

More Opinions . . .

After close examination of the series of editorials in the last three issues of the **Salemite**, there are a number of conclusions to be drawn and compromises to accept. The following opinions are not those of a few girls on campus, but a more representative number. These opinions were voiced through open discussions on this subject of what Salem is, should be, or shouldn't be.

College life is a tremendous leap from the previous life to which we, as freshmen, have been accustomed. Before we came to Salem, we thought a great deal about the future and what we wanted to do with our college education when we had completed our four years. Each girl has a certain ambition which she wishes to work toward and eventually achieve. She chose Salem as a place to help her reach her desired goal. For, after all, one couldn't expect everything to come after four short years in any educational institution. A person has to be able to apply what he learns to his own individual character. No school, no matter how large, can possibly offer a perfect course in every field. Happiness and contentment are achieved through adjustment; therefore, those who make the adjustment will be happy and content, and those who cannot make the adjustment will be unhappy and discontented.

From our presence in these various open discussions on this subject, we have gathered that every individual has her own convictions. Therefore, quite obviously, each individual will stand by her own opinions. To continue arguments such as those which have been going on would be pointless, since it would virtually end in a dead-lock. Do we want a fight, or do we want a better school? Each person should have open-mindedness enough to listen to all sides of the discussion; intelligence enough to sort the good ideas from the bad; and perseverance enough to put the good ideas into practice. For, after all, any school is what the students make it. We don't want to tear down the "ivied-walls." We want to make them a firm foundation for our later lives.

Helen Ridgeway  
Phyllis Forrest

Dear Editor . . .

This editorial is intended as an introduction to one which is more specific to be written next week.

The basis for all regard must be trust and admiration and respect—each of which is a counterpart of the other. Regard in itself is flexible, as it can appear in more than one form. This form can be love, it can be friendship, but it must always result in devotion; not devotion through a blind and lazy faith which really loves only security, but rather a reasonable faith—one which looks at all the aspects of the object of esteem and wholly realizes its intrinsic worth. The object may be a religion; it may be a person; it may be a group of persons; or it may be an institution, which is a group of persons plus a working dogma—the heart, soul, mind and personality which guides the corresponding qualities of the persons who reside within the walls of the institution. This dogma may be a working one; it may be fundamental, universal and immutable in its utter honesty, but it must not be static and hence stagnant.

There are a few basic principles of life which God Himself gave to us through Moses. These are unchangeable. If they are followed in their very facet and with true devotion, the problems which perpetually present themselves will unflinchingly be solved, for these basic elements are limitless, timeless and infallible in their applicability. Petty grievances and concerns will vanish, life will lose its tarnish, ennui and despair will become impossible.

But what of these petty grievances which spring inevitably from petty causes? They seem to be quite prevalent in the world, they overrun us, blotting out the matters of real significance; small, insidious practices and attitudes—cozening and impune. We might localize them to our microcosmography of Salem and scrutinize without bias. Reform the world? It's best to start at home.

Where are these attitudes and practices? They are everywhere: they are in our handbook, they are in our faculty, they are in our student body, they are in our dining hall.

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Editor's Note:

This week's editor is Lee Rosenbloom. Next week's issue will be the last one edited by this year's staff.

Fitzgerald Considered

By Pax Davis

It does his memory little service, I suspect, that this winter America has gone a little bug-eyed on the life, misfortunes and — but only slightly—the work of F. Scott Fitzgerald, the author of "The Great Gatsby," "Tender Is The Night" and a handful of the best short stories of this century. Fitzgerald, as we can see at last, was a major American artist. But the best-seller lists suggest that our interest centers on the corruption and tragedy of his life rather than on the singing triumph of his best work.

And though even by this we pay him a sort of homage, our belated obsession with his downfall suggests that we really see little more still than the surface aspects of his corrosive genius. Arthur Mizener's fine biography, "The Far Side of Paradise," should set the record straight, but it has produced, instead, a mad scramble after gossip column morsels and warmed-over dirt. By the same token, Budd Schulberg's grand novel, "The Disenchanted," has been gobbled up as the tabloid version of Fitzgerald's sad and bitter life, rather than what it really is: a major effort by a novelist to dramatize the workings of another novelist's mind and the pressures which pervert that working in America.

And it need not be so. For the story Mizener tells, and the perceptions he brings to the Fitzgerald work, ought to help us gain a clearer picture of the novelist's contribution to American letters. It is, of course, a pathetic story.

Fitzgerald, blessed with the beauty of a collar-add and the grace, talent charm and wit of a young Prometheus, seemed destined for the sort of triumph only Hollywood could imagine; and yet he plummeted, almost from the first day of his success, to failure, both in art and life, with so headlong a fury that those who watched it are still, 25 years later, a little breathless. Dissipation, a mad wife and an extravagant desire to live up to his sudden fame perhaps played major parts in his tragedy, but, as Mizener makes clear, it was the "spoiled priest" in Fitzgerald which lay back of his ultimate destruction. Unable to resist the impulse toward what he thought glamorous living, yet at the same time unwilling to accord that acquiescence the sanction of approval, he lived in a constant tension between indulgence and self-reproach. This was misery, and as Mizener's biography shows, misery of the most painful sort.

And yet, it was not quite a complete failure. Though this constant inner struggle proved Fitzgerald's destruction, it strangely led to the production of a brilliant, if limited, body of work. "The Great Gatsby," his first really first-rate novel, has a purity of form and grace of execution that could only have resulted from a crystalline conception. Brief, swift and epigrammatically compelling, it objectifies just those impulses in Fitzgerald which never granted him relief.

"Tender Is The Night," though (Continued on page six)

A Professor's Notes

Notes From An Instructor's Memo Pad

March 2. Memo from **Salemite**: "Faculty are complacent, irresponsible."

Cost of living (1950-51) up 20%  
Wages for laborers, equivalent increase

Our take-home pay, down 5%  
Countermeasures: Since savings now depleted and home fully mortgaged, no recourse here. But husbands work in summer, wives during academic year. Mrs. — intends to peddle perfume on the streets next year. Remind wife to stop at — Bakery for sale of broken cookies and stale bread. Investigate savings on mouldy bread.

March 3. Memo: "Salem has small classes, allowing close relationship between faculty and students."

Normal elsewhere: 3 classes, 2 committees  
Normal here: 4 classes, 4 committees  
Maximum here: 7 classes, 9 committees  
Also expected to handle departmental correspondence, cut stencils, etc.

March 4. Memo: "The value of a college is measured by the excellence and prestige of its faculty."

Grants available for research or attendance at professional meetings: none.  
Opportunity for study: none, ex-

cept during summer. But see note March 2.

Inducement for research: Elsewhere: 12 months sabbatical leave, with pay, every 7th year. Here: leave without pay, a generous offer which none can afford to accept.

Inducement for continued residence: Elsewhere: free tuition for wife and children. Here: full tuition charged, even for wife auditing husband's course.

March 5. Projects now underway for a "greater Salem."

Plant: new heating installation, redecoration throughout, sumptuous friendship suite, science building with terrazzo floors, rumpus rooms with elaborate fluorescent lights.

Faculty: ??? Perhaps we should adopt the mottoes "Labor is its own reward" and "Money is the root of all evil." Must convince wife of this.

March 6.

Wife enthusiastic. Assume complacent, carefree attitude and recommend mottoes to students. On way home check stores for sales of leftovers.

March 7.

Attend faculty meeting, assume professorial air, and listen to discourse on "Our Philosophy of Education at Salem." Offer a few profound remarks.

I Am Afraid

By Catherine Birckel

I am afraid—  
I am afraid in reading newspapers, in listening to speeches. I am afraid of those men dressed in white, who claim aloud, "Look at those dressed in black; they are wrong—And those dressed in blue, in red—They are wrong also".  
Black, blue, red are wrong—  
White is the only right color—  
I am afraid of those who condemn.

Each man strives for his ideal in his own way. Truth is a mysterious book. Who can pretend that he only reads right?  
The other civilizations—we condemn them in the name of insufficiency of their religions—  
But look—In our country, during the last twenty centuries, you could easily find equal blemishes.  
Fanatic Christians condemn other religions. They forget—the conquest of Africa by France through

slavery, the slaughters in the South of France in the 16th century are not less than Eastern polygamy, or other extravagant rites.

And today, how many times do we read such statements as:

"The immorality of communism"  
"The evil of communism"

"The wrong of communism?"  
Turn the page, and here is another article about a Korean battle won by the western powers:

"The purpose of this fight was not only conquest of territory but killing of Reds—"  
Are we then entitled to condemn in the name of morality?

We say that in our civilization we have such defects in spite of the perfection of Christianity—but in the other civilization it is because of the imperfections of their way of thinking.

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By A Faculty Member

I am not going to use any commas. I will use periods but I will not use commas. Not that I do not respect them—I do. Actually I'm awed by them. I am awed by many things—transitional phrases unity coherence emphasis metaphors which aren't mixed phrases which aren't trite participles which don't dangle. One thinks one wants to write then one teaches freshman composition. And one learns how involved is a sentence how involved is a thought. One becomes too negative—don't use a comma here don't say 'wonderful.' And then one tries to be positive (with other people's writing). One quotes Sidney: 'Look into your heart and write.' Then one Sunday one looks into one's own heart and finds that THE CRITIC sits on the used-to-be-genuine-leather-but-is-now-recovered-in-plastic throne where one's 'shaping spirit of imagination' was—should have been—ought to be.

And that is why I will not use commas.

I think first of freshmen. Large round eyes and open mouths. 'And where are you going my pretty maid?' Some say 'Nowhere' and they mean it. Some say 'Nowhere' and don't mean it. Some say 'I wish I knew'—others 'You tell me'—or 'Where is there to go?'

And they all tell you about the English teacher they had their senior year in high school. 'Wonderful' 'Inspiring' 'the BEST!' Then they look at me. I smile because I now know all good English teachers are not in colleges or universities—they all teach English to seniors in high schools everywhere.

Then I remind them that they are not like anyone else. That they are themselves. That they should write about themselves. And so they write about themselves and it sounds like everybody else.

So I ask them to read. They do. 'What do you think?' I ask. They reply 'My Sunday School teacher never said this.' And they regard you strangely with their large eyes.

I speak to the sophomores. They avidly record every word I say. They do not have wide eyes. They have half-lidded eyes—guarded expressions. I do not ask them where they are going. They so obviously know. And they know me too. They write examination papers designed to please me. They are wise in the ways of getting ahead they half-humorously tolerate my enthusiasm for Shelley and William Blake and Jonathan Swift.

I have not made up my mind about juniors so I will pass over them.

And go to the sated seniors. 'They have been talked at for four years and they are tired— Some of them knit long sox with mature fingers. A flash from their left hands with every stitch. They regard me if they regard me at all with benign eyes which say 'You don't have a ring on your finger and if you have bells on your toes you are immoral. Others psychoanalyze you as you teach— Others are absent—in one way or another.'

But I have dealt with the general. There is also the particular. There is the question that comes in class just when I have come to think I am god. There is the examination paper that bolts me from the chair—that makes me regard the coffee table as if I were alive.

Then my halo disintegrates and I become gratefully humble.

The Salemite



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