Fitzgerald's Southern Narrative: The Tarleton, Georgia Stories

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In a 1922 feature article pasted in the Fitzgeralds' scrapbooks and subtitled "Novelist Says Southern Type of Flapper Best," Fitzgerald "classifies American flappers according to their locality." Accompanying the article is a quarter-page map of the United States containing cartoon renditions of flappers from every geographical area and depicting Fitzgerald with a pointer singling out the Southern flapper.[1] This Southern flapper is, in many ways, a hybrid of the flapper and the Southern belle types; and, importantly, she is the embodiment of Fitzgerald's complex relationship with the South. Fitzgerald's fascination with the South had begun at an early age, associating it as he did with the legacy of his Maryland-born father: "Fitzgerald . . . developed an early tug toward the country of his father's youth, sympathizing with the cause of the Confederacy and admiring the impeccable manners of the Old South."[2] When he was stationed at Camp Sheridan, near Montgomery, Alabama, and after he met Zelda Sayre at a country club dance in July 1918, Fitzgerald's fascination with the South was reawakened. He explores his complex and changing ideas about the South in the characters of Sally Carrol Happer, Nancy Lamar, Ailie Calhoun, and the males that surround them as they appear in what has come to be known as the Tarleton Trilogy, three stories set in the fictional town of Tarleton, Georgia. And yet, in the tangentially related story "Dice, Brassknuckles & Guitar" (1923), a story that serves as a bridge between the first and second Tarleton stories, "The Ice Palace" (1920) and "The Jelly-Bean" (1920) and the last, "The Last of the Belles" (1929), he arguably signals his move away from a romanticizing of his fictional characters based on type—here the Southern type —and toward an embracing of characters who embody human complexity and universal ideals not tied to geographical location.

Although the serious critical discourse on Fitzgerald's deep connections to the South and the recurrence of Southern settings and Southern characters in his fiction began more than thirty-five years ago, there has been little agreement as to his final stance regarding Southern manners and morals associated with the chivalric code. In his 1973 foundational study, "Scott Fitzgerald's Romance with the South," Scott Donaldson traces the origins of Fitzgerald's fascination with the South, first, to his admiration of his father's Maryland family heritage, his genteel manners, and his belief in "the romance of the lost Southern cause"; and, second, to his enchantment with the quaint Old-South origins and ways of his Alabama wife Zelda Sayre. Ultimately Donaldson concludes that the magic of the Old South became "mingled in Fitzgerald's mind with the golden girl" and that when she failed him, his "illusions [about the romantic appeal of the South] are shattered" (3). Donaldson sees in Andy's loss of Ailie Calhoun in "The Last of the Belles" what he calls "Fitzgerald's ultimate rejection of the Southern belle," a rejection that brought about his loss of illusions and resulted from Fitzgerald's "confusion of place and person . . . " (3).

In 1982 C. Hugh Holman extends Donaldson's idea to include symbolic associations that became part of Fitzgerald's dialectic construction of the contrast between South and North. The South to Fitzgerald, as Holman sees it, was "a land of beauty and romance, of lost order, of tradition and dignity, and of a glorious past . . . [something] to be dreamed of and to be loved in youth, but it must be abandoned in maturity." The North, by contrast, was the "home of accomplishment, effort, and hard work, the bedrock of reality [though also] a killer, or at the very least a duller, of the romantic dreams of youth, which the South represents."[3] These romantic dreams, according to Holman, were so seductive to Fitzgerald that he adopted a view of the South that was characterized by a savoring of "the backward glance" (56) and a privileging of nostalgia which Fitzgerald and his narrators will eventually outgrow as time passes and

youthful dreams fade. Holman disagrees with Donaldson that Ailie Calhoun is Fitzgerald's rejection of the Southern belle. She is rather "wistful nostalgia made flesh" (64) and, as Fitzgerald understands, it is time itself rather than Ailie that can be seen as the villain who makes the South empty for Andy forever.

John Kuehl in his 1992 "Psychic Geography in 'The Ice Palace,'" sees many of the same binaries that Holman points out, but argues that within the story's structure of "Geographical antithesis,"[4] the North represents death in life while the South is a form of life in death (178). Sally Carrol Happer, whose story this essentially is, opts in the end for the latter, and Kuehl leaves open the possibility that this may imply a preference in "The Ice Palace" for South over North in Fitzgerald's mind, though he reminds the reader that in the second story of the Tarleton Trilogy, "The Jelly-Bean," Fitzgerald is critical of things Southern. Kuehl is particularly interested in the degree to which the Tarleton stories indicate that the civil war in Fitzgerald's psyche may result from conflicts within the Southern half of the binary that result from tensions within his relationship with Zelda, tensions that will ultimately bring him to reject the part of the South associated with Zelda's willful "indolence," while believing still in his "Southern" father's "historical American values of 'honor, courtesy, and courage'" (179)—a point that proves over and over to be true in Fitzgerald's fiction.

Building on Donaldson's central point regarding the Southern belle, Alice Hall Petry in her 1989 study of Fitzgerald's stories observes that by the time of his final Tarleton story "The Last of the Belles," Fitzgerald had become more judgmental in his short fiction and thus had come to appreciate more fully the mode of satire. Extending Donaldson's earlier suggestion that Ailie Calhoun in "The Last of the Belles" was "all artifice" and represented Fitzgerald's ultimate rejection of the Southern belle, Petry argues that Andy's portrait of Ailie is satirical and aimed at

stripping away Ailie's mask to reveal "the chill-minded flapper under the alluring Southern belle."[5]

Heidi Bullock in her 1996 essay "The Southern and the Satirical in 'The Last of the Belles'" takes Petry's idea and turns it away from Ailie and onto Andy. She maintains that virtually all who have read the story have been drawn in by Andy's seemingly reliable narrative voice when, in effect, Andy is the one who has failed to question his stereotypical assumptions about Ailie and about the South. In the process he has assumed a "universally apprehended South" that is "relentlessly trite."[6] In the end the object of Fitzgerald's satire, Bullock argues, is Andy, through whom Fitzgerald is revealing the underlying problem of the characters in the story, of general readers, and also of critics, most of whom neglect to consider the source of their information. The popular imagination, according to Bullock, insists solipsistically that all characters in the story "represent" something rather than that they be unique individuals with stories of their own.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about these major critical treatments mentioned above of various aspects of Fitzgerald's Southern narrative is that all, with the exception of Bullock's, move in the end toward definitive conclusions regarding Fitzgerald's final "stance" in relation to the South, or at least to some aspect of Southern values and customs. Donaldson sees Fitzgerald as having ultimately rejected the South on the basis of his rejection of the Southern belle; Holman believes that Fitzgerald saw his romanticizing of the South and its belles for what it was—a phase of the worship of "wistful nostalgia" that had to be given up as youth faded; Kuehl understands that Fitzgerald, though he balances praise and criticism of both North and South, ultimately solves the either/or conflict in his own psyche by rejecting the willful indolence of the South's Zeldas and accepting the American values of his Southern father: honor, courtesy,

courage; Petry argues that Fitzgerald finally strips away from his belle the mask of seductive charm that conceals a dark flapper-like manipulativeness, presumably generalizing outward to a rejection of the South itself. Only Bullock of the five concludes that Fitzgerald could, through his satirical stance toward Andy himself in "The Last of the Belles," be urging the reader to examine her/his own solipsistic tendency to generalize without verifiable evidence about any person or region on the basis of preconceived notions and stereotypes. It is also interesting to note that the critical views, again with the exception of Bullock's, have tended to draw conclusions based on the creation of binary structures: North (masculine)/South (feminine); North (death in life)/South (life in death); North (future)/South (past); Southern belle (surreptitiously charming)/flapper (chill-minded), for example. In defense of all who have critically engaged Fitzgerald's Southern narrative, particularly that part of it contained in his Tarleton stories, it must be said that Fitzgerald has invited—even seemingly required especially in the first two stories, "The Ice Palace" and "The Jelly-Bean"—the kind of dialectical reasoning that critics have engaged in by having his narrators and characters create the binaries themselves, as Sally Carrol Happer does, for example, when she characterizes Northern men as canine and Southern men as feline (*S* 59); or as Nancy Lamar does in "The Jelly-Bean" when she maintains that all people in England have "style" while Americans, especially all Southern Americans lack "style" (*S* 151).

It is also of particular interest that all of the critics mentioned above, except Holman, fail even to mention "Dice, Brassknuckles & Guitar" in their assessment of Fitzgerald's Southern narrative, an understandable omission since, although Jim Powell is from Tarleton, technically the story is set in the North. Holman mentions "Dice" only in passing to suggest that the story and its central male character, Jim Powell, are tangentially related to the Tarleton trilogy. In a

footnote, Holman makes this observation: "Jim Powell is the protagonist in Fitzgerald's 1923 short story 'Dice, Brass Knuckles & Guitar [sic].' In this story he goes North to make an improved living by running a school to teach rich youths social grace and self-defense. When he learns that the rich regard him as 'just a servant,' he heads bitterly back to the South and to being a jelly-bean" (Holman 59). The brevity of Holman's analysis of "Dice, Brassknuckles & Guitar" coupled with the absence of any other thorough examination of the story and its relationship to the other Tarleton stories underline the need for a study of the intertextual connections between "Dice" and the other Tarleton stories, particularly a study of the ways in which the story sets up what well might be Fitzgerald's later satirical portrait of Andy in "The Last of the Belles," finally shedding light on Fitzgerald's ideas about the South.

Though Fitzgerald included allusions to the South and focused on North/South contrasts in many of his works, a fact which Scott Donaldson has carefully documented, the clearest picture of Fitzgerald's characterization of the mythic South and the Southern belle can, indeed, be found in those three stories mentioned above and referred to as the Tarleton Trilogy: "The Ice Palace," "The Jelly-Bean," and "The Last of the Belles." These stories are set in Tarleton, Georgia, which is a thinly disguised Montgomery, Alabama, described in "The Jelly-Bean" as "a little city of forty thousand that has dozed sleepily for forty thousand years in southern Georgia, stirring in its slumbers and muttering something about a war that took place sometime, somewhere, and that everyone else has forgotten long ago" (*S* 143). In addition to the romantic moonlight and magnolias atmosphere of Tarleton, Fitzgerald or his narrators are drawn to the three Southern belles who live there. As Andy, the narrator of "The Last of the Belles" is told by his friend who is about to leave Tarleton, "You see, there're really only three girls here—, "a fact which intrigues the narrator, who says that "there was something mystical about there being three girls" (*S* 449-50).

The three girls are characterized as being highly individual, distinctly different from each other; but at least on the surface and in varying degrees they possess characteristics that qualify them as both flapper and belle. Sally Carrol, on the one hand, has the flapper's bobbed hair, two spots of rouge dabbed on her lips, and a grain of powder on her nose. On the other, she is one of those "gracious soft-voiced girls, who were brought up on memories instead of money" (*S* 50), one who can eloquently describe her Southern legacy to her Northern fiance in a Confederate cemetery: "people have these dreams they fasten onto things, and I've always grown up with that dream . . . I've tried in a way to live up to those past standards of noblesse oblige—there's just the last remnants of it, you know, like the roses of an old garden dying all round us—streaks of strange courtliness and chivalry in some of these boys . . . " (*S* 54).

Sally Carrol is quite aware of the conflicting needs within her, one related to the independent, flapper spirit, that pulls her toward the larger world outside Tarleton and what she thinks will be freedom, and the other, the Southern side, that keeps her attached to Tarleton. "There's two sides to me, you see," she tells her Tarleton friend Clark. "There's the sleepy old side you love; an' there's a sort of energy—the feelin' that makes me do wild things. That's the part of me that may be useful somewhere, that'll last when I'm not beautiful any more" (*S* 51). After being trapped in an ice palace during a Winter Carnival that she attends when she goes North to visit her fiance's family, she realizes that she must return, presumably forever, to the South, her ancestral home. Similarly, Ailie, "the Southern type in all its beauty" in "The Last of the Belles" (*S* 450), whose eyes have been drawn North after a winter in school in New York and a Yale prom, turns down the men who could take her there to marry a man from Savannah. "You know I couldn't ever marry a Northern man," she tells Andy, who proclaims of her that "Beneath her mask of an instinctive thoroughbred she had always been on to herself . . . " (*S* 462).

The case of the third belle of Tarleton, Nancy Lamar from "The Jelly-Bean," is more complicated than that of Sally Carrol Happer and Ailie Calhoun. She is clearly the wildest of the three, frequently gambling away more money than she has, and without a trace of *noblesse oblige*, urging Jim Powell to drain the gas from a stranger's car so she can use it to remove chewing gum from her shoe and return to the dance floor. Nancy has no apparent loyalty to the chivalric code of the Old South, and she, more vehemently than Sally Carrol or Ailie, professes a profound regret that she cannot escape Tarleton. In her case she regrets "that I wasn't born in England" (*S* 151). When she gives a farewell kiss to Jim, she tells him, "I'm a wild part of the world, Jelly-bean . . " (*S* 155). Nancy is more flapper than belle, and she, perhaps more than Ailie is that chill-minded flapper hiding beneath the "alluring Southern belle." In a clear reference to her in "The Last of the Belles," the narrator Andy refers to her as "a lady I promptly detested" (*S* 450)—a judgment that points, among other things, to Andy's inclination to draw conclusions about people based on slight objective evidence.

As Holman has noted, the Southern belle is the central image of the three stories. In his description of the Tarleton belles and the types from which they descend, they are "the embodiments of a tradition that stretched back before the Confederacy and that enchanted and hypnotized men for a century, permanent embodiments of the dream of beauty and youth and the romantic aspiration of the aggressive male" (Holman 61). It is important to note, however, that Sally Carrol, Ailie, and Nancy are quite different manifestations of the Southern belle, possessing as they do varying degrees of allegiance to the genteel tradition associated with the belle and to the ethos of freedom from tradition associated with the flapper. Sally Carrol's defense of the chivalric tradition is inspired, and she returns to the South after quite consciously rejecting the larger theater in which her ambitions might have been realized. Ailie takes longer. But she finally acknowledges

she could never have married a Northern man, though she has felt the sincerity of two of her Northern suitors, who would have perhaps freed her from the constraints of her legacy. Both Sally Carrol and Ailie opt consciously not to reject the legacy of the chivalric tradition, and choose consciously to remain Southern belles, a decision that Nancy, on the other hand, makes quite unconsciously when she marries her Savannah suitor while she is intoxicated.

One might assume that with Sally Carrol back in Tarleton, apparently for good, at the end of "The Ice Palace," with Nancy already married to a man from Savannah in "The Jelly-Bean," and with Ailie about to become comfortably established in marriage to a man from Savannah at the end of "The Last of the Belles," Fitzgerald's ideas about the Southern belle have been brought to closure. And perhaps in a limited sense they have. Clearly his rendition of the belle represents a movement forward of the stereotype in that it reflects changing times, particularly the revolution of manners and morals that came with World War I and its aftermath. The Fitzgerald belle has become a wilder part of the world from her contact with the flapper creed. And her destiny is similar to that of the flapper, which in Zelda's words was to go "where all good flappers [one could here substitute 'belles'] go—into the young married set, into boredom and gathering conventions and the pleasure of having children, having lent a while a splendor and courageousness and brightness to life, as all good flappers should."[7] The differences of opinion noted above among those who have examined Fitzgerald's attitudes toward the Southern belle point to the open-endedness of the Tarleton stories and toward the ambivalence on Fitzgerald's part as to how he finally viewed Sally Carrol, Nancy, and Ailie.

A window, however, that might well provide additional insight into Fitzgerald's attitudes toward Tarleton's women and finally toward the South itself is the neglected Tarleton-related story "Dice, Brassknuckles & Guitar," which serves as a sequel to "The Jelly-Bean" and a

prequel to "The Last of the Belles." When Jim Powell, a resident of Tarleton, first appears on the scene in front of the New Jersey house of Amanthis Powell in his dilapidated jalopy accompanied by his African American body-servant in "Dice, Brassknuckles & Guitar," readers of the story when it first appeared in *Hearst's International* in May 1923 would not likely have known what a rich "fictional" history he has brought with him—and what insights his story might provide into the Tarleton stories. There is a hint of Jim's origins in the "mangy pennant bearing the legend 'Tarleton, Ga.'" (*S* 238) attached to the rear of his car, and he immediately introduces himself to Amanthis by the name "Powell"—a name that connects them even as it softens barriers of gender and geography—and revealing to her that he is "a resident of Tarleton, Georgia" (239). He further tells her that he comes "from mighty good people . . . Pore though. I got some money because my aunt she was using it to keep her in a sanitarium and she died" (*S* 240). He explains to Amanthis that he has inherited his aunt's money, left the principal of his inheritance back in Tarleton, and come "north for the summer" on the interest he has recently collected. Only those readers who had read "The Jelly-Bean" when it first appeared in the October 1920 issue of *Metropolitan* would have recognized him as the title character from that story, a "type" of Southern character: the corner loafer who "spends his life conjugating the verb to idle in the first person singular—I am idling, I have idled, I will idle" (*S* 143). In "The Jelly-Bean," Jim has succumbed to the charms of Nancy Lamar and resolved to reclaim the aristocratic heritage that had once been his family's when they owned land and a big white house in Tarleton. But that had been long ago, and as it turns out he had waited too long to reclaim his legacy and the Southern belle in the form of Nancy that would have accompanied his reclaiming had he managed to accomplish it. Nancy, shortly after consuming too much corn liquor, elopes with a man from Savannah whom she would not have married sober, leaving Jim "feelin' right

sick" and without purpose at the end of the story (*S* 158). During the interval between the end of "The Jelly-Bean" and the beginning of "Dice, Brassknuckles & Guitar" Jim has apparently decided to acquire a body servant and the jalopy that brings him to the threshold of Amanthis's house in New Jersey, hoping, it seems, to earn a living in the land of opportunity, the North. Six years after the publication of "Dice, Brassknuckles & Guitar" popular magazine readers would learn that Nancy, though not called by name, was likely one of "only three girls" in Tarleton whom Andy's friend Bill Knowles considered worth meeting. The other two are Ailie Calhoun, the Southern "belle" of "The Last of the Belles: (*Saturday Evening Post* March 2, 1929) and Sally Carrol, the nineteen-year-old belle from "The Ice Palace" (*Saturday Evening Post*, May 20, 1920) who had spoken so eloquently in a Confederate graveyard to her Northern boyfriend about "the most beautiful thing in the world—the dead South" (*S* 53-4). Clearly Jim Powell's story is an intricately woven thread in Fitzgerald's Tarleton series. It is noteworthy that when we first encounter him in "The Jelly-Bean" he is characterized as a "type"—a "bred-in-the-bone, dyed-in-the-wool, ninety-nine three-quarters per cent Jelly bean" (*S* 142)—that Fitzgerald moves within the circle of other "types," most notably Southern belles. By the end of "Dice, Brassknuckles & Guitar," however, it has become clear that Fitzgerald is developing in the story complex ideas that he intends forcefully to communicate with regard to characterization by type.

Fitzgerald begins his 1926 story "The Rich Boy" with the following lines: "Begin with an individual, and before you know it you find that you have created a type; begin with a type, and you will find that you have created—nothing" (*S* 317). With these lines Fitzgerald may on some level be delineating the process of character development in any given story; he may also, perhaps, on another level, be admonishing not only himself, but his popular audience, about the tendency to reduce characters to generalized types. At least as early as 1923 with the

composition of "Dice, Brassknuckles & Guitar" he had begun to counter what had been a tendency at least in the first two Tarleton stories to rely heavily on stereotypes in the development of character. From the moment the reader encounters Jim Powell in "Dice" (and this is especially true if the reader has been acquainted with him in "The Jelly-Bean") it is clear that whatever preconceptions the reader has brought into the story are quite possibly suspect. Granted Jim is described early in the story as "a southern gentleman" (*S* 238) and he does, in fact, have the manners associated in the popular imagination with that type, properly introducing himself and his body servant Hugo to Amanthis and referring to her throughout their exchanges by the title "mamm." However, the Jim Powell presented in "Dice" is not the Jim Powell of "The Jelly-Bean," the character whom Fitzgerald had described in that story as an idler, one who "might have been known in the indiscriminating North as a corner loafer" (*S* 143). The Jim Powell of "Dice" is energetic and entrepreneurial. He has planned to take his body servant into New York and earn money as a taxi driver. When this enterprise fails, largely due to the inadequacy of his car rather than lack of effort, he initiates another plan in which he establishes a school to instruct the young people of Southampton, New York, how to throw dice, use brass knuckles, and play the guitar. To this endeavor—granted the idea of it, and even the story itself, is outrageous and absurd—he devotes a boundless energy that would be out of type and out of character for the old jelly-bean Jim Powell. In line with his "Southern" values, however, he does demonstrate great courage in forcibly ejecting Martin Van Vleck from of his jazz school when Van Vleck violates the rules against drinking on the premises, an act that results in Jim's having to close his school and in his being honor-bound to return the tuition he had collected even though an injustice had been done to him. By the end of the story, it is true that Jim has become disenchanted with the members of Southampton society who have treated him badly, and at this

point Fitzgerald regresses into stereotype, calling him "a child of the South—brooding was alien to his nature" (*S* 253); but the reader would be right to question Holman's observation that Jim is finally heading "bitterly back to the South and to being a jelly-bean" (*S* 59). In any case, Fitzgerald brings into high relief Jim's paternalistic treatment of Hugo, having him in conversation with Amanthis refer to him, among other patronizing and demeaning terms, as "my boy Hugo" (239), a move that undercuts the honorable traits Jim displays in relation to the refunded tuition for the jazz school. Here perhaps Fitzgerald is satirizing the blatant racism of privileged Southern whites toward African Americans. Certainly by the time of *The Great Gatsby* (1925) Fitzgerald was calling attention through Tom Buchanan to the "'Nordicist' and Anglo-Saxonist narrative of American history and . . . the racism it legitimized"—a narrative with which he was clearly familiar and seems to have begun increasingly to show discomfort.[8] Ultimately, throughout "Dice" Jim has shown himself to be too complex to be entirely predictable. Only two things seem certain at the end of the story: the Jim of "The Jelly-Bean" and "Dice" cannot be known through a simple stock phrase based on geographical stereotype; and at the heart of Jim the individual, regardless of where he is located at a given moment, there is a foundation of his morality that is built on honor, courtesy, and courage, those values that, to Fitzgerald, transcend place.

Fitzgerald addresses the idea of character delineation by "type" even more dramatically and intricately in his characterization of Amanthis Powell. Despite being geographically located in the North, Amanthis Powell may be associated with what Holman has suggested to be Fitzgerald's construction of the South—"a land of beauty and romance, of lost order, of tradition and dignity, and of a glorious past . . . [something] to be dreamed of and loved in youth, but . . . abandoned in maturity"—as delineated in the first of the two Tarleton stories; and yet she also

defies this construction by performing actions that stand in direct contradiction to this construction. As Ronald Berman points out, "the color gold often appears in [Fitzgerald's] southern stories, suggesting a haunting beauty that deserves to be remembered."[9] Just as the color gold imbues Fitzgerald's Tarleton stories (as Berman suggests, most notably in "The Ice Palace"), so the color yellow is everywhere in evidence in "Dice." Early in the story the narrator remarks how "There was something enormously yellow about the whole scene—there was the sunlight, for instance, that was yellow, and the hammock was of the particularly hideous yellow peculiar to hammocks, and the girl's yellow hair was spread out upon the hammock in a sort of invidious comparison" (*S* 238). While in the earlier Tarleton stories the color gold suggests "a haunting beauty," here another, less burnished, shade of that same color appears to suggest that, in the North at least, such beauty is only surface; it is, in fact, a more "hideous" version of the color he had heretofore associated with the South. And yet, on another level, Fitzgerald may have been at least tacitly acknowledging that his *construction* of the South was losing its luster, for Amanthis is ultimately a character who shares the traits of Fitzgerald's most obvious female representation of the South, Sally Carrol Happer. Like Sally Carrol, Amanthis is first depicted in an indolent pose: while Sally Carrol "gazed out down sleepily" from an upper-story window (*S* 48), Amanthis "slept with her lips closed and her hands clasped behind her head" in a hammock (*S* 230). And just as Sally Carrol leads an impassive life in the South, so Amanthis "opened her left eye slightly to see June come in and then closed it and retired contentedly back into her dreams" (*S* 242). Both Sally Carrol and Amanthis suggest the indolence that Fitzgerald associated with the South, an indolence characteristic of a "life in death," of a "golden [or yellow] past."

As Amanthis is a character capable of distinguishing human virtue, Fitzgerald further associates her with his construction of the South with regard to the values of "tradition and dignity" that are part of the concept of *noblesse oblige*. In her assessment of Jim Powell as compared to her high-society compatriots, Amanthis finds him "better than all of them put together" (*S* 252)—a judgment that situates her morally in the camp of Nick Carraway. Her words reflect her ability to see outside the boundaries of social and economic status in order to judge Jim on his character, and his character is one driven by the intent to improve another's condition (albeit socially and, perhaps, economically). And yet, Amanthis defies Fitzgerald's construction of the South in her deceitful actions: She allows Jim to persist in the erroneous notion that she is not part of high society, but rather a woman from a lower social and economic class whose suitors are "promising young barbers from the neighboring village with somebody's late hair still clinging to their coat-sleeves" (*S* 241). She observes his actions with regard to his jazz school—actions he has taken in order to afford her entrance into high society—with baffled and detached amusement, and abandons him for sub-debutante dances during much of their time in Southampton. In her prolonged deceit, she is shown to be a character who is not the embodiment of Fitzgerald's construction of the South; in effect, she both is and is not: she is the construction and the antithesis of that construction, a complex character that defies easy categorization on a geographical level.

Ultimately, Fitzgerald's complex portraits of Amanthis and Jim, but particularly of Amanthis, suggest that neither can be typed in relation to geography, which in turn indicates Fitzgerald's growing realization that his symbolic structure of the South was breaking down. This realization is echoed in the opening lines of "The Rich Boy," and ultimately plays itself out in Fitzgerald's abandonment of the Southern symbolic structure in his satirical portrait of Andy

in “The Last of the Belles.” When Andy in “The Last of the Belles” realizes that Ailie will not marry him—as she says, “Oh, no, I couldn’t marry you” (*S* 461)—Andy comes to this realization about the South: “All I could be sure of was this place that had once been so full of life and effort was gone, as if it had never existed, and that in another month Ailie would be gone, and the South would be empty for me forever” (*S* 663). This flash of insight appears to say more about Fitzgerald’s understanding of his early romantic construction of the South and of southern “types” than it does about Andy’s romantic inclinations towards Ailie.

What then is one to conclude about the importance of a Fitzgerald story that deconstructs regional stereotypes, particularly those closely related to his Southern stories, as is “Dice, Brassknuckles & Guitar,” which clearly serves as a link between the other three stories in the Tarleton Trilogy? With regard to his Southern narrative the story marks the point at which Fitzgerald begins to abandon his previous construction of the South that is rooted in regional types to write stories that are more firmly grounded in individualized characters. By analogy, just as Fitzgerald needed to play out his indictment of the excesses of capitalism in the dress-rehearsal fantasy “The Diamond as Big as the Ritz” before treating its themes in a more subtle manner in “Winter Dreams” and *The Great Gatsby*, so he had to work in the mode of the absurd romantic comedy in a bridge story like “Dice, Brassknuckles & Guitar” before settling into his more nuanced treatment of the reductive nature of regional stereotyping in “The Last of the Belles.” As for those qualities that he will carry from his Southern narrative into his larger American narrative, he arguably leaves behind all types and calls out as negative such qualities as hypocrisy and inhumanity, while embracing, as John Kuehl has noted, certain universal values such as honor, courtesy, and courage—values that play well far beyond the bounds of Dixie.

NOTES

[1] M. J. Bruccoli, S. F. Smith, and J. P. Kerr (eds.) *The Romantic Egoists* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), 97.
[2] S. Donaldson, "Fitzgerald's Romance with the South," *The Southern Literary Journal* 5 (Spring 1973), 3-17; 3. Subsequent references to this work are included in the text.
[3] C. H. Holman, "Fitzgerald's Changes in the Southern Belle: The Tarleton Trilogy" in J. R. Bryer (ed.) *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald: New Approaches in Criticism* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 53-64; 56. Subsequent references to this work are included in the text.
[4] J. Kuehl, "Psychic Geography in 'The Ice Palace,'" in J. R. Bryer (ed.) *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald: New Approaches in Criticism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 169-79; 174. Subsequent references to this work are included in the text.
[5] A. H. Petry, *Fitzgerald's Craft of Short Fiction: The Collected Stories* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1989), 156.
[6] H. K. Bullock, "The Southern and the Satirical in 'The Last of Belles'" in J. R. Bryer (ed.) *New Essays on F. Scott Fitzgerald's Neglected Stories* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1996), 130-37; 131.
[7] Zelda Fitzgerald, "What Became of Our Flappers and Sheiks?" reprinted in M. J. Bruccoli, S. F. Smith, and J. P. Kerr (eds.) *The Romantic Egoists* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), 133.
[8] See M. Nowlin (ed.), "Appendix E: Race and the National Culture, 1920-1925" in F. S. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2007), 237.
[9] R. Berman, "Fitzgerald's Intellectual Context" in K. Curnutt (ed.), *A Historical Guide to F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004), 69-84; 82.