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FRANK NORRIS AND F. SCOTT FITZGERALD AS ROMANTIC REBELS

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Critics have often considered Frank Norris as «naturalist» and Scott Fitzgerald as «romanticist.» Both writers have, on the other hand, «romantic awareness,» an awareness that informs their works. In his essay, «A Plea for Romantic Fiction,» Norris emphasizes that «the true Romance is a more serious business than» «moonlight and golden hair.» It is «the red, living heart of things.»[1] Moreover, he views Romance and Realism exist «not so much in things as in point of view of the people who see things.»[2] Frank Norris is a romanticist because of the «point of view» with which he observes life and sees things.

> The difficult thing is to get at the life inmediately around you – the very life in which you move. No romance in it? No romance in *you*, poor fool. As much romance on Michigan Avenue as there is realism in King Arthur's court. *It is as you choose to see it*. The important thing to decide is, which formula is the best to help you grip the Real Life of this or any other age...[3]
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> ...
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> The reason why one claims so much for Romance, and quarrels so pointedly with Realism, is that Realism stultifies itself. It notes only the surface

1. Norris, *The Responsibilities of the Novelist*, a collection of critical essays and articles by Frank Norris, published along with William Dean Howells' *Criticism and Fiction* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), p. 279.

2. Norris, «The True Reward of the Novelist,» *The Responsibilities of the Novelist*, p. 200.

3. *Ibid.*

> of things. For it, Beauty is not even skin deep, but only a geometrical plane, without dimensions and depth, a mere outside. Realism is very excellent so far as it goes, but it goes no further than the Realist himself can actually see, or actually hear. Realism is minute;...[4]

The province of Romance is the «variations from the type of normal life.» The «Naturalism is a form of romanticism, not an inner circle of realism.»[5]

This, however, does not minimise the naturalist traits that burden Norris's major works and the romantic elements that are preponderant in Fitzgerald's fiction. Norris's belief seems to be in contradistinction to Fitzgerald's thoroughgoing commitment toward aesthetic accomplishment; Fitzgerald's lyrical prose and his keen ear for the word make him seem more a romantic than a realist. Neither of the two novelists wished to belong to any particular school of writers. Perhaps it would be much safer to consider them as «realists» who aimed at an authentic portrayal of the society of their times. Alternatively, they may be treated as romantic rebels who grounded their work in experience but illuminated that work by exercise of a romantic imagination.

The romantics in their pursuit after Elysium and ideal life gave importance to feeling, imagination, and disparaged reason. The realists, on the other hand, rejected the romantic conception and vision of life as unattainable and unreal and, accordingly, demostrated their faith in reason, reality, and experience.

Norris rated «life» above imagination and firmly believed that fiction must come from life; «you can't imagine anything that you have not already seen and observed.»[6] His delight in life and willingness to learn from all possible sources made him cry that life is better than literature, experience better than roaming in «the misty side streets of literature.» As a creator of literature the artist ought to have «life» as a foundation for all his works.

His most exuberant and clear statement pertaining to the value of experience for the writer is found in his letter to Isaac Marcosson, who had favorably reviewed *McTeague:*

> What pleased me most in your review of 'McTeague' was the 'disdaining all pretensions to style.' It is precisely what I try to avoid. I detest 'fine writing,'

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4. Norris, «A Plea for Romantic Fiction,» *The Responsibilities of the Novelist*, p. 280

5. Norris, «Zola As a Romantic Writer,» an unsigned editorial in the *Wave* on June 21, 1896. This passage is quoted in Franklin Walker's *Frank Norris: A Biography* (1932; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), p. 84.

6. Frank Norris, «Fiction is Selection,» *Wave*, 16 (September 11, 1897), 3. Reproduced in *The Literary Criticism* of Frank Norris, ed. Donald Pizer (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), p. 52.

> 'rhetoric,' 'elegant English,' –tommyrot. Who cares for fine style! Tell your yarn and let your style go to the devil. We don't want literature, we want life.[7]

Even before the publication of any of his novels Norris in an short story published in 1896 prompts one of his characters to tell another:

> You've been writing these 'Dramas of the Curbstone' without hardly stirring from the house. You've just been trying to imagine things that you think are likely to happen on the streets of a big city after dark, and you've been working that way so long that you've sort of used up your material – exhausted your imagination. Why don't you go right out – now – tonight, and keep your eyes open and watch what really happens, and see if you can't find something to make a story out of, or at least something that would suggest one.[8]

As far as theme and content are concerned Norris seems to have formulated a critical system that rests on «life, not literature.» «Life,» then, to Norris included the emotions and the instincts, the life of passion and violence, the world of nature, strength, and naturalness.[9] And this critical credo provided freedom for Norris to write candidly about his own perceptions with enlarged sensibility and thereby free the novel from the limitations and restraints of Realism that only entertains «with its meticulous presentation of teacups, rag carpets, wall-paper and haircloth sofas, stopping with these, going no deeper than it sees, choosing the ordinary, the untroubled, the commonplace.»[10] The faith in the life of action, instinct, and emotion that Norris emphasized continues as a force to reckon with in the modern American novel. The desire for experience is a key theme in American literature, as Philip Rahv reiterates:

> ... since Whitman and James the American creative mind, seizing at last upon what had long been denied to it, has found the terms and objects of its activity in the urge toward and immersion in experience. It is this search for experience, conducted on diverse and often conflicting levels of consciousness,

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7. Franklin Walker, ed., *The Letters of Frank Norris* (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1956), pp. 30-31.

8. Frank Norris, «His Sister,» *Frank Norris of «The Wave»* (San Francisco: Westgate Press, 1931), p. 34. The passage is quoted from an unpublished dissertation, «Social Thought in the Writings of Frank Norris,» by Sara Jane H. Gardner, Washington State University, 1966. I am indebted to Sara Gardner for this.

9. I am grateful to Donald Pizer's «Introduction» to *The Literary Criticism of Frank Norris*, (ed.).

10. Norris, «A Plea for Romantic Fiction,» in *The Responsibilities*, p. 282.

> which has been the dominant, quintessential theme of the characteristic American literary productions – from *Leaves of Grass* to *Winesburg, Ohio*, and beyond...[11]

Beyond is *This Side of Paradise* – a portrayal in personal terms of Fitzgerald's Princeton experiences similar to Norris's agonizing experiences in *Blix* and *Vandover and the Brute*. Both *Blix* and *This Side of Paradise* are records of the novelists' transmuted experiences in which their «sharp and concise attitude about life»[12] begins to emerge. As John Kuehl observes, Scott Fitzgerald's work is «subjective, reflecting his own experiences and emotions, but the early novels present these in quite a direct way...»[13] The entries in «Thoughtbook,» kept between 1910 and 1911, represent what Fitzgerald at an early age could do well. The «Thoughtbook» and the Notebook and the Ledger signify that Fitzgerald could observe people and their inter-relationships, project himself into their midst, and thereby capture the essence of his experiences in objective terms – the kind of objectivity that realists demanded of themselves.

Unlike Norris, Fitzgerald did not come up with any codified critical credo or system of thought. His letters, however, reveal occasional glimpses. From the body of his works, letters, Notebook and «Thoughtbook,» it seems that the younger novelist did echo or follow what the older writer had so explicitly propounded: life is better than literature, experience is superior to imagination. This may be termed «romantic individualism» – as Donald Pizer defines it, «a pervasive and widespread faith in the validity of the individual experience and mind as a source of knowledge and a guide to action.»[14] What is implicit in this faith and conviction is that it is possible to create serious and lasting works of the imagination directly out of American experience. In his essay «An American School of Fiction?» Norris is confident that:

> The school of fiction American in thought, in purpose, and in treatment will come in time, inevitably. Meanwhile the best we can expect of the leaders is to remain steadfast, to keep unequivocally to the metes and bounds of the vineyards of their labors; no trespassing, no borrowing, no filching of the grapes of another man's vines. The cultivation of one's own vine is quite sufficient for all energy. We want these vines to grow –in time– to take root deep in American soil so that by and by the fruit shall be all of our own growing.

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11. Philip Rahv, *Image and Idea* (Norfolk, Conn. New Directions, 1949), p. 8.

12. Introduction to the Modern Library Edition of *The Great Gatsby*, 1934.

13 John Kuehl, «Scott Fitzgerald's Critical Opinions,» *Modern Fiction Studies*, (Spring 1961), pp. 3-18.

14. Donald Pizer, «Romantic Individualism in Garland, Norris and Crane,» *American Quarterly*, 10, No. 4 (Winter 1958), 463-464.

> We do not want –distinctly and vehemently we do not want– the vine-grower to leave his own grapes to rot while he flies off to the gathering of – what? The sodden lees of an ancient crushing.[15]

Both Norris and Fitzgerald believed in the individual perception of Truth and probed, as Norris urged the novelist to do, the «unplumbed depths of the human heart, and the mystery of sex, and the problems of life, and the black, unsearched penetralia of the soul of man.»[16] Norris grounded his critical credo in the faith that literature in its highest form «is a sincere transcription of life.» Fitzgerald wanted literature, among other things, to make «new observations,» and a «new examination into human emotions.»[17]

The two writers shared a faith in romantic individualism, experience, and imagination; they also held similar views on life. Norris and Fitzgerald could as well be considered romantics as realists, or, more appropriately, romantic rebels, though literary historians and critics generally tend to treat Norris as an ardent advocate of the naturalistic novel and Fitzgerald as a historian or spokesman of the Jazz Age of the 1920s. Norris himself declared that «Romance and Realism are constant qualities of every age, day and hour. They are here to-day. They existed in the time of Job. They will continue to exist till the end of time, not so much in things as in point of view of the people who see things.»[18] This answers critics who were confounded by literary labels when they asked themselves whether Norris was a naturalist, or a romanticist turned realist, or a realist «striving to free himself from the trammels of his drab craft.»[19]

> If the distinction made by Norris between romanticism and realism –that the one deals with the unusual and the other the normal life– is too arbitrary to be accepted by his critics, it at least serves to explain his own procedure.[20]

No single answer or neat pigeonholing is possible with regard to Norris in spite of the fact that he was influenced by Emile Zola, the French naturalist.[21] Literary

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15. Norris, *The Responsibilities*, pp. 273-274.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

17. See Fitzgerald's letter of Winter, 1939, to his daughter Frances Scott Fitzgerald. Reproduced in *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, ed. Andrew Turnbull (1963; Bantam edn. New York: Bantam Books, 1971), p. 51. All future references to this title will be by *The Letters*.

18. Norris, «The True Reward of the Novelist,» *The Responsibilities*, p. 200.

19. Ernest Marchand, *Frank Norris: A Study* (Copyright 1942; rpt. 1964; New York: Octagon Books, 1971), p. 33.

20. Franklin Walker, *Frank Norris: A Biography*, p. 81.

21. «He was never seen without a yellow paper-convered novel of Zola in his hand,» wrote his brother, Charles G. Norris, of Frank Norris.

historians like Oscar Cargill, Robert E. Spiller, and Vernon Louis Parrington have indeed called Norris a disciple of Zola.

Good fiction eludes the unnatural boundaries set for it by such terms as «romanticism,» «realism,» «naturalism,» «existentialism,» though any or all of these may be comprehended in a single work. For example, *McTeague*. It is easy to conclude that it is «pure naturalism.» But, how to account for the lingering romance in the idyll of the belated love of old Grannis and Miss Baker? Or the stark and sharp realism of Norris' superb portrayal of the little world of San Francisco's Polk Street with its car conductors, car girls, «coffee joints,» small shops and saloons? It is a rhythm of the commonplace world in its undisturbed routine. Also, how ignore the animal qualities in McTeague which are atavistic and destructive? There is, thus, in this literary *tour de force* romanticism, realism, and naturalism; this is true of most of the works of Norris.

According to Norris,

> ... Romance ... is the kind of fiction that takes cognizance of variations from the type of normal life. Realism is the kind of fiction that confines itself to the type of normal life. According to this definition, then, Romance may even treat of the sordid, the unlovely – as, for instance, the novels of Mr. Zola. (Zola has been dubbed a Realist, but he is, on the contrary, the very head of the Romanticists.) Also, Realism, used as it sometimes is as a term of reproach, need not be in the remotest sense or degree offensive, but on the other hand respectable as a church and proper as a deacon – as, for instance, the novels of Mr. Howells.[22]

Norris considered romanticism, realism, and naturalism in a dialectic, pitting realism and romanticism as opposing forces, and placing naturalism as a transcending synthesis.[23] But, at the same time, he was concerned with the existence of free will in a purposeful universe – an aspect that was repugnant to the Continental naturalists's credo of scientific determinism. Norris' naturalism is an American version, one closer to transcendental romanticism. It is difficult to brand him as primarily belonging to a particular literary school.

Norris, it seems, was romantic at heart with a broad truth of life, realist in the solemn treatment of his fictional materials objectively portraying contemporary scenes, and naturalist in his literary techniques, particularly in works like *McTeague* and *Vandover and the Brute*, without incorporating steadfastly the philosophy of

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22. Norris, «A Plea for Romantic Fiction,» *The Responsabilities*, p. 280.

23. Though the sentence is partly modified, the thought is primarily borrowed from Donald Pizer's *The Literary Criticism of Frank Norris*, ed.

materialistic determinism. «Norris accepted determinism only in so far as it appealed to his dramatic sense.»[24] Critics unmindful of this find him, not surprisingly, inconsistent in his philosophy.

Norris' biographer, Franklin Walker, says:

> ... From the beginning his temperament merged the romantic and the realistic, selecting the unusual subject and presenting it with verisimilitude. When he wrote *Ivernelle,* he became absorbed in the details of medieval armor; when he wrote *McTeague* he «got up» the particulars of dentistry. The method was the same; the formula alone was different; and it was the discovery of this formula which so completely changed the nature of his writing. The change came as the result of an interest in Zola and French naturalism.[25]

A caveat needs, however, to be added here to Franklin Walker's summation. What Walker means by «method» is realism; but it is not clear what he wants «formula» to mean. Does he suggest that Norris turned into a naturalist after his exposure to Zola? Or did Norris come up with a new or heightened romanticism unlike that of Poe or Scott; nor the kind of romanticism that dealt only with the distant past; not the kind of romanticism that resides in dreams and illusions.

Whereas Norris was attracted by Zola's world of big things and the sensational as in the epic sweep and grandeur of *The Octopus,* Fitzgerald's fascination for Zola's system of the enormous, the formidable, and the terrible was partly incorporated in *Tender Is the Night* and the unfinished *The Last Tycoon.* In his letter to John O'Hara, Fitzgerald suggested, «Invent a system Zolaesque» (see the appendix to Josephson's *Life of Zola* in which he gives Zola's plan for the first Rougon-Maquart book)[26] In fact, the Notes to the unfinished *The Last Tycoon* indicate that Fitzgerald did not stop practising what he preached.

It seems that both Norris and Fitzgerald were captivated by the «Zolaesque system» which both tried in their own way to follow. Both may have been impressed by the realism of Zola, but Norris' authentic realism appealed to Fitzgerald more; not the kind of «fiction that confines itself to the type of normal life,» not the «realism of the genteel, of the drawing room,» nor the «drama of a broken teacup.» To Norris, «details, gathered through experience, close observations, and hard work, objectified reality.»[27] The authenticity of realism apprehended through all the impressions of sense epitomized in Norris' work captivated Fitzgerald's temperament.

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24. Franklin Walker, *Frank Norris: A Biography,* p. 85.

25. *Ibid.,* p. 81.

26. Fitzgerald's letter to John O'Hara dated July 25, 1936. Reproduced in *The Letters,* ed. Turnbull, p. 545.

27. William B. Dillingham, *Frank Norris: Instinct and Art,* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), p. 128.

The realism of *McTeague* opened new vistas and «laid bare a section of American life where the fiction writer had scarcely ever thought to probe, and in a spirit and manner altogether new – the spirit and manner of the anatomist.»[28] Fitzgerald in his view of *Brass*, by Charles Norris, made a special reference to the elder brother's work and took the liberty to point out that Frank Norris in *McTeague* had given an air of authenticity by appealing «to the sense of smell or of hearing rather than by the commoner form of word painting.»[29] The extensive documentation in *The Beautiful and Damned* employed by Fitzgerald, particularly in the section related to the discussion of Gloria's diary, to lend authenticity to the narrative is similar, as a device, to the one in Norris' *Vandover and the Brute*. This method is perfected in *Tender Is the Night* in the discussion of Nicole's letters. Fitzgerald confessed to Max Perkins that the drunken scenes and all the realism in *This Side of Paradise* «might have been written by Norris.» Most of what Fitzgerald wrote was true of his times and the places in which he lived. To label Fitzgerald as the social historian of the Jazz Age is thus not unfair, nor does it obscure his merits. It is, in fact, a tribute to his powers of sharp and acute observation and a serious commitment to a realistic presentation of the socially significant detail. As John O'Hara has pithily remarked, in *This Side of Paradise* «the people were right, the talk was right, the clothes, the cars were real...»[30] The authenticity that Fitzgerald longed for and sought after, for which he showered encomiums on *McTeague*, is realized in his very first novel. Both Norris and Fitzgerald felt the truth of detail, desideratum of realism, and strong conviction in fact as the ultimate way to truth, essential.

Themselves in the line of the nineteenth century American realists beginning with Mark Twain, Norris and Fitzgerald placed a high value on «experience» and they respected the «author who wrote what he knew,» «From Twain to Hemingway there is clearly discernible this tradition which values above almost all else the author's true knowledge of what he is talking about.»[31] Norris made impassioned and forthright pleas for authorial integrity for he strongly believed that only writers of intellectual integrity and honesty could write great books. Fitzgerald gave similar advice in chastising Scottie in one of his letters– «...you have to have your own fences to jump and learn from experience.»[32] And again, «Don't try to be witty in the writing, unless it's natural – just true and real.»[33] Obviously, Fitzgerald wanted integrity and sincerity in writing.

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28. Ernest Marchand, p. 50.

29. Review of *Brass*, by Charles Norris, *The Bookman*, 54, No. 3 (November 1921), 253-254. Quoted by John Kuehl in his «Scott Fitzgerald's Critical Opinions,» 3-18. Reprinted in *Profile of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, compiled by Matthew J. Bruccoli, p. 26.

30. John O'Hara, «In Memory of Scott Fitzgerald: II - Certain Aspects,» *New Republic*, 104 (1941), 311.

31. Dillingham, *opus cit.*, p. 129.

32. Turnbull, *The Letters*. Letter from Scott Fitzgerald to his daughter, October 20, 1936, p. 11.

33. *Ibid.* Letter dated July 7, 1938, p. 35.

Yet, though he adopted realistic techniques and methods in his novels and short stories, Fitzgerald, like Norris, remained primarily a romantic at heart. «... Fitzgerald was among the wildest of the romantics, but he was also among the few Americans who tried, like Stendhal in France, to make the romance real by showing its causes and its consequences...»[34] What his own romantic self longed for – «fame, money, and the girl» (Zelda Sayre) – was accomplished, though painfully at times. His own life was mostly a romantic dream like the dream of Jay Gatsby; but what Gatsby could not magnificently possess Fitzgerald could sadly own and enjoy.

The romantic's tragic sense of life informs Fitzgerald's work. His early work, particularly, reflects the importance of his sensations and feelings and his ability to express them with honesty. *This Side of Paradise,* though considered a patchy and artistically immature work, does reveal what Professor Eble notes: «Fitzgerald, like most romantics, tended to endow experience with maximum emotion long *after* the event and *after* the romantic imagination had had time to color and intensify the experience.»[35]

By Fitzgerald's own admission, his ideal among the English Romantics was John Keats. There are numerous references to Keats in Fitzgerald's works. It was Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale* that furnished Fitzgerald both with title and epigraph. The chief trait of realists like Howells, namely, the recording of observation whether of their own souls or of the world outside, is also a feature of the romantics and their attitude; they were passionately reverential of fact – the mental fact as well as the physical, whether it was Shelley's realism of observation of social fact or Wordsworth's grasp of the common man's idiom. This partly explains why Fitzgerald adored romantics, particularly Keats.

The emotional exhaustion evident in the later work of Fitzgerald was perhaps due to the strenuous and serious drain on him, somewhat parallel to Keats' condition when he came to «Hyperion» after the great Odes. «I have asked a lot of my emotions,» said Fitzgerald, «one hundred and twenty stories. The price was high, right up with Kipling, because there was one little drop of something – not blood, not a tear, not my seed, but me more intimately than these, in every story, it was the extra I had. Now it has gone and I am just like you now.»[36] It is perhaps Fitzgerald's romantic ecstasy and agony, and his romantic crack-up.

Norris argued as a romantic that violent and bizarre action, exotic and strange locales, the life of passion, the life of the low and fallen, the great forces underlying

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34. Malcolm Cowley, «Third Act and Epilogue.» Originally published in *The New Yorker* (June 30, 1945). Reproduced in *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Arthur Mizener (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 66.

35. Kenneth Eble, *F. Scott Fitzgerald* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1963), p. 48.

36. Malcolm Cowley, «Third Act and Epilogue,» p. 67.

all experience, the sensational, the unrestricted emotions, «variations from the type of normal life,» were the stuff of life. Apart from these characteristics, Norris' concept of romanticism would include the idyllic and bucolic romance in *Blix*, the paean of the slow flowering, inexplicable love of old Grannis and Miss Baker in *McTeague*, the jettisoned love of Vandover, the mystical longing of Vanamee for his physically departed beloved Angela, the belated commingling of farm and dairy love between Annixter and Hilma (a love that metamorphoses Annixter's misogyny in *The Octopus*), and the domestic love of Laura Jadwin in *The Pit*.

In contrast, Fitzgerald's romanticism runs as a tributary to the mainstream of the early nineteenth-century English Romantic poets, the poets who gave importance to emotions, feelings, imagination, dreams, illusions, the past. John Kuehl argues that part of Fitzgerald's romanticism is in the American tradition, but to a great extent it is connected to the early nineteenth-century English romantic poets and the latter-day romanticists of the Victorian period:

> ...With various modifications, additions, and changes of emphasis, he took over much of the aesthetics of the Romantic poets: the use of the artist's personal experience as subject matter; the stress on the individual and his private world; the importance of the hero and heroism; the conflict between the world as it is and as it might be (the real and the ideal); the importance of the moment; the importance of wonder (man's capacity to respond to the infinite possibilities of his existence.)[37]

Yet another characteristic of romanticism in Fitzgerald's work, whether it is *This Side of Paradise* or *The Last Tycoon*, is the romantic striving to create an order out of experience individually acquired, providing an organic completeness to an otherwise incomplete or disorderly experience.

Apart from relying on his life as the subject matter for his works, Fitzgerald was greatly awed by romantic illusions. Arthur Mizener, Fitzgerald's biographer, says of Gatsby:

> Gatsby himself is a romantic who, as his creator nearly did, has lost his girl because he had no money. On her he had focused all his «heightened sensitivity to the promises of life.» For him money is only the means for the fulfillment of «his incorruptible dream,» «I wouldn't ask too much of her. You

37. John Kuehl, «Scott Fitzgerald: Romantic and Realist,» *Texas Studies in Literature*, 1, No. 3 (Autumn 1959), 412. I wish to thank John Kuehl for the thought I have incorporated and some of the expressions.

> can't repeat the past,» Nick says to him of Daisy. «'Can't repeat the past?' he cried incredulously. 'Why of course you can.'»[38]

Mizener continues that the limitation of *The Great Gatsby* «is the limitation of Fitzgerald's own nearly complete commitment to Gatsby's romantic attitude.»[39] Even according to Fitzgerald the burden of the novel is «the loss of those illusions that give such color to the world so that you don't care whether things are true or false as long as they partake of the magical glory.»[40] Fitzgerald described *The Last Tycoon* as «an escape into a lavish, romantic past that perhaps will not come again into our time.»[41]

It may be concluded that Norris and Fitzgerald are romanticists in their outlook and realists in method; the formula of Norris' romanticism is closer to American and French, while Fitzgerald's is akin to the English Romantics. In absence of any neat classification, both the novelists may be considered romantic rebels. In both there are traces of determinism: in Norris mostly for dramatic purposes; in Fitzgerald, more slightly, particularly in a well-known short story, «Absolution.» Eble says, «The heavy hand of heredity and the brooding presence of environment make this story the most 'naturalistic' story Fitzgerald ever wrote.»[42] What Eble says of Fitzgerald's naturalism may, with due modification, apply to Norris:

> Despite the pessimism and determinism which run through his work, Fitzgerald still sees man as capable not only of choice but of a vision superior to what he himself may be. Few readers can escape the effect of the «ordering» of his novels which comes from his strong moral sense. There is little of the naturalist in Fitzgerald's treatment of character, and his reputation probably profits from his disconnection from literary naturalism and his hewing to the moral line which runs through the best American writing.[43]

Norris and Fitzgerald provide further parallels as moralists, seen amid the social and intellectual currents of the 1880s to the 1920s.

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38. Arthur Mizener, *The Far Side of Paradise: A Biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (1949; rev. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, Sentry edn., 1965), p. 191.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

40. *Ibid.*

41. William Troy, «Scott Fitzgerald - the Authority of Failure,» in *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Arthur Mizener, p. 22. This article was originally published in *Accent* (Autumn 1945).

42. Eble, p. 32.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 157.