



The Composition of
Tender is the Night

Matthew J. Bruccoli

THE COMPOSITION OF
TENDER IS THE NIGHT

THE COMPOSITION OF
TENDER IS THE NIGHT

A Study of the Manuscripts

by

MATTHEW J. BRUCCOLI

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH PRESS

Copyright 1963 by Matthew J. Bruccoli
Library of Congress Catalog Number: 62-14379

FOR *Arlyn* AND *Mary Bruccoli*

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	xiii
Editorial Method	xvii
The "Author's Final Version"	xx
The Drafts	xxii
Diagram of the Development of <i>Tender is the Night</i>	xxv
CHAPTER I	1
The Reception of <i>Tender is the Night</i>	2
The Reputation of <i>Tender is the Night</i>	9
CHAPTER II	17
Background	17
First Draft. The holograph third-person draft of the Francis Melarky-matricide version	24
Second Draft. The typescript third-person draft of the Francis Melarky-matricide version	32
Third Draft. The holograph narrator draft of the Francis Melarky-matricide version	38
Fourth Draft. The typescript narrator draft of the Francis Melarky-matricide version	47
CHAPTER III	59
Fifth Draft. The Kelly-shipboard version	59
CHAPTER IV	67
Sixth Draft. The second typescript third-person draft of the Francis Melarky-matricide version	67
CHAPTER V	74
General Notes for the Dick Diver version— <i>The Drunkard's Holiday</i>	74

CHAPTER VI	89
Seventh Draft— <i>The Drunkard's Holiday</i> . First holograph draft of the Dick Diver version	89
Book I	94
Book II	103
Book III	128
CHAPTER VII	161
Eighth Draft— <i>Doctor Diver's Holiday</i> . First typescript of the Dick Diver version	161
Ninth Draft. Revised second typescript of <i>Doctor Diver's Holiday</i>	169
Tenth Draft. Carbon-copy for serial	175
Eleventh Draft. Typescript printer's copy for serial	178
CHAPTER VIII	184
Twelfth Draft. Galleys for serial and typescript revi- sions	184
Thirteen. Page proof for <i>Scribner's Magazine</i>	190
Fourteen. <i>Scribner's Magazine</i>	190
Fifteen. Tearsheets from <i>Scribner's Magazine</i>	192
Sixteen. Book galleys	193
Seventeen. Book page-proof	197
CHAPTER IX	198
The Book	198
The Text	206
APPENDICES	219
Appendix 1: Unlisted Sections of Manuscript	219
Appendix 2: Textual Collation of Serial and First Six Chapters of the Book	221
Appendix 3: Structural Comparison of the First Edition with the "Author's Final Version"	234
REFERENCES	237
LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED	245
INDEX	249

List of Illustrations

Diagram of the development of <i>Tender is the Night</i>	<i>xxv</i>
Holograph manuscript pages	44-45
	53
	62-63
	113-117
	141-158
Fitzgerald's summary of Part III, first half . . .	131

But, my God! it was my material, and it was all I had to deal with.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

When Scott was writing "Tender Is the Night"—he didn't think he ought to talk about the books he was doing, and so put it this way—he said that the whole motif was taken from Ludendorff's memoirs. They were moving up the guns for the great Spring offensive in 1918, and Ludendorff said, "The song of the frogs on the river drowned the rumble of our artillery." When he told me this, it puzzled me, but when I read the book I realized that there was all this beautiful veneer, and rottenness and horror underneath.

Maxwell Perkins

If she has a success coming, she must associate it with work done in a workmanlike manner for its own sake, and part of it done fatigued and uninspired, and part of it done when even to remember the original inspiration and impetus is a psychological trick.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

Introduction

NO PART of the glamorous legend that surrounds F. Scott Fitzgerald is more spectacular or more appropriate than the Fitzgerald revival of 1945-1950, which elevated him from relative obscurity to the first rank of American letters. That this revival was more than a freak run of misplaced nostalgia is attested to by the fact that after fifteen years a counterreaction has not yet occurred. All his books—except his play, *The Vegetable*—are currently in print; two of his novels and a collection of stories are in student editions; his first editions command high prices; scores of articles on Fitzgerald, popular and scholarly, are published each year.

Yet despite all this solid popular and critical interest, it is apparent that Fitzgerald scholarship has in some cases failed to establish well-defined principles for assessing his work. Although there is considerable appreciation of *Tender is the Night*, there is also considerable disagreement about its rank in the Fitzgerald canon. In a sense, Fitzgerald continues to be victimized by the color of his life, which hampered serious criticism of his work when he was still writing.

Responsible and intelligent commentators are often lured into discussing Fitzgerald's work purely in terms of his personal history. To be sure, there is justification for this approach to a writer who declared, "Whether it's something that happened twenty years ago or only yesterday, I must start out with an emotion—one that's close to me and that I can understand."¹ There is no denying that all of Fitzgerald's best work is intensely personal, but this does not mean that it must be approached through biographical or historical methods. There is a necessity for objective study of his craftsmanship, and this has been largely neglected. The Fitzgerald Papers at the

Princeton University Library offer an incredibly rich archive, but this material has merely been picked over. Scholars have examined Fitzgerald's manuscripts, exclaimed in print over the fact that there are various versions of his novels, but have failed to do any detailed work on this basic material. *Tender is the Night* is known to have had the most intricate history of all of Fitzgerald's novels, but few American novels have generated so much sentimental nonsense or solemn guesswork.

Although some critics have picked *Tender is the Night* as Fitzgerald's best book, most critics have categorized it as a noble failure, a work in which—because of a faulty structure—the parts are more brilliant than the whole. These critics often take their lead from the author's own rejection of the original structure, but this rejection does not constitute a warrant to ignore the evidence to be found in Fitzgerald's plans and working drafts about the composition of the novel.

To be sure, the book—or, rather, the history of the book—encourages guesswork scholarship. The author struggled with it for nearly a decade, and what he expected would be his greatest popular and critical success was a qualified failure. A few snatches of information have been published about the development and composition of the story, and this little has engendered a quantity of theorizing. The most common notions are that Fitzgerald worked on *Tender is the Night* so long that he rewrote it to death; that he changed his plot without really changing his characters and thereby introduced a basic confusion into the book; that after years of fumbling with a subject that was too profound for him, he hastily and carelessly assembled the book; that (and this is inevitable) he wrote *Tender is the Night* drunk; or that it suffers from having been drastically cut down from a much larger work. All this is clearly contradicted by the manuscripts, but no one has troubled to investigate them thoroughly—not even Fitzgerald's first biographer, who gives a very sketchy account of the composition of *Tender is the Night*, or Malcolm Cowley, whose ap-

pendix on the manuscripts in his edition of the "author's final version" of *Tender is the Night* is the sole study of the material. In fairness to Mr. Cowley it must be said that a detailed study of the manuscripts was outside the scope of his project, and it is doubtful if his publishers would have granted him the space the job requires.

It is not really surprising that the very abundance of the material has discouraged analysis of it; moreover, it is in such a disorganized state that it took me seven months to catalogue it. There are some 3,500 pages of holograph manuscript and typescript, plus proof, representing seventeen drafts and three versions of the novel.

This study is an attempt to inventory the manuscripts of *Tender is the Night* and to interpret the material. I have reconstructed in detail the composition of the novel, chiefly from the manuscripts, although I have used other sources—such as Fitzgerald's letters and short stories. I have tried to show what the manuscripts reveal about Fitzgerald's intentions, and I have essayed an interpretation of the purpose and meaning of the novel. Throughout I have attempted to present a picture of a deliberate and serious literary artist at work. It is my hope that this analysis of the composition of *Tender is the Night* presents Fitzgerald as a craftsman, and that it shows how his natural talent was refined by firm standards of self-criticism. Where the intuitive artist left off, the professional took over.

I would be disingenuous were I not to admit that I have been especially keen to destroy a few of the popular stories that surround *Tender is the Night*. Although the stories may be better than the facts, it is time for us to apply the same standards to Fitzgerald criticism that we insist on for other authors. Either Fitzgerald was the playboy of American literature who squandered a remarkable talent while accidentally producing a superb novel or two—or he was a serious writer whose private life was irregular. We cannot have it both ways.

During the course of this project I have incurred obliga-

tions, which I cheerfully acknowledge. I would acknowledge them fulsomely were not untempered gratitude in bad form. To Alexander Clark, Curator of Manuscripts at the Princeton University Library, I am obliged for many courtesies during my trips to the Library. Had he not encouraged my plans for working on this material, this study would not have been possible. For friendly professional services I am indebted to the entire staff of the Alderman Library of The University of Virginia—and in particular to John Cook Wyllie, Francis L. Berkeley, Jr., and Miss Louise Savage. I am indebted, too, to C. Waller Barrett for granting me the freedom of his monumental American literature collection. The Yale University Library and the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, also supplied material. Malcolm Cowley, Matthew Josephson, Edmund Wilson, and the late Theodore Chanler patiently searched their memories for me. Charles Scribner, Jr., Burroughs Mitchell, and Josiah Q. Bennett—all of Charles Scribner's Sons—helped me to work with that firm's records. Ivan von Auw, Jr. of Harold Ober Associates, was of great help in arranging for permissions to quote from unpublished Fitzgerald material and from the letters of Harold Ober. I am grateful to Frederick A. Hetzel, of the University of Pittsburgh Press, for his loyalty and labor in connection with this book. Mrs. Robert A. Stocking, my typist, slaved over my working drafts. Professor Robert M. Estrich, Chairman of the Department of English, Ohio State University, arranged for secretarial help in the preparation of printer's copy for this book.

Permission to quote from the published work of F. Scott Fitzgerald and from the letters of Maxwell Perkins has been generously granted by Charles Scribner's Sons. Part of Chapter I of this book originally appeared in *Modern Fiction Studies*.

Professor Fredson Bowers served as adviser when this study was prepared as a University of Virginia dissertation, and to him I am deeply indebted for many things—but

especially for his patience. To my second reader, Professor Floyd Stovall, I am equally indebted.

My greatest obligations are to Mrs. Samuel J. Lanahan and to the late Harold Ober, who granted me the extraordinary privilege of working with this material and who always acceded to my pleas for additional privileges.

Editorial Method

One reason why a detailed study of the composition of *Tender is the Night* has not been prepared before is that the sheer bulk and confusion of the material are intimidating. There are roughly 3,500 pages of holograph manuscript and typescript—plus galley proof, page proof, and tearsheets. The *Tender is the Night* archive has been likened to a barrel into which many buckets of water have been poured, so that the problem of cataloguing the manuscripts is like separating out of the barrel the contents of each bucket. This figure may seem less hyperbolic—and less self-congratulatory on my part—when its creator is identified as the Curator of Manuscripts at the Princeton University Library.

Seven manuscript cartons of *Tender is the Night* material are at Princeton. Each of these cartons is little more than a storage container; there is little intramural or intermural organization. A given box includes parts of several drafts; and the parts range from notes on scraps of paper to fragmentary scenes to complete chapters. For reasons that will be detailed later, Fitzgerald sometimes changed his pagination system in the middle of a scene. Some sequences of writing were used in various spots and consequently bear multiple sets of paginations. But the individual pages are surprisingly easy to work with. Fitzgerald wrote his holograph drafts in soft pencil on pulp paper that has yellowed; nevertheless, his handwriting is quite legible, and it is even possible to read almost all the crossed-out words.

The first practical problem in preparing this study was to se-

lect a method for identifying the various pieces of material and organizing them for discussion. Since I could not discover a real precedent for this problem, I decided on a method that would reveal the nature of the unsorted material and at the same time allow the reader to check my reconstruction of Fitzgerald's work. Accordingly, each differentiable unit of work within the archive—that is, each section of material that can be isolated from the material around it—has been provided with a chronological key number from #1 to #199. It did not matter whether the section consisted of one page or 100 pages. Thus, section #1 is a fifty-one page holograph chapter which I believe to be the earliest surviving piece of work Fitzgerald did on the first chapter of the first draft of the first version of *Tender is the Night*; it was found in manuscript box 2. Section #44 consists of a single page of typed notes for the third version; it was the first piece in box 1.

Each of these 199 sections has been catalogued in a way that should make it readily identifiable. Although most of my work was done with microfilm, the catalogue has been checked against the actual material at Princeton. My intention has been to trace the composition of *Tender is the Night* by a method that would permit the reader to check me at every point. I have made no attempt to reorganize the Princeton archive into the drafts I have reconstructed: the manuscripts have been left as I found them.

At the beginning of each division of this study there is a textual headnote which catalogues the sections of material to be discussed. This headnote is divided into five columns: (1) the physical description and pagination of the section; (2) the part of the first edition of *Tender is the Night* to which it corresponds, with roman numerals representing the books of the novel and arabic numerals representing the chapters; (3) brief notes on any special identifying features of the section; (4) the number of the manuscript carton at the Princeton University Library in which the section was found; and (5) the key number.

In noting the pagination in the headnotes I have used square brackets to indicate unnumbered pages and angle brackets for cancelled paginations. The entry 2-3, [4], 5-7, 9-10 would mean that pages 1, 4, and 8 are wanting, but that there is an unnumbered page between 3 and 5 that is obviously to be reckoned as page 4. The entry 10-20 <20-30> would mean that pages 10-20 were at some time numbered 20-30. Paginations in parentheses indicate a single page so numbered by Fitzgerald. Thus section #2 is described: 48, (49-50), 51, 51½, 52, [], 53, 53½, 54-55, 44½, 56-60, 62-66, 68-69, 71-74, 77-78, 78½, 79-84, 84½, 85-86, (87-91), 92-98, 98½, 99-123, insert A-B, 124-131. 92-96 also numbered <31-32, (33-34), 35-36>. This is the pagination that appears on the pages of the section. Number 48 appears on the first page; then comes one page headed 49-50 which Fitzgerald inserted in place of two cancelled pages; then come pages numbered 51, 51½, and 52; then comes an unnumbered page; then come pages 53 and 53½; then come pages 54 and 55; then comes a page headed 44½; and so on.

Fitzgerald was not a methodical worker, and the *Tender is the Night* material, written during a particularly disturbed and disorganized period of his life, does not have a simple pattern. I have reconstructed twelve drafts before page proof, and in most of these drafts he salvaged material from earlier drafts. That a particular section was used in an earlier draft presents a problem in organizing the material for discussion. Since the chief purpose of this study is to reconstruct the composition of *Tender is the Night*, I discuss the material in a draft-by-draft order to show how the novel developed during the decade Fitzgerald worked on it. A given section is included with each draft it appeared in. The 200 sections have been sorted into drafts by several means. The changing of characters' names—both within and between drafts—proved to be the most useful kind of evidence. A chapter in which Abe is surnamed Herkimer is earlier than one in which he is surnamed Grant, and Grant is earlier than North.² A chapter in

which the name Francis is crossed out and replaced by the name Rosemary was obviously written as part of the first version and then incorporated into the third version. The use of paginations to differentiate drafts proved reliable, too. Multiple paginations in a section indicate that the section was moved from an earlier draft and/or had occupied a different position in its present draft. Since Fitzgerald was a tireless polisher of his style, some sections—and indeed whole drafts—were readily differentiated by stylistic tests.

The following symbols are used in the catalogues of manuscripts:

- H Holograph
- T Original typescript
- CC Carbon copy of typescript
- X Crossed-out
- R Revised
- [Changed to, as VI[VII

Combinations of these symbols are used, so that RT would signify a revised typescript.

Throughout this study page references to *Tender is the Night* supplied in parentheses refer to the first edition—New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934.

The "Author's Final Version"

Although Malcolm Cowley's introduction and appendix to the "author's final version" of *Tender is the Night* are generally helpful—they are, in fact, the only published analysis of the material—some of his comments on details are wrong or misleading. Cowley gives the impression that the first draft of the Dick Diver version was considerably longer than the published form and that what we read is in some ways a condensation of the novel Fitzgerald projected: "He had watched it grow from a short dramatic novel like *The Great Gatsby* to a long psychological or philosophical novel on the model of

Vanity Fair, and then, as he omitted scene after scene, he had watched it diminish again to a medium-length novel, but one in which he was sure that the overtones of the longer book remained.”³ The first part of this statement—that the novel grew and expanded while Fitzgerald worked on it—is misleading unless qualified by the information that the short form was the early matricide version. The Dick Diver version did not develop in scope while it was in progress. Fitzgerald’s preliminary plan indicates that he had fixed his design and scope when he began the Dick Diver version; and the drafts themselves clearly reveal that the Dick Diver version was composed straight through on this plan—without any narrative growth. The second part of Cowley’s statement—that Fitzgerald cut “scene after scene”—is misleading because the scenes Fitzgerald omitted from the published book would total perhaps thirty printed pages, hardly enough to change the bulk of the work from a long to a medium-length book. Moreover, some of these scenes exist only as rough sketches and were never part of a finished draft. The impression that *Tender is the Night* was originally much longer is supported by Fitzgerald’s claim that he had “thrown away three-fourths of it”; but that was certainly an exaggeration.⁴ The assertion is not supported by the surviving manuscripts, and it is extremely unlikely that Fitzgerald destroyed that much manuscript. He did reject material written for the early versions, but he also salvaged much of it too.

On the evidence of the manuscripts, Cowley is also wrong in saying that Fitzgerald could have written separate novels about Abe and Rosemary.⁵ This comment implies that Fitzgerald cancelled great sections of material about these two characters; but in fact there is little information about Abe and Rosemary in the manuscripts that was not used in the novel. Comments like these have led people to assume that *Tender is the Night* was originally double its published length or that there were subversions within the Dick Diver version. This is not the case. The development of *Tender is the Night* is a sufficiently com-

plex story; and these embellishments only obscure the real problem—which is to discover not what Fitzgerald left out, but rather what he salvaged and transformed.

As will be seen later, Cowley is open to challenge on other points. The purpose of these objections is not to attack Malcolm Cowley, who has served Fitzgerald well, but to correct an influential account of the manuscripts.

The Drafts

The following summary account of the composition of *Tender is the Night* is offered by way of a briefing for the detailed study of the manuscripts which forms the body of this study.

In the summer of 1925 Fitzgerald began work on his fourth novel. It was to be a compact, rather sensational novel of American expatriate life on the French Riviera; and it was to deal with matricide. The central figure was Francis Melarky, a young motion picture technician. Fitzgerald wrote parts of three long chapters—perhaps one-quarter of the book—in holograph. In this earliest stage the prototypes of the Norths and the Divers appear. The holograph draft was followed by a typescript, with many holograph revisions and inserts. In these first two drafts the story is told in straight third-person narrative.

In 1926 Fitzgerald recast the story so that it is told by a narrator who is passively involved in most of the action. The holograph draft of this form of the story, which includes salvaged typescript from the third-person form of the story, advances the plot by one chapter. The typescript of the narrator form—with holograph material—advances the plot still further. A good deal of the Paris material in these narrator-drafts found its way into the published novel. At various times this version was entitled *Our Type*, *The Boy Who Killed His Mother*, *The Melarky Case*, and *The World's Fair*.

In the summer of 1929 Fitzgerald discarded the matricide plot for a new plot, the Kelly version, which survives in only two long holograph chapters set on an ocean liner; but this

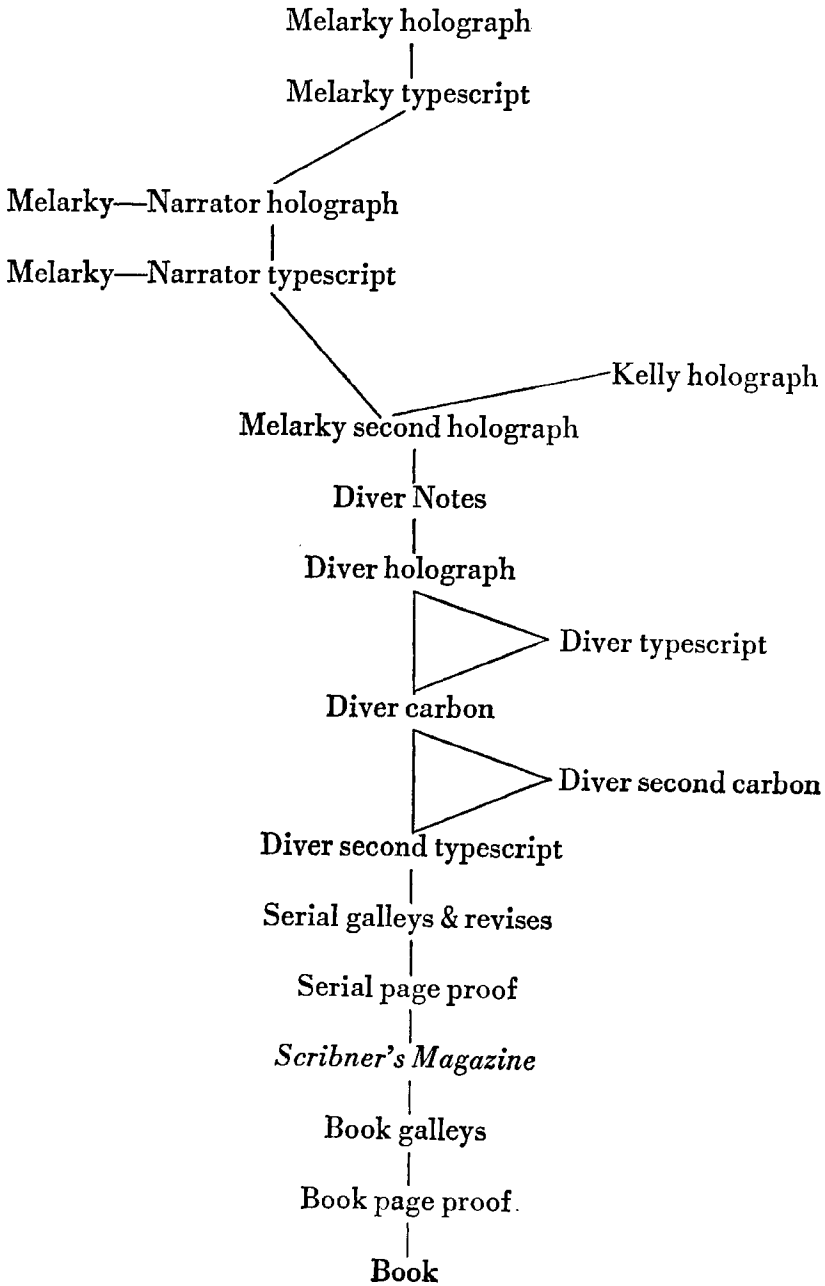
false start introduces a young actress named Rosemary who ultimately became the Rosemary of *Tender is the Night*. The Kelly version of the plot was apparently never given a title.

In 1930 Fitzgerald returned to the matricide idea and patched together from typescript and holograph a new draft in straight third-person narrative—with the narrator character dropped. This was the sixth draft.

Early in 1932 Fitzgerald drafted a plan for the third version of the novel. This was the Dick Diver story. He prepared a complete holograph draft, which was first revised in typescript and then in the carbon copy of that typescript. The first draft of the third version was entitled *The Drunkard's Holiday*, which was changed to *Doctor Diver's Holiday* and then *Tender is the Night*. A second typescript was prepared from the revised carbon, and this new typescript was revised in the original and carbon. The original of the second typescript was used as printer's copy for the *Scribner's Magazine* serial galleys, which were extensively rewritten and then reset for final serial galley proof. Fitzgerald then partly revised the serial page proof. Some of the author's tearsheets—pages ripped from the magazine—survive, but they were not revised.

The galley proof for the book was set from the serial version; and the book galleys were then revised in great detail. It is possible that Fitzgerald also made some revisions in the page proof for the book.

Diagram of the Development of *Tender is the Night*



THE COMPOSITION OF
TENDER IS THE NIGHT

