OF CELEBRITY STATUS, POSTHUMOUS PUBLICATIONS, SCHOLAR’S CHOICE, AND THE AMERICAN NOVEL: A CASE STUDY OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD’S *TRIMALCHIO*

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This paper begins with the discussion of the contentions and continuous critical debate that arise for and against posthumous publications of well-established American fiction writers. The publication of several editions of a text opens basic and troublesome questions about publication and editorial policy concerning modern writers who are no longer alive to defend themselves. I narrow the problem to modern writers because in most such cases document survival is increased and what the writer intended is known. Among the various categories that may characterize the literary documents surviving an author’s death there are at least three distinctions. One is the work as published during the author’s life, without further revisions or wish for such revision. It is clearly the author’s last known avowed intention. Given today’s technology, for the sake of scholars and the purity of the publication, similar documents probably are better offered in facsimile, whenever possible, than in any other form. An outstanding example (except for the *Gatsby* volume) is Matthew J. Bruccoli’s _et al._ edition of the 18-volume set of the *F. Scott Fitzgerald Manuscripts*.¹

The second category is a published work that did not express the author’s last wish and intentions, but was supplanted by the author’s work in progress for a revised version left incomplete at the time of death. In instances in which the author’s latest but uncompleted
intentions and directions are clear, an edition carrying out the author’s wishes deserves publication as a separate book, as in the case of Malcolm Cowley’s edition of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *Tender is the Night* (1951).\(^2\) Such works probably are best published together with the received editions as a set of versions. Though twentieth-century prose and poetry are fixed in print in the author’s lifetime, even then, in rare instances exemplified by *Tender is the Night*, there is reason for editorially revisiting the work.

The third category presents an author whose clear intention was publication, but whose work in progress was left at death in a vexingly unfinished state of various tangents existing in a welter of documents. Coherent works brought out of this tangle can take very different forms, as F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Last Tycoon* edited by Edmund Wilson and *The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western* edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli indicate.\(^3\) Such work probably represents an ongoing enterprise for many editors over time because of the monumental amount of dedication and labor that goes into the unavoidable second guesses. In these cases the resulting work cannot help but be a collaboration between the author and the exercise of taste, instinct, care, and knowledge of the editor.

Inevitably, because dead authors cannot speak for themselves, there are variations and problematical aspects in each of these categories. There is no one inviolable rule for editing the work of the dead, but if there is an elementary rule for scholarly editing it is that the editor should honor the author’s last known intention. Many of these issues were highlighted and debated by scholars when Ernest Hemingway’s son, Patrick Hemingway edited and published *True at First Light: A Fictional Memoir* in 1999 to mark the birth centenary of his father.\(^4\) The publication of discarded works by Hemingway divided the literary critics into two opposite camps ranging from positive affirmation to total negation. For some critics the book was a
Hemingway lover’s dream come true – an unexpected centennial gift. Michael Rogers seems to have been swept off his feet as he writes:

Like Zeus descended from Olympus, Hemingway returns with one last bolt of lightning in his hand….Hemingway’s unequaled power to describe a locale is in full vigor, and readers will feel the sun hot on their necks, the weight of the rifle in their hands, and the taste of the gin after the hunt….Twentieth century American literature could not end on a brighter note than the publication of this book.5

Rose Marie Burwell, a professor who specializes in Hemingway’s unfinished late work, sees it as a daring, if ultimately thwarted, expedition into postmodern narrative and the strange country of Hemingway’s obsessions. Patrick Hemingway, who condensed the manuscript to half its length, had a logical explanation for the barrage of questions aimed at him. “The only trouble is he [Ernest Hemingway] did leave the material. He didn’t destroy it. Perhaps he didn’t intend to have it published, but when people are dead it’s hard to know what they want. Somebody, someday, was going to publish these works, and I had particular insights about this particular work.”6 Patrick further emphasized that he had not changed any of his father’s words, although he quickly acknowledged that condensing the book inevitably reshaped it. This is what troubled people like Joan Didion, who felt that condensation inevitably worked to alter what the author may have intended. Hemingway, she claimed:

was a writer who had in time made the English language new, changed the rhythms of the way both his own and the next few generations would speak and write and think …. This was a man to whom words mattered. He worked at them, he understood them, he got inside them. He wished to be survived by only the words he determined fit for publication would have seemed clear enough. …[It] was something not yet made, notes, scenes in the process of being set down, words set down but not yet written.7

She even went on to describe the book as “the systematic creation of a marketable product, a discrete body of work different in kind from, and in fact tending to obscure, the body of work published by Hemingway in his time. Hemingway’s own letter written in 1952 to Charles A. Fenton also supports her point of view:
Mr. Fenton I feel very strongly about this. I have written to you before and I write you now again. Writing that I do not wish to publish, you have no right to publish. I would no more do a thing like that to you than I would cheat a man at cards or ruffle his desk or wastebasket or read his personal letters.  

Another critic, Tom Jenks, was of the opinion that Hemingway, in his last book, wrote his own sad epitaph; he concludes his argument with a strong sense of disgust:

*True at First Light* candidly shows Papa at his worst: self-conscious, self-pitying, self-indulgent, self-aggrandizing. The book is so unformed, fragmentary, digressive, and anecdotal that no one can say what Hemingway’s intention might eventually have been… I think it is reasonable to say that in drafting the manuscript, Hemingway was more or less, just writing.  

In another review of the book, James Brady’s tone is equally outraged:

Has anyone been given less opportunity to “rest in peace” than Papa since he said adios? Has any great writer been so relentlessly milked, marketed, manipulated and exploited in death as poor Hemingway? …..Since the 1961 suicide in Idaho, they’ve gotten four full books out of a dead man…. There is some wonderful stuff in these books plus much literary wreck. The Hemingway who once told George Plimpton that he re-wrote the final paragraph of *A Farewell to Arms* 39 times, “to get it right,” would probably not have recognized any of these works in their posthumously published form.  

Charles Scribner Jr., who liked to call Hemingway “a Scribner author” and who wrote about the association that Hemingway maintained with their firm for the rest of his life, said in 1993: “I sincerely hope that if Ernest is keeping a watch on the fate of his writings from someplace beyond the grave he will be pleased by what we have done and what we are doing, If he is not pleased I am sure to hear about it should we meet in the hereafter.”  

Earlier, he had justified his claim for publishing a selection of Hemingway’s letters in 1981 by stating:  

Hemingway left strict instructions that his letters should not be published. But with Mary’s approval, I published them and I think I did the right thing…..I considered that I was justified. It is well known that Virgil left instructions for the *Aeneid* to be burned after his death. Fortunately not all literary executors obey such requests.  

Discussions regarding the sharply divided opinion of the publication and reception of *True at First Light* can go on endlessly, but it would be missing one vital point. Though some
critics do not agree to accept posthumous publications as integral parts of the writer’s canon, nevertheless we have seen that books like *A Moveable Feast, Islands in the Stream, The Dangerous Summer* and *The Garden of Eden* have been used by critics and readers alike to assess Hemingway’s work. In the same vein, one should not have any qualms of conscience in accepting *True at First Light* as Hemingway’s work, as it can offer us insights, however fleetingly, into his *oeuvre*. Whether it is novels or films, the tinkering with classics has prompted ongoing debate among fans and critics. In films, we see the “director’s cut” versions or restored versions with lost footage. In novels, the current trend is to offer pre-edited drafts by major writers or their “new” books crafted from unfinished manuscripts.

II

It was when curiosity about Gatsby was at its highest that the lights in his house failed to go on one Saturday night—and, as obscurely as it had begun, his career as Trimalchio was over.

--*The Great Gatsby*, beginning of Chapter 7.

“I’ve shifted things around a good deal to make people wonder.”

--Jay Gatsby to Nick Carraway, *Trimalchio*, Chapter VIII

Coming to F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *Trimalchio*, the situation is not just publishing a dead writer’s work but something more complicated. In the “News and Notes” section of *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Society Newsletter*, there was an interesting entry entitled “A Trio of *Trimalchios*” which read thus:

James L.W. West III is the editor of the recently published *Trimalchio: An Early Version of “The Great Gatsby,”* based on the galleys set from the manuscript Fitzgerald sent to Charles Scribner’s Sons in October 1924. A paperback edition without scholarly paraphernalia will appear in 2001. This will not be the first time that *Trimalchio* has been published. An explanation: Two sets of the galleys are extant. One is at the Thomas Cooper Library of the University of South Carolina. Fitzgerald made no changes on it.
This is the basis of the West edition. The second copy is at Princeton University. It has many corrections both in Fitzgerald’s hands and typed. This is the duplicate set that Fitzgerald kept when he sent the revised galleys to Scribner’s in early 1925. In 1990 Garland Publishing issued a facsimile of the Princeton copy, *The Great Gatsby: The Revised and Rewritten Galleys*, edited and arranged by Matthew J. Bruccoli, as part III of the 18-volume *F. Scott Fitzgerald Manuscripts*. And in April 2000, the University of South Carolina published *Trimalchio*, a facsimile edition of the unrevised galley proofs in the Thomas Cooper Library. Bruccoli has written an afterword. Fitzgerald enthusiasts now can have three different versions of *Trimalchio* on their shelves.  

Before discussing other issues and the legitimacy of simultaneously publishing a rival volume, it is worthwhile here to delve a little into the background of this manuscript, found among Fitzgerald’s papers, to see whether it is really perfection’s rough draft or not. Fitzgerald began to think seriously about the novel that would become *Trimalchio*, and later *The Great Gatsby* in June 1922. The material he was working with was different from what he eventually decided to use for *Gatsby*. The locale of this novel, he said, was “the middle west and New York of 1885,” and the story had “a Catholic element.” Apparently, Fitzgerald wrote *Trimalchio* in France during the summer of 1924 and submitted it to his publisher, Charles Scribner’s Sons, in October of that year. In a well-known letter written from Great Neck, Long Island, he told Maxwell Perkins that it would draw on “the sustained imagination of a sincere and yet radiant world.” He titled the book after the ostentatious party-giver in the *Satyricon* of Petronius but was actually toying with several other titles as well, including “Among the Ash Heaps and Millionaires” and “Under the Red, White and Blue.” On November 7, 1924, he wrote to Maxwell Perkins, the editor in New York:

> I hope you got my telegram. *Trimalchio in West Egg.* The only other titles that seem to fit are “Trimalchio” and “On the Road to West Egg.” I had two others: “Gold-hatted Gatsby” and “The High-bouncing Lover” but they seem too light.

Perkins sent the manuscript back in the fall asking Fitzgerald to make some changes, in particular, he said, in the description of Gatsby, whom he couldn’t quite “see” the way he could
Tom and Daisy Buchanan and Jordan Baker. Apart from urging Fitzgerald to help the reader’s eye focus on Gatsby [as the two letters written by him show], he wondered whether the blank mystery of Gatsby’s wealth shouldn’t be partly illuminated, if only with “the suggestion of an explanation”; and he proposed that a little of Gatsby’s hidden past be disclosed before the crack-up, before the gush of confession in the penultimate chapter. Perhaps Gatsby’s career could “come out bit by bit in the course of the actual narrative.” As it turned out, Fitzgerald did make major changes in the galley proofs, shifting much material about, and in the spring of 1925 he sent the new manuscript to Perkins under the name *The Great Gatsby*. Maxwell Perkins loved it. “The novel is a wonder,” he wrote in the first letter, adding in the second that Fitzgerald had produced “an extraordinary book.” Scribner’s published it officially on 10th April, 1925, T.S. Eliot congratulated the author, stating that it was the best thing that had happened to the American novel since Henry James, and the rest is history.

Was the discovery of *Trimalchio* the result of great detective work? Literature scholars have known for decades about the original text sitting in the Princeton University Library, but no one had considered publishing it. A number of scholars have commented on the differences between the two versions. A complete text was discovered in Fitzgerald’s galley proofs, and since the writer had reworked the galleys but did not discard or destroy any of the original text in his rewriting, West compared the printer’s galley texts, Fitzgerald’s editing marks, and his handwritten draft and developed the full novel according to Fitzgerald’s intentions. “Students are surprised and fascinated to see the stages through which a great work passes on the way to completion,” he says. “It was Fitzgerald’s editor, Maxwell Perkins, who offered suggestions to hone in on the character of Jay Gatsby earlier in the book. But Fitzgerald has a great ability to revise his own work.”

The novel provides its audience with new understandings of
Fitzgerald’s working methods and fresh insight into his creative imagination. Moreover, in The Crack-Up there is a letter Fitzgerald sent to his friend John Peale Bishop soon after the publication of The Great Gatsby; in the letter he writes modestly about his ability to edit his own work:

I’m afraid I haven’t quite reached the ruthless artistry which would let me cut out an exquisite bit that had no place in the context. I can cut out the almost exquisite, the adequate, even the brilliant—but a true accuracy is…still in the offing.16

Reading passages from Trimalchio and then looking at their equivalent passages in The Great Gatsby allows one to enter the mind of Fitzgerald through his revisionary decisions and enhances one’s appreciation of the enormous amount of work Fitzgerald devoted to crafting his masterpiece. Though Trimalchio is not the same novel as The Great Gatsby, there are a lot of similarities. The first two chapters of both books are almost identical; both novels have nine chapters and are narrated by Nick Carraway; both explore the effects of money and social class on human behavior and morality; the green light stands at the end of the Buchanan’s dock in both novels; Dan Cody and Meyer Wolfsheim are in both texts; Jay Gatsby gives his fabulous parties and uses the term “old sport” in both narratives; Trimalchio and Gatsby both include the famous guest list for Gatsby’s parties, and there is money in Daisy’s voice in both novels.

Among the crucial differences, however, Trimalchio contains several lengthy passages that do not appear in Gatsby. Nick Carraway is not the same in Trimalchio: he is not quite so likeable or self-deprecating, and he more obviously controls the narrative. His love affair with Jordan Baker is traced in greater detail, and we see more readily why they are attracted to each other. Most importantly, the unfolding of Jay Gatsby’s character is timed and executed in a wholly different fashion in Trimalchio. In the earlier novel, his past remains a mystery until after the hit-and-run accident; in Gatsby, the reader sees him revealed in a more direct way.
Though there are no differences between the two texts, the novel is made available to readers and scholars not only for comparison with *The Great Gatsby* but for interpretation and analysis on its own. Readers see the same cast of characters but observe them through a different set of lenses and filters. As mentioned earlier, the plot and structure of the two novels are not the same. The novels are very similar in the first two chapters. But in Chapter III, Fitzgerald began to revise the book, making significant changes in III, IV, and V, completely rewriting Chapters VI & VII and making significant changes in VIII and IX. He moved much material concerning Jay Gatsby’s past to earlier positions in the novel and added short paragraphs to account for Gatsby’s wealth. He polished the prose extensively and introduced several new passages, including the memorable description of Jay Gatsby’s smile in Chapter III. Also, elsewhere in the narrative one finds passages and sequences missing from *Gatsby*. Most importantly, in *Trimalchio* Jay Gatsby’s past is revealed in a wholly different fashion. Gatsby tells the details of his life directly to Nick in conversation, whereas in *Gatsby*, Nick relates that conversation to us. Once we hear Gatsby tell it directly, the revision feels forced – though granted, it shifts more of the emphasis to Nick’s voice and adds to the mystery surrounding Gatsby. Yet for the attentive reader of *Trimalchio*, much of that mystery is still upheld, since when Gatsby speaks, we can never be sure he’s telling the truth. Nick, as we all know, is the only truly honest person he himself knows. Again, there are also differences in the description of Nick's first meeting with Gatsby. A comparative analysis of the same incident as told by Nick Carraway makes the changes clear and shows how, in the later edition, Nick becomes much more analytical and adds his own perceptions, making the narration less objective.

Here is the first, from *Trimalchio*:

For a moment he looked at me as if he failed to understand. “I’m Gatsby,” he said suddenly.
“I thought you knew, old sport. I’m afraid I’m not a very good host.”
He was only a little older than me; somehow I had expected a florid and corpulent person in his middle years, yet he was somehow not a young man at all. There was a stiff dignity about him, and a formality of speech that just missed being absurd, that always trembled on the verge of absurdity until you wondered why you didn’t laugh. I got a distinct impression that he was picking his words with care.17 (41)

Now, from The Great Gatsby:

For a moment he looked at me as if he failed to understand.
“I’m Gatsby,” he said suddenly.
“I thought you knew, old sport. I’m afraid I’m not a very good host.”
He smiled understandingly -- much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced—or seemed to face—the whole external world for an instant, and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believing in you as you would like to believe in yourself, and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. Precisely at that point it vanished and I was looking at an elegant young roughneck, a year or two over thirty, whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd. Some time before he introduced himself, I’d got a strong impression that he was picking his words with care…I had expected that Mr. Gatsby would be a florid and corpulent person in his middle years.18

In the first edition, after Gatsby excuses himself, Nick turns immediately to Jordan, “constrained to assure her that [he] rather liked him.”

“He says he’s an Oxford man,” she remarked.
“Have you got some prejudice against Oxford?”
“I don’t think he went there.”
“Why not?”
“I don’t know,” she insisted. “I just don’t think he did.”

In the revised edition, Fitzgerald adds a few more details, which ‘stimulates’ Nick’s ‘curiosity’:

“Who is he?” I demanded. “Do you know?”
“He’s just a man named Gatsby.”
“Where is he from, I mean? And what does he do?
“Now you’re started on the subject,” she answered with a wan smile. “Well, he told me once he was an Oxford man.”

A dim background started to take shape behind him, but at her next remark it faded away.
“However, I don’t believe it.”

“Why not?”

“I don’t know,” she insisted, “I just don’t think he went there.”

Again, in another instance, in the early version, once they are on their way, Gatsby asks Nick a bald question: “Have you ever had what’s known as an *affaire de coeur*?” Nick’s answer disappoints so Gatsby tries again: “I’ll have to begin in a different way. Let me ask you this: What’s your opinion of me anyhow?” In the revised version, the same scene begins with just the right jolt: “Look here, old sport,” he broke out surprisingly, “what’s your opinion of me, anyhow?” On the whole, the Gatsby of *Gatsby* talks less – and is more often “surprising.” In *Trimalchio* he tells Nick, “I might be a great man if I could forget that once I lost Daisy. But my career has got to be like this.” He drew a slanting line from the lawn to the stars.” It was only later that Fitzgerald invented for him the mind-boggling pronouncement about Daisy perhaps loving her husband when they were first married: “In any case,” he said, “it was just personal.”

In an article published in the *New Yorker*, Claudia Roth Pierpont makes a comparison between *Gatsby* and *Trimalchio*. But comparing the two version of the text is not really the focus of this paper. What is intriguing is the critical debate surrounding the two simultaneous publications of *Trimalchio*. The questionable editorial choices of West, the puzzling choice of Bruccoli concerning dissemination of his facsimile edition, and the disputable behavior of both publishers all raise problems that with lasting disquiet haunt every trumpeted exhumation of buried work as something still living on its own, independent of the final product to which the author gave life. In the introduction to the Cambridge University Press edition of “the early version of *The Great Gatsby*,” the editor James L. W. West III repeatedly claims that the publication of this book is “not only for comparison with *The Great Gatsby* but for
interpretation as a separate and distinct work of art.” They unequivocally announces that the draft is “different enough from Gatsby to deserve publication on its own.”

*Trimalchio* is a notable literary achievement. It is a direct and straightforward narration of the story of Jay Gatsby, Nick Carraway, Jordan Baker, Myrtle and George Wilson, and Tom and Daisy Buchanan. The handling of plot details is surehanded; the writing is graceful and confident. *Trimalchio* will provide readers with new understanding of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s working methods, fresh insights into his creative imagination, and renewed appreciation of his genius.

The first justification offered by the editor states that when Fitzgerald submitted *Trimalchio* to Scribner’s, the text entered the “public phase of its existence.” This highly debatable statement is further highlighted by the second justification the editor uses to present *Trimalchio* as a distinct work of art: namely, that it

is like listening to a well-known musical composition, but played in a different key and with an alternate bridge passage. A theme that one usually hears in the middle movement is now heard in the last. Familiar leitmotifs play through the work but appear at unexpected moments. Several favorite passages are missing, but new combinations and sequences, recognizably from the hand of the composer, are present. To the knowledgeable listener it is like hearing the same work and yet a different work.

West also maintains that unlike the inconsistent quality of several unapproved, posthumous publications, *Trimalchio* was a finished work:

*Trimalchio* is a finished novel, which he submitted to his publisher in October, 1924. That’s different from an aborted novel or a fragment. Fitzgerald submitted *Trimalchio* and, in part because of his own second thoughts, and in part because of [his editor’s] comments, he tore it apart and came up with *The Great Gatsby*, which is entirely different.”

As the editor duly notes, *Trimalchio* does not challenge the commonplace notion in Fitzgerald studies that *Gatsby* “became a masterpiece in revision;” the early version of the classic American novel merely provides more raw material for public consumption.
The Bruccoli edition is a facsimile publication of the proofs themselves, limited to five hundred numbered copies on laid paper and with an Afterword by Professor Bruccoli himself. This University of South Carolina Press edition does not distort any fact in the facsimiles it publishes, but in the advertising hype for its edition, it misleads the audience. Its pre-publication advertisement tells us that “Before The Great Gatsby there was TRIMALCHIO,” implying a different book. The box-cover for the facsimile galley sheets announces “Trimalchio” in very large, specially designed letters, followed by “by F. Scott Fitzgerald” in somewhat smaller type of the same design. The subtitle makes clear that this Trimalchio is only “a facsimile edition of the original galley-proofs of The Great Gatsby,” and “The Great Gatsby” is in bold italics. Nevertheless, the second title page reads only “Trimalchio by F. Scott Fitzgerald.” Here attention can be drawn to the fact that clearly implicit in the marketing and design is a strong insinuation of a hitherto unpublished early novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Notwithstanding the advertising copy’s claim that the set of unrevised galleys “permits readers a look at Fitzgerald’s progression from a brilliant first draft to a masterpiece,” what is implicit in the way the publication announces itself is also subtly complicit in the entwinement of these galleys with the idea of Trimalchio as “a separate and distinct” book. Although both editors suggest otherwise, Trimalchio is but a draft, and it remains for all times only a draft of The Great Gatsby.

For scholars, the fascinating aspect of the publications that are called Trimalchio is that they provide the curious history of the choices editors and publishers have made in bringing, or not bringing, Fitzgerald’s working documents to the light of day. Only three documents—the holograph (at Princeton)—the unmarked galleys (at the University of South Carolina), and the revised galleys (at Princeton), survive as the sole existing drafts remaining from the composition
of *The Great Gatsby.* Any publication of the unrevised galleys should have been titled something like *The “Trimalchio” Galleys for “The Great Gatsby,”* or *“The Unrevised Galleys for “The Great Gatsby.”* Since they could not have been published as *The Great Gatsby,* both Bruccoli and West are perfectly honest and accurate in their subtitles. But those matters are small compared to the most debatable and consequential choice faced by editors’ and publishers: the basic one of what should and should not be published. It is true that Fitzgerald probably would not have objected to *Trimalchio* being published as a first draft or a version of Gatsby. He had done his best with his manuscript when he sent it to the publisher, and we know that the first batch of proofs was sent to the author on 27th December, the second batch on the 30th. Fitzgerald undertook a complicated rewriting and restructuring of the novel in these proofs once they reached him in January. He followed his own instincts for revision but also paid attention to Maxwell Perkins’ advice. So we can assume that once he got to work on his revision, Fitzgerald did not wish to see what we now call *Trimalchio* published as an independent work. He knew from these letters that Scribners would have published the book as submitted in typescript and as printed in the unrevised galleys if he insisted on it. But he didn’t. He did not want the so-called “Trimalchio” galleys published – it was no longer his book. Instead he plunged into revisions and completed what was his book, *The Great Gatsby.*

Unfortunately, two publishers have decided that *Trimalchio,* “the book,” was another.

Without going into the debate of whether the writer would have given permission to publish the first drafts of his works or not, it would not be inappropriate to conclude with the hope that as ‘earlier versions’ of great works continue to be published, it remains the reader’s discretion to consider them either as prototypes or as legitimate, solitary works of art. Like the
continuous critical debate that has been raging since the publication of Hemingway’s posthumous *True at First Light*, critical opinion about *Trimalchio* is once again sharply divided. For some readers reading *Trimalchio* is ultimately like watching deleted scenes from a movie on a DVD, where the film director deliberately offers his own interpretation by highlighting some sections and omitting others. But as long as they enhance one’s appreciation of the work as a whole, these changes are of comparatively minor significance. Just as we accept film adaptations of classic novels where variation is a norm rather than a potential sacrilege, these readers therefore believe that the existence of *Trimalchio* doesn’t threaten *Gatsby*’s place in the canon. Instead, they regard the two works as two versions of the same story.

In the meantime we can go on listening to the myriad opinions expressed by scholars and critics alike. *Trimalchio* is unlike the unfinished, and sometimes weak, writings by authors that have recently been posthumously edited and published. Lisa Levy, a freelance writer in New York, regards *Trimalchio* not as an exercise in grave digging, but as a rescue mission.28 If one loves to read *The Great Gatsby*, one will surely find the time to read *Trimalchio* too. Again, those who are not very happy about this are of the opinion that Fitzgerald did not want *Trimalchio*, and yet we have it. On the other hand, we did want the revised version of *Tender is the Night* and yet do not have a fully edited revised version of that novel. It is said that at the 2000 International Fitzgerald Conference in Nice, Frances Kroll King, Fitzgerald’s one time secretary, sighed, “Oh, I wish they’d just leave him alone!”29 Professor Jackson R. Bryer said that at best he was ambivalent about publishing *Trimalchio* and at worst felt it was “a little unfair to Fitzgerald because that’s not what he ended up with.”30 On the question of whether art was being served by publishing this new novel, he also added, “Would it be helpful to peel away
the paint from the Sistine Chapel to see what Michelangelo put there first?” “No, Bryer said, because Michelangelo wanted people to see his end result, and that was the case also with *The Great Gatsby.*” Milton R. Stern elucidates his point of view in unequivocal terms:

May Cambridge and West think about revisions of present volumes in future editions of the collected works of Frances Scott Key Fitzgerald. May all editors disintering rejected preliminary drafts and versions of published work maintain humility about themselves and respect for the decisions of the authors in how they publish those materials. May they think about what format and advertising proclaim. And may all good editors, struggling with the unfinished manuscripts of modern authors who died before they could complete works that they hoped would see the light of day, have what Melville’s Ishmael prayed for: “Oh, Time, Strength, Cash, and Patience!” And Taste. Amen.31

The moderate critic can keep to the middle path and accept that the obsession with the past that fuels the story has seeped into a different perspective: reading *Trimalchio,* he can fall in love with *Gatsby* all over again (just as Gatsby does with Daisy). He can believe in that green light glimmering on the dock across the bay, and in that “orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us.”

### NOTES

2. The original version of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *Tender is the Night* (New York: Scribner’s) was published in 1934. A revised version of *Tender is the Night* (New York: Scribner’s) was edited by Malcolm Cowley, and published in 1951. This later version has a different plot structure.
3. The manuscript of this novel was in an unfinished form at the time of Fitzgerald’s death. This was first published as *The Last Tycoon,* edited by Edmund Wilson (New York: Scribner’s, 1941) and later as *The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993) edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli.

There are several interviews with Patrick Hemingway available online, and most of them repeat the same idea. See [http://www.bookpage.com/9907bp/patrick_hemingway.html](http://www.bookpage.com/9907bp/patrick_hemingway.html); [http://weekwilywire.com/ww/07-26-99/alibi_feat1.htm](http://weekwilywire.com/ww/07-26-99/alibi_feat1.htm); [www.hemingwaysociety.org/virthem.htm](http://www.hemingwaysociety.org/virthem.htm).


In 1952 Hemingway himself advised Charles A. Fenton of Yale, who, on the evidence of the letters, was tormenting Hemingway by sending him successive drafts of what would be “The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway: The Early Years.” The correspondence reveals Hemingway’s dislike for using earlier drafts of his own writing. “You do not like to be tailed, investigated, queried about, by any amateur detective no matter how scholarly or how straight. You ought to be able to see that, Fenton.” A month later Hemingway wrote to him again, “I think you ought to drop the entire project.” See *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters*. Ed Carlos Baker (New York: Scribner’s, 1981). Joan Didion’s article also mentions this interaction in details.


This refers to a small pamphlet published by The University of South Carolina Press just before the publication of its edition of the novel edited by M.J. Bruccoli.


Lisa Levy, “Fitzgerald’s Trimalchio”, [www.FEED Books/Fitzgerald’s Trimalchio/07.12.00/htm](http://www.FEED Books/Fitzgerald’s Trimalchio/07.12.00/htm).

Frances Ring’s comment has been quoted from the article by Milton R. Stern, “On Editing Dead Modern Authors: Fitzgerald and *Trimalchio,*” *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Society Newsletter* Vol.10 Dec 2000: 18.

Milton R Stern, 18.

WORKS CITED


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