professor Dubya-Dubya, and his experiences on the ranch as protege of Mr. McGraw.

A Lamp on the Plains exploits Danny Milford's adolescent experiences in the west.

1938 No Star is Lost

James T. Farrell (1904-)

This novel is a sequel to A World I Never Made. Bill had stolen some money from his Aunt Margaret. He treated Danny and two other school chums--took them to the penny arcade, bought them refreshments, etc. One of the favorite games the Fifty-Eighth Street gang played was to go into an ice cream place, order refreshments, and when served, curse the proprietor and dart out the door. When it

came Danny's time to go, he was afraid; Bill called him yellow and a "punk." He went, but on his way out, tripped and fell. The proprietor caught him and Bill and held them until the grandmother came and paid the bill. The O'Neills contracted diphtheria, and little Artie died because no doctor would come. Danny did not like to stay at the O'Neill's; he was afraid of his papa, and bed bugs annoyed him.

No Star is Lost is the biographical sequel to A World I Never Made and continues the story of Danny O'Neill's life from the time he enters school until he is about eleven years old.

1938 Fox in the Cloak Harry Lee (----)

Neill Glass moves with his mother, Jenny, to Atlanta, Georgia, to join his father, Alec, who is undependable as a support to the family. Jenny, who writes as a hobby without publishing her work, encourages Neill to keep up his art in the face of adverse circumstances. He studies under Mrs. Mercer, who dies; through her influence he meets the other artists of the city. Various acquaintances tell him he will have to leave Atlanta if he wants to become a worthwhile artist; he finds they are right, broke his engagement with Gena and left for New York to work with J. Monelli, a celebrated artist.

Fox in the Cloak portrays the life of Neill Glass, gifted in art, from beginning high school until he is in his early twenties and emphasizes the struggles of his family, especially his mother, and his pursuit of art.

1939 Inn of that Journey Emerson Price (----)

Mark Cullen, son of a supervisor of schools, moves to Scatterfield and becomes the friend of Soapy Dodger Pendleton, town ruffian. Under his influence he becomes a participant in upsetting human filth on a school-board member's porch and a look-out for Soapy while he steals tobacco from John Delaney's store. Soapy was finally sentenced to reform school, but escaped on a freight. The Cullens left Scatterfield; when Mark returned he found a monument erected to Soapy for his heroic

performance in the war; other members of the gang had met with misfortune.

This novel features the youth's association with a gang of ruffians through his high school years.

1939 Abel Dayton Flannery Lewis (1913-)

Abel Dayton lived with his father, John Dayton, and his assistant telegrapher, Charley, at Slatewater Hollow, near Farley, California. As a youth he loved to fly kites; they gave him his theory of rising currents in the air, which interested him later in airplanes. He attended high school in Farley, riding a freight in with Charley. One day he slipped and fell from the train; an amputation cost him his foot. His father died from hard drink, and Abel decided to become an aviator.

Abel Dayton is the biographical account of a youth reared by two men in a western town, crippled, and left alone at the death of his father to shuffle for himself. He decided on aviation as a fitting and desirable pursuit.

1939 The Long Lane Philip Stong (1899-)

Kenneth Brubacker's mother deserted him and her husband to go to California with Kenneth's uncle, Merritt Brubacker. He lived on at the farm with Lee and Ariel, caretakers. His father went to Des Moines where he established a business and made friends with an actress, Gilda Morrissey; Kenneth liked her very much and made her his confidant. His mother returned but was dissatisfied and did not remain. Gilda persuaded the father to visit the farm to please Kenneth; the couple later married. The long lane was a stretch of road in which Kenneth made a great many decisions, going to and from school.

The Long Lane is a biographical novel of a boy who had to adjust himself to the loss of both parents due to the mother's desertion of him and his father.

1940

Walk Like a Mortal

Dan Wickenden (----)

Gabe's mother, Margaret, met an old friend, Charlie Cobden, at their summer cottage. Fascinated by his wealth, she enjoyed many excursions with him. Returning home she continued this friendship. A rift between mother and father occurred; and the mother went to work. The son had admired her greatly; finally she deserted the boy and the father, and they went to live with Uncle Henry's family; they eventually were absorbed by this large family, and contentment reigned. The mother returned, but Gabe's feeling had changed toward her; she finally decided to marry Charlie, to the relief of all.

Walk Like a Mortal features the mother's desertion of the father and the youth's readjustment of his life, transferring his affection for his mother to his father's relatives.

1940

The Canyon

Peter Viertel (1920-)

The Canyon is a novel told in the first person of the activities of a gang dominated by a cruel Mexican boy. One of the activities was to sell spiked orange juice on the side of the road until stopped by authorities. One of Keetcheye's cruel acts was to force one of the members to swim until he was about to drown when rescued; another was to shoot a member in the leg. The hero made friends with Perfecto, a Mexican. He worked for Jenkins, a real estate agent, who was bent on getting the Mexicans' property; he befriended the Mexicans to the extent that they outwitted Jenkins; the rains came and wrecked the Mexican village; Jenkins obtained the land in spite of their efforts to save it.

The Canyon features a gang led by a cruel Mexican and a youth's efforts to save a Mexican village from a real estate exploiter.