

Fitzgerald's Biographer At UNC

In Search Of Thomas Wolfe

The Complex Art Of Ghost-Writing

By JIM BISHOP

BOOKS

Wheeling & Dealing In The Poker World

THE CINCINNATI KID. By Richard Jessup. Little, Brown. 152 Pages, with appendix. \$3.95.

By J. A. C. DUNN

Like an icpick, the Kid gets straight to the viscera and stays there. The Kid is, by most standards, still a relative kid; but he came up hard. At 26 he is ready to meet The Man.

"From thirteen to sixteen he began to feel the cards. They became more than just instruments of making money for the movies or a new pair of shoes, which was a very common device used by all of his friends. Out of these quiet, very desperate little penny games in alleys and on the decks of abandoned barges, on wintry street corners, the raw shoeshine boys' poker began to grow and he began to grow with it and when he had grown old enough, he began to hope there was a way open for him; and once he had discovered his feel for cards was real and genuine, an urgency began to rise in him and gain strength."



RICHARD JESSUP

George C. Scott, Jackie Gleason, the group.

Unless some idiot ballyhoos him to death, Mr. Jessup will probably develop even further the same "feeling," but for words. You hope an urgency to do so is rising in him and gaining strength. You wouldn't do either party the disservice of calling him another Hemingway. Who needs one, to begin with; and Mr. Jessup does not quite have Mr. Hemingway's effortless abruptness in any case. But he has something else.

"The Cincinnati Kid" is "The Hustler" of the stud poker world, and let Mr. Jessup try to deny that. But it doesn't matter. The story is much the same: the new young genius tangles in a marathon poker game with the old hoary king of the deck, and the girl gets rubbed raw in the resulting friction. The book is so visual that you find yourself casting the movie version, in some instances with the same people who played in "The Hustler":

Lutherans Hold Dinner Tuesday

The annual Fall Fellowship Dinner of the Northern District of North Carolina Synod will be held Tuesday at 7 p.m. at Augsburg Lutheran Church in Winston-Salem.

Dr. Mark Depp will be the guest speaker.

A program of music will be presented by the Lutheran Church Women of Christ and Epiphany Lutheran Churches of Winston-Salem.

Among those expected to attend will be Mrs. Paul Stout, President of the Lutheran Church Women of North Carolina Synod, and Mrs. D. E. Perryman, District Chairman.

By W. H. SCARBOROUGH

Andrew Turnbull has an affinity for monumental tasks. He has been in Chapel Hill for the past week working at one — he intends to become the definitive biographer of Thomas Wolfe.

The Wolfe scent has been in his nostrils for a year-and-a-half now, and Mr. Turnbull expects to be following it for another three years at least. Under the circumstances one might expect his enthusiasm to flag or at least to be of low intensity. If anything, Mr. Turnbull's joy for the chase seems to be growing.

For one thing he is now a veteran biographer; his life of the late F. Scott Fitzgerald has won praise and made for him a reputation as a meticulous scholar, a writer capable of blending drama, color and accuracy into a literary genre all too often characterized by drab factuality.

He has waded into the mountain of legend and myth surrounding Wolfe in hopes of finding a man who at some point stood distinctly separate from his fiction. He has a theory that Wolfe the man is every bit as fascinating as Wolfe the illusion — and that no coherent, realistic picture of this man exists.

To that extent he is a true biographer as opposed to a literary historian; he treats his subject almost novelistically in his writing, but the writing is based on cold fact derived largely from non-literary sources. He is re-creating Wolfe, not from Wolfe's autobiographical novels, but from people who knew him — from thousands of scraps of personal reminiscence, from letters, from any source of direct contact with the man. He hopes the end result will be a portrait as near life as it can get without actually breathing.

In Chapel Hill Mr. Turnbull has been going through the large mound of Wolfe materials in the North Carolina Collection of the University Library for hints and leads. He has also been seeking out and interviewing people in the area who knew Wolfe, whether they knew him well and were friends with him for years, or knew him only slightly and had only one encounter with him.

Already he has tracked Wolfe through Harvard University, where his unpublished manuscripts are lodged; he has been to Asheville, and to Europe where the few faint traces of his visits there have not been obliterated by war and time. Although Wolfe died 25 years ago, the Wolfe spoor is still heavy in the land. This means for Mr. Turnbull a tremendously complicated job of gathering and digesting unnumbered, often unrelated bits of information. Sometime within the next two years they will begin to coalesce into an entity.

Mr. Turnbull took a couple of hours off from his labors last week to talk about them and biography as he conceives it. He has, he admits, been struggling with Wolfe. "How do you write a biography of an autobiographical writer you've never known," he asked with a hint of rueful amusement.

Then he told how: "I'm trying to draw that fine line between Wolfe the person and the projection of himself he gave in his novels. I want to do this by bringing out the people around him. You can't do this by 'letting Tom say it.' If you do, you get this fine mist of Wolfe over everything. I want to find out what the smaller man was really like."

One of the persons around Wolfe, Maxwell Perkins, who was Wolfe's close friend and editor for most of his productive life, actually set Mr. Turnbull on the project. Mr. Turnbull had thought seriously about a biography of Perkins, who played literary godfather to many of the literary giants of the twenties and thirties.

"But you can't hang a whole book on Perkins — his life was too meager, he was too subservient to the writers he edited."

In a way Mr. Turnbull will do a biography of Perkins within the biography of Wolfe, and Wolfe, who depended on Perkins so much, will be the window.

"I first read Wolfe in 1943. He is not an adolescent writer. 'Look Homeward, Angel' continues to be the book of American adolescence, but Wolfe's range went way beyond that; he could capture sickness and death and loneliness as no other writer. I'm sympathetic to a lot of the things people use to pan him. He was interested in life, and this was the important thing, not the structure of his novels. To apply the standards of Henry James or of Flaubert is unfair. The novel was his best form, but he spilled out of that even. He is essentially like Whitman in that."

Wolfe and Fitzgerald were polar opposites in most respects, but they seem to respond to similar treatment. Wolfe, by his own admission was a "putterer" who attempted to capture life by recording as much of it as possible; Fitzgerald tended to be something of a "leaver-outer," who exercised careful selection of material.

"I welcome the difference," Mr. Turnbull said. Mr. Turnbull became a biographer by a circuitous route to say the least. He was born in Baltimore under such circumstances that Fitzgerald became a neighbor during his boyhood. But he had no thought of using his knowledge of the novelist until decades later. He took an undergraduate degree in English and French at Princeton, then served in World War II in the Navy.

Picking up the academic skein again, he took a doctorate in European history from Harvard, worked in Europe for a few years and became a teacher in humanities at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"But I had always been interested in writing of some sort," he said.

"I was interested in a broad-



Biographer Andrew Turnbull ... In UNC's North Carolina Room

er kind of writing than in specialized academic writing. I was a historian by temperament and training. In casting around for something I could write about, I thought of Fitzgerald, and wrote a little reminiscence of him. The New Yorker accepted it right off and published it in 1956. I got really excited and did a second reminiscence, and the New Yorker took it too.

"I had always wanted to do a biography of Fitzgerald, but either I was not old enough or literate enough, or then Arthur Mizener was already working on one of him."

Still, Fitzgerald stayed with him, although Mizener's "The Far Side of Paradise," Budd Schulberg's fictionalized account and Sheila Graham's "Beloved Infidel" all came out in the years he was pondering the problem.

Finally, one day, he simply walked off the streets of New York and into the office of Harold Ober, Fitzgerald's agent and long-standing friend. Mr. Turnbull told Mr. Ober on the turn, and Mr. Ober secured the cooperation of both Scribner's and Fitzgerald's daughter. During the ensuing four years Mr. Turnbull interviewed 450 people who had known Fitzgerald, and wrote to several hundred others. At the same time he

read everything Fitzgerald had published and as many of the Fitzgerald papers and letters as he could lay hands on. "By the end of it, I was saturated with Fitzgerald."

"I was really reading Fitzgerald for the first time, I'd never really read him before I got onto his biography, but my interest remained on the man, and I didn't stop for critical analyses of his writing. The interest, the unknown lay in his character."

The book itself is actually that portion of an iceberg above water. Beneath it lies 80 percent of the total bulk: research, "an endless pursuing of endless bits of information."

If one accepts Mr. Turnbull's notions about biography, it should be read for pleasure as well as for knowledge.

"It should have some of the attributes of fiction — color, character, emotion. Insofar as I can, I try to bring that in."

Mr. Turnbull does not know what the fruit of his labors on Wolfe will be, but it is altogether possible that he will provide us with the first view of him in which it is not necessary to look through Wolfe's own eyes. If Mr. Turnbull sticks to his self-imposed schedule, that view will be available sometime in 1966.

He's an old friend and he stopped at the house to talk books. His name is Gerold Frank, a tall, bald, bald man of 55 who looks like a roll-on deodorant in a Brooks suit. Frank wrote the Lillian Roth book, "I'll Cry Tomorrow"; the Diana Barrymore book, "Too Much Too Soon"; the Sheila Graham book, "Beloved Infidel"; and Zsa Zsa Gabor's "My Story."

Frank has written others, but these four sold 6,000,000 copies. We sat at the bar sipping coffee and listening to the soft zither music of Ruth Welton, and he kept jiggling an unlighted cigarette between his lips. I offered a light, but he said no thanks, he has been living on unlighted cigarettes for years. Never smokes; just jiggles until it falls apart.

This is a sensitive, sentimental man. Once, when he worked for the Associated Press, he took a roll of their ticker machine paper, and wrote a 60-foot single-spaced letter to Lillian Cogen of Cleveland. She read twenty feet of it and fell asleep. In the morning, the maid came in and swept forty feet of it into the garbage can.

He married Miss Cogen and now, 31 years later, they have two married children and he writes about the heartaches of other people, Lillian Roth and Mike Connolly had had a whack at "I'll Cry Tomorrow" when Gerold Frank was called in to write it again. It was a good break for all concerned, because Gerold found out that if he opened the sessions by uttering the magic words: "There must be no secrets between us. You must tell me everything," that the ladies smiled shyly and told everything. Well, almost.

There is more to it than that. Frank has empathy. He loves people. Innately, he, too, is shy and he lives wild, garish lives through his subjects. He doesn't forget them when the book is done. It must be ten years since he wrote "I'll Cry Tomorrow," but a year and a half ago, when Lillian Roth opened in "I Can Get It For You Wholesale," who sat in Sardi's waiting for the morning papers? Who read the reviews to her, and became misty-eyed when they turned out to be good? The Jack Paar of the writers, that's who.

Once, when Miss Roth was deep in alcoholic despair, she rented a room in a tall hotel and tried to jump out the window. She tried three times, and fell to the floor. "My God," she sobbed, "I failed at this too." She always keeps small dogs. "They are the only thing more helpless than herself," Mr. Frank says.

He has personal feelings about all of his women. He feels, for example, that Diana Barrymore saw herself as an ugly, bow-legged, yellow-skinned daughter of a handsome man. When she drank, she walked leaning forward like a child on six-inch heels. She enjoyed taunting her husband about other men. Why? She enjoyed violence because, when she was little, after violence, she could love.

"I am convinced," Gerold says, "that Diana was not a true alcoholic and she wasn't on pills. Yet, the night she died she was

taking antabuse to stop drinking, second to sleep, dexedrine to stay awake and she was drinking gin." He delivered the eulogy at her funeral.

Sheilah Graham writes a Hollywood newspaper column, but asked Frank to write her biography. Her great love was the novelist, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and their now-and-then romance became a big part of the look. Miss Graham was a London orphan. Gerold crossed his legs over two additional bar stools and said he thinks of her as the little match girl who dreamed of fame and glory and literally forced them to come true.

In a way, Gerold was the ghostly boy friend of these women, without kitchen privileges. When Miss Graham told him about a Sunday morning scene with Scott Fitzgerald, the writer went to the spot, high in the Hollywood Hills, and sat there with the lady on a Sunday morning. When Miss Barrymore said that she had a lover to whom she ran at the top of a bridge, arms outstretched, Frank stood at the top of the bridge and re-enacted it.

Zsa Zsa Gabor, a Hungarian, heard the speech about "tell me all" and she burst into laughter. "No woman," she said, "tell all. Not all." Her name was Sari, but her daughter couldn't pronounce it. It came out Zsa Zsa. "We have all been afflicted with baby talk ever since."

Gerold thinks of Miss Gabor, not as a glamorous woman, but as a humming dynamo. She is here, there, everywhere, all at the same time. Writing her biography Frank found, was like riding a diamond-studded carousel sidesaddle. "She is always a step ahead of other women," he said, wrenching another cold cigarette. "Just before sack dresses came into Style Zsa Zsa wore sack dresses. When wigs became popular, Gabor was ready to quit wearing them."

In one afternoon and evening, according to Gerold, Miss Gabor will rehearse a song, answer 20 phone calls, tell part of her life story, water the garden, read press clippings from Spain, Hungary, France and the U. S., take the dogs to the doctor, undress, laze, dress, appear on TV and show up at a night club looking dewy fresh.

His favorite book is a new one called "The Deed." It's about two Israelis who assassinated Lord Moyne, British Minister of State in Egypt. They were kids and they went to the gallows singing "Hati-kvah." The Egyptian hangman broke down weeping. Gerold Frank almost chokes talking about it.

He has heart. And tenacity. I was afraid to ask if he'd given up looking for the remaining 40 feet of that letter.

Committee Will Fill Board Seat

The Orange Democratic Executive Committee will elect a member to the County Board of Education at a called meeting on Oct. 22.

The election is being held to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Charles Walker. Mr. Walker has moved to Edgecombe County.

The Executive Committee will meet at 8 p.m. at the County Courthouse in Hillsboro. The interim appointment will last until the next general election.

Use the Weekly's Classified Ad section for best results.



- CURRENT BEST SELLERS**
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What's Going on at the Intimate

Gore and Crime In Old Book Corner

This week — and for the next two weeks — The Intimate is going to offer a truly astonishing collection of books on crime and the law.

Beginning with 18th Century imprints, and running to the recent past, this collection consists of books and pamphlets, many illustrated, and all contemporary accounts of murders, trials for treason, and other grim evidences of man's inhumanity to man — and woman.

We think you'll enjoy looking over this collection — and we know that if you're looking for an absolutely unique Christmas gift for a lawyer friend, or a writer, this is a good bet for you.

Drawings Held Over

The collection of reproductions of great drawings which we put out last week was such a roaring suc-

cess that we wired off for more, and will hold the display over for another week. As we write this, the new supply is still somewhere on the road, and we're keeping our fingers crossed!

If you haven't looked these over, don't miss them. We think they are the biggest dollar's worth we've seen lately — and you folks seem to agree with us.

Minor Chat

Hottest titles on our own private best seller list are **JOY IN THE MORNING**, by Betty Smith (ours are autographed copies), **SECURITY**, the little fat bit by the author of **PEANUTS**, and **THE GROUP**, Mary McCarthy's sensational new novel.

Old books are pouring in at a faster rate than ever before. Distinguished collections will be put out as fast as we can process them, but in the meantime there is what you might call a constant gentle rain of nice minor titles onto the 57c and 72c shelves. Come treasure-hunting and see.

THE INTIMATE BOOKSHOP
 119 East Franklin Street Open 'Til 10 P.M.

CRUSADES AND CRINOLINES.

By Ishbel Ross. Harper and Row. 276 Pages. \$6.00.

By JOAN BISSELL

Take Saratoga in the summer of 1840: it is the mecca for "politicians, dandies, office holders, office seekers, fortune hunters, anxious mothers with lovely daughters." In short, it is the resort. Place a fashion-conscious girl of fourteen in this setting, and you have Ellen (Neil) Louise Curtis, destined to revolutionize the fashion world.

Watching the ladies stroll or ride in carriages through Saratoga's streets, Nell would memorize the cut of their bonnets. After returning home, she would copy them, many of which had been made in Paris for the wives of wealthy plantation owners who summered in Saratoga. By the age of eighteen, Nell had made arrangements to receive special training from the local milliner. She subsequently added dressmaking and designing to her talents. In the 1850's Nell moved to New York to test her skill on discerning ladies who would be highly critical of anything less than the best — and the best still came from Paris.

Thus, Ishbel Ross lays the groundwork for Nell to meet William Jennings Demorest, a widower who was intensely interested in fashions and merchandising and who had already had some degree of success in selling women's cloaks. Dem-

rest's work with ladies' fashions brought him into contact with Nell. Their marriage marked the beginning of a profitable association: what Nell could design, Demorest could market.

A natural promoter, Demorest recognized the advertising advantages in publishing one's own fashion magazine. Consequently, Madame Demorest's "Mirror of Fashions" appeared in 1860. Both Mr. and Mrs. Demorest wrote articles for their publication, but the most important contributor and staff member was Mrs. June Croly, affectionately known as Jenny June.

Like Mr. Demorest, Jenny June valued the power of words for promoting sales of concrete objects as well as philosophies; she could write glowingly of the Demorest weighted hoops which kept milady's skirts balanced, never allowing them to sway too far backward or forward; she could also write scathingly about women who failed to assume their wifely duties, married men who behaved as though they were still single, and young ladies who felt that life owed them a knight in armor. (Small wonder that as the magazine's circulation increased, Jenny June found her desk covered with letters, some condemning, some praising, and some requesting advice.)

Both Mrs. Demorest and Jenny June advocated jobs for women and regretted that many females married simply because they had no other means of support. That women could hold responsible positions and

earn their own way had been demonstrated by Mrs. Demorest, Jenny June, and their contemporaries: Mrs. Vincenzo Botta, once secretary to Henry Clay, now a lecturer and writer; Kate Field, a columnist for the Tribune; Mrs. Mary Livermore, editor of "The Agitator" and "The Woman's Journal"; Elizabeth Blackwell and Mary Jacob, physicians; and Susan King, realtor.

Through Susan King and Mrs. Demorest, the Mandarin Tea Company was founded to provide a means whereby indigent women could support themselves: only financially handicapped ladies were allowed to sell the "superb Mandarin Tea," which, of course, was highly touted in the "Mirror of Fashions."

To read "Crusades and Crinolines" is to read about the fashions and the prominent people who wore them from 1840 to 1898: President Tyler's bride-to-be who wore "walking dresses" from Lamberts and recommended that store via a printed placard that hung casually from her wrist, as one might have carried a reticule; the Empress Eugenie whose gowns set the style for the season; Mrs. Tom Thumb, bride of P. T. Barnum's midget, whose wedding gown and trousseau were designed by Mrs. Demorest.

The Demorest's magazine became a potpourri of essays, announcements, advertisements, and any other information that the staff regarded as being of interest to the family, for the

magazine was often read by the male as well as the female members of the family. In a single issue one might find colorful pictures of the latest gowns, corsets, cloaks, and bonnets; an essay by Thomas Hardy or Louisa May Alcott; a poem by Edgar Allan Poe; the lyrics to some popular songs; dance lessons; social notes; and pictures of Mr. Demorest's watch guard, "to foil pickpockets who attempt to relieve gentlemen of their pocket watches."

No issue was complete without a dress pattern. Printed on sheer paper, these patterns were the brainchild of Mrs. Demorest and the manifestation of Mr. Demorest's mathematical ability. He had figured out the proper proportions for "sized" patterns, and these were introduced in the late 1850's when the sewing machine was winning widespread acclaim. (Although Butterick later entered the field, the Demorests were the acknowledged inventors of the printed paper patterns.) By having fashion "spotters" in Paris, Mrs. Demorest obtained the latest information about styles, complete with drawings of the season's outfits. Mr. Demorest then designed the paper patterns which delighted the seamstresses who, despite their distance from a fashion center, could outfit their prominent customers in "the latest thing from Paris."

Reading about the Demorests, one learns about the New York of this era, for an account of

their activities reflects the commercial and cultural growth of the city: they heard Jenny Lind sing; they visited the Crystal Palace, modeled after the one in London; they discussed the gold crisis confronting President Grant; they dined at Delmonico's; they saw Sarah Bernhardt make her American debut; they helped establish the first woman's club in New York, the Sorosis Club; they witnessed the development of such companies as Brooks Brothers, Lord and Taylor, Gorham, and Sloane.

Ishbel Ross has presented history through her biography of two fashion designers. She has shown how the fashion world was affected by the Panic of 1857 and how the Demorests noted the decrease in the number of fashionable ladies who were able to change their wardrobe with the seasons. The Civil War saw few Southern ladies shopping in New York, and the Demorests were hard put to supply the Northern women with black mourning garments: it seemed that everyone on the street had lost someone in the war; the black mourning cloak was ubiquitous.

For all its emphasis on ladies' wear, Miss Ross's book has larger merits. It would be both fair and descriptive to call it the first instance of history re-created by cut-out pattern — a graphic recreation of the flavor of a time too near the present yet to have been explored, but remote enough to excite curiosity.