THE CAMBRIDGE EDITION OF THE WORKS OF
F. SCOTT FITZGERALD
Dust Jacket by F. Cugat, for first edition of *The Great Gatsby*. 
THE GREAT GATSBY

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My principal debt is to Mary Jo Tate for extraordinary editorial support. I am grateful to Judith S. Baughman for running the factory. Provost Arthur K. Smith and the Carolina Venture Fund provided a crucial grant; I am fortunate to be at the University of South Carolina.

Additional debts have been incurred to Roma Danysch (U.S. Army Center of Military History); Michael G. Knapp (National Archives); Alexander C. Meakin (Great Lakes Historical Society); Jean Preston (Princeton University Library); Alexander Clark (Princeton University Library); Lorraine B. Diehl; Vincent F. Seyfried; E. M. Koehler, Jr.; Charles A. Rheault, Jr.; and Adeline Tintner. Charles Scribner III offered help and friendship. Dr. Lindeth Vasey and Dr. Andrew Brown of Cambridge University Press compelled me to un-assume certain assumptions; Julie Greenblatt of the New York office ably saw this volume through production. Peter Shepherd (Harold Ober Associates) and R. Andrew Booze (Kay Collyer & Booze) handled the contractual aspects of this project. Joel Myerson, former Chairman of the Department of English, and Carol McGinnis Kay, Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, did everything in their powers to sustain this edition. I have personal obligations to Professor Myerson, with whom I have been arguing bibliography for twenty years.

Fredson Bowers died during the night of 10–11 April 1991; we had discussed the proof for this volume on 7 April. Editorial work on the Cambridge University Press critical edition of F. Scott Fitzgerald will proceed in accordance with the general plan we prepared at the start of the project. I worked with Fred for thirty-six years.

My editorial work in this volume is dedicated to Scottie.

M. J. B.
CHRONOLOGY OF COMPOSITION AND PUBLICATION

JUNE 1922  Fitzgerald begins planning a novel at White Bear Lake, Minnesota.

SEPTEMBER 1922  Fitzgerald writes “Winter Dreams.”

OCTOBER 1922  Fitzgerald moves to Great Neck, Long Island.

JUNE 1923  Fitzgerald begins writing early version of novel.

NOVEMBER 1923  Fitzgerald writes “The Sensible Thing.”

APRIL 1924  Ledger: “Out of the woods at last + starting novel.”

MAY 1924  Fitzgerald leaves for France.

SEPTEMBER 1924  First draft finished. Ledger: “Hard work sets in.”

SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 1924  Fitzgerald revising typescript. Ledger: “Working at high pressure to finish.”

NOVEMBER 1924  Typescript sent to Maxwell Perkins. Ledger: “Novel off at last.”

20 NOVEMBER 1924  Perkins reacts to typescript.

JANUARY–FEBRUARY 1925  Fitzgerald revises galleys in Rome.

MARCH 1925  Fitzgerald at Capri.

10 APRIL 1925  Publication of The Great Gatsby.
INTRODUCTION

1. THE COMPOSITION AND REVISION OF THE GREAT GATSBY

F. Scott Fitzgerald began planning a novel that became The Great Gatsby in June 1922 at White Bear Lake, Minnesota. After writing the first draft of his play The Vegetable, he reported to Maxwell Perkins, his editor at Charles Scribner’s Sons:

When I send on this last bunch of stories I may start my novel and I may not. Its locale will be the middle west and New York of 1885 I think. It will concern less superlative beauties than I run to usually + will be centered on a smaller period of time. It will have a catholic element. I’m not quite sure whether I’m ready to start it quite yet or not. I’ll write next week + tell you more definite plans.¹

From the start Fitzgerald wanted his third novel to be structurally significant. As early as July 1922 he declared to Perkins: “I want to write something new—something extraordinary and beautiful and simple + intricately patterned.”² Fitzgerald did not provide additional information about this project. No manuscript for the nineteenth-century Catholic material survives, and it is uncertain whether he actually worked on the novel in 1922.³ Fitzgerald’s concern with the technical requirements of his novel was also ex-

¹ Fitzgerald was revising the short stories to be collected in Tales of the Jazz Age (New York: Scribners, 1922). Unless otherwise noted, all Fitzgerald / Perkins letters cited in this introduction are in Dear Scott / Dear Max, ed. Jackson Breyer and John Kuehl (New York: Scribners, 1971). Transcriptions in that collection have been corrected here.


³ In a reply to a fan letter from Holger Lundbergh, tentatively assigned to early 1923, Fitzgerald stated: “I’m not starting my new novel until Spring” (Correspondence, p. 125).
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pressed in his March 1923 letter to Thomas Boyd: “I shall never write another document-novel. I have decided to be a pure artist + experiment in form and emotion. I’m sure I can do it much better than Anderson.”

The short story “Winter Dreams,” written in September 1922, treats the key Fitzgerald subject of an ambitious poor boy’s love for a destructive rich girl, and this story of aspiration, success, and disenchanted prefigures The Great Gatsby. Dexter Green’s reaction to Judy Jones’s house in the magazine text of “Winter Dreams” was subsequently removed from the story and transferred to Jay Gatsby.

In October 1922 Fitzgerald moved to Great Neck, Long Island. Since he regularly saw Perkins in New York, their correspondence at this time is not helpful for reconstructing the gestation of The Great Gatsby. During the summer of 1923 Fitzgerald began writing the draft that—on the evidence of the two surviving manuscript pages he sent to Willa Cather in 1925—became The Great Gatsby. The characters are Jordan Vance and Ada—who clearly anticipate Jordan Baker and Daisy—and Caraway, who is not the narrator. It is impossible to determine the time or setting of these pages. Fitzgerald’s claim that he “was in the middle of the first draft” of Gatsby

4 Correspondence, p. 126. Sherwood Anderson (1876–1941), American novelist and short story writer, author of Winesburg, Ohio (1919).
5 See page 116 of the novel; the Metropolitan magazine text of the story read: “There was a feeling of mystery in it, of bedrooms upstairs more beautiful and strange than other bedrooms, of gay and radiant activities taking place through these deep corridors and of romances that were not musty and laid already in lavender, but were fresh and breathing and set forth in rich motor cars and in great dances whose flowers were scarcely withered” (56 [December 1922], 98, 100–102, 104–7). The revised story was collected in All the Sad Young Men (1926).
6 In a letter assigned to summer 1923 Fitzgerald informed Lundbergh (see note 5): “My new novel is started and progressing—but too slowly. Tonight I’m going to chart out a schedule of work for the rest of the year” (Correspondence, p. 133).
7 The schedule does not survive.
8 Fitzgerald was concerned that his description of Daisy in the book was too close to Cather’s description of Marian Forrester in A Lost Lady. See Brucoli, “An Instance of Apparent Plagiarism.” F. Scott Fitzgerald, Willa Cather, and the First Gatsby Manuscript,” Princeton University Library Chronicle, 39 (Spring 1978), 171–8. These two manuscript pages from Fitzgerald’s early draft are at the Princeton University Library and are facsimiled in this article.
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when Cather’s *A Lost Lady* was published in September 1923 is probably an exaggeration.  

Work on the novel was interrupted when Fitzgerald became involved in the production of *The Vegetable* in September. After the play failed in its November 1923 tryout, he was compelled to devote the winter and spring of 1923–4 to writing short stories for ready income (“‘The Sensible Thing,’” “Rags Martin-Jones and the Pr–nce of W–les,” “Gretchen’s Forty Winks,” “Diamond Dick and The First Law of Woman,” “The Baby Party,” “The Third Casket,” “One of My Oldest Friends,” “Absolution,” “The Pusher-in-the-Face,” “The Unspeakable Egg,” “John Jackson’s Arcady”). On 7 April 1924 Perkins informed Fitzgerald that he had reservations about the proposed title, “Among Ash Heaps and Millionaires”—clear evidence that by this time Fitzgerald had found one of the central symbols of his novel.  

In early April, after he had cleared his debts with short stories, Fitzgerald reported to Perkins that he was working on a “new angle”—which almost certainly meant a new plot:

A few words more relative to our conversation this afternoon. While I have every hope + plan of finishing my novel in June you know how those things often come out. And even it takes me 10 times that long I cannot let it go out unless it has the very best I’m capable of in it or even as I feel sometimes, something better than I’m capable of. Much of what I wrote last summer was good but it was so interrupted that it was ragged + in approaching it from a new angle I’ve had to discard a lot of it—in one case 18,000 words (part of which will appear in the Mercury as a short story).  

It is only in the last four months that I’ve realized how much I’ve—well, almost deteriorated in the three years since I finished the Beautiful and Damned. The last four months of course I’ve worked but in the two years—over two years—before that, I produced exactly one play, half a dozen short stories and three or four articles—an average of about one hundred words a day. If I’d spent this time reading or travelling or doing anything—even staying healthy—it’d be different but I spent it uselessly, neither in study nor in contemplation but only in drinking and raising hell generally.

8 *Correspondence*, p. 156.
9 Unpublished letter, Charles Scribner’s Sons Archives, Princeton University Library.
10 See appendix “Note on ‘Absolution.’”
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If I'd written the B. + D. at the rate of 100 words a day it would have taken me 4 years so you can imagine the moral effect the whole chasm had on me.

What I'm trying to say is just that I'll have to ask you to have patience about the book and trust me that at least, or at least for the 1st time in years, I'm doing the best I can. I've gotten in dozens of bad habits that I'm trying to get rid of

1. Laziness
2. Referring everything to Zelda—a terrible habit, nothing ought to be referred to anybody until its finished
3. Word consciousness + self doubt
ect. ect. ect. ect.

I feel I have an enormous power in me now, more than I've ever had in a way but it works so fitfully and with so many bogeys because I've talked so much and not lived enough within myself to develop the necessary self reliance. Also I don't know anyone who has used up so [paper torn] sonal experience as I have at 27. Copperfield + Pendennis were written at past forty while This Side of Paradise was three books + the B. + D. was two.

So in my new novel I'm thrown directly on purely creative work—not trashy imaginings as in my stories but the sustained imagination of a sincere and yet radiant world. So I read slowly and carefully + at times in considerable distress. This book will be a consciously artistic achievement + must depend on that as the 1st books did not.

If I ever win the right to any leisure again I will assuredly not waste it as I wasted this past time. Please believe me when I say that now I'm doing the best I can.

Great Neck provided the setting and background material for Fitzgerald's "new angle." It was at that time a favored residence for show-business figures and promoters; Fitzgerald's neighbors included Ring Lardner, Lew Fields, Ed Wynn, Raymond Hitchcock, and Herbert Bayard Swope. A great place for parties. The Fuller-McGee case, which resulted from the failure of the E. M. Fuller & Co. brokerage firm in June 1922, was in the papers through 1922–3 and involved Arnold Rothstein, the man generally believed to have been responsible for fixing the 1919 World's Series. Rothstein was a source for Meyer Wolfshiem.

Jay Gatsby's life-style was probably inspired by an actual Long Island bootlegger who has not been definitely identified, but may
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have been Max Gerlach. Fitzgerald’s scrapbooks include a newspaper clipping about the FitzGeralds on Long Island with an autograph note: “Enroute from the coast—Here for a few days on business—How are you and the family old Sport? Gerlach.” Fitzgerald discussed this figure with Edmund Wilson, for Fitzgerald noted “I had told Bunny my plan for Gatsby” in the margin of his copy of Wilson’s 1924 play The Crime in the Whistler Room, where a character who resembles Fitzgerald has the following speech:

He’s a gentleman bootlegger: his name is Max Fleischman. He lives like a millionaire. Gosh, I haven’t seen so much to drink since Prohibition. . . . Well, Fleischman was making a damn ass of himself bragging about how much his tapestries were worth and how much his bath-room was worth and how he never wore a shirt twice—and he had a revolver studded with diamonds. . . . And he finally got on my nerves—I was a little bit stewed—and I told him I wasn’t impressed by his ermine-lined revolver: I told him he was nothing but a bootlegger, no matter how much money he made. . . . I told him I never would come into his damn house if it hadn’t been to be polite and that it was torture to stay in a place where everything was in such terrible taste.

The ways Fitzgerald drew on New York City and Great Neck material for his novel are shown by notes on the chapters of Gatsby that he made at least fourteen years later on the endpaper of André Malraux’s Man’s Hope (1938); only three of the chapters are described as “an invention” or “inv.” The Gatsby–Cody relation-

11 Late in her life Zelda Fitzgerald recalled that the bootlegger’s name was von Guerlach (Henry Dan Piper to Bruccoli, 22 April 1974).
13 Edmund Wilson, This Room and This Gin and These Sandwiches (New York: New Republic, 1937), pp. 73–6; Wilson’s play was first performed in October 1934. Fitzgerald’s copy is in the Bruccoli Collection.
14 The Rumsies: sculptor and polo-player Charles Cary Rumsey and his wife Mary Harriman had an estate at Westbury, Long Island. The Hitchcocks: polo-player and war hero Tommy Hitchcock (May 1933 Ledger entry: “Met Mrs. Rumsey + Tommy Hitchcock + went to parties there”). The Goddards have not been identified, but Fitzgerald may have been referring to screenwriter and playwright
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Fitzgerald’s notes on sources for chapters, on endpaper of Man’s Hope (1938) by André Malraux. Princeton University Library.

ship was drawn from the boyhood experience of Fitzgerald’s Great Neck friend Robert Kerr.15

The Fitzwards sailed for France in May 1924 with seven thousand dollars earned from short stories. The Great Gatsby was written at Valescure during a summer of domestic strife caused by Zelda Fitzgerald’s interest in Edouard Jozan. On 18 June Fitzgerald re-

Charles William Goddard. The Dwanms: movie-director Allan Dwan (November 1923 Ledger entry: “Parties at Allen Dwans”). The Swopes: Herbert Bayard Swope, executive editor of the New York World, a lavish Great Neck host. Gineva was Gineva King, Fitzgerald’s first serious love when he was at Princeton. Mary may have been actress Mary Hay.


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ported to Perkins from Valescure: "We are idyllicly settled here + the novel is going fine—it ought to be done in a month—though I'm not sure as I'm contemplating another 16,000 words which would make it about the length of Paradise—not quite though even then." This additional material cannot be identified; but at 48,852 words, The Great Gatsby is considerably shorter than This Side of Paradise at approximately 85,000 words. By about 25 August, Fitzgerald was able to tell Perkins that the novel "will be done next week," but that he would not send it before October because "Zelda + I are contemplating a careful revision after a weeks complete rest." By "done" Fitzgerald probably meant that he had completed the working manuscript. (In this Cambridge critical edition manuscript or holograph designates a handwritten document; typed documents are referred to as typescripts.) This letter includes Fitzgerald's exuberant declaration that "my novel is about the best American novel ever written. It is rough stuff in places, runs only to about 50,000 words + I hope you won't shy at it." "Rough stuff" presumably refers to the sexual material—for example, Tom and Myrtle going into the bedroom in Chapter II—not the quality of the prose.

Fitzgerald's Ledger entries for September—October 1924 indicate that these months were devoted to revising the typescripts: "Hard work sets in" and "Working at high pressure to finish." On 10 September he was able to inform Perkins that what was probably the penultimate typed draft was completed.

Now for a promise—the novel will absolutely + definately be mailed to you before the 1st of October. I've had to rewrite practically half of it—at present its stored away for a week so I can take a last look at it + see what I've left out—there's some intangible sequence lacking somewhere in the middle + a break in interest there invariably means the failure of a book. It is like nothing I've ever read before.\footnote{Correspondence, p. 146. Fitzgerald twice described this scene to Perkins as "raw" (c. 1 December 1924 and c. 15 January 1925).}

On 27 October Fitzgerald alerted Perkins that "I'm sending you my third novel: The Great Gatsby". The ribbon typescript would have gone to Scribners, and at least one carbon copy was sent to
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Harold Ober at the Paul Revere Reynolds agency for possible serial sale.\(^{17}\)

Except for galley inserts, no typescript material survives for *The Great Gatsby*. The extant prepublication forms of the novel—excluding the two manuscript pages sent to Cather—are the holograph first draft (Princeton University Library), an unmarked set of the first galley proofs (Bruccoli Collection), and Fitzgerald's heavily reworked duplicate set of the first galleys (Princeton University Library). The manuscript and the revised galleys have been published in facsimile.\(^{18}\) There is no way of determining how many layers of typescript were required between manuscript and the galleys. The head of the first page of MS Chapter III has the note "3 exempl." in another hand—indicating that there were two or three carbon copies of the first working typescript, which was almost certainly re-typed before delivery to Scribners.\(^{19}\)

Shortly before leaving France in early November 1924 to spend the winter in Rome, Fitzgerald wrote to Perkins expressing dissatisfaction with the typescript versions of Chapter VI (the second Gatsby party) and Chapter VII (see Appendix 6, "Early Draft of the Gatsby—Tom Confrontation Scene"). Fitzgerald's letter probably crossed Perkins's 18 November first response to the novel: "... it

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17 After serial rights to *The Great Gatsby* were declined by Ray Long of the Hearst magazines and John Wheeler of Liberty, H. N. Swanson offered ten thousand dollars in January 1925 for serial publication by *College Humor*. Fitzgerald rejected it because he did not want to delay book publication for less than twenty thousand dollars, and because he thought that serialization in *College Humor* would give the book a frivolous image. For the Fitzgerald / Ober correspondence bearing on these negotiations see *As Ever, Scott Fitzgerald*, ed. Bruccoli and Jennifer McC. Atkinson (New York and Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972). Swanson claimed in his memoirs: "For a long time, the original manuscript [i.e., ribbon typescript or carbon copy] of *The Great Gatsby* was in my office files. Unfortunately, some light-fingered individual knew this and stole it" (*Sprinkled with Ruby Dust* [New York: Warner Books, 1989], p. 31). His book is untrustworthy about Fitzgerald in other matters; but the editor who made an offer for serial rights would have received a typescript of the novel.


19 A note on the manuscript reads: "Returne a Institut Gaudeo 19 Avenue de la Victoire Nice"—the typing agency.
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has vitality to an extraordinary degree, and glamour, and a great deal of underlying thought of unusual quality. It has a kind of mystic atmosphere at times that you infused into parts of ‘Paradise’ and have not since used. It is a marvelous fusion, into a unity of presentation, of the extraordinary incongruities of life today. And as for sheer writing, it’s astonishing.”

On 20 November 1924 Perkins sent Fitzgerald his detailed response to the novel:

I think you are right in feeling a certain slight sagging in chapters six and seven, and I don’t know how to suggest a remedy. I hardly doubt that you will find one and I am only writing to say that I think it does need something to hold up here to the pace set, and ensuing. I have only two actual criticisms: -

One is that among a set of characters marvelously palpable and vital—I would know Tom Buchanan if I met him on the street and would avoid him—Gatsby is somewhat vague. The reader’s eyes can never quite focus upon him, his outlines are dim. Now everything about Gatsby is more or less a mystery i.e. more or less vague, and this may be somewhat of an artistic intention, but I think it is mistaken. Couldn’t he be physically described as distinctly as the others, and couldn’t you add one or two characteristics like the use of that phrase “old sport”, - not verbal, but physical ones, perhaps. I think that for some reason or other a reader—this was true of Mr. Scribner and of Louise—gets an idea that Gatsby is a much older man than he is, although you have the writer say that he is little older than himself. But this would be avoided if on his first appearance he was seen as vividly as Daisy and Tom are, for instance: - and I do not think your scheme would be impaired if you made him so.

The other point is also about Gatsby: his career must remain mysterious, of course. But in the end you make it pretty clear that his wealth came through his connection with Wolfsheim. You also suggest this much earlier. Now almost all readers numerically are going to be puzzled by his having all this wealth and are going to feel entitled to an explanation. To give a distinct and definite one would be, of course, utterly absurd. It did occur to me though, that you might here and there interpolate some phrases, and possibly incidents, little touches of various kinds, that would suggest that he was in some active way mysteriously engaged. You do have him called on the telephone, but couldn’t he be seen once or twice consulting at his parties with people of some sort of mysterious significance, from the politi-
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cal, the gambling, the sporting world, or whatever it may be. I know I am floundering, but that fact may help you to see what I mean. The total lack of an explanation through so large a part of the story does seem to me a defect; or not of an explanation, but of the suggestion of an explanation. I wish you were here so I could talk about it to you for then I know I could at least make you understand what I mean. What Gatsby did ought never to be definitely imparted, even if it could be. Whether he was an innocent tool in the hands of somebody else, or to what degree he was this, ought not to be explained. But if some sort of business activity of his were simply adumbrated, it would lend further probability to that part of the story.

There is one other point: in giving deliberately Gatsby’s biography when he gives it to the narrator you do depart from the method of the narrative in some degree, for otherwise almost everything is told, and beautifully told, in the regular flow of it,- in the succession of events or in accompaniment with them. But you can’t avoid the biography altogether. I thought you might find ways to let the truth of some of his claims like “Oxford” and his army career come out bit by bit in the course of actual narrative. I mention the point anyway for consideration in this interval before I send the proofs.

Although these recommendations were in keeping with the narrative plan Fitzgerald had already built into the novel, he gave Perkins credit for the structural success of The Great Gatsby: “Max, it amuses me when praise comes in on the ‘structure’ of the book—because it was you who fixed up the structure, not me” (c. 10 July 1923).

About 1 December 1924 Fitzgerald replied to Perkins’s suggestions, saying that he knew how to fix Chapters VI and VII, but that he was uncertain about how to break up the biography in Chapter VIII. Gatsby’s “vagueness” would be repaired “by making more pointed—this doesn’t sound good but wait and see. It’ll make him clear”. And around 20 December Fitzgerald wrote to Perkins expressing confidence in his ability “to make it perfect” in proof, although he admitted that the confrontation between Gatsby and Tom in Chapter VII would never “quite be up to mark” because:

—I’ve worried about it too long + I can’t quite place Daisy’s reaction. But I can improve it a lot. It isn’t imaginative energy thats lacking—its because
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I’m automatically prevented from thinking it out over again because I must get all those characters to New York in order to have the catastrophe on the road going back + I must have it pretty much that way. So there’s no chance of bringing the freshness to it that a new free conception sometimes gives.

As for Gatsby’s vague ness, Fitzgerald explained that it resulted from his own ignorance: “If I’d known + kept it from you you’d have been too impressed with my knowledge to protest. . . . But I know now—and as a penalty for not having known first, in other words to make sure I’m going to tell more.”

By 24 January 1925 Fitzgerald had revised the “first part” of the galley proofs and returned them with replies to Perkins’s queries. The duplicate set of reworked galleys retained by Fitzgerald reveals that The Great Gatsby achieved greatness through extensive proof revisions. Fitzgerald regarded galleys as another kind of typescript or trial edition in which to rewrite whole scenes when necessary. Thus, in an undated January letter he reported to Perkins: “The Plaza Hotel scene (Chap VII) is now wonderful and that makes the book wonderful.” The reworking of the novel in galleys is analyzed later in this introduction, but it should be noted here that geographical distance prevented Fitzgerald from checking the reset galleys. By about 18 February 1925 Fitzgerald returned the rest of the first galleys to Perkins with the report that he had solved the problems that bothered both of them:

1. I’ve brought Gatsby to life
2. I’ve accounted for his money
3. I’ve fixed up the two wrong chapters (VI and VII)
4. I’ve improved his first party
5. I’ve broken up his long narrative in Chap. VIII

20 Compare Ernest Hemingway’s “my new theory that you could omit anything if you knew that you omitted and the omitted part would strengthen the story and make people feel something more than they understood”—A Moveable Feast (New York: Scribners, 1964), p. 75. Gatsby was published before Fitzgerald met Hemingway.

21 Correspondence, p. 151.
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On 5 March Perkins wired: “All proofs and corrections received.” Since the novel was published on 10 April, there was no time to send page proofs back and forth across the Atlantic.

In 1934 Fitzgerald wrote an introduction to the Modern Library reprint of The Great Gatsby in which he declared: “Now that this book is being reissued, the author would like to say that never before did one try to keep his artistic conscience as pure as during the ten months put into doing it.” And he went on to state that “What I cut out of it both physically and emotionally would make another novel!” This statement has been accepted at face value by critics who have postulated a much longer draft which Fitzgerald converted into a selective short novel. Fitzgerald’s statement about physical cuts is not to be taken literally—except for the material published in “Absolution.” Although The Great Gatsby working drafts (other than the two pages sent to Cather) preceding the extant manuscript are lost, it seems clear from the surviving evidence that “physically” should be understood to mean that Fitzgerald left out material he could have written.

The Great Gatsby is “extraordinary and beautiful and simple + intricately patterned” because F. Scott Fitzgerald was a genius who fulfilled his instinctive sense of form through layers of revision.

2. RECEPTION AND REPUTATION

The Great Gatsby was published on 10 April 1925; on the twentieth Perkins cabled Fitzgerald: “SALES SITUATION DOUBTFUL EXCELLENT REVIEWS.” The sales were disappointing. The first printing was 20,870 copies, and there was a second printing of 3,000 in August. (This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and 21 Typed copy of cable; Charles Scribner’s Sons Archives, Princeton University Library.

23 P. x. Fitzgerald’s Modern Library introduction is included in this volume as Appendix 7.

24 The first edition of the novel went through seven printings: Scribners, April 1925; Scribners, August 1925; London: Chatto & Windus, 1926; New York: Modern Library, 1934; Scribners, 1943; New York: New Directions, 1946; New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1949. After book publication the novel was serialized in Famous Story Magazine (April–August 1926); reprinted in a single issue of the
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**Damned** both sold more than 50,000 copies during Fitzgerald's lifetime.) At 15-percent royalty on two dollars, the two Scribners printings earned the author less than seven thousand dollars; the stage and movie rights brought more than the book sales.25

Fitzgerald wrote Perkins around 24 April 1925 that there were two reasons for the commercial failure of *The Great Gatsby*: the title is “only fair,” and the novel has no important woman character. About this time he explained to Edmund Wilson that the big fault of the novel is that “I gave no account (and had no feeling about or knowledge of) the emotional relations between Gatsby and Daisy from the time of their reunion to the catastrophe.”26 He made the same criticisms to H. L. Mencken on 4 May.27

The reviews included the warmest Fitzgerald had received—along with some opaque dismissals. Gilbert Seldes announced in the *Dial* that “Fitzgerald has more than matured; he has mastered his talents and gone soaring in a beautiful flight, leaving behind him everything dubious and tricky in his earlier work, and leaving even farther behind all the men of his own generation and most of his elders.”28 Among the prominent receptive critics were William Rose Benét in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, Laurence Stallings in *The New York World* (after an earlier unsigned *World* review was headlined “F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Latest a Dud”), Herbert S. Gorman


27 *Letters*, p. 480.

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in the New York Sun, Harry Hansen in the Chicago Daily News, Carl Van Vechten in The Nation, and Herschel Brickell in the New York Evening Post. Probably the review that most concerned the author was H. L. Mencken’s long piece in the Baltimore Evening Sun, which expressed reservations about the novel while recognizing Fitzgerald’s development as a writer:

The story is obviously unimportant . . . it is certainly not to be put on the same shelf with, say, This Side of Paradise. What ails it, fundamentally, is the plain fact that it is simply a story—that Fitzgerald seems to be far more interested in maintaining its suspense than in getting under the skins of its people. It is not that they are false; it is that they are taken too much for granted. Only Gatsby himself genuinely lives and breathes. The rest are mere marionettes—often astonishingly lifelike, but nevertheless not quite alive.

What gives the story distinction is something quite different from the management of the action or the handling of the characters; it is the charm and beauty of the writing.29

Charles Scribner’s Sons made a strong effort to promote the book. It was packaged in a striking dust jacket by Francis Cugat (see appendix “Note on the Dust Jacket”), but the jacket text conveys the impression that the publisher was uncertain about the nature of the novel: “It is a magical, living book, blended of irony, romance, and mysticism.” The second of seven ads in The Saturday Review of Literature was captioned “F. Scott Fitzgerald, Satisfier,” indicating that the publisher was still looking for the right handle.30

The English impact was negligible. The 1926 Chatto & Windus printing did not sell well, although the reviews were better than those Fitzgerald’s previous novels had received in England. The Times Literary Supplement called it “undoubtedly a work of art and of great promise.” Edward Shanks in the London Mercury commended the author’s control over his material. Conrad Aiken, writing in the New Criterion, praised the form and originality of the

29 “As H. L. M. Sees It,” 1 May 1925, p. 9.
30 Vol. 1 (25 April 1925), 709.
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novel but stated that “it is not great, it is not large, it is not strikingly subtle.” L. P. Hartley described it as “an absurd story” in the *Saturday Review.*

The novel was dead in the market before the end of 1925, even though *The Great Gatsby* achieved exposure through the 1926 Broadway dramatization by Owen Davis and the 1926 silent movie based on the play. This publicity did not sell the book. Copies of the August 1925 second printing were still in the warehouse when Fitzgerald died in 1940. There was one more American printing during the author’s lifetime, the 1934 Modern Library volume—discontinued for lack of sales. This reprint added Fitzgerald’s introduction replying to the charges of triviality brought against his work in the proletarian Thirties: “But, my God! it was my material, and it was all I had to deal with.”

Fitzgerald’s newspaper obituaries revealed no awareness that *The Great Gatsby* was more than a period piece. The *New York Times* devoted a condescending paragraph to the novel:

The best of his books, the critics said, was *The Great Gatsby.* When it was published in 1925 this ironic tale of life on Long Island at a time when gin was the national drink and sex the national obsession (according to the exponents of Mr. Fitzgerald’s school of writers), it received critical acclaim. In it Mr. Fitzgerald was at his best, which was, according to John Chamberlain, “his ability to catch . . . the flavor of a period, the fragrance of a night, a snatch of old song, in a phrase.”

The next day, a *Times* editorial stated: “It was not a book for the ages, but it caught superbly the spirit of a decade.” James Gray wrote “A Last Salute to the Gayest of Sad Young Men” for the *St. Paul Dispatch*—Fitzgerald’s hometown newspaper—in which he ventured the “heresy” that the Nobel Prize had been awarded to writers who had not produced anything as brilliant as *The Great*

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31 TLS (18 February 1926), 116; *London Mercury,* 13 (April 1926), 616–8; *New Criterion,* 4 (October 1926), 775–6; *Saturday Review,* 141 (20 February 1926), 234–5.
32 P. x.
33 23 December 1940, p. 19.
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Gatsby: “Perhaps some day it will be rediscovered.”35 The New Yorker’s comment on the obituaries described Gatsby as “one of the most scrupulously observed and beautifully written of American novels.”36

The postmortems generally played it safe by viewing Fitzgerald as a writer who had failed to fulfill his promise. But in the series of tributes and reminiscences that appeared in two 1941 issues of The New Republic, John Dos Passos challenged the nostalgia or period-flavor critical approach to Fitzgerald and declared that Gatsby was “one of the few classic American novels.”37

Fitzgerald’s death triggered a revival of reader interest in Gatsby— which subsequently triggered the Fitzgerald revival. Unlike the Melville revival, which was the work of academics, the Fitzgerald revival resulted from reader response in the Forties. Critical reassessment of the novel was mainly a process of the Fifties.38 During the Forties no article devoted to The Great Gatsby was published, but there were appraisals or reappraisals of Fitzgerald that singled it out for praise. Publishers did more than the critics for Fitzgerald. Between 1941 and 1949, seventeen new editions or reprints of The Great Gatsby were published. The key event was the inclusion of Gatsby with the initial publication of The Last Tycoon in 1941, for the respectful posthumous attention attracted by the unfinished novel carried over to Gatsby. In 1942 Scribners brought out a small reprint of Gatsby. Three years later the novel became widely available and widely sold—the surest gauge of a book’s influence. In 1945 there were five new editions or reprints—as well as The Crack-Up, with its section of letters about Gatsby from Edith Wharton, T. S. Eliot, and Gertrude Stein.39 That year the Tycoon / Gatsby edition went into a second printing; the Armed Services Edition of Gatsby was published; the Viking Portable F. Scott Fitzgerald (which included Gatsby and Tender Is the Night) was published and required a sec-

35 24 December 1940, p. 4.
36 4 January 1941, 9.
37 “Fitzgerald and the Press,” 104 (17 February 1941), 213.
39 New York: New Directions.
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... and the twenty-five-cent Bantam paperback Gatsby was released.

3. THE MANUSCRIPT

The complete holograph draft of The Great Gatsby—so titled—consists of 264 leaves of unruled $8\frac{1}{2}$ by 12$\frac{1}{2}$ (13) inch paper, with text written in pencil on the rectos. The paper has oxidized to a tannish hue, but it was probably originally off-white. It is wove paper, watermarked “CASCADE BOND / U.S.A.”—of two weights.

The entire manuscript is written on American-made paper, which might suggest that Fitzgerald arrived in France with a complete or substantially complete draft of the novel. However, his correspondence with Perkins makes it clear that this was not the case. The explanation is that Fitzgerald brought a supply of paper to France. The holograph galley inserts (written in Rome) are also on American paper.

The repeated manuscript chapter numbers and the absence of a manuscript chapter numbered IV reveal the evolution of the novel’s structure during the process of composition.


MS III: 1–6, insert, 7–29. Corresponds to galleys 7–12 and to book Chapter II—Myrtle’s party.


\(^4\) Insert designates an unnumbered page; (27–29) designates a page so numbered by Fitzgerald to indicate that it replaces pages 27, 28, and 29.
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MS VIII: 23–32, [33], 34–45. Corresponds to galleys 51–57 and to book Chapter IX.

MS Fragment: Opening of Chapter III (book Chapter IV)—the guest list: 5 unnumbered pages. This draft is remarkably close to the published text.

This manuscript is the draft preceding the lost typescripts. Fitzgerald composed in holograph and turned the manuscript over to a professional typist as each chapter or a substantial section was completed; therefore at a given point he would be composing in holograph and revising one or more typed chapters. Fitzgerald never wrote on a typewriter.

Although it is not possible to reconstruct every stage of the evolution of The Great Gatsby in manuscript, the surviving draft consists of at least two conflated layers of manuscript. The most useful evidence for differentiating manuscript layers is the handwriting and the splices. In general, a large handwriting with frequent current revisions (i.e., revisions and corrections made during the initial composition rather than those inserted as a result of later review) indicates a first draft. But as Fitzgerald worked on a stint his handwriting gradually enlarged, so that there are handwriting differences which do not differentiate recopied sections and first drafts. A small handwriting with few current revisions indicates that the material was recopied by Fitzgerald. It is, however, impossible to differentiate with certainty current revisions from review revisions. The splices—which are not to be confused with simple inserts—occur at places where two drafts have been linked by deletion and / or by adding connecting words. The name changes are a third kind of evidence: Daisy was originally Ada, and Nick was originally Dud.
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Pages in which Ada and Dud are changed were salvaged from an earlier draft; there are only a few cases—Ada: MS Chapter II, 57; III, 89–90; Dud: I, 26; I, (31–32). The Great Gatsby manuscript is a working draft; Fitzgerald reserved his polishing and revising for the typescripts.

Because Fitzgerald usually did not number the pages of a chapter until he thought he was done with it, the usefulness of the manuscript pagination is somewhat limited. The different chapter-numbering systems do not reveal much about how each chapter evolved; but they do make it possible to determine the order in which the chapters were written, as well as the order in which they were originally meant to appear in the novel.

The first three chapters of the final holograph draft to be written were paginated 1–90 (pp. 1–37, 38–62, 63–90 in simple form). They were designated Chapters I, II, and III by Fitzgerald, but correspond to Chapters I, II, and IV of the published book. At this stage of composition the Wilsons, the Valley of Ashes, and Dr. T. J. Eckleburg’s billboard were introduced in manuscript Chapter III (book Chapter IV) when Nick and Gatsby stop for gas on their way to New York.

By the time Fitzgerald reached the opening of his manuscript Chapter III on page 63, the first two chapters had been turned over to a typist; this page has his note “(43 on typewriter)”. As has been noted, it was Fitzgerald’s custom to revise secretarial typescripts of earlier chapters while writing ahead on the manuscript. Awareness of this procedure is of the greatest importance in reconstructing the evolution of The Great Gatsby, for it must not be assumed that the manuscript represents a single final working draft or that the unrevised proofs represent the only typescript: in accordance with Fitzgerald’s working method, one or more revised typescripts (and their carbons) intervened between the manuscript and the setting-copy typescript. Inevitably, the latest typescript would have been a revised draft.

Only after bringing the story through the first party at Gatsby’s house and Nick’s car trip to New York with Gatsby did Fitzgerald

On p. 83 of MS Chapter III Daisy Fay Buchanan’s maiden name is given as Machen; Zelda Fitzgerald’s mother was Minnie Machen Sayre.
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write the account of Nick’s day in New York with Tom and Myrtle that became book Chapter II (MS pp. 1–29). Since he headed this chapter “III”, Fitzgerald planned to have it replace the original Chapter III (MS pp. 63–90)—positioning it between Gatsby’s party and Nick’s drive to New York with Gatsby. There is no manuscript Chapter IV, so it is clear that the original Chapter III became Chapter IV—which it is in the published novel. The new Chapter III (Tom and Myrtle) ends with Nick’s summary of his evenings in New York and his analysis of Jordan’s dishonesty (MS pp. 26–29), which was moved in typescript to the end of book Chapter III—as a bridge between Gatsby’s party and Nick’s trip with Gatsby—to convey the impression of the passage of time.

The early section of the manuscript developed this way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MS Chapter</th>
<th>corresponds to Book Chapter</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III (later insertion)</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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VI, 100 (deleted); VI, 113; and VIII, 37. Before page 99, the expressions used by Gatsby are “old fellow” and “old man.” The decision to characterize Gatsby by this slightly absurd expression was made during the revision of the typescript.

The second manuscript Chapter VI (book Chapter VII) gave Fitzgerald more trouble than any other surviving manuscript chapter. He was never satisfied with it and came to blame the commercial failure of The Great Gatsby partly on his inability to clarify Daisy’s reactions in the Plaza Hotel episode. This manuscript chapter includes parts of at least three drafts. It was originally paginated 1–40 and typed; then the middle section was rewritten at least twice, with the holograph revisions keyed to the typescript pagination.

MS VI (Book Chapter VII)

Sequence A, pp. 1–16: Gatsby replaces servants; he tells Nick about Louisville courtship and sings a sentimental song he composed (some of this material was moved to book Chapter VI); lunch at the Buchanan house; trip to New York with stop at Wilson’s garage; arrival at Plaza Hotel.

Sequence B, pp. 113–115, 117, insert 118: Gatsby replaces servants; he describes courtship and sings song; he discusses his ambitions and his disappointment in Daisy. This sequence is a later draft and is keyed to typescript.

Sequence C, pp. 109–116: picks up after Tom has learned that Wilson is taking Myrtle away; Tom, Daisy, Gatsby, Nick, and Jordan go to the Polo Grounds (baseball stadium in Manhattan); confrontation between Tom and Gatsby at café in Central Park; departure from New York. This sequence is a later draft and is keyed to typescript.

Sequence D, pp. 132–134, 135–137, 138–139, 139, 140, 140: picks up after Tom has learned that Wilson is taking Myrtle away; confrontation in Plaza Hotel; departure from New York. This sequence is a later draft and is keyed to typescript. The Plaza version of the confrontation is a replacement for the Polo

42 The first “old sport” in the book text occurs at page 43 when Gatsby invites Nick to ride in his hydroplane.