INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.

2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.

3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.

4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.

5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

University Microfilms International
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106 USA
St. John's Road, Tyler's Green
High Wycombe, Bucks, England HP10 8HR
CASS, Colin Stephen, 1944-
HEROISM IN THE APPRENTICE NOVELS OF JAMES
GOULD COZZENS.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1976
Literature, American

© 1976

COLIN STEPHEN CASS

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
HEROISM IN THE APPRENTICE NOVELS
OF JAMES GOULD COZZENS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Colin Stephen Cass, B.A., M.A.

The Ohio State University
1976

Reading Committee:
John M. Muste
Julian Markels
Richard Weatherford

Approved By
John M. Muste
Adviser
Department of English
For

S. G. C.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the following for permission to quote from copyrighted materials:

Mr. James Gould Cozzens, for permission to quote from Confusion, Michael Scarlett, Cock Pit, The Son of Perdition, and two unpublished letters.

Brandt & Brandt, 101 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017, for permission to quote from the works of James Gould Cozzens.

Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 757 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017, for permission to quote from the works of James Gould Cozzens, and from Frederick Bracher's The Novels of James Gould Cozzens.

The University of Pittsburgh Press, for permission to quote from Harry John Mooney's James Gould Cozzens: Novelist of Intellect.

The University of Minnesota Press, for permission to quote from Granville Hicks's James Gould Cozzens.
Oliver & Boyd, 23 Ravleston Terrace, Edinburgh, for permission to quote from D. E. S. Maxwell's Cozzens.

Twayne Publishers Division, G. K. Hall & Co., for permission to quote from Pierre Michel's James Gould Cozzens.

Mr. C. E. Frazer Clark, Jr., for permission to quote from James B. Meriwether's James Gould Cozzens: A Checklist.
VITA

April 30, 1944 .... Born - Staten Island, New York

1965 ............ B.A., Hamilton College, Clinton, New York

1965-1973 ........ Teaching Assistant and Associate, English Department, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1972 ............ M.A., The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1973-1976 ........ Instructor, English Department, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan

PUBLICATIONS

"Two Stylistic Analyses of the Narrative Prose in Cozzens' By Love Possessed." Style, 4, No. 3 (Fall 1970), 213-38.


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Modern American Novels

Studies in Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Crane, O'Hara, and Cozzens. Professor Matthew J. Bruccoli

Studies in Bibliography and Textual Criticism. Professors Matthew J. Bruccoli and Richard D. Altick

Studies in Twain and James. Professor William Charvat
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. CONFUSION: A NOVEL</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. MICHAEL SCARLETT: A HISTORY</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. COCK PIT</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE SON OF PERDITION</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. A NOTE ON BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GUIDES</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF REFERENCES</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

When James Gould Cozzens published Morning Noon and Night in 1968, he was sixty-five, a usual age for retirement. With reason, then, the writer in the New York Times Book Review\(^1\) speculated that the novel's closing lines might also be Mr. Cozzens' farewell to his own literary career. Now, eight years later, the reviewer's surmise looks to have been correct. Except for the retrospective publication of two hitherto unpublished short works,\(^2\) the Cozzens literary corpus remains substantially what it was\(^3\).


in 1968: one collection of short stories, *Children and Others* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964); miscellaneous uncollected short works in verse and prose; and the thirteen novels on which his reputation is chiefly based:

(1) *Confusion: A Novel* (Boston: B. J. Brimmer, 1924), "Conf";


(3) *Cock Pit* (New York: William Morrow, 1928), "CP";

(4) *The Son of Perdition* (New York: William Morrow, 1929), "SoP";

(5) *S.S.San Pedro* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1931), "SSSP";

(6) *The Last Adam* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1933), "LA";

(7) *Castaway* (New York: Random House, 1934), "Cast";

(8) *Men and Brethren* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1936), "M&Br";

(9) *Ask Me Tomorrow* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1940), "AskMeT";

(10) *The Just and the Unjust* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1942), "J&U";
The present paper studies the first four of these thirteen novels.

Critics generally treat Confusion, Michael Scarlett, Cock Pit, and The Son of Perdition as Cozzens' "apprentice novels" and either dismiss them outright or survey them briefly on the way to the much more substantial and representative works that begin with S.S. San Pedro in 1931. The very titles will be unfamiliar to all but specialists, since Cozzens listed none of them in S.S. San Pedro or subsequent books. All four are, at present, out of print; were unavailable twenty years ago; and are likely to remain so. Pierre Michel refers to a 1959 letter in which Cozzens says that "they ought not to be reprinted," and


in a note answering my request for permission to quote
from these novels, Mr. Cozzens remarks on his present feel-
ings about them:

As you doubtless know I didn't allow them to be
included in Harcourt's Uniform Edition. Myself,
I'd say you learn at most:

1. When a 19 year old youth's ms. is put in
print by the first, alas ill-advised, publisher
who sees it, that is not good. Callow, he imagines
he has it--writing--made.

2. While, as Aldous Huxley proposed, in writing
there is no substitute for talent, talent unhappily
is no substitute for mature life-experience and the
sweat without end of working and reworking and
reworking.6

Cozzens says, in the frequently cited interview for
Twentieth Century Authors, that "'My first novel was
written when I was nineteen, and that, and the next, and
the next, were about what you would expect. I have the
advantage of being older now.'"7 When writing to his bib-
liographer, he refers twice in the same paragraph to his
unfavorable opinions of his first novel, calling it
"Confusion (poor book)" and "the somewhat embarrassing

6 24 July 1976. Quoted with permission.

7 Twentieth Century Authors: A Biographical Dictionary
of Modern Literature, ed. Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard
volume. Elsewhere, in fact, he admits that this book is "much too painful to talk about."

Reading these novels lets one sympathize with the embarrassment that the mature writer might understandably feel when looking back on his earliest works. As John Fischer puts it, Cozzens "doesn't like to have them read now, for the same reason that Yehudi Menuhin would not like to have a recording distributed of his early finger exercises.

Another scholar, Robert E. Scholes, advances an explanation for this authorial reticence:

"Why, then, does Mr. Cozzens choose to ignore them? The answer is that they were, in the main, written by a young man who was so different in attitude from the 'classicist' of today that he may well be considered another person. The James Gould Cozzens of the later novels is not especially proud of the young man who bore his name back in the twenties."

Granting, however, that the writer might


11 "The Commitment of James Gould Cozzens," Arizona Quarterly, 16 (Summer 1960), 130.
find them too painful to talk about, it does not follow that scholars are well advised to imitate his example. On the contrary, there are compelling reasons why we should discuss them.

The most obvious reason is the one that justifies all studies of juvenilia: we cannot claim to understand an author's career if we know only one end of it. In fact, our right to say that we know even that much would be debatable: without understanding where an author is coming from in his literature, how can we be sure we see where he has arrived? This logic applies to the juvenilia of any writer, provided only that scholars concede that he is worth bothering with in the first place. And even this stipulation is rather difficult to impose fairly. In effect, it puts the evaluation ahead of the analysis—judges the thing before we are certain of what we are judging. Heinrich Straumann warns against this unsound procedure in his article about the furor that followed the publication of By Love Possessed. Examining not only the novel, but the critical procedures that were brought to bear upon it, he observes first that "an absence of consensus in these matters [critical estimates of contemporary literature] cannot but throw its fatal reflection on the whole work of modern criticism," and after a perceptive, impartial, and rigorously logical dissection
of the book and the controversy, he sums up: "Our survey should have made it clear that with one exception [i.e., the substantiated objections to the book's style] all the judgments passed on the novel are not based on any clearly definable and indisputable reasons, but that these reasons are brought into focus to support some preconceived likes and dislikes."\(^{12}\) He argues, in other words, that for the sake of authors and critics alike our critical judgments ought to be more methodical and disinterested than they were in the *By Love Possessed* fracas.

But if the principle that thorough analysis should precede evaluation can be invoked to justify studies of juvenilia by any writer, it applies especially to Cozzens. This is partly because the end of his career is too full of contradictions, surprises and unanswered questions to seem tidily finished. We cannot very comfortably say that we understand even one end of his career, let alone the whole thing. Without belaboring the point, we should notice a few salient unsettled questions concerning this novelist.

The first is that in 1950 after Guard of Honor, Cozzens' eleventh novel, had received the Pulitzer Prize, many critics were willing to agree that Cozzens was worth bothering about. As Granville Hicks summarized the case, Cozzens "has been writing novels for twenty-five years ... and has been writing novels that individually have been highly praised." Responding to Bernard De Voto's pugnacious enthusiasm about Guard of Honor, Hicks added that "if few critics rose to his [De Voto's] own rhapsodic heights, only two or three failed to see substantial merits in the novel." Furthermore, Hicks thought that "One thing is clear: he has kept on growing; and there are not many novelists over forty of whom one can say that."13 Mark Schorer had earlier made the same observation: "He has the vital gift of growth, will not write himself out . . . ."14

And yet it was equally true that "In 1957, when James Gould Cozzens' 'By Love Possessed' finally appeared, nine years after his last previous novel, 'Guard of Honor,' it was instantly pronounced a masterwork by critical and popular acclaim and, an almost incredibly short time thereafter, it was dismissed (by what eventually came to be at


least general critical assent) as a fake masterwork. 15 Since then, interest in Cozzens has dropped off sharply. As R. W. Lewis said, "his properly developing career and reputation were given fame's kiss of death" 16 when By Love Possessed was overpraised. The "muted appearance" 17 of the collection of stories, Children and Others (1964), did nothing to reverse this sudden plummeting of his career. Reviewers were almost unanimous in finding Morning Noon and Night (1968) dull and otherwise disagreeable, and even Granville Hicks admitted that "I am less impressed by Morning Noon and Night than I was by Guard of Honor and By Love Possessed, but it is good Cozzens, and good Cozzens is never to be ignored." 18 Few people heeded his advice, for there has been hardly a stir of interest on Cozzens' behalf since then.

There are some disturbing aspects to this story. One is the abruptness—in "an almost incredibly short time"—

15 Brooks, "The I in Henry Dodd Worthington," p. 3.


17 Ibid., p. 4.

of this demise of a literary reputation. It raises doubts. Why did the success or failure of a single novel count, in the long run, for more than all the earlier career of an author who had been growing steadily until he could write The Just and the Unjust and Guard of Honor? Why didn't the generally very favorable consensus about the middle novels carry more weight than it did? Do we forget all the earlier Hemingway work just because Across the River and Into the Trees is disappointing? To take up one of the most damaging specific charges that were made against By Love Possessed—its objectionable style—why wasn't Cozzens accorded a better credit rating than he was? Until By Love Possessed, he had been routinely praised for his style—its clarity, economy, discipline, subtlety, sensitivity to patterns of speech, and so forth. Why, then, did so many critics treat the style of By Love Possessed as an indication of Cozzens' ineptitude, when it might with far better reason have been regarded as an experiment by an already proved master of a more conventional prose? Whether the experiment was successful is largely beside the point, or should have been, given the book's compensatory virtues in scale, substance, and structural virtuosity. Why, in short, did evaluation so quickly and finally crowd out analysis in this complicated matter?
There were enough reviewers, critics, and readers who found *By Love Possessed* compelling that they turned it for a while into that rare phenomenon, the popular and critical success. What became of them during the countercharge, and especially afterward? Were they made suddenly to see the error of their ways? Was the truth about the book so obvious that, once pointed out, there was nothing more to say? This I find hard to believe about such an involved book and controversy, let alone the eleven prior books. Yet if so, what was this stunning truth?

The whole dispute is now notorious for having become inflamed and for giving off clouds of opinion on personal, political and social matters which, strictly speaking, were irrelevant to the appraisal of the work as literature. That the outcome of such an imbroglio should have been, in effect, a verdict of guilty passed on a serious professional's career seems regrettable, to say the least. How far can we trust such a verdict? It is not my purpose here to answer all these questions. I merely mention them to show that the problem of identifying James Gould Cozzens'
rightful place in American literature has been shoved untidily to the back of the drawer. It is an easily disproved fallacy that Cozzens was neglected by the critics, yet I believe that he wrote some uncommonly good novels which we neglect now.

Other reasons also encourage a study, not only of Cozzens' career in general, but of his juvenilia in particular. Numerically, the four apprentice works represent almost a third of his total output of thirteen novels. They are, thus, too large a body of evidence to ignore, especially if Cozzens, now that his writing seems finished, is to receive the reappraisal that I believe his work merits. In fact, these novels are the logical place to begin that review. And since the first four books have long been out of print, their unavailability itself imposes a certain custodial responsibility on scholarship.

The sparsity of criticism of the apprentice fiction constitutes yet another reason for the present study. This criticism can be discussed under five
headings: (a) contemporary reviews, published in periodicals when the books first appeared; (b) reviews which, focusing on later novels, mention the earlier ones by way of background; (c) articles on Cozzens in scholarly journals; (d) books containing passages or sections devoted to Cozzens; and (e) books devoted entirely to Cozzens.

Contemporary criticism of the apprentice novels ranges from miserable to quite good, though most of it hovers about a critical mediocrity, and all is hampered by the normal brevity and purpose of literary reviews. Surely, too, the weaknesses inherent in our present system of book reviewing become magnified in the appraisals of a neophyte's books. Everywhere are evidences that the books were read and the reviews composed in great haste. Inaccuracies, irrelevancies, superficial observations, and indefensible generalities of all kinds abound. The frequency of misspelled names, incorrect synopses, and faulty quotations allows this category of criticism to be evaluated on unusually objective criteria. We should not hope to find much incisive and thorough thinking heralded by such shoddiness. At worst, the reviewer was someone like Isa Glenn, the "Author of 'Southern Charm,,'" who, obviously being paid by the word, gushed in almost meaningless prose-gestures: "... the story of 'Cock Pit' is one of
beauty—the beauty of words delicately chosen and of a theme so difficult, so obscure, for so long taboo, that only the true artist may write it. A plot story? So it is. An adventure story? Truly. Tropical adventure . . . ,"19 and so on, through a long review that never explains what this taboo theme is; that ignores the main characters, and pads with a list of minor ones; that neglects the plot, and fills with a long quotation from a minor scene; and that seems to prove nothing but the critic's ineptitude. At the opposite extreme are ill-tempered reviews like "There Was a Lady,"20 in which the anonymous writer sneers at Confusion. But the best review of Cozzens' early books shows both the possibilities and limitations of this source of criticism. Titled "Elizabethan England,"21 it takes a good-natured, useful, and intelligently balanced look at Michael Scarlett, finding "much to commend it" as "a roaring cloak-and-dagger romance" which has "a certain timeliness" in the 1920's and a "success in imitating the spirit of Elizabethan

dialogue." The writer manages to give much information in small compass about the characters, scenes, and actions of the book, while also chiding Cozzens for some avoidable anachronisms before closing with forbearance toward the book's obvious weaknesses: "For the story of 'Michael Scarlett' little need be said. . . . This book will bring hearty pleasure to mature minds, who will overlook the matter for the sake of the manner. . . ." Criticism of this kind seems all that one could ask, yet even here, the brevity of an ordinary book review precludes analytic profundity. Our present understanding of the juvenilia owes very little to even the best of contemporary critics.

Only scraps of criticism of the first novels occur in reviews of later books. As Cozzens improved, the reviews did too, yet the discussion of the apprentice pieces remained necessarily short, extending from a clause to a paragraph at most. Many reviewers passed over his early fiction in silence. Others, like William Rose Benet writing on Castaway (1934), were unaware that Cozzens had published anything before S.S. San Pedro (1931).22 Still others began resorting to the redundant formulas—most of them deriving from one of three sources of biographical

information— for acknowledging the first novels and getting past them: that Confusion was written while Cozzens was still an undergraduate at Harvard; that Cock Pit and The Son of Perdition derive from Cozzens' experience teaching the children of American engineers in Cuba; that the first books are romantic, unrepresentative, and not very good; and that Cozzens no longer acknowledges them in his subsequent books. In short, the later reviews make no significant contribution to our understanding of the juvenilia.

From the third category, the scholarly journals, criticism of Cozzens is better and more plentiful than from the contemporary or later book reviews, and yet this fact has little actual bearing on our knowledge of the apprentice fiction. To date there has been only one article devoted solely to a juvenile work. It is J. C. Levenson's note, "Prudence and Perdition," consisting of a single paragraph on The Son of Perdition. Levenson mentions the frequently observed similarity to Conrad's Nostromo. He generalizes that The Son of Perdition is not only Cozzens' "first good novel," but (very

\[23\] (a) Twentieth Century Authors; (b) Van Gelder, "Cozzens at Work"; and (c) "The Hermit of Lambertville," Time, 2 Sept. 1957, pp. 72-74, 76, 78.

\[24\] Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction, 1, No. 3 (Winter 1958), 53-54.
surprisingly) "still one of his best," which "clarifies his later work in interesting ways." The brevity of his wide-ranging and paradoxical note does not permit him to develop such ambitious claims.

A handful of other articles include some discussion of the juvenilia, but it is usually redundant and always brief. The longest consideration takes only two pages. It occurs in Robert E. Scholes' "The Commitment of James Gould Cozzens" and makes the important point that "one of the favorite pastimes of the elder Cozzens is chastising the recollected figure of his youth" (p. 132). Scholes regards Confusion and Michael Scarlett as having "an almost identical story" about "Beautiful roses, exquisite youths, destroyed by a cruel, cruel world." He observes that "Sensibility and emotional commitment are here, out of control to the point of mawkishness perhaps, but definitely here" (p. 131). By showing evidence of similar authorial attitudes, "not absent but merely controlled" (p. 132) in Cozzens' later years, Scholes thus involves the juvenilia in his rebuttal of "the repeated cry of critics and reviewers that Mr. Cozzens 'fails to commit himself'. . ." (p. 129). This scholar is unusual in believing that S.S. San Pedro (1931) and Castaway (1934)

25 Arizona Quarterly, 16, No. 2 (Summer 1960), 129-144.
"belong with Cock Pit (1928) and Son of Perdition (1929) to a period of experiment which separates the early sentimental efforts from the mature works" (p. 134). And when he contends that The Son of Perdition is seriously disunified and "Thematically . . . more confused than Confusion" (p. 135), I cannot agree with him.

The only other treatment of comparable length in a periodical is in John William Ward's "Reappraisals: James Gould Cozzens and the Condition of Modern Man." Ward, who gives a page (p. 95) to Confusion, believes that "the weakness of the novel is that the reader is not sure how to take the meaning." Despite its inadequacies, however, he thinks that it "strikes the very note he [Cozzens] was to explore in his mature fiction: the necessity for experience, the adjustment of the ideal to the actual." He also observes that "No artist develops in a simple linear fashion, getting better and better, exploring his theme more deeply and more intelligently in each successive novel, but Cozzens comes close" (p. 95). Passing over Michael Scarlett and Cock Pit, Ward devotes another half page (p. 97) to The Son of Perdition, which he finds "interesting for two reasons: it marks the tentative discovery of the way Cozzens will organize his major novels

while, at the same time, it wavers between two ways of handling the story." He recognizes that "Cozzens is already exploring the problem of the limits of human action, the moral complexity arising from man's limitations as man," yet, like Scholes, Ward sees disunity, a failure of "the interpenetration of the various levels of action," there being "little functional relationship" between the American and Cuban societies.

The several other articles, spending a page or less on the first novels, ought to be surveyed, their brevity notwithstanding. Francis X. Duggan finds a continuous development of "the central theme of the crushing weight of circumstance" from *Confusion* through *By Love Possessed*. He summarizes *Confusion*, stressing that "circumstance renders meaningless man's best aims and accomplishments" (p. 605), but feels that the theme "is not so evident in his next three novels . . . ." In a short paragraph, Chester Eisinger scans several ways in which the apprentice novels "anticipate the themes and methods of his maturity," mentioning "the need to endure," "the conflicts between passion and reason, principle and reality," "the fictional possibilities in Christian dogma," and Cozzens' attitudes

toward women and novel writing. John T. Frederick notices the negative attitudes toward religion in Confusion, Cock Pit, The Son of Perdition, and several other works, as a preliminary to his examination of the anti-Catholicism in By Love Possessed. And in a paper on Cozzens' reputation, Granville Hicks includes a short anecdotal paragraph on the juvenilia, remarking that they "were probably a long way beyond what one would expect from so young a writer." Stanely Edgar Hyman, in one of the best articles on Cozzens, summarizes the first four books in one page, disposing of Confusion, which was "well-titled," as mostly "the exotic wish-fulfillment of a schoolboy, full of affected clap-trap," and finding Michael Scarlett "equally precious, although rather less earnest." Speaking of Cock Pit, he says that Ruth Micks, "another girl hero," exhibits "a combination of qualities generally found only in the heroes of comic books." He takes The Son of Perdition for

29 "Love by Adverse Possession: The Case of Mr. Cozzens," College English, 19, No. 7 (April 1958), 315.
31 "James Gould Cozzens and the Art of the Possible," New Mexico Quarterly, 19, No. 4 (Winter 1949), 477-78.
"Cozzens' first relatively mature novel." Although it involves a "series of tragic and melodramatic incidents" that come "out of the hopper as no more than bathos," Hyman feels that "the novel's central opposition of human values to industrial values is vividly realized, and for the first time Cozzens displays an imaginative grasp of characters not thinly disguised projections of himself" (pp. 477-78). As the article ranges from theme to theme, Hyman sometimes locates the earlier books in relation to those themes: "the concept of 'earned' morality" (p. 480), for instance; "the radical imperfectability of man" (p. 480); the nature of "power and authority" (p. 482); the paired impulses to "self-destruction" and "survival-instinct" (p. 484); snobbery (p. 488); and preoccupations with sexual frustration and death (p. 489 ff.). As Hyman sees it, Cozzens' career "seems to divide into three clearly demarcated stages: the first four exotic works; the two short novels, *S.S. San Pedro* and *Castaway*, as a transitional stage symbolically killing off the old machinery and personality; and then the five [as of 1949] mature professional comedies" (p. 493).

Three articles in magazines with general circulation should also be included in this category, since they shed some light on the apprentice fiction. Robert Van Gelder reports on an interview with Cozzens, in the article,
"James Gould Cozzens at Work." In this, one of the few interviews ever granted by an exceedingly reticent author, Cozzens enlarges on the now embarrassing beginnings of his career:

He returned again to the subject of discipline. He is certain that he achieved publication when much too young. He spoke of his first novel, put into print when he was a 19-year-old at Harvard, with conditions in algebra still to pass, referring to this novel as "much too painful to talk about."

"When I was that age I admired a friend of mine who got drunk at 9 o'clock in the morning. That is too early in life to begin to think of yourself as a writer. Because you are very young when you think a fellow who comes to your rooms early in the morning, already drunk, and is heaving bottles against near-by walls at noon, is entirely admirable."

... But of his first novel he continued: "It made me, in my own eyes, a real figure in literature, at once; an author of far too much promise to waste time any longer at schoolboy work. So I quit school and got at my career, started right in at what I thought was the top. In that way every natural fault was solidified, and it is taking all my effort now, in my mid-thirties, to wipe out those faults, to really learn to write."32

In 1957 the New York Times Book Review carried another short interview, some of which again concerns the juvenilia:

Q. Mr. Cozzens, we would assume that you did not—in your own opinion—hit your stride until novel number five. Will you comment on the present tendency of writers to reach for a typewriter and to achieve publication in their teens, if not before?

A. Anyone who means to write should certainly reach for a typewriter in his teens. What publishers publish is their business, but I often think they should show more judgment.

Q. What is your favorite Cozzens novel?

A. "Confusion." It seemed to me perfect when I was 19 and nothing else I've written has ever seemed that way.33

But surely the most famous interview was the one that Cozzens granted to Time magazine. It became the basis of Time's cover article for September 2, 1957.34 In its gossipy survey of Cozzens’ life, it rummages through the author's family history, childhood, school days, and early career, and includes passing judgments on the juvenilia: "Aptly titled Confusion, it concerned a shimmering young sylph named Cerise D'Atrée who was caught in the Fitzgerald undertow and dragged to an early Jazz Age death" (p. 74).

It mentions Michael Scarlett, "a mawkish Elizabethan historical romance" (p. 74), then "two more apprentice novels, Cockpit [sic] and The Son of Perdition, unlikely tales of tropic adventure" (p. 76). In conjunction with the Time article, however, one should read the letter from Cozzens to Raphael Paganelli that is published as Plate 14 in


34 "The Hermit of Lambertville," pp. 72-74, 76, 78.
Meriwether's Checklist (p. [86]). It begins, "Yes, I do have first-hand knowledge of inaccuracies in TIME . . . ," and without naming them specifically, he discusses the degree to which he and Time are to blame for them. On the one hand, he says that the article "was so full of inaccuracies, of nonsense evident to anyone who knew me, that it would have amounted to a joke if much of the misinformation hadn't been phrased in ways that seemed to make me deride and despise, individually and collectively, quite a lot of people. Put into my mouth was a series of pronouncements some asinine, some gratuitously unkind, that I'd be about the last writer in the world to make." But he feels that because he did not insist on seeing the remarks being attributed to him before they were published, he is largely to blame: "In short, my own negligence, not any 'slanting' or distorting of facts by TIME accounts for all or most of what was ridiculous and untrue in the story." The letter (21 Oct. 1963) thus reinforces the impression which the Time article itself gives: that this source was meant for popular consumption, is not above suspicion, and should not be relied upon very heavily.

The fourth category of criticism— that which emanates from books with passages or sections devoted to Cozzens—is interesting because there is so little mention of his juvenile works, unless a passing allusion to his "very
unimpressive beginnings in books like *Confusion* (1924) and *Michael Scarlett* (1925)\(^{35}\) qualifies as a significant critical remark. Another paragraph containing nothing new occurs in Orville Prescott's volume, *In My Opinion*.\(^{36}\)

General and literary encyclopedias can be relied on to mention Cozzens, but seldom to say anything about the juvenilia beyond the fact that the four titles exist. The notable exception, as I have already mentioned, is the Cozzens entry in *Twentieth Century Authors*. These authorial comments have been influential enough that they should be quoted here:

"During my sophomore year (1923-24) my first book was published. This went to my head, and I took a year's leave of absence to write a second book. It was published in 1925, but instead of going back to college I went to Cuba, where I spent a year teaching the children of the American engineers at a sugar mill in Santa Clara Province. In the summer of 1926 I went to Europe and remained there a year.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

"My first novel was written when I was nineteen, and that, and the next, and the next, were about what you would expect. I have the advantage of being older now."\(^{37}\)

\(^{35}\) W. M. Frohock, "Cozzens and His Critics: A Problem in Perspective," in his *Strangers to This Ground: Cultural Diversity in Contemporary American Writing* (Dallas: Southern Methodist Univ. Pr., 1961), p. 82.


Harry R. Warfel's *American Novelists of Today* adds only the blanket generalization that *The Son of Perdition* represents an apparent advance over its predecessors.

The *Literary History of the United States: History alludes, in its "Third Edition, Revised 1963," to the juvenilia when it asks:

Why had the critics and the reading public not discovered Cozzens sooner? There is probably one simple answer. Not until the publication of *The Last Adam* (1933) and *Men and Brethren* (1936) could one be certain of the kind of subject Cozzens would be likely to treat and the techniques he would use. He had changed course in each of the earlier works, of which there were five between 1924 and 1934.

As Cozzens scholars will know, however, this is a red-faced entry, for Granville Hicks pointed out as late as 1950 that "Very little has been written about him, and he is not even mentioned in Maxwell Geismar's chapter on the novel in the *Literary History of the United States*, though three or four dozen of his contemporaries are at least named." It is also noteworthy that even in amended form, the LHUS, which now allots two pages to Cozzens, mentions the juvenile titles only in the Bibliography volume.


Finally, we need a fifth category for the material on the juvenile novels to be found in the five books concerned wholly with criticism of James Gould Cozzens. The one to begin with is Harry John Mooney, Jr.'s, James Gould Cozzens: Novelist of Intellect (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Pr., 1963), because in its 186 pages it contains only two sentences on the whole subject. Mooney opens by getting rid of the juvenilia: "During the early 1930's, after James Gould Cozzens had published four romantic and tendentious novels which he has since, in what is apparently mature self-knowledge, withdrawn from circulation, he wrote the first three of what Brendan Gill has called his eight 'canonical works'" (p. 5). He comes back to the apprentice works only once, in a parenthesis on page 157 that concerns another scholar's work.

The pamphlet, James Gould Cozzens, by Granville Hicks explores the juvenile works much more extensively in its 46 pages than Mooney's book does in 186, though I disagree with Mr. Hicks at several points. Of Confusion, for instance, he says, "If its theme was education, it was the education not of a young man rather like the author but that of an exotic young woman with a noble French father and a brilliant British mother" (p. 5). But I am of

41 Univ. of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers, No. 58 (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Pr., 1966).
Stanley Edgar Hyman's mind, that until The Son of Perdition, Cozzens' characters look like "thinly disguised projections of himself," \(^42\) and that Cerise is "rather like the author," her sex notwithstanding. Granville Hicks, believing that Michael Scarlett is "Bad in itself" but "impressive as a kind of schoolboy exercise," asserts that "Although the novel is less serious in intention than Confusion, and often descends to romantic claptrap, it seems to grow out of an affectionate feeling for the Elizabethan period and the writers who graced it. Moreover, in the character of Michael, Cozzens made some attempt to portray an ideal aristocrat—a man of letters but also a man of action and a romantic lover" (p. 6).

Mr. Hicks's comments on Cock Pit are more perplexing than on the other books. He says first that "The hero is Lancy Micks, ... a man quick with his fists or with a gun, a he-man through and through. His life is threatened in the course of an intra-company feud, and of course he acquits himself valiantly" (p. 7). I shall examine whether Lancy Micks is the hero or acquits himself valiantly. On the whole, I think he is not and does not, since the mess that his impulsiveness creates is left for his daughter to clean up, and since at the end of the

\(^42\) "James Gould Cozzens and the Art of the Possible," p. 478.
novel he "acquits himself" by doing nothing at all. Hicks also refers to Lancy's "daughter, Ruth, who is much like him." Although superficial similarities are of course present, as Hicks shows, we are probably closer to the young author's intention (difficult though that sometimes is to establish) if we concentrate on the difference between this father and daughter. Finally, I have trouble reconciling the claim that "The hero is Lancy Micks" with the seemingly contradictory one that "The central position in the novel, however, is occupied not by Lancy but by his daughter, Ruth . . . ." I can conceive of a character who occupies the "central position" of a novel, yet is not a hero. But I cannot conceive of a hero who does not occupy the "central position."

Mr. Hicks takes the usual position on The Son of Perdition, that it "marks the end of Cozzens' apprenticeship. More firmly written than any of its predecessors, it is also better constructed." But again, although I agree with him in this, I find his discussion marred by injudiciousness. In view of the Monagas, for instance, he surely goes too far by saying that "All of the characters are believable," though I concede that "none gets out of hand as Ruth Micks does in Cook Pit" (p. 7). For another example, to state that "Stellow is the kind of man Cozzens admires . . . ." (p. 8) is to offer a superficial
remark on a matter of some consequence. I have the same feeling about his reading that "... Stellow is defeated by the proud integrity of Vidal Monaga and by the inviolable independence of Oliver Findley" (p. 8). This interpretation makes the end of the novel sound obvious and uncomplicated when it is nothing of the kind. It may, in sum, be true that "Cozzens does not try to deal with his materials at any great depth" (p. 9), but in some ways—such as the attempted intertwining of allegory and realism; the increasingly apparent control over systems of imagery and allusion; the maturing irony; the narrative innovations; and especially the compromising of Stellow—the novel has greater depth than Hicks suspects.

D. E. S. Maxwell's Cozzens (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1964), the only British book, is hard to use because of its arbitrary categories, confusing documentation, and discursiveness. The overlaps and mismatches revealed just by the chapter titles promise disorder: "Conformity and Experience," "Emerging Themes," "Form and Meaning," "The Social Landscape," and "Cozzens and the American Tradition." The confusion is not superficial. The author cannot be in firm control of his argument when, for instance, Chapter I ends upon the conclusion that "Here, in short, is rather the classical than the conservative temper" (p. 24), and when the fourth
sentence of Chapter II is as follows: "His generally conservative cast of mind, though properly to be defined by the aberrant inflexions it embraces, is, no doubt, in part the inheritance of upbringing and background" (p. 25). Leaving aside the question of how a cast of mind can embrace an aberrant inflexion, I am perplexed to find that Cozzens' "conservative temper," so recently laid to rest, is so soon resurrected as his "generally conservative cast of mind."

Maxwell dismisses the first two books at once. "Cozzens too thinks little of his early books. In a letter to a Princeton undergraduate he speaks of them as having been 'written before I had taught myself to write or had any idea of what novels should do.'\textsuperscript{43} Maxwell reasons that "These novels, thus disavowed, need no detailed consideration" (p. 33), and the first two get no consideration at all.

He thinks that "With the Cuban novels, however, Cozzens is indeed approaching the areas where his real concerns are to lie" (p. 33). Mr. Maxwell therefore examines them (in reverse order), giving a page to The Son of Perdition, then three pages to Cock Pit. He is

\textsuperscript{43} Maxwell quotes here from John William Ward, "James Gould Cozzens and the Condition of Modern Man," \textit{American Scholar}, 27, No. 1 (Winter 1957-58), 96.
surely right that in the "sugar combines Cozzens found the
concentration of power, the hierarchical structure, the
interlocking responsibilities, the dependence on technical
skills, whose working have continued to fascinate him" (p.
34). His view of Stellow is somewhat peculiar, however,
for he implies Stellow's subordination, yet the novel gives
no reason to see him this way. Maxwell says that "Like
some medieval barony, sovereign and unscrupulous, the Com­
pany exacts similar qualities [order, security, purpose,
the beauty of machinery] from its administrators, who are
admirable in their ample vision of their functions, their
resolute power of action, their ability to accept the
authority delegated to them without being dwarfed by it.
Such a man is Joel Stellow, Administrator General . . . ,
and the hero of Son of Perdition" (p. 34). In a paper that
focuses on the early heroes, it is not a pointless cavil
to observe that we are never shown anyone more powerful
than Stellow, nor anyone delegating him his authority; no
one exacts anything from him, nor are there any other ad­
ministrators mentioned. Cozzens goes to some lengths to
reduce Stellow's stature, if not to dwarf him. And as for
"resolute power of action," the novel ends upon Stellow's
utter powerlessness to save his friend, his inability to
take any action at all. Critics generally hold that The
Son of Perdition falls short of Cozzens' best work, but it surely deserves a more accurate reading than this.

Maxwell's discussion of Cock Pit is largely a summary of characters and action. He does assert, though, that Lancy is a "hero of the Hemingway type" and that "what counts in human enterprise is not that it should succeed but that it should be manfully sustained" (p. 36). Whether he believes that Lancy manfully sustains his enterprise and succeeds is not clear. But in any case, Ruth's determination to succeed, and the author's evident approval of her success, make Mr. Maxwell's generalization seem untenable, regardless of how he applies it to Lancy. As for Ruth, Maxwell considers her intellectually her father's superior and also "endowed with the same qualities of physical endurance and masculine strength of will" (p. 36) that Lancy has. He also observes that "She is used, indeed, as a measure of the incompetence of the men who love her . . . ," meaning Ramon, Elmer Kirk, and Mr. Nortz. But Maxwell overlooks his own implications, for he concludes, not that Ruth also overshadows her father, measures his incompetence, and succeeds where he has failed; but that "only Lancy and Don Miguel are her peers."

Another confusing subject in Maxwell's discussion is his remark that "Virtue in Cock Pit, inconsistently with the urbane ideals of the later Cozzens, resides in the
in the unpolished Lancy Micks . . ." (p. 35). The preceding paragraph, on The Son of Perdition, closes by saying that "... Cozzens, moreover, as ... Cock Pit emphasises, is not comfortable with a representative of virtue the morality of whose own actions is often open to question" (p. 35). Apparently, Maxwell means Lancy, though how a person "the morality of whose own actions is often open to question" can be a "representative of virtue" is unclear.

Considering the resounding triumph of Ruth's not very virtuous expedients, including torture and blackmail, we should probably be asking whether Cozzens is impressed by conventional virtues in Cock Pit anyhow.

Pierre Michel, by devoting a seven-page chapter in his James Gould Cozzens (New York: Twayne, 1974) to the first four novels, gives the longest sustained discussion of the juvenilia ever to appear in print. The chapter's subtitles indicate the general direction of his findings: "The Mark of Immaturity"; "Improvement: Cock Pit"; and "Flickerings of Excellence: The Son of Perdition." After observing that "they all bear the mark of immaturity
and hastiness," Michel quotes a letter he received from Mr. Cozzens:

"They were all written before I was old (or mature) enough to manage the novelist's only proper job of so presenting his material that new or clarified meaning may be given to the reader's own human experience. While observation is first-hand and settings are real (in the Cuban books, at least), . . . the people are imperceptively handled. Intelligent adults won't have much patience with them." (p. 24)

But I think that Michel's prefatory remark is right: "Inept though they are, they are his first attempts at long fiction and, as such, are worthy of attention" (p. [8]). They afford evidence that Cozzens' "talent was maturing" (p. 30), though Michel dissents from the usual opinion by contending that they "do not announce the themes that he was to develop in his 'mature' novels; the reader and the critic can detect their timid budding" only by hindsight (p. 24).

Two paragraphs (pp. 24-25) describe and appraise Confusion. Michel thinks it "not a good novel" because it is disunified; it overemphasizes action, offers stereotypes instead of believable characters, and states rather than shows. He underestimates the novel thematically, however, in his surprisingly unrepresentative enumeration of its "themes--the exotic, the grandeur of French aristocracy, love and expatriation . . . ." When he focuses on love, his criticism seems even more questionable. He protests that "... Confusion puts on stage a very refined society,
and its people all attain perfection—even in love . . . . "
Granted, the characters are idealizations who at times seem all too perfect, but this remark about perfection in love disagrees with explicit material in the novel. Cerise at one point complains that "'if you could be satisfied with cheap emotion it would be perfectly splendid, because there's no end of it in the world. Cheap nostalgia, cheap sorrow, cheap love . . . ," all of which she generalizes as "'that sort of eternal imperfection I was trying to tell you about yesterday!" (Conf., 344). This seems hard to square with the claim that "its people all attain perfection—even in love." Michel adds that Cerise "dies when she hears that her lover is dead. The world is thus well lost for love, and the romantic notion that the lovers must be reunited in death comes full circle." Here again I feel that he ignores the book. Cozzens closes on a bitterly ironic demonstration of his scepticism about death and salvation. I see nothing in the novel about reunion in death, nor does Michel offer the evidence that should persuade us.

He thinks that Michael Scarlett is, if anything, worse than Confusion: it is "hardly an improvement. The setting, action, tone, and style of this cloak-and-dagger story betray Cozzens' youthful infatuation with the riotousness and with the verbal brilliance of the Elizabethan
nobility" (p. 25). He closes by saying that "To Confusion's flaws, which it duplicates, Michael Scarlett adds one that makes it almost unreadable: the dialogue—and the novel is almost all dialogue—is imitated from sixteenth-century English conversation; in spite of its archaicness, it does not manage to recreate an atmosphere; it only confuses the reader" (p. 26). I personally rather enjoy the dialogue, but the more interesting point here is the embedded contradiction. If Michel concedes that "the novel is almost all dialogue," then he really cannot mean that Michael Scarlett duplicates Confusion's flaws, since one of his objections to the earlier book is that Cozzens "tends merely to state rather than to show; he fails to dramatize" (p. 25), which would be nearly impossible in a book that is "almost all dialogue." On the contrary, one of Michael Scarlett's surest proofs of authorial growth is that it avoids many of the expositions and set speeches that marred Confusion.

Michel's analysis of the central character, Michael Scarlett, deserves attention because it disagrees with Granville Hicks's. Michel writes, "Although in this character, Cozzens may have made 'some attempt to portray an ideal aristocrat,' one cannot but discern in him an

44 Michel quotes Hicks, James Gould Cozzens, p. 6.
involuntary caricature of a young cavalier: an irresolute youth who has too many allegiances to be consistent and whose idealization of chivalry and lofty sentiments make him lose sight of the realities of life and his duties as a nobleman" (p. 26). If there is doubt about so fundamental a question as whether the author intended his protagonist to be Hicks's ideal hero or Michel's subject for caricature and presumably irony, then we are in no position to judge the work, let alone dismiss it as Mooney and Maxwell do. Michel and Hicks disagree again on Michael Scarlett as a rebel. Hicks has said of the young Cozzens that "He was not concerned with the revolt of youth . . . . In his own immature way he was already a conservative." But Michel asserts that Michael's "repeated gestures of defiance, 'whoring and rioting and blaspheming,' make him the antithesis of Cozzens' later rebels; for his acts are never frowned upon by the novelist" (p. 26). In other words, Michel takes Michael Scarlett for a rebel of whom Cozzens approves. At issue, again, are basic disagreements about what goes on in these juvenile works.

In the discussion of Cock Pit (pp. 26-28), Michel is more approving. He feels that "this novel is a definite improvement on the preceding ones . . ." (p. 27) and

45 James Gould Cozzens, pp. 5-6.
admires its evocation of the Cuban scene, its convincing professional details, and its concern with the relationships within a complex social organization. He objects, with reason, that in Cozzens' eagerness to create an atmosphere, he "crammed into the novel too many episodes that are unrelated . . . and that betray his gratuitous search for the exotic . . . ." He feels that Lancy's fight against the Company takes too long to get started; that Ruth's "love theme . . . is not quite integrated"; and that her success against Don Miguel is implausible. In most of these matters I agree with him. His thoughts on Lancy Micks and on the moral affirmations that should be deduced from Lancy are, however, highly debatable. Michel contends that Lancy "offers a picture of moral and professional perfection . . . ." Lancy is "A staunch defender of professional and moral integrity" who "fights his way through various probable and less probable episodes to come out the winner, thus asserting that honesty will prevail over perfidy" (p. 27). Michel then irreproachably adds that "novels in which the good are invariably rewarded and the evil just as invariably punished do not quite sound like life . . . ." (pp. 27-28). The question, though, is whether this description of Lancy and the book's plot is accurate, and I think it is not. We know that Lancy is given to brawling, gambling, and heavy drinking; other characters
have grounds for calling him a "'ten-cent bad man,'" a
"'fool,'" and a "'bullying murderer'" (CP 205, 35, 205,
resp.); and he kills a man he thinks is firing the cane,
and then tampers with the evidence. To call such a person
"a picture of moral and professional perfection" is simply
absurd. Moreover, to say that Lancy "fights his way
through . . . to come out the winner" is to ignore the
book's plot, implausible though that plot surely is. The
measures that Lancy takes against Don Miguel merely expose
himself to danger; an assassin very nearly kills him, and
on a second try would probably not fail. The winning
depends, not at all on the foolishly honest Lancy, but on
his conniving daughter. It will not do, then, to say that
the book ends by "asserting that honesty will prevail over
perfidy," or that "Finally, Cock Pit suffers from a naive
idealization of honesty and integrity . . ." (p. 28). On
the contrary, success belongs to the better schemer, who
resorts to kidnapping, torture, and blackmail on her way
to success. Michel is, of course, right at this point.
Ruth's success is utterly implausible. But that is another
matter.

Two pages (pp. 28-30) are devoted to The Son of
Perdition, which "shows much improvement over the preceed-
ing three" (p. 28). Michel admires the "use of the Cuban
background" (p. 28), the "tightly constructed" narrative,
the "concern with the structure of the book," and the "attention . . . to the analysis of character" (p. 30). Of the characters, he finds that "all of them are convincing because Cozzens, for the first time, stops to scrutinize them closely, thereby exposing their inner lives" (p. 30). Much of what Michel says in this section is sound, though he occasionally swerves into astonishing remarks, such as that Osmundo Monaga is "a reserved young man adept at making boats" (p. 29). This is a splendidly understated description of a character who fornicates with his own sister, knocks her out cold with a block of wood, attacks his father, and is eventually fed to a school of barracuda. Immediately after Michel's comments on the Monagas, he writes that "Cozzens stresses the primitiveness of these people who now belong to the company— to modern industry— but who still live in the midst of superstitions . . . ." (p. 29). Yet in fact, Cozzens emphasizes that all three Monagas are independent of the company, and that Vidal Monaga is one of the few unsuperstitious people in the town. To summarize, then, I feel that although Pierre Michel's book supplies at present the longest consecutive discussion of the juvenilia, it is an uneven work which, in a mere seven pages, contains some glaring faults.
We come finally to Frederick Bracher's book, *The Novels of James Gould Cozzens* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1959). Chronologically the first, it remains the longest, the most influential, and in some ways the best book of the five. Yet Harry John Mooney, Jr., criticizes it fairly when he writes that "the strengths and weaknesses are alike the product of its critical method. For Bracher has not attempted to treat individual novels in terms of either their thematic or aesthetic development, but has instead elected to study whole areas of Cozzens' work in relation to his entire output . . . . Consequently, Bracher's book is strong in its interpretation of recurrent Cozzens themes . . . [but] unsatisfactory to the reader who looks for a detailed analysis of any single novel." Even so, there are many observations of the juvenile novels scattered throughout this inconvenient volume, and Bracher's insights about the books are somewhat more penetrating and consistent than those of Maxwell, Hicks, or Michel.

Bracher's general attitude is that they "are the kind of youthful experiment for which most writers are fortunate enough not to find a publisher. All four books seem confused in intention and weak in structure, but they show nevertheless a real gift for phrasing and a sharp eye for

46 *James Gould Cozzens: Novelist of Intellect*, pp. 157, 158.
significant detail. No one of them could be called successful, but taken together they represent a remarkable achievement for a man in his early twenties" (p. 23).

Confusion and Michael Scarlett are often treated together in Bracher's book. They "have similar heroes and a common theme: a glittering, accomplished youth, at odds with society, is finally defeated by a world which does not measure up to the standards he demands. These novels are romantic not only in their glorification of the aristocratic rebel, but in their richly sensuous decor and sympathetic picture of romantic love" (p. 27). As I shall discuss at some length, I do not agree that these books paint an especially "sympathetic picture of romantic love." But the passage is more interesting because it shows that Bracher, like Michel, understands the early heroes as rebels. "In the early novels," he says, "the central figures are active rebels, fighting authority in its various forms and protesting against the iniquities of society and the condition of man" (p. 26). In fact, this view is fundamental to the books' value as Bracher sees them: "The process of evolution by which the hot protestant against authority changes into the mature hero who adapts to the unremitting constraint of circumstance can be traced in a survey of the early novels" (p. 26). That the early
heroes should be regarded as rebels, not protestants against authority, is taken for granted here and in much other criticism. It is a point worth challenging. Cerise D'Atrée, for one, commits no crimes against the state or any person, joins no political movements, speaks no denunciations of authority, leads no life of bohemian abandon. She is a model student, a girl who goes to her grave a virgin, who lives in utopian harmony with her elders, engages in many irreproachably wholesome activities and no dissipations whatever. Her rebellion against authority amounts to little more than an elopement with a rather presentable suitor, and a confused dissatisfaction with a world which—as Bracher puts it—"does not measure up to the standards [she] demands" (p. 27). Cerise is simply not an active rebel fighting authority.

An only slightly less one-sided demonstration can be made for Michael Scarlett, whom the Queen regards as "doubtfully companioned" (p. 281) but not disloyal. When, just before the end of the novel, she summons Michael, it is to rebuke him for the misbehaviors of his followers. Before the scene ends, Michael—who nowhere protests against the Queen's authority—has affirmed that "'I am your servant, Madam,'" and she, though displeased about the Golden Asse rowdies, tells this alleged rebel that "'Thou'rt too young for my purpose or I'd lift thee to
Queens do not generally care to promote active rebels who fight authority. Michael's most active opposition to authority occurs in the final scene, when he fights against the soldiers who have come to apprehend Nashe. But the meaning of the fight is not that Michael rebells against the queen, the state, authority in general, or law, which Bracher elsewhere calls the "ultimate adversary" (p. 236). Rather, Michael fights to protect his friend and, incidentally, to avenge the Spanish youth who was murdered by the same soldier that appears in this closing scene. Thus, although I agree with Bracher that Michael Scarlett "centers on a conflict of loyalties in Michael's heart" (p. 28), I cannot agree that it or its predecessor is a glorification of the "aristocratic rebel." And if we have no hot protestants against authority, how can we watch them evolve into something else?

My quarrel over Cock Pit is fundamentally the same with Bracher as with Michel, whose work at many points shows Bracher's strong influence. "In place of the courtly exquisites of the first two books," Bracher writes, "the Cuban novels glorify the strong, ruthless, durable individual who, unhampered by scruples of taste or conscience, devotes himself with undivided mind to the exercise of power" (p. 30). This opinion would be unexceptionable
enough, but that Bracher thinks "the outstanding example is Lancy Micks . . ." (p. 30). Like Michel, Bracher somehow regards Lancy as triumphantly successful, and he involves the book's title symbolism—that of fighting cocks—in this interpretation. He teaches that "The fighting cock is a symbol of the unrelenting aggressiveness of American engineers and executives battling in the cock pit of central Cuba . . ." (p. 30). He believes that Lancy Micks, "whose honesty and strength Cozzens clearly admired," is the "outstanding example," for "Like the fighting cock, he is the embodiment of pugnacious, self-sufficient masculinity. He holds out against the great machine that is the Company, and by his insistence on making an honest report defeats some elaborate chicanery planned by his superiors" (pp. 30-31). I will repeat myself to point out here that "self-sufficient" is precisely what Lancy proves not to be. His insistence on making an honest report, though nearly getting him killed, does not defeat anything until his daughter is finished doing all the defeating. As for Cock Pit glorifying "the strong, ruthless, durable individual who, unhampered by scruples of taste or conscience, devotes himself with undivided mind to the exercise of power," it may be true that Ruth is, to a certain extent, such a person and is thus glorified. But what is Lancy's "insistence on making an honest report" if not a scruple
of conscience? And at the end of the book, while Ruth is out rescuing him, what power is Lancy exercising? Finally, the heroine's remark to Mr. Britton, just before she saves the day for her brash father, is the appropriate rebuttal to Bracher's unsupported assertion that Cozzens admired Lancy's honesty: "'Honest people are always fools, Mr. Brit'" (p. 250). As the title symbolism assures us, Cock Pit is chiefly about a fight, yet it appears that the two critics who have had most to say about the juvenilia do not know who won it.

Bracher's mistake about the rebelliousness of Cerise and Michael does, I believe, invalidate his theory about the first four books, insofar as he maintains that a process of evolution occurs in those novels to change alleged young rebels into mature heroes (p. 26). No rebels, no process. For those critics who maintain that the disavowed juvenile works are of no consequence, the collapse of this theory cannot make much difference, since it concerns only unimportant books. But they will have to grant that Bracher's confusion about Lancy Micks has effects that are more far-reaching. Mistaken for a self-sufficient hero whose unrelenting aggressiveness and admirable honesty triumph, Lancy gives rise to a whole line of so-called "fighting-cock heroes." Bracher believes that "The fighting-cock hero reappears in the second Cuban novel,
The Son of Perdition, but he has changed sides" (p. 33).

George Bull, the interpretively troublesome protagonist of The Last Adam, is "the final admirable exemplar in Cozzens' novels of the fighting-cock hero . . ." (p. 37).

and later Bracher reasons that "If Doctor Bull represents the culmination of a strain, begun in the Cuban novels, of admiration for the strong, uncomplicated natural man, Castaway marks a complete rejection of such sentimental primitivism . . ." (p. 46). Elsewhere, Bracher contends that "The fighting-cock type of man also recurs, though not in a sympathetic light, in Benny Carricker of Guard of Honor and Warren Winner of By Love Possessed--both, significantly, fighter pilots" (p. 31). In other words, this misreading of Lancy Micks, a character in one of the juvenile novels, is the anchor for a chain of reasoning that reaches to several of the major novels, and the protagonists of two of them. The point, obviously, is that to understand the later novels, we cannot afford to be ignorant of the earlier ones.

Bracher's comments on The Son of Perdition include, among much routine material, interpretations of Stellow and Findley that have critical significance. "The fighting-cock hero," Bracher says, "reappears in . . . The Son of Perdition, but he has changed sides. He is no longer the rebel but has become the godlike man in
authority who keeps the whole machine running" (p. 33). Having challenged Bracher's ideas about rebels and fighting-cock heroes already, I will not belabor the point here. What he means is that Stellow (the godlike man in authority) descends from Lancy Micks, and although in a few ways this is true, it is surely more important that Stellow as Administrator General resembles two other people in Cock Pit: Roy Fletcher, the Administrator of that novel; and Don Miguel, Lancy's enemy and opposite. In these observations about Stellow's literary ancestry the nature and degree of the changes in the maturing author become clearest.

Findley receives several pages of discussion in Bracher's The Novels of James Gould Cozzens (esp. pp. 33-34, 200-202), mainly because of the "theological implications of this almost allegorical figure" (p. 33). As the son of perdition, Findley is, of course, the key to the novel as allegory, and I shall examine him in detail. For reasons too complicated to explain in this introduction, Bracher's conclusion that Findley "represents both Satan and Judas" can be defended, and yet without recognizing the allusion on which the novel closes, one cannot estimate the relation of the novel to its scriptural source. Bracher thinks that the last words, "'There is a place prepared for you,'" suggest an allusion, and he proposes
a loosely parallel passage in Milton. The effect of this attribution is to identify the "place prepared" with Hell. But it is much likelier that Cozzens has in mind the Gospel According to Saint John, where Jesus tells his disciples twice that he goes to "prepare a place" for them (John 14: 2, 3), and from which Gospel Cozzens takes, verbatim, the epigraph for the novel and the title for its fourth chapter. In John 14, however, the "place" referred to is Heaven, not Hell. No reasoning about the allegory can proceed without that fact.

My conclusion from this survey is that the criticism of the apprentice novels leaves much to be desired. There is little of it, and that little tends to be redundant, superficial, long on assertions while short on evidence, sometimes careless, and occasionally just wrong, even on the most basic matters. I have tried to show significant lapses in all the longer discussions, mainly to support my contention that we do not have much reliable knowledge of these books. That we do not is understandable enough, in view of Mr. Cozzens' repeated disavowals of the juvenilia. By telling us that they are poor novels, he saves us the trouble of appraising them. But here, I contend, we overlook our own highly fallacious reasoning. We have once again got the evaluation before the analysis. The necessity is not to judge these novels, but to
understand them and apply what we learn to the later ones.

The author's attitude toward these books should be anything but a deterrent to criticism. His firmness in rejecting them is, as I see it, fundamental to any critical value they now have. In print, Cozzens has made more pronouncements on the badness of his early books than on any other literary subject. From a man who has always been notoriously unwilling to discuss his life and work, this rejection gives us a critical foothold, a rare opportunity to hold on to something that does not emanate from the fiction. I can believe that Mr. Cozzens is embarrassed by his early work chiefly because of the romantic heroes who flourish there, and, insofar as they probably reflect how he wished to see himself, they betray how immature he was then. Although Mr. Cozzens seems unnecessarily hard on himself if he cannot forgive having once been young, it is true that the books are amateurish and adolescent. They might understandably embarrass him. And yet he has been so insistent in proclaiming his feelings on this one subject, that a suspicion should form. I mean that this embarrassment at his formerly romantic views may be more than a judgment on early work. It may well have been an important influence that shaped the later books into vigorous public denials of what the early ones stood for.
Seen in this light, the novels that critics have most trouble accommodating in their theories become little trouble at all. The *Last Adam*, *Castaway*, and *Ask Me Tomorrow* have at least one important thing in common: their central characters cannot be confused with the stereotyped romantic heroes with whom Cozzens' career begins. It is partly because of this contrast that I have organized my research and treatise as an inquiry into the concept of heroism. The embarrassing first heroes can help to reveal, not only which views the author rejected or kept, but also why he approached his later characters as he did. For those very many critics who have objected to Cozzens' failure to become emotionally involved with his characters, it may help to recall that excessive emotional involvement more or less ruined his first few books and was probably one of the bad habits he was trying to cure himself of.

The ensuing pages document the literary coming-of-age of James Gould Cozzens. In the most general terms, what becomes evident in the juvenile works is a conflict between

47 By "heroism" I mean all that pertains to a literary hero. A "hero" is a central character whom the author largely admires; whose successes he applauds; whose failures and sufferings he laments; and who he hopes will arouse our admiration and sympathy. A "protagonist" is the central character of a literary work, but the word does not necessarily connote the author's admiration or sympathy. Therefore, all heroes are protagonists, but protagonists are not necessarily heroes.
two ways of writing a novel. One approach is literary in the worst sense. It entails the author's thoughtless acceptance of a great many sensational actions and events, exotic settings, heightened sentiments, wish fulfillments, and stereotyped characters, especially heroes. It accepts what is far likelier to be encountered in third-rate fiction than demonstrated in a random sampling from the lives people lead. It is what, throughout this paper, I shall refer to by the uncapitalized word, "romantic." The other way of writing requires the accumulation of what Mr. Cozzens has called "mature life-experience." The juvenile works show these opposite literary forces in dramatic contrast. As many critics have said, Confusion is aptly titled, in that we do see the fuddle-headedness of the amateur who cannot yet control his medium, doesn't really know what he's trying to do or say. But in this first book we also see a confusion of the two approaches to fiction that I have mentioned. Confusion becomes confusing, partly from the author's ineptitude, but partly, too, from his subversive observations of life, which tend to deflate the materials he has uncritically accepted for his fiction. The degree to which this division of mind was conscious is hard to estimate, but in retrospect we can see that the

subversion of banal literary formulas by actual observations of life goes on constantly in the juvenilia and is particularly evident in the handling of protagonists.

Finally, I shall show that the present study helps to solve the greatest single question in Cozzens criticism. That question is whether—having once, and with great firmness, abandoned the practice of depicting heroes—Cozzens ever returned to it. To put it another way, the problem is to choose between two mutually exclusive descriptions of Cozzens' career. By one interpretation, we have a career that begins by depicting unmistakable romantic heroes; leads to a stretch of books in which the author stands aloof, seemingly ironic and critical of compromised protagonists whom he does not intend as heroes; and then doubles back to books in which he again admires and sympathizes with his central characters, in effect offering them as heroes. By the other description, we begin with romantic heroes; progress to compromised protagonists who are treated ironically and critically; and never return to heroes at all. For the interpretation of those late novels that either crown or decapitate Cozzens' career, the difference is nothing short of enormous.
II

CONFUSION: A NOVEL

Written when Cozzens was nineteen, published when he was twenty, Confusion: A Novel (Boston: B. J. Brimmer, 1924) is naturally a very adolescent book. Yet it is also illuminating, especially in its heroine, Cerise D'Atreé, and in less direct evidences of the heroic stereotypes that Cozzens began his career by accepting. In Confusion, moreover, the rumblings can be heard of the process that characterizes the whole juvenile period, prevails in The Son of Perdition (1929), and puts an end to apprenticeship. I mean the subversion of the romantic stereotypes, both by the author's accumulation of "mature life-experience," and by the unforeseen anti-romantic effects of some Trojan horses already within the gates. Even in his first novel, postures are assumed and theories enunciated which will effect a revolution in Cozzens' writing. Already, for instance, a heroine is compromised whom the author probably never meant to compromise, and she remains heroic chiefly because he couldn't bring himself to overthrow her. Most broadly, this novel shows stereotypic heroism and the
author's incompatible observations of life in a conflict that reduces heroic literature to convictionless confusion, too far weakened by intrusive observation to survive as a heroic romance, yet too heavily burdened by its romantic ingredients to rise either to believable realism or to satire.

All four definitions of "hero" in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) help to bring the concept of heroism in Cozzens' early fiction into focus:

(1) Antiq. A name given (as in Homer) to men of superhuman strength, courage, or ability, favoured by the gods; at a later time regarded as intermediate between gods and men, and immortal . . . ;

(2) A man distinguished by extraordinary valour and martial achievements; one who does brave or noble deeds; an illustrious warrior . . . ;

(3) A man who exhibits extraordinary bravery, firmness, fortitude, or greatness of soul, in any course of action, or in connexion with any pursuit, work, or enterprise; a man admired and venerated for his achievements and noble qualities . . . ;

(4) The man who forms the subject of an epic; the chief male personage in a poem, play, or story; he in whom the interest of the story or plot is centred . . . .

Because the early protagonists are not simply central characters, but persons whom the author admires and even glorifies, the first three definitions have almost as much applicability here as the narrowly literary fourth does.

Definition (2) affords the best starting point. When Cozzens uses the word "hero" himself, he has in mind this meaning—the brave man of action, especially in battle—as when he writes of "the hero who must still steel himself against fear" (p. 362). Probably this sense is, except in specifically literary discussions, primary for most speakers, and it appears to have exerted a strong influence on Cozzens when he sought to depict his first literary heroes (def. 4). A surprising amount of attention is given, in a book about the education of a schoolgirl, to heroic men of action and their attributes. It seems clear that Cozzens shares with Cerise the admiration of valorous warriors that becomes evident in her anecdote to Pelton:

"Once a lot of English irregulars in the Hundred Years War tried to take this place [a stronghold], and there was only one man here, and the portcullis was out being reforged, so he put on his armor and stood in the middle of that bridge and threw twenty of them into the gorge. He was a priest, too, one of the cardinals of an Avignon pope, I think. They did things in those days" (pp. 82-83).

The cardinal's conduct—reminiscent of Robin Hood and Little John—impresses Cerise, age thirteen when she tells the story. But more generally, Cozzens introduces the D'Atrées by way of an old servant, who might tell "a hundred other stories of the Château's past, of former

2 For convenience I shall often allow "hero" to stand for both masculine and feminine characters indifferently.
D'Atréés, renowned in battle and fortunate in love:

Then came tales of a princely house which fought with Spanish lords against the Moors—a terrible bearded D'Atré known as "the heartless" who killed with his own hands a hundred Moors in as many minutes at the storm of Toledo; and the Knight Commander of the Hospitallers who held the breach against half an army when the Pro-Consul besieged Rhodes. D'Atréés who had fought against the English in Poitou and the D'Atré bowmen who tormented the Black Prince's march when he went to aid John of Spain... ay, a great house and every son worthy of it. (pp. 12-13)

These gaudy warriors are not confined to a legendary past. Cozzens says in his narrative voice that Cerise's father was admired on similar grounds: he was "Monsieur D'Atréé of illustrious lineage, of such renown that they pointed him out as the bravest man in Africa at the Polo Club in Algiers..." (p. 16). Tischoifsky, eventually one of Cerise's unofficial guardians, "who was Russian, of the nobility, exiled because of an unfortunate duel, was an artillery officer and wore his chocolate uniform with grace and distinction. He wrote verses in unfamiliar French and had killed six Turegs single handed in a skirmish at a desert spring" (p. 19). And Cerise herself, a compendium of heroic accomplishments, could at age twelve "do anything with a horse, she was a tireless swimmer, and all Tischoifsky's uncanny skill with rifle and foils had been exercised at her demand to make her shooting a local sensation, to provide her with a wrist of steel and no little
dexterity in fencing" (p. 55). She even tries these swash-
buckling talents against a boy who gets fresh with her; she
duels with and utterly humiliates him.

Clearly, silliness abounds in Confusion, where this
crudest notion of heroism, though entirely too familiar, is
very influential. The author admires warriors for their
courage, self-reliance, astonishing feats, and bloody
success, especially if they battle in just causes against
unfavorable odds. These heroes, "renowned in battle and
fortunate in love," may be a glaring stereotype, but they
are important in Cozzens' early fiction. Like Cerise,
Cozzens boyishly accepts such figures as heroic. He thus
embarks, probably not consciously, on a series of novels
that become confused by his efforts to succeed in spite of
this stereotype. Warrior heroes can shine, of course, only
when the action has become so desperate that their special
abilities are called upon. Applying their standards of
heroism to a character like Cerise dooms the fiction,
either by forcing its action to the absurdity of sword
fights with fresh boys, or by obliging the writer to find
grounds on which to admire a heroine who has nothing
heroic to do. Michael Scarlett is pretty obviously an
attempt to get around this problem, not, alas, by scrapping
the concept of heroism, but by devising a plot that gives
Michael scope for plenty of heroic doings.
Having accepted warriors as a model for heroism, Confusion generalizes their virtues. Tischoifsky, who philosophizes about "the benefits of military training" (p. 209), has as his motto "Cura ut vir sis...take care that you be a man" (p. 3). Time magazine reported that Cozzens' own father offered him the same advice: "He used to say to me, 'You should be a man.'" By the end of the novel, Stanley Meredith, the sententious young philosopher whom Cozzens takes seriously, has generalized the warrior's fearlessness into one part of "'the whole essence of human conduct,'" which "'rests on one's ability to choose one's course, and having chosen, kill fear and regret'" (p. 366, italics mine). In view of the OED meanings of "hero," this generalizing from martial conduct to "the whole essence of human conduct" amounts to a shift from Definition (2) to (3): "A man who exhibits extraordinary bravery, firmness, fortitude, or greatness of soul, in any course of action, or in connexion with any pursuit, work, or enterprise; a man admired and venerated for his achievements and noble qualities."

Cozzens means to depict and sympathize with Cerise's many confusions about life. But so little separates him from his character that in revealing her puzzlement, he

3 "Hermit of Lambertville," p. 74.
often reveals his own. Confusion about valorous heroism is conspicuous. He shares her admiration for the virtues celebrated in Arthurian romance, for instance. There is no irony in the passages about the D'Atreës' glorious and bloody past, or M. D'Atreë's reputation as the bravest man in Africa, or Cerise's mettle as marksman and fencer. When Cerise is thirteen, Pelton is perfectly serious in being "half inclined to think she would indeed have made a more thrilling figure in the rude pomp and bloody pageantry of the Middle Ages, a figure men would die for ..." (p. 82).

Blair and his friend seem "'like ... knights before the tournament!'" as they prepare for a polo match, and Blair chivalrously requests (and gets) Cerise's handkerchief as "'a favour from my lady'" (p. 323). Cerise thus speaks for Cozzens when she reflects on the Morte D'Arthur:

> The lucid directness of those pages seemed truer to life in their fantasy than New York in its complicated realism. The values of life seemed to be undergoing a readjustment, the importance of the present was minimized, the concern for men mitigated. Whatever the world might do, between those blue covers romance was ever rampant ... and there were ideals unquestioned by the empiricism of life today. She realized that the question was being begged ..., but the road to peace was open and she took it gladly. (pp. 81-82)

Questions are, indeed, being begged. At the center of Arthurian heroism is the hero as knight, warrior. How then is it "the road to peace"? How can she find solace in medieval tales of bloodshed, yet also grieve that the First
World War, "like a monument to human folly and greed and stupidity loomed gigantic on the horizon. While such a war was possible there was nothing worth accomplishing, nothing which could survive the dirt and hopeless confusion and unfairness" (p. 384). More important, how can Cozzens admire warlike medieval heroisms, yet confess them rampant romance, fantasy, a begged question? The answer is that the military heroisms he admires in medieval romance are separate in his mind from the military events he deplores in contemporary life, because he begins his career seeing no vital connection between literature and life. On the contrary, as Cerise's taste for Malory makes plain, literature is valued as a means of escape. Cozzens, sharing her confusion about the relation of literature to life, creates a confusing book, since he likes romance and gives Cerise many attributes of an Arthurian figure; yet also tries to make her live believably in the modern world. Straddling both worlds, she is vulnerable from either point of view. But if this appears a hopeless predicament, the mere existence of Cerise's reflections on romance and realism implicitly argues to the contrary, showing that although Cozzens' youthful preference was for romance, his intelligence was already becoming uneasy about it. Recognizing that the problem was "complicated realism," he was only a step away from beginning to solve it.
Even though warriors are the conceptual center of heroism in this first book, it is still no war novel. Cozzens therefore compromises between romance and plausibility by focusing on many sports, where prowess again assumes legendary—and often ludicrous—proportions. Blair Boughton reveals Cozzens at his youthful worst, for this suave young Beowulf in white ducks has his author's admiration:

"I'll get into a bathing suit and come back with you [Cerise] and then I can go home by swimming over. It's not more than a mile."

Like that. Cerise was half afraid she would find he did not swim as well as she did.

"Oh, no, I'll drive you back."

"I don't believe so, thanks. I need the exercise."

So they did that. (p. 303)

Understandably, though, Blair must be a suitable match for Cerise, who as athlete is a heroine of Olympian prowess:

She reveled in the delight of perfect physical fitness. She was easily the best swimmer and rider in camp, she played tennis in the fast and hard fashion Tischoifsky had shown her, she was tireless in a canoe or on the wood trails. (p. 147)

Cerise, with beautiful precision, took all the final swimming prizes before a considerable gallery the afternoon of Water Day, and with three straight sets added her name to the column on the tennis cup. (p. 169)

Although she cannot slay dragons, Cerise excels in virtually every physical activity she undertakes. On page 302, where we first hear of her playing golf, "Blair gracefully
took three to hole out on the ninth and allowed Cerise to
tie him. Dicky was lagging badly for the man who took
the cup the year before." She easily defeats the champion,
in other words.

Recalling her anecdote about the valiant cardinal at
the gorge, we can see that versatility is also a criterion
for heroes. No mere roughneck, that man of action is also
an eminent churchman. Far-removed accomplishments are
manifest in Tischoifsky, who slays Turegs, yet writes poems
in unfamiliar French (p. 19) and enjoys recondite histori­
cal scholarship (p. 51). In Cerise, of course, this aggre­
gation of far-flung successes is most apparent. She easily
answers to the description of the "ideal aristocrat" that
Granville Hicks applies to Michael Scarlett: "a man of let­
ters but also a man of action and a romantic lover." 4 She
is not only a champion swimmer, tennis player, rider,
fencer, hiker, canoeist, rifleman, basketball player, and
the rest, but also the class president, the best student,
the best actress, writer, and philosopher, and the most
popular and beautiful girl, admired by women and other
girls, rushed by swarms of boys, doted on by several older
men. Cozzens is obviously not content with men-of-action

4 James Gould Cozzens, p. 6.
characters alone, whether as warriors or athletes. The early heroes are cynosures, dazzling in the breadth as well as the height of their attainments.

Although her overload of stunning accomplishments makes Cerise incredible, the more interesting observation concerns her relationship to her successors, Michael Scarlett and Ruth Micks. The difference is not what would be expected. Cerise is an impossible cynosure, but she fails; Michael is an even more extravagant cynosure, and he fails; yet in Ruth Micks we have, at last, a cynosure who succeeds. In other words, the young writer's course was not to correct the defects in his first heroine by lightening the next protagonists' loads of heroic implausibilities. On the contrary, Cozzens redoubled his efforts to create a stunning hero. This may appear only to prove the author's obtuseness, but I think that two other observations are nearer the mark. First, the idea that central characters had to be romantic heroes must have been very firmly rooted in his mind to persist so stubbornly. And second, regardless of this firmness, the forces that worked against this idea were stronger still--strong enough to topple the concept of the cynosure in the fourth book.

This creation of a cynosure amounts almost to deification. Ordinary mortals simply cannot do all the things that a Cerise does. Occasionally the language confesses
to the deifying that is going on. In Betty Connant, for example, "you noticed Betty's remarkable and flawless whiteness with wonder. Betty, her blue eyes dreamy and the mist of gold hair lightly stirred, so very white and cool, was like a legend in that summer country" (p. 161). Or her brother Billy Connant, "who looked as if he had stepped out of a myth" (p. 159). Or Cerise herself: at a ball, no less than "Fifty tuxedo clad youths trailed her, persistently eager ..." (p. 225). Stanley Meredith reveals the full cloying implication of such a cynosure: '
'You see it wouldn't do for me to be in love with you, and I'm not in love with you the way Blair is, nor yet Dicky, and that bunch. I rather worship you, Cerise!" (p. 370).

Such allusions to deific and mythic attributes in the characters should recall the first definition of "hero" in the OED: "Antig. A name given (as in Homer) to men of superhuman strength, courage, or ability, favoured by the gods; at a later time regarded as intermediate between gods and men, and immortal." The definition provokes speculations. It's tempting, for instance, to involve the deification of heroes in the novel's evident religious uneasiness. The Time article quotes Cozzens as saying that at Kent, a high-Episcopal school, "'I was the boy intellectual
who didn't believe in God . . . ,"5 and Confusion pro-
claims his atheism rather noisily. Since there are para-
lels between Cerise's school experience and Cozzens' own,
her brief ardor for Anglicanism (pp. 132-42) and her more
lasting complaint that she can't believe in things (p. 344)
may well be pages from Cozzens' own spiritual history. His
tendency to deify these early characters might betoken
spiritual discomfort—perhaps an effort to make fiction do
the work of religion, or a wish to ascribe to humanity what
he cannot believe about God.

But it is likelier that the figurative deifications of
heroes are simply hyperbolic. The author goes to absurd
lengths in trying to inflate his material. The deification
of anyone would smack of absurdity, but these efforts to
exalt school children are actually very instructive. They
suggest the cardinal rule in the rhetoric of heroic exalta-
tion: the less substantial the character's realistic claims
upon the reader's belief and admiration are likely to be,
the greater the need will be for the author to intrude with
heroic claims and epithets to build him up. Some such
principle must account for the extravaganza of claims made
about Cerise and her friends. But even here can be detect-
ed the processes of subversion. For to apply such a rule,

5 "Hermit of Lambertville," p. 74.
a writer must sense the realistic weaknesses of his characters in the first place. And having once applied it as excessively as Cozzens does in Confusion, an author will not be long in seeing what he did and what falseness underlies his heroic supermen.

By attenuation of, and confusion with, the heroic man of action, Confusion reaches the man of work. If a writer conceives of epic or Arthurian heroes, yet places them in the modern world, he will find few plausible occasions to demonstrate their mettle. He may indulge in a half serious sword fight or two, or a decathlon of athletic competitions, but the mettle of most men is tried in their work. Few writers seem more convinced of this than the mature Cozzens. In Confusion, however, ordinary work is largely ignored, and romanticized when included. The connection between work and more conventionally heroic exploits can be seen when Cerise, thinking about sex, tries to harmonize ideality with fact. The effort leads to an enlightening series of heroic vignettes:

Sex was all right, it was rot to think it was nasty. . . . But, well, she liked blue mountain gorges where the wind blew, the long sea crashing on the beach. They had something clean and free that the idea of sex somehow spoiled. She . . . called up such visions; sunbrowned men, fierce fighters, steel-muscled men sweating in labor; gigantic engineering,
patient scientists ferreting out the secrets of substance; the runner breaking the tape, the strong swimmer crawling across the green sea currents; men who had crested the glory of human achievement, men proud and strong, men swift and golden haired and laughing eyed. (pp. 287-88)

The heroes in these vignettes are of three kinds. The warriors ("fierce fighters") and the athletes ("sun-browned men," "the runner," "the strong swimmer," "men proud and strong, men swift") have both been discussed as men of action. The third kind here is men who work. But "steel-muscled men sweating in labor" do not sort easily with engineers and ferreting scientists. Confusion includes "steel-muscled men" among heroic men of action, yet manual labor does not interest Cozzens. In fact, a contrast elsewhere, between the nouveau riche Mr. Scott and his son Rupert hints at Cozzens' early preference for characters (like Cerise) who have not had to labor: "Andover and Yale had done something to mold him [Rupert] into a pleasing figure. He was good looking in his father's manner, but the massive build was that of a college athlete, not a foreman" (p. 192). Although engineers and scientists can, according to the vignettes, qualify as heroic types, their endeavors are literally glorified—seen in relation to "the glory of human achievement," not the butcher's bill.

In fact, no principal character in Confusion works because he must. Cozzens asks, not what work a person
should do, or how to do it, but whether to do any. Pelton and Tischoifsky, erstwhile Foreign Legionnaires, are both wealthy enough to do no remunerated work at all. Pelton explains that by joining the Foreign Legion "...I spoiled every chance of doing anything in America. When I came back I felt too old. I didn't have to work to live [i.e., on Park Avenue] and that took away every incentive. ... And you know how tired of the army I got. Heavens, what can a man do?" (p. 86). Tischoifsky's reply is perfectly understanding: "'Try living here,' urged Tischoifsky, 'there's something about this [French Mediterranean] coast which fills you with the most exquisite calm, with indifference about such things as accomplishing anything'" (p. 86).

Such nonchalance clashes with Cerise's admiration for the warrior-cardinal: "'They did things in those days'" (p. 83), she says. Much of her confusion centers on her feeling that, wealthy or not, she ought to do something. Her friend Betty tells her, for instance, that

"you're not like me, you have something better to do."
"What?"
"Oh, I don't know, but anyone who knows you and watches you feel [sic] it. I guess you think better things and want better things" (p. 156).

The vagueness is never dispelled, despite tentative probes in many directions. Having written and scrapped an essay on education, "She wanted to feel that she was contributing, and the argument for Latin and Greek didn't do that" (p. 185).
And later: "No matter, there was, perhaps, some way she could serve, some way she could give her life to making beauty. The very vagueness seemed to make the hope of resolution all the greater" (p. 311). At times she criticizes her own seriousness about such matters: "She already felt inclined to laugh at the immature solemnity of her afternoons of argument and exposition of theory. She felt that she could shake off all the serious things in the world as did the girls about her . . ." (p. 215). But approaching the end of the book, she is still vague about what to do with her life: "I know now, she reflected, that neither love nor faith in God can do more than make me forget; there is something in life I have not attained, if I forget the quest I play the craven" (p. 354). But regardless of such rhetoric, her plight is that she has nothing to do, no activity that satisfies her or lets life mean anything. As she says from her delirium shortly before the end, "'... this is the whole world and there really doesn't seem to be so very much in it'" (p. 396).

The conversation between Pelton and Tischoifsky reveals the handicap of the juvenile writer, along with some means he uses to compensate for his shortage of experience. It also indicates one place from which to measure his book-by-book growth. Tischoifsky's answer to the question, "'Heavens, what can a man do?'" is, in effect, that he can
do nothing. The whole book, however, puts this question to Cerise, who is unhappy because she must settle for the same answer. In the long run, the problem is the author's, not just hers, Pelton's, or Tischoifsky's. They have no answer because he has none. The book's weaknesses are in direct response to this shortage. The grossly inflated claims about characters; the profusion of exotic scenes and showy activities; the spectacular quality of many events; the sententious pronouncements of the characters, all really prove that Cozzens had no better answer than Tischoifsky, and was trying to compensate in his manner for a paucity of matter. Yet the contrast between the juvenile and mature Cozzens emerges if Pelton's question, "'Heavens, what can a man do?"' is juxtaposed to the epigraph of the eighth novel (1936): "... Men and brethren, what shall we do?" There we get a whole book documenting one day's worth of Ernest Cudlipp's busy life, his implied answer to the question.

During her quest for something serious to do, Cerise encounters just enough of the world's ordinary business to find it a great disappointment. Her Aunt Hortense, when Cerise was born, observed that "'The child is born fortunately,' . . . , 'babies born in the slums never come honestly to grips with living. . . . She has every chance to see life honestly" (p. 35). Cozzens presumably accepts
this premise. At least, he gives Cerise extraordinary opportunities to see life, takes her reflections seriously, and says nothing to suggest that babies from the slums would see more honestly. His reasoning is that if someone like Cerise cannot find life satisfying, then no one could; Cerise doesn't find it so, and therefore it must not be so. He follows this logic of disillusion all the way to the end. Cerise complains late in the novel that "I can't believe in things. Things aren't quite right. It's that sort of eternal imperfection I was trying to tell you about yesterday. I can't even believe in my own writing, it seems futile; and then you're lost, you have no faith in yourself!" (pp. 344-45).

In reaching such disillusion, however, Cerise has shunned a few kinds of work that confront life's imperfection. She visits a settlement house "for backward children, pitiful little half-wits" who "drove home a horror and loathing pity. . . . One only had to look at these children to see how little was accomplished, how hopeless it was" (pp. 270-71). Back at school, when "Louise asked casually how it had been, Cerise answered it was a waste of time and changed the subject" (p. 272). Likewise, when her philosophizing on education leads to an impasse, "Cerise decided education was better left alone" (p. 185).
She has a comparable response to politics. Meeting a politician named Edwards, she thinks:

"What rot," . . . . It seemed to confirm a conviction that all this legislative business was inexcusable foolishness which no sane person would bother his head about. . . . Politics are like religion, she thought, they take up time for people who haven't the mental initiative to do anything else. . . . She saw Edwards declaring wars no one wanted, completing legislation everyone disregarded as much as possible, with pompous hebetude blundering among stubborn working men on a strike or conferring with equally asinine politicians whose petty opinions expounded another form of folly to replace that then in force. (p. 173)

In later years Cozzens will be impatient with inexperienced people who criticize jobs they cannot do themselves. The best illustration occurs in Bunting's speech to Abner Coates in The Just and the Unjust: "Standing off and saying you don't like the way things are run is kid stuff—any kid can work out a program of more ice cream and less school and free movies and him telling people what to do instead of people always telling him—" (J&U 365). For now, though, Cerise can deplore human imperfection and bungling; can announce her eagerness to do something worthwhile yet refuse work that promises to be glamorless and difficult; yet she can get by as Cozzens' uncompromised heroine.

This comes about because Cozzens in his first novel neither knows nor cares much about the world's work. Workers interest him only insofar as they supply heroic
types. It may be admirable of Cerise to wish to serve humanity, and Cozzens admires her for it. But ordinary work will not do for his heroine. As Cerise's friend puts it, "Well, thank Heaven you aren't going to spend your life washing consumptive babies". . ." (p. 272). Instead, Cozzens imagines extraordinary, exalted individuals, set apart from the mundane world. The few workers admired in Confusion resemble the warrior-cardinal who stands alone and performs wondrous feats. That pattern informs the sketch of Cerise's father, the commandant of a Foreign Legion outpost:

Two years saw Pierre exercising a tremendous influence over the desert people. For six months no caravan had been molested between Wargala and Ain Areg. . . . he worked tirelessly . . . to come back weary and laconically successful. No one knew how he did it, but an inexorable rule of law and order was clutching the endless barren miles about. (p. 21)

Cerise's mother is treated similarly. At the outpost she began to study medicine, driven by a deep pity for these helpless men [soldiers] for whom there was no doctor but Lieutenant Marrot . . . . These wounded who poised on the verge of death from unavoidable neglect gave life a new reality for her. And these young officers wistfully in love [i.e., all with her] and bitterly lonely needed sympathy. (p. 20)

Later, Cozzens would never neglect to explain "how he did it," would joke about the possibility that a sentimental Florence Nightingale in the African desert might take on the whole of medical science. In Guard of Honor, Amanda Turck makes fun of her own adolescent fantasies of just
this sort: "All that fascinated me was the idea of being a doctor, alleviating the ills of suffering humanity in exchange for a good deal of reverent awe and astonished respect" (GoH 604). But in Confusion Cozzens is smitten chiefly with images of heroic individuality, never mind about ways and means. And since the protagonist can approach work as a choice between doing nothing at all or living up to models who have "crested the glory of human achievement," it is little wonder that admired workers are gaudy.

Other working characters resemble the D'Atréés in their bold individualism, their idealism, glamor, success, and freedom from the restraints of ordinary practicality. A master jeweler says "I cannot sell my things to people who ought not to wear them" and charges trifling prices because "I don't like money" (pp. 249-50). Lynn Carruth is a very young painter already at the peak of his profession. He modestly avers that he's "not doing well," ... "one wants to do things a thousand times better always." He paints because "... I have to do as my nature makes me, I am driven to work by a power stronger than myself" (pp. 319, 320). Likewise, Horatio Lane, a famous author, pontificates that "The writer must be in the world, but not of the world. If he confess that anything beyond his writing is worthy of his love ... , if
he recognize temptation, be it from the flesh, from the
devil, or from God Himself, that man is lost" (p. 358).
As forerunners to the many hundreds of characters that
Cozzens later sketched at their work, these early people are important. Their nonsense shows how much borrowed,
hackneyed clutter had to be cleared away, how much knowl­
edge and good observation and disciplined art had to be added before the seemingly effortless, economical drawings, found everywhere in the later books, became possible.

In Confusion the most fully developed and instructive man of work is John Bold, the aviator who dies in the airplane he designed, built and tested for himself. All the individualism, the idealism, glamor and implausibility of lesser working characters are full-blown in John Bold, who also conforms to the pattern of heroism among men of action. He expresses his enthusiasm for flight in metaphors of battle and conquest: air is "'the last element dominated by man.'" As he anticipates "'the time when man is master of his universe'" he has "a glow of triumph" in his eyes. Once again, Cozzens literally glorifies a character he admires, for Cerise thinks flying "'would be glorious'" (pp. 373-74). But more, until his disillusioning death she sees Bold as a savior:

This vague and undefinable promise which John Bold seemed to hold forth was an answer meet enough for the complexities of pessimism . . . . It was a prom­ise of things worth doing, a solution for the
messiness and cruel ugliness of life . . . . Here at least was one man with vision and skill and strength to put an airplane twenty thousand feet above the world; a man beyond the smallness and tangled muddle of life, whose eyes were on the stars steadfastly, who strove unsparingly for the salvation of man, the only possible salvation. (p. 375)

Thus, Cozzens again turns an extraordinary person into a cynosure who finally approximates a god and savior. But whether Cozzens is looking fondly back into a noble past, comparing, for example, Pierre D'Atree's exploits with those of his ancestors; or wishfully ahead to John Bold's salvation for man, he is always, in his early heroes, trying to dodge the "complicated realism" of the present. John Bold's vision takes Cozzens literally out of this world, somehow beyond the half-wit children and the nasty politicians, even more extravagantly than all the other accumulated improbabilities do. The book suffers again from a fundamental confusion, like the one engendered by admiration of warriors and loathing of war: Cozzens would have his heroes "in the world, but not of the world." But readers will dismiss such stuff, denying that these people are in the world to begin with.
Despite all her heroic attributes, and probably because of them, Cerise proves an unconvincing, unappealing character, but she is also an inevitable result of the central strategy for Confusion, that is, to test life by studying a character eminently suited to succeed in it. (Nothing suggests that Cozzens suspected the brashness of this undertaking at the time. The character hails life to the bar, not vice versa.) Through Cerise's Aunt Hortense, Cozzens explains his interest in such a wealthy, aristocratic and talented heroine: "It takes very little prescience," Hortense remarks, "to foresee [sic] the certain general lines within which the child's future cannot help proceeding. Heredity does something--environment does more!" (p. 36). Hortense needs to be handled with care, for she also believes herself justified richly in declaring that here indeed is the favored of the gods, that on this young head will come honor and this young life will remain ever ignorant of pain and poverty, of bitterness and all confusion, to walk continually in confidence and light" (p. 37).

Since Cerise dies "in the blackness of fate, in the eddies of confusion following fate" (p. 403), thus explicitly disproving Hortense's prediction, we have to approach this woman as a suspect prophet and discuss the idea of confusion separately.

Believing, however, in the positive formative influence of heredity and environment, Hortense gets support
from reliable characters in *Confusion* and from Cozzens throughout his writings. Tischoifsky, for one, explains Cerise's accomplishments as a matter of training, which "'prepares them [children] for every emergency in life. Good blood well trained . . .'" (p. 55, Cozzens' ellipsis). Cerise's tutor, Dr. Coty, echoes the same thought: "'There is something in heredity, I believe, and there is much in habit, an enormous amount in habit'" (p. 95). Hortense, Tischoifsky, and Coty are all saying the same thing: Cerise's heredity, her good blood, is aristocratically above question; but her early environment is provided chiefly by Tischoifsky, Coty, and Cerise's mother Marian, who devote themselves and their money to the training of—the formation of habits in—young Cerise.

But this thought, that heredity and environment determine human life, amounts to the principal tenet of literary naturalism. To understand heroism in *Confusion*, we must first decipher the book's relation to naturalism. Doing so requires analysis of Cozzens' design for the novel as a whole.

The book's title is first mentioned in the epigraph:

*Wipe off all idle fancies and say unto thyself incessantly: now if I will it is in my power to keep out of this my soul all wickedness and lust, all concupiscences, all trouble and Confusion . . .* (p. [6], Cozzens' ellipsis)
The next explicit title allusion occurs at Cerise's birth, when Aunt Hortense predicts "'the certain general lines within which the child's future cannot help proceeding. Heredity does something--environment does more'" (p. 36). She expects that "'this young life will remain ever ignorant of pain and poverty, of bitterness and all confusion, to walk continually in confidence and light'" (p. 37).

Consider just this much evidence in relation to naturalism. The epigraph optimistically affirms that human will can determine what troubles and confusion do not befall one's "soul." The epigraph thus contradicts the usual argument in naturalism, namely, that man lacks free will and lacks effective control over his own life, which is shaped by powerful forces operating on him from within (as heredity does) and from without (as environment does). Hortense's remarks, like the anti-naturalistic epigraph, are also optimistic, but they are consistent with naturalism in emphasizing the formative power of heredity and environment. Putting this information together, we have two propositions, one probably, one surely about Cerise: an anti-naturalistic epigraph and a naturalistic prophecy by Hortense. Both propositions agree on one thing: that Cerise can be spared confusion in life. And the novel's conclusion disproves both of them, for she dies prematurely, "in the eddies of confusion following fate" (p. 403).
The book would seem to be in a logical dilemma, simultaneously denying naturalism and non-naturalism. But the matter becomes clear in Hortense's next remarks. Cerise's mother, uneasy about the heredity-plus-environment optimism, objects:

"But consider the endless chances, why it's dismaying what may easily come from next to nothing. I don't see how one can possibly be sure, much less plan about the future."

"I still hold you ought not to worry [Hortense answers]. You know roughly what you want the child to be, and fate has a smaller part in men's affairs than men sometimes think. Man's fate is that he is a man; all turmoil and confusion must arise from that fact, not from blind intervention. The impossible never happens and when things are made impossible—they are continually--it simply doesn't happen" (p. 36).

In short, Hortense maintains that heredity and environment are virtually alone in determining man's life, and that one can eliminate chance, blind intervention. It is this position that the book refutes, for Cerise dies by sheer chance, accident. Cozzens carefully prepares us for this end, first by juxtaposing Hortense's optimism at the close of Part I, to a very different view of Cerise, now age twelve, at the opening of Part II:

"Damn," groaned Cerise, "Oh, damn!"

Even as she spoke the copper-plated bottom of the Pandora [her new sailboat, and note the allegorical name] ground on rock . . . . (p. 41)

Much later we see her driving alone in a car, "speeding on to alien and ugly places. If there was beauty in life she was not working toward it; she was to end where chance
might dictate" (p. 310). Analogously, John Bold, also rep­resenting heroic and hopeful possibilities for mankind, ends by chance in a plane accident. The foreshadowing is deliberate, for Cerise remembers his thoroughly upsetting and pointless death—"Twenty thousand feet and fragments" (p. 388)—in the paragraph immediately before the auto acci­dent that leads to her own death.

In broadest terms, then, Confusion reads like a prose restatement of the predicament of Robert Burns's mouse:

But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
   Gang aft a-gley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
   For promised joy.⁶

Here, for comparison, is Cozzens' final allusion to his title:

For him [Tischofsky], even as for her Mother and Pelton, the dominant issue had been Cerise's life and happiness. In watchful devotion they had been unsparing, and the transcending bitterness of their efforts ending thus, in the blackness of fate, in the eddies of confusion following fate—she could feel the tears gather under weary lids. She must not think of it. (p. 403)

But if the point is that blind chance can ruin even the best-laid plans, where do we stand in relation to naturalism? Logic won't help. The anti-naturalistic

epigraph amounts to two propositions: (a) that the will can prevent confusion, and by implication, (b) that blind chance need not be considered in this matter of excluding confusion. Likewise, Hortense's naturalistic remarks consist of two propositions: (x) that heredity and environment together can preclude confusion, and (y) that blind chance need not be considered. Conjunct arguments like these are false if any conjunction is false. And since the novel's conclusion shows that chance must be considered, both the epigraph and Hortense's prophecy, taken as wholes, are untrue, disproved. But nothing follows about the truth or falsehood of the other conjunctions, that is, proposition (a), which is anti-naturalistic, and proposition (x), which is naturalistic.

An additional consideration, however, is that naturalism normally assumes the operation of blind chance, in a godless universe wholly indifferent to human affairs. In other words, if Hortense had added chance to heredity and environment, as Cozzens does in making the plot, then her prediction could have been fully consistent (though less optimistic) naturalism.

Most naturalists regard heredity, environment, and chance as the enemies of human happiness; they depict lowly, brutish, and ultimately helpless characters victimized by indifferent forces such as these. Confusion,
though, offers a protagonist as if seen, for a change, through the magnifying end of the naturalistic telescope. We begin, not with Crane's Maggie Johnson or O'Neill's Yank, but with Cerise D'Atree, a rich, healthy, competent, well-educated aristocrat who enjoys almost every conceivable advantage. The literature of naturalism might have been enriched by Confusion, for the convincing failure of a person seemingly fit to survive would be an interesting application of the naturalist doctrine.

Suppose that Confusion was meant to be thoroughgoing naturalism, with the innovation that environment and heredity could assist the survival and happiness of Cerise. There is ample support for such a hypothesis. Like a naturalist herself, she sees, with "a little frown of perplexity," the dubiousness of free will when, after the jeweler tells her how to strengthen the will, he spoils everything by lighting a cigarette, as he assured her he could will not to do (pp. 251-52). Again like a naturalist, she understands that "Biological law had no knowledge of the broken


heart; it demanded [her friend] Jacqueline's baby, and was getting it" (p. 326). She later applies such unromantic insights to herself, finding "that she, whether or no her brain could ever love Blair, loved him with every fiber of her body" (p. 380). Just as Stanley Meredith pronounces--"'Sic transit gloria mundi'" (p. 387)--on the death of John Bold the would-be savior, so Cerise also concludes, as a naturalist would, that human glory is a frail and transitory thing:

What were all those fine words when death casually wiped a finger across the slate? . . .
Blair's lips were stilled with earth, the arms which had held her were cold. So much for human glory, so much for human love. (p. 401)

Elsewhere, she is oppressed by naturalistic visions of suffering in an indifferent or hostile nature: "She had a sudden vivid impression of pain in the world, of helpless unending suffering and regret . . . . The weary brightness of sand and sea grass seemed a reiteration of futility; futility in her wondering and yearning; futility in her struggle and denial, futility in the truth if it could be found ever. Their indifference to men, their unconsciousness of men, and the things men think of, seemed to typify a hostile nature . . . " (pp. 362-63). Having portrayed the godless world that all naturalism assumes, Cozzens ends by re-emphasizing his atheistic bias:
A tide of anguish was drowning her. Her heart cried out. "From the depths have I called unto Thee, O Lord . . ."

God would be leaning down from heaven and pity her. There was nothing but silence. (p. 404, Cozzens' ellipsis)

In short, the dissonant chords of naturalism can be heard clearly enough in *Confusion*.

But if *Confusion* at some points resembles—and evinces the probable influence of—naturalistic literature, there are still difficulties in calling the book naturalism. For by definition, naturalism is a species of realism. The latter, through all the diversity of allegedly realistic practice, does generally aim for plausibility and a measure of typicality in its depictions. It does not seek to evade present realities as most of us conceive of them. It does not offer palpable absurdities as facts. In realism, and therefore in naturalism, one's willingness to suspend disbelief should not be over-taxed. By these criteria, *Confusion* is neither realistic nor naturalistic; or if it was meant to be, it nevertheless fails. It is cluttered with implausibilities. It shows pronounced longings for the legendary past and Bold's interstellar future, while insulating itself with a hands-off distaste from the mundane

realities of modern life that are the chief subject matter for most realists.

At its core, the novel is romantic, depicting lives and events mainly as Cozzens wishes to find them, not as they are likely to be; tying itself explicitly to medieval romances at several points; and borrowing heavily from the worn-out sentimentalities and melodramatic situations of "romance" as popularly received:

The tall curtains, the polished floor and subdued glow of light, the insistent gaiety of the music, seemed to assume something of Nigel Story's black-eyed grace. Those were the lips that had lied to Betty, the only lips she had ever kissed, and in their perfidy it seemed all Winifred Pickering's dance took on a tarnish, a tinsel sadness which clutched at Cerise's throat. She saw Betty in the bitterness of the disillusionment which must have been hers, saw that lovely blonde creature broken-hearted over this same man she danced with. (p. 244)

But muddled into the romance that the nineteen-year-old author wished to write and believe in, is a bitter disillusion that takes the form of naturalism. It was meant, I feel sure, to prove that this young writer was not as moony and inexperienced as the book's nonsense might suggest. But the novel is not naturalism. It is romance into which, rather incongruously, elements of naturalism are confused.

This mixture is remarkable, in view of how inimical naturalism is to romanticism. Philosophically, the combination is self-contradictory and makes no sense. Genetically, however, the mingling is both understandable and
promising. What these ingredients have in common is their purely literary origin for Cozzens. Almost everything about Confusion testifies to the author's great lack of sophistication. His unhesitating appropriation of the most egregious romantic stereotypes shows how undiscriminating he was. What wonder, then, that faced with a paucity of experience to draw from, he should borrow indiscriminately from naturalistic as well as romantic materials? Here, in fact, may be the unrecognized beginning of the subversive process that finally turned this writer into a vehement anti-romantic. The effect of the naturalistic infusion in the novel is, never to turn him into a thorough naturalist, but to show up defects in his romantic material and to counteract the preference—which in the Malory reflections he explicitly identifies with love of romance—to escape life instead of dealing with it. From the first, in other words, his borrowed materials war with one another.

Classifying the book as romance is important in discussing heroism. If Confusion is regarded as a naturalistic novel, Cerise probably should not be called a heroine in the laudatory sense at all. Heroes—if they can be said to occur in naturalism—will have to be recognized according to either their admirable fitness to thrive amid the conflict of forces that a naturalist depicts; or their affecting failure to do so. Confusion closes on Cerise's failure.
As naturalism, the book would say that although we might pity her, Cerise is what not to admire, for as Tischolfsky puts it,

"We gave her the past in full measure, we laid a foundation of exquisite sensibility and appreciation. It was to have been her most ready servant. It has turned on her and she is going to be its slave. . . . Ordinarily the realization of life as it is—to use that for lack of a better phrase—would fall on semi-developed taste and immature appreciation. Both those safeguards we have obliterated in Cerise . . . . Now you see Cerise stripped of all protection except the unreliable slowness of experience to divulge the full force of disappointment" (p. 211).

In naturalism, a character thus weakened will be likely to resemble, say, Blanche DuBois, and to be contrasted to some Stanley Kowalski\textsuperscript{10} of her own.

Cozzens does not, however, show Cerise in any such way. He admires her, admires no one else more, and romantically laments that chance can wipe out even such a person as she is. He leaves the impression that heredity and environment, though most carefully controlled, count for little, because final dispensations are subject to chance—"fate"—in a "stupid and coarse grained world" (p. 108). In effect, he romantically affirms and exaggerates heroism, then naturalistically undermines it, but closes the whole in tones of romantic lament after all.

\textsuperscript{10} Tennessee Williams, \textit{A Streetcar Named Desire} (New York: New Directions, 1947).
From the suggestion provided in the vignettes, that heroes are "men who had crested the glory of human achievement," the young Cozzens can be expected to impose high standards on his heroes, not only in their most tangible exploits (battles, sports, noble works), but in all the important categories of their lives. It is consistent with Cozzens' magnification of his early heroes that the social standards in Confusion should be aristocracy and wealth. The D'Atrees "were a very ancient family," "a princely house" (p. 13) of "'great nobles, whose aristocracy was unquestioned'" (p. 212). And Cerise's illustrious father married "the daughter of Alfred Sommett, of Sommett, Ltd., whose business monopolized the English trade with the Barbary states and the Levant. A great concern . . . It was a deep laid scheme, this marriage" (p. 16). The allegorical names make the point: Cerise is of impeccably aristocratic paternal ancestry (D'Atree means "of Atreus") conjoined with the money of Alfred Sommett, a man at the summit of the business world. Only the greatest of everything will do for the early heroes.

In relation to Cozzens' career, Confusion's emphasis on aristocracy is in some ways representative, in some ways not. But Cerise's title is certainly another evidence of
the conflict between literary and experiential influences on Cozzens' writing. Needing a heroine for his first book, he began thinking about exotic French aristocrats who, it is safe to guess, did not emanate from his own past experience, yet who clutter the pages of juvenile fiction and popular romances. The price an American author must pay, both for depicting literal aristocrats in the modern world, and for being cut off from his own direct observations of life, must have become obvious quite soon. The strain can already be felt in *Confusion*. The novel begins bravely enough in exotic African and European settings, yet Cerise is soon shipped to America, where the hobnobbing with other aristocrats ends perforce. Instead we get the people and settings that Cozzens might plausibly have seen for himself: houses and apartments of the well-to-do in the East (Cozzens grew up on Staten Island), restaurants in New York, a private school in Connecticut (Cozzens attended Kent School in Connecticut), a summer camp, a country club, a seaside resort. *Michael Scarlett*, as if in resistance to this strong attraction of the commonplace, turns to Elizabethan England and lets Cozzens have his noblemen with less implausibility. But the efforts to simulate Elizabethan speech, to recreate a time and place far removed from his experience, show again how heavily these first books were influenced by literary sources. And Renaissance noblemen create
difficulties of their own. Thus, it is not surprising that after his second novel, Cozzens never again wrote about titled protagonists, who pull him away from the time, country, and ways of life he knows best.

Nevertheless, if literal aristocracy is not usual in Cozzens, the substance of it is. Cozzens knew and continued to write about well-born Americans. Even in Confusion, aristocracy means more than just "'good blood'" (p. 55). It also means "'inherited pride'" and "'subtle rightness.'" Cerise is protected by "'the inherited pride of nobility, the subtle rightness of generation after generation of forbears, who were great nobles, whose aristocracy was unquestioned'" (pp. 211-12). Mrs. Allenby, an autocratic old American lady, proves that Cozzens admires such attributes in untitled persons as well: "She combined a fussiness with respect commanding dignity, which made even her relatives afraid of her. They were rather proud, too; she represented well-founded and unshakable worth; her absolutism was written over with divine right" (pp. 327-28). Cozzens admires the cumulative effect of aristocracy, especially as it affects one's manner. Pelton considers the tradition manifest in Tischoifsky:

"Odd, he thought, the background that Leon has. Generations out of the east, savage, savagely Europeanized. And his grace and flawless courtesy the result. I suppose his tradition of haughty and
cruel aristocracy has left marks. But you don't see them. Only the tradition of nobility. Cerise had that tradition. (pp. 212-13)

To admire graceful and courteous nobility is all very well when the tradition produces admirable results. It is meant to be seen doing so when Cerise's sense of tradition induces her to apologize to a maid for having lost her temper: "'I'm a D'Atrée,' whispered Cerise under that inscrutable gaze [from a painting of one of her ancestors], 'and D'Atrées should not lose their tempers. It's beastly, it's vulgar. I--, I--,,' she caught after a half remembered line, 'I must be emerald still'" (p. 106).

In Cozzens, however, approval of aristocracy entails more or less intolerant disapproval of its absence. Such disapprobation, always a little condescending, can be downright ugly. When it becomes obvious contempt applied to stereotyped representative of racial, religious, and national groups, it seems nothing but plain bigotry of a most objectionable sort. In describing himself for Twentieth Century Authors (1942), Cozzens makes no attempt to conceal his personal biases: "'My social preference is to be left alone, and people have always seemed willing, even eager, to gratify my inclination. I am more or less illiberal, and strongly antipathetic to all political and artistic movements. I was brought up an Episcopalian, and where I live the landed gentry are Republican.'" It is interesting
to reflect on the fact, evident in *Confusion*, that Cozzens in his inexperience accepted a good many stereotypes, both literary and social. Subsequent accumulation of "mature life-experience" overthrew most of the literary stereotypes as false, however.

In *Confusion*, most social discriminations bespeak only a normal artistic impulse to comment on society and conduct, and vitiating bias is generally not involved: "Compared to the beauty and peace of the Chateau, you could not help admitting that life here [at an American boarding school for girls] was noisy, and some of the girls were vulgar . . ." (p. 132). They were "perpetually saying unpleasant things about each other with skilful cruelty," and their conversations often "seemed execrable taste" (p. 129).

Elsewhere, Cozzens flaunts a snobbery that looks like mere affectation, as in this rather muddled comment on Latin and Greek as somehow a part of "inherent" good breeding: "People who decried Latin and Greek had no inkling of it or they could never attack the cultural training. It was a part of good breeding, and good breeding did not seem to be in demand, nor could it be attained where it is not inherent" (p. 185). The following, however, is less palatable than criticism or harmless stuffiness:

Crossover eked out a slender mental life in cramped and hasty moments. Neither he nor any of those men [would-be intellectuals at Breck's] were soundly
educated. Their accent was bad and manner worse. They had no prep school and college tradition, they did not belong with people who lived pleasantly and decently. (p. 260)

Such ideas of social superiority and exclusiveness have been sanctioned earlier in Confusion. Tischoifsky says,

"It is the militant racial consciousness which must be overcome, the consciousness which makes one race [he seems here to mean nationality] think itself above another."

"But, Uncle Leon, look at the Bulgars and people. They aren't civilized enough to hurt. I would not blame anyone for feeling above them" (p. 93).

Cerise is allowed the last word, and Cozzens interrupts the scene.

Later, Cerise contrasts the would-be intellectuals to her rich young friends, the polo-playing ones with prep school and college traditions:

Compared to the men at Breck's place these boys she knew were fresh and clean and attractive. They passed gracefully through gracious settings, they were casually cheerful and good mannered, they showed nothing of the wrack and wear of life which seemed to lay a dingy hand on all those she had seen this evening.

None of these boys were important; they did not have the intelligence, the seeking after intelligence, but they were attractive. (pp. 259-60)

These reflections lead her to consider "'Appearances . . . appearances. I don't believe it matters so long as the appearance is all right'" (p. 260). Cerise, if not Cozzens, happens to be inconsistent in this judgment, for she has already met the "good looking" Rupert Scott and found him an ignoble villain who makes her shudder with disgust.
(pp. 192, 205). But it's no long fall from this nonsense about appearances, to Ackerman, the cigar-chomping Jew from the Theatre Guild ("'Ye gods . . .' shuddered Gloria Green" [p. 273]), or to the several shuffling, grinning darkies (e.g., pp. 115, 164), who together sum up the book's representations of Jews and blacks. Confusion, in short, seems willing to have those who "did not belong with people who lived pleasantly and decently," relegated to the back of the bus, mainly for defects in accent, manner, schooling, and appearance.

The study of heroism in Confusion is interesting partly because the author's gallery of heroic and villainous types is just beginning to fill up. Many of these portraits—poor likenesses or variously meretricious stereotypes—will be thrown out or hung elsewhere by the older Cozzens, whereas room will have to be made for others. But even in this first trial, Cozzens is plainly trying to define and justify his reasons for approving of some characters over others. In moving from the aristocratic D'Atrées to Cerise's good-looking prep school boys, Cozzens has relaxed the admission standards rather laughably, yet these socially admired characters, whether titled or not, have money in common. Approval of aristocracy shades imperceptibly
into an approval of accustomed wealth (as in Cerise, of D'Atree-Sommett parentage).

Cozzens largely ignores people lacking both money and ancestry. But he scrutinizes merely wealthy characters, perhaps fearing that aristocracy will seem nothing more exalted than traditional money. One can, of course, be ignobly rich. If aristocracy can be reduced simply to wealth, and wealth can be ignoble, the foundation on which his admiration for aristocrats rests would be considerably weakened. Needing to admit wealth but also keep it in its place, he would apparently like to find a difference in kind, not merely in degree, between wealth and aristocracy.

The nouveaux riches Scotts let Cozzens probe for such a difference. Cerise acknowledges the advantages of their great wealth: "Civilization demanded a great deal of money. Cerise was used to all the money she could reasonably want, but a glance about the [Scotts'] room went far to convince her there was something in having all the money one could unreasonably want" (p. 191). And Mrs. Scott, it's true, wins a measure of Cozzens' condescending admiration: "Mrs. Scott had found out how things ought to be and made them as nearly that way as sheer will power and crushing bank balance could. There was something admirable about her. She escaped vulgarity as if by a miracle, but escape it she did" (pp. 191-192). Cozzens will also concede that the
Scotts' "Meadowbrook House" was, in its Elizabethan imitation, "good to look at," yet theirs is no genuine aristocracy. "There were ancestral portraits in the gallery, but they were not the Scott ancestors . . ." (p. 189). Mrs. Scott, neither born nor bred to gentility, is "the mainspring in all this pseudo-rural life, the spirit which had guided it to its passable excellence despite the struggles of temperament and training" (p. 191). But in those struggles, neither will power nor bank balance can prevail, and Cozzens finally dismisses the effort as a failure: "It wasn't as if they did not know their own failure . . . the valiant Mrs. Scott knew . . . that this transplanted England was a sorry mimic, that her hard won gentility was obvious" (p. 194).

Cozzens turns the Scott episode into a little melodrama, the point of which concerns this wealth-versus-aristocracy question. The Scotts' son, Rupert, has been expelled from Yale for cribbing, as we learn immediately after Cozzens mentions the failure of the Scotts' "hard won gentility." The juxtaposition suggests that Rupert's moral lapses, like his mother's failures in taste, also occur because he lacks gentility, that is, aristocratic temperament and training. After enlarging on Rupert's dastardliness, Cozzens confirms this interpretation:
Rupert Scott, his obviously abominable actions, his long-spun little intrigue—that sentence about his "whole soul revolting." A shudder of disgust seized her [Cerise]. And Eva [Rupert's sister], who had no compunction about listening to conversations not intended for her. And Sir Wetherby, the suave well-bred hanger-on, who had ends in view and could perhaps satisfy them because of Mrs. Scott's weakness for titles.

... Was there, then, no such thing as "Richesse oblige"—did the possession of so much money involve them in no way with the canons of good taste? Money was always the bulwark of refinement, it meant leisure, the opportunity for culture. It meant Rupert Scotts. It could not be done in one generation; aristocracy was a process of ages. (p. 205)

This evidence reveals another authorial confusion. Cozzens implies a difference in kind between the aristocratic and the merely wealthy. Aristocracy entails an obligation (noblesse oblige) to "the canons of good taste" and to right conduct, whereas richesse regrettably does not. But the remark that "It could not be done in one generation; aristocracy was a process of ages" suggests that, given time, the Scotts might eventually become aristocrats themselves. If so, we have only a difference in degree, and the heroic D'Atréés are kin after all to the dastardly Rupert Scott, who produces a shudder in Cerise. But for that matter, so does Ackerman, the Jewish theatre man, cause a similar shudder in Cerise's friend, though the excellence of what Ackerman does is conceded (p. 273). In short, this whole system of snobbery seems in danger of collapsing. Cozzens' effort, in depicting the D'Atréés,
to stress their tangible accomplishments (such as battle heroisms) rather than the mere longevity of the family's wealth may be one response to this danger. But if what one does eventually determines what one socially is, then the Scotts and Ackermans can be seen as aristocrats in the making. One need only grant time the same validity as he looks ahead from ordinary beginnings, as Cozzens grants it looking back into an aristocratic past, and suddenly all successful characters should become about equally interesting. Instead, though, Cozzens offers two standards. Preferring to have the already established aristocracy different in kind from the wealthy or competent, he confusingly denies the Scotts the possibility of becoming aristocratic. "It was a sorry yearning after what they had not; this whole splendid place dedicated to an unrealizable ideal . . ." (p. 194). But on the other hand he admires people who, from similar beginnings, have already become so.

This patent inconsistency is, however, revealingly consistent with certain observations about the young Cozzens' art. First, it shows a consistent handling of heroes: in all respects, and at any expense of plausibility or logic, he must exalt them, separate them from ordinary humanity. As aristocrat, Cerise is duly exalted by the outcome of the Scott episode.
Second, the treatment of the Scotts is consistent with the author's need to overcome the book's greatest handicap, regardless of what thematic implications the solution commits him to. Cerise takes on all of life as her antagonist. Such a heroine necessarily involves Cozzens in dramatic difficulties, since the subject of the novel is thus so vaguely stated that in confronting all, Cerise seems to have no opponent, and nothing much seems at issue. Despite the many glimpses of miscellaneous activities in Confusion, there is really no sustained single action, and nothing much for Cerise to do or stand for. This dramatic predicament presumably gives rise to--among other things--the Scotts and the aristocracy-versus-wealth theme. In his effort to generate a semblance of meaningful conflict, Cozzens has tried to villainize the Scotts and to inveigh against parvenus generally. In fact, however, the Scotts are guilty of nothing much, and surely they do not belong in a Cozzens gallery of social villains. Confused and short on material, though, Cozzens was willing to accept the hackneyed indignation against Philistinism and try to make it his own, when in truth it was probably not very important to him. Michael Scarlett helps prove the latter point, since he is treated with great respect as a wealthy aristocrat, yet he is only two generations removed from yeomanry and his "comparatively ignoble . . .
forefathers" (MScar 13). The consistency here, in short, is that the young novelist was willing to say almost anything in order to keep the novel going and appear to say something.

Third, this handling of the Scotts is consistent with the use of stereotypes in the early fiction. It becomes increasingly clear that Cozzens resorted to literary stereotypes as a means of compensating for the insufficiency of his own material. There could scarcely be a more egregious stereotype than Rupert Scott, the dastardly son of a rich man, unless perhaps it is "Sir Wetherby, the suave well-bred hanger-on, who had ends in view." Rupert is a trumped up villain meant to reinforce the untenable idea that a person who is not an aristocrat will behave badly. What the case against parvenus is to thematic integrity, the sketch of Rupert is to integrity of characterization. I do not mean that Cozzens deliberately falsified his novel. It does appear, however, that lacking an adequate fund of actual experience, Cozzens borrowed the literary stereotypes that lied for him.
Appraised on social criteria, a Cozzens hero must be "civilized" (e.g., p. 93), and must behave accordingly. Cozzens apparently believes that someone becomes civilized because of several forces interacting in his favor. Prominent among them are breeding, training, education, and experience with the world at large. For clarity I shall separate these concepts, even though Cozzens at times uses them loosely and conflates them.

Cozzens holds that ordinary people are not civilized. Sharing Cerise's opinion that "The honest man must never willingly profess doctrines he knows are drugs" (p. 354), he tells us all what swine we are, as in Horatio Lane's description: "Like smirking swine humanity passes on its soggy nasty way, snorting and sweating, breeding and dying, surrounding him [the "'civilized spirit"' who "'cannot escape the fineness which is himself'""] with dirt and clamour. There is no escape and can never be" (p. 361). Cerise represents her mother's and Tischoifsky's unsuccessful effort to let someone escape:

"There isn't any world here [on the D'Atrée estate]." Tischoifsky nodded.
"And never will be, I hope. . . . No young person can really live in the world today without becoming warped and prejudiced, without acquiring false notions of life and its values" (pp. 69-70).
To be truly civilized in *Confusion*, one must be as little influenced by ordinary brutish people as possible.

Ironically, in view of the "breeding and dying" of human swine, Cozzens also sees civilized people being separated from the common herd first by literal breeding. Having "good blood," one is spared at birth half the struggle of "temperament and training" that handicaps the upstart Mrs. Scott. Moreover, the well-bred people in *Confusion* are generally handsome, like the prep school boys who are "fresh and clean and attractive" (p. 259), or like Cerise, the product of a strategic marriage that was a "deep laid scheme" (p. 16). Physical health and prowess attend the comeliness and good temper of these literally well-bred characters. Cerise "knew girls who fought hard for half as much attention . . . . In the unconscious arrogance of beauty she wondered at them" (p. 304).

Conversely, Cozzens often derogates the appearance of characters he does not admire. Ackerman is "a rather strange-looking little Jew . . . . Cerise saw him with a kind of horror when . . . he appeared in the auditorium with a much chewed cigar and a note book . . . ." (p. 273). And Mr. Scott "was ruddy and somewhat jovial. His fingers were blunt, she noticed; the role of landed aristocracy did not sit easily on him . . . . His dinner coat insisted on wrinkling at the wrong places" (p. 191). Likewise, at
Breck's party Cerise observes that "There was something wrong with all these people. There were facts that could not be overlooked. Crossover's ridiculously stiff and high and dirty collar, Miss Faulkner's fingernails" (p. 254). When Cozzens refers to civilized people, he ordinarily means more than the condition of fingernails, but clearly he takes temperament and bodily appearance as rather reliable indications of breeding.

This is all conventional enough. He could not, however, have foreseen how much he would come to depend on the purely physical description of human nature that these subversive thoughts about "breeding" actually imply. In Confusion, effete characters like Horatio Lane are taken to be separate from and superior to the "smirking swine" passing on its "soggy nasty way." By Cock Pit and The Son of Perdition, though, the images of bestiality have come to be normal (if still quite melodramatic) for almost all characters, eventually applying even to the heroes, Ruth Micks and Joel Stellow. And in By Love Possessed Cozzens is only the more insistent that we not forget what we are. His scatological allusion to Jonathan Swift, for instance, shouts the nonethereal essence of man: "But how in the world of fancy did you put delightfully the human circumstance whose undressed substance was that Celia, Celia, Celia shits . . . ?" (ByLP 428).
Being civilized also connotes for Cozzens a manner, a suitable bearing, as well as a pleasing appearance. Like Pelton, he admires the "grace and flawless courtesy" that derive from Tischoifsky's "tradition of nobility" (pp. 212-213). This manner, which may evolve from "haughty and cruel aristocracy" (p. 212), never strays far from aristocratic assurance and ease of command, as when Cerise, age twelve, addresses a servant: "'Gustav, go get me some ducks and a shirt and leave them on the landing steps— and a towel—'" (p. 43). When a girl behaves "like a young Empress" as she selects a table at Delmonico's, however, her ostentation is disapproved (pp. 223-24). Rather, Cozzens regards civilized conduct as the absence of apologetic shyness, "'which would make every rude word or unkind look an ordeal. That she [Cerise] is protected from by the inherited pride of nobility . . ." (p. 211). And more positively, a civilized manner makes life pleasant for others. The prep school boys "passed gracefully through gracious settings, they were casually cheerful and good mannered . . . , they were attractive" (p. 260). The Reverend Robert Breck is a sturdier example of a civilized man:

. . . Cerise felt instinctively that here was a genuine note. He came smiling with easy friendliness, cast a word here and there, read a bit from a book someone held out to him, passed it back with laughing comment. He was everywhere [at his own party]. Conversation grew more spirited, the whole atmosphere was transformed; people who were plainly dull and common-place seemed to reflect the vigor and swift intelligence of the host. (pp. 254-55)
He is unlike "stupid old Frau Offen, whom people always seemed to think was clever because she could say something unpleasant about everybody and everything . . ." (p. 105), for as Stanley Meredith declares, "no true philosopher troubles to be disagreeable. In this life it is sheer folly to add to the unavoidable discomforts the distress of being unpleasant!" (p. 365).

Although there is a tiresome posing conventionality about the behavior that Cozzens at first takes to be civilized, manners are likely to be subtle and complicated among the well-born people he begins by describing. One probably unexpected benefit to derive from this early preoccupation with proper aristocratic behavior is a rather definite idea of how a character should not behave. The great success of someone like George Bull in *The Last Adam* owes much to the insipid models of etiquette he lustily tramples upon. Underlying the conventionally good manners in *Confusion* are, in fact, the beginnings of another subversive process, adumbrating the decline of romanticism and the rise of Cozzens as realistic social novelist, shrewdly observant of how people really act and how their manners affect the social machinery. An author's effort to discriminate among the manners of his characters necessarily forces him to trust his close observations of them.
According to Cozzens, an important source of civilized behavior is training, different from education in forming automatic habits rather than reflective or retentive powers of the mind. Lack of proper training forces Mrs. Scott, in her parvenu's struggle against temperament and training, to resort to "sheer will power and crushing bank balance" to achieve only a "sorry mimic" of "how things ought to be" (pp. 191, 194). For as Cerise's tutor contends, "If one did not form the habit of concentration at an early age, it could be attained later only by enormous struggle and sacrifice" (p. 78). He means more than scholastic habits: "'There is . . . an enormous amount in habit. Habit can make you do things you do not believe in, it can even make you believe things . . .' (p. 95). Cerise, thinking of a mind trained in childhood to accept religious dogma, agrees that "it would believe not because of inherent truth, but inherent habit" (p. 142). She naturally has good habits: "Her early training had done something to make her a much better student than most of these girls" (p. 129), whereas her roommate illustrates the complementary truth, that one can learn the habit of failure: "Louise was always in danger of not being promoted with her class, and habit had rendered it not so very unpleasant" (p. 129).

Because it approaches free experience with life, education is more complicated than training. But if it
can be confined to pure academics, the case for education is fairly clear. The ordinary condition of the human mind is inefficiency:

They passed the ugly frame and slowly revolving wheel of a floating mill.
"See that," said Dr. Coty, "inefficiency combined with ingenuity. It is a symbol of the mind of man" (p. 96).

Education—close here to training—combats such inefficiency, as Coty explains:

"what is a person educated for?"
"Well," replied Dr. Coty . . . , "cultivation of the mind; making it efficient and useful; stocking it with useful knowledge. Chiefly, I fancy, training it to absorb knowledge" (p. 94).

Cerise is admirably educated. Even before she is sent to school, her tutor has "with tireless devotion set himself to supply a familiarity with cultures and civilizations" (p. 53). At twelve Cerise speaks three languages fluently (p. 54). Later she numbers Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, Italian, German and English among her many other accomplishments. Given education on this scale (assisted by a wandering yacht for classroom), Cerise naturally finds "a great deal wrong in even what poor education the age offered" (p. 181). Having a "prep school and college tradition" may be a minimum social credential, but even so, "None of these [prep school boys] were important; they did not have the intelligence, the seeking after intelligence . . ." (p. 260). More than fine tutelage is needed.
Cerise, forgetting the tutor, yacht, and château, decides on the ultimate source of education for heroic characters:
"If you wanted an education you got it yourself and that was all there could be to it" (p. 185).

This is an important remark, for it shows how Cerise's education comes gradually into her own hands and hence nearer to her direct experience with the world. But at the point where educational theories give way to the facts of life, Cozzens may seem uncertain himself on whether to prefer her well-schooled ignorance about life, or the confusing disillusion of her experience with it. The text, in any case, leaves little doubt that at age nineteen Cozzens would have stated the problem roughly this way, equating experience with confusion, for Cerise does not emerge from confusion; she subsides into it, "... ending thus in the blackness of fate, in the eddies of confusion following fate. . . ." (p. 403). Theoretically, as Dr. Coty believes, training and education can prevent this, for they prepare the mind "to absorb knowledge" (p. 94) and to become, not confused, but wise. In this process, Coty explains, the ultimate source of wisdom is experience: "... I do believe that the only wisdom worth having is that which the equipped mind derives from experience. There is no other way of gaining it!" (p. 95). The theory may be sound, but Tischofsky and Marian are very sceptical about
trusting it in practice: "'Education is all very well,'" Tischoifsky says, "'but I want Cerise to grow up here undisturbed by the turmoil and confusion of life. That's the only way education can proceed smoothly and sensibly'"
(PP. 69-70).

After following Cerise on her encounters with confusing experience, Cozzens ends the novel, which has been very substantially about education, on a vision of Cerise overwhelmed by confusion, and he may therefore appear to side with Tischoifsky and Marian. It may seem as if Coty's theory—that wisdom must ultimately derive from direct experience with life—has been proved disastrously wrong. In fact, Cerise's education may actually seem to have harmed her. Finding nothing in life to do, she hardly uses the efficient habits Coty inculcated. But education of her reflective powers leads, as her mother feared, to confused pessimism: "It was possible that this mass of ideas and impressions so rapidly accumulated [from much reading at school] had a little to do with that strange pessimism which settled on Cerise" (p. 279). Her heightened sensibility leaves her defenseless: "'Now you see Cerise stripped of all protection except the unreliable slowness of experience to divulge the full force of disappointment. . . . The merciful sleep of ignorance or misunderstanding will not shield her at all!'" (p. 211). Thus, a mistaken case could
actually be made against the education of heroes. We must not miss the point this way. Cozzens does not praise ignorance over the civilized results of education.

Yet it may seem that he agrees with Tischoifsky and Marian, that Cerise should be highly educated, yet sheltered from the world. She would be no more absurd than Pelton and Tischoifsky. Education for them is merely an ornament and diversion which they don't need to—and would prefer not to—put to serious use. It is like a splendid roadster built to be kept always in the garage, except that it can also provide an escape from the world, as it does for Tischoifsky, writing his learned "Histoire de Mahomet Almansor" (p. 51), his "'absurd book'" (p. 86); and for Pelton, who "arose to find Castiglione in the firelight and substitute the pleasant court of Umbria for contemporary New York" (p. 243); and already for Cerise herself, preferring her Morte D'Arthur to the "complicated realism" of present life.

But I doubt that Cozzens meant either to denounce education, or to advocate prolonged and thickly insulated schooling. He cannot ask us to admire a superbly educated heroine who knows nothing of life. The roadster will not do. Cerise herself agrees that merely academic triumphs don't matter much: "It seemed a stupid, almost brutal
travesty that she should be here [at school] represented
at the peak of achievement in this sheltered make-believe
life, mocking her with this little glory" (p. 291).

On the whole, Cozzens probably laments but agrees with
the conclusion that "'there isn't anything for people to do
except watch the young and inexperienced—whom they love—
make painful and costly mistakes!'" (p. 94). He does not
appear to doubt the desirability of being wise, or the
belief that experience is the ultimate source of wisdom.
Rather, he comments on the bitterness of the lessons that
experience has to teach. Cerise ends in confusion because
none of the things she tried to believe in were able to
sustain her—not work, not art, love, or religion. Her
physical wound, which had been healing, does not kill her.
She dies instead from despair when she realizes that, with
Blair dead, she has lost her last hope. The much older
Cozzens who wrote By Love Possessed and disavowed Confusion,
has no quarrel with Cerise's opinion that the ultimate
truth about life is bitter. Contemplating his father's
grave, "... Arthur Winner could feel true experience's
malaise: Ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make
you sick!" (ByLP 246). Instead, the older Cozzens' objec-
tion is surely with Cerise's right to claim any significant
experience with the things that disappoint her—work, art,
religion, love, and so forth. By extension, he sees that
the young Cozzens who thought his heroine had progressed from innocence to experience, was actually as confused as she.

The content of Cerise's terribly disruptive experience with life deserves scrutiny. Mrs. Allenby asks Cerise a blatant but important question: "'There are two important things in life; love and death. Do you know anything about them?'" Cerise answers from her inexperience, "'I suppose I don't. I would like to be loved according to my own fancy, and I don't want to die'" (p. 330). But by the end, she is washed in eddies of confusion, thanks to her encounters with love and death, against which neither aristocracy nor wealth, breeding, training, nor education has protected her.

Cerise's experience with death is inseparable from scepticism about religion. This is odd, because Cozzens strives to exclude religion from serious attention. Marian and Tischoifsky agree that "'We will say nothing about religion' . . . . 'Answer her questions impartially, but she must have none of this religious training'" (p. 53).

Except while Cerise, away at school, toys briefly with devotion, the subject is repeatedly dismissed with contempt, as in Tischoifsky's comfort to Marian: "'It is a phase, she
will outgrow it presently. Her mind is not the sort to content itself with the unempirical doctrines of religion. Do not reproach your own sanity because of young fancy'" (p. 140). And although ". . . Cerise turned with fervency to this new found shelter and support [Anglicanism], confident that faith was more than an exploitation of human weakness" (p. 133), Tischoifsky later proves right: "Cerise was conscious of no definite break in her belief, but a sharper ear seemed to detect the absurdities of Dr. Grimply's sermons and a conviction was awakening in Cerise, a conviction that after all, the religion so fervently espoused, would not quite do" (p. 141). On the contrary, Cerise decides that the universe is indifferent to human affairs. Concerning death, this scepticism is educed by Mrs. Allenby, with whom Cerise agrees:

"And would it [religion] help me if I did mind dying?"
"I suppose not" [Cerise answers].
"Can't you see it doesn't matter what you want?"
(p. 330)

But Cerise wants to believe in something. She complains, "'Peter, I can't believe in things. Things aren't quite right. It's that sort of eternal imperfection I was trying to tell you about yesterday. . . . It's hoping and being disappointed time after time. It breaks down faith'" (pp. 344-45). She places her penultimate hope on John Bold who, as a man representing "'the salvation of man,'"
constitutes a humanistic alternative to the religion she has discarded: "John Bold was at least a symbol of hope, hope hazarded and hazily formed, but definitely typifying some worth and promise, some palliation for a world desecrated with war, some excuse for life and the inexplicable confusion of life, justifying with its general terms her twisted instance" (p. 385). Her last gamble, on love, is a response to Bold's failure. Having rejected Blair twice, Cerise learns that Bold has been killed. On the same page, in a tired voice, she tells Blair that "If you want to marry me now, I'll go away with you!" (p. 387, italics mine). They set out. A page later, with Cerise still thinking about "Twenty thousand feet and fragments," a train crashes into their car, killing Blair and seriously injuring Cerise.

Had Cozzens remained in control, these experiences with death would seem only a rather extravagant proof that chance can upset human plans and that death spoils everything. Religion would not be involved. Instead, however, Confusion ends with disillusion about religion uppermost:

A tide of anguish was drowning her. Her heart cried out. "From the depths have I called unto Thee, O Lord . . ." God would be leaning down from heaven and pity her. There was nothing but silence.

IV.

Very late that night Cerise died. (p. 404)
This ending implies that, appearances notwithstanding, religion has been in question all along. The novel reads like a circular argument. From the premise that religion is fallacious, Cozzens proves that religion is fallacious. Moreover, he puts his heroine in the absurd position of complaining, in a universe she has already decided is godless and indifferent, about its godlessness and indifference. Having found "eternal imperfection," she feels that, except for her terror of dying, death would be preferable to living (p. 402), and that satisfactions in life are "Silly and empty" (p. 403). Cozzens would have us share her bitterness—blame the world because she is so unhappy.

Disenchantment with religious and humanistic means to salvation is akin, however, to despair about love. The book confirms Cerise's pessimism about all three sources of hope. For if Bold, as a savior of man and a substitute for religion, is "a symbol of hope . . . , justifying with its general terms her twisted instance" (p. 385, italics mine), then Blair Boughton is a lesser symbol of hope that might justify her twisted instance in particular terms. Cerise looks to love when other hopes have failed. And Cozzens is fully conscious of the resemblances between amorous and religious susceptibilities:
It was much the same feeling she had experienced . . . when Dr. Grimply said Mass . . . . It was akin to the exalting faith in God. Only it was love now . . . but Cerise, who needed only faith was content to have that faith in the glamorous mystery she gave her new and gentle deity. She did not even see the obvious irony in making the clown's song a token of hope in the future. She was immune to irony as all whom life's bitterness has left unchallenged are immune. (p. 154)

In Confusion Cozzens approximates his mature thinking more closely on love than on any other major subject. The plot is weak in that the death of lovers in an auto wreck tells little about the value of love. (Death in Bold's plane says comparably little about the value of human endeavor.) Another weakness is that Cerise, who dies a young virgin, is the chief vehicle of Cozzens' pronouncements on sex as well as love, though she lacks adult experience with either one. But all the same, Confusion does depict love as the source of confusion, disorder, irrationality, and false hopes that it often is in the later novels.

Cerise passes through several phases in her thoughts on love and sex. Her ideas assume the form of a dichotomy, with love as a romantic ideal, and sex as a naturalistic compulsion. In girlhood she thinks love is silly. She scoffs at her sentimental playmate who has a crush on the married Margrave Hautdorf: "Elizabeth was too absurd for words" (p. 103). As for sex, "... Cerise had been

11 Feste's song, Twelfth Night, II, iii, 48-49.
brought up carefully under the delicate sanity of her mother's theories and it left her with faint interest and no curiosity" (p. 150).

Her interest in love as a romantic ideal awakens sooner than her concern about sex does. At school she reflects that "there was this thing love, which had the most profound and surprising effects. There seemed something about it capable of rendering life worth while. In the mazes of her own imagination it was love in a Watteau park . . . . It would make you forget all about the world and you would sink deeper and deeper into infinite romance" (p. 153). Cozzens moves Cerise along a zig-zag course toward disenchantment about romantic love. Although Pelton opines that "'Love is the means of perfection!'" (p. 338); and although Georgia Heathly, respected authoress, counsels Cerise to marry because "'the so-called freedom [of being unmarried] is an empty thing!'" (p. 381); the prevailing direction of Cerise's thought is away from confidence in the Watteau park and "infinite romance." Her recently married friend Jacqueline Atkinson has bitter words for her:

"You don't know just how dreadful marriage it [sic]. You can't live with a man and stand him, not if you have any sensibility at all. I don't know what I hoped it would be. But what it is!"

"Love can't stand it, you know," she went on, "damn fools keep trying it and finding it can't, and then they make a sort of sloppy compromise" (pp. 325-26).
About this, Cerise "felt a strange conviction that what Jacqueline was saying was true. You think love better than life and find it twenty times worse" (p. 326).

Mrs. Allenby agrees. "'Usually you don't discover that you can't stand them [men] until afterwards, never suspect that you are tying yourself for life to a clumsy, helpless insentient thing which will do nothing but annoy you all your days!'" (pp. 331-32). Anticipating Julius Penrose (ByLP 544-45, 565), Cerise herself observes, "'You know, if you could be satisfied with cheap emotion, it would be perfectly splendid, because there's no end of it in the world. Cheap nostalgia, cheap sorrow, cheap love; it's easily expressed . . .'" (p. 344). Shortly thereafter, she acts on these anti-romantic insights. Having accepted Blair's second proposal, she realizes she has made a sentimental mistake and therefore breaks the engagement: "Certainly something had betrayed her or she would never have told Blair she would marry him. If for an instant she had loved Blair with her whole heart, loved him helplessly and beyond words; she did not love him now, she had no conception of love. The moon is not full many nights, she thought grimly" (p. 353). Apparently she has faced—or at least, Cozzens has faced—what she already "knew in her heart": "The solution [in Morte D'Arthur] of the ideal love she knew in her heart to be a fallacy, a dream woven by the
yearning, the disappointed who built in their thought what
the world could never give. But she [at this stage] knew
nothing of love, and the dimness of its definition was an
avoidance of abrogation, even as it gave scope to dreams"
(p. 282).

Thus, when proposing to Blair herself, she is already
convinced that "ideal love," "infinite romance," is "a
fallacy." In the later novels, this attitude would not be
surprising. But here it creates difficulties for Cozzens.
If Cerise as heroine knows that ideal love is a fallacy, he
cannot let her be so foolish as to choose it. But all
amorous relationships in the book are treated within the
dichotomy of ideal love or physical sex. Not accepting
Blair for ideal love, she must be choosing him for sexual
desire. Cozzens confirms this point only eight pages
before they agree to be married:

white light fell across all her relations with Blair
and divested them instantly of the vague and curious
theories she had hitherto held. It seemed now that
she had been tacitly assuming herself some sort of
disembodied intellect, that she had declined to admit
that she was a woman, that Blair loved her not because
she was Cerise, but because she was a woman, because
her body was beautiful, and that she, whether or no
her brain could ever love Blair, loved him with every
fibre of her body. (pp. 379-80)

And yet, shame and defeat are involved in this recognition,
as the remainder of the passage shows: "She felt herself
trembling, . . . knowing too well the reason for her
present emotion, and she flushed deeper, wished she could kill herself for her woman's body" (p. 380). This is a crucial passage. In fact, the whole scheme of heroism as developed thus far becomes threatened by it. So we should consider Cerise's sexual experiences up to this point.

Her attitude toward sex changes later, and much less drastically, than the one toward ideal love. At twelve she finds her first sexual intuitions very upsetting. A statue of Aphrodite makes her "'feel funny,'" and she adds, "'I don't want to look at it any more' . . . . 'It's beastly to cry'" (p. 73). Some months later, when a boy tries to kiss her, "Cerise in a fury unaccountable even to herself, whirled and, using the foil for a whip, slashed him across the knees" (p. 102). Much later Gloria Green tells her, "'I can't help the way I'm made . . . . Most girls don't care much about love without sex. If I love a man, I want just that . . . ." Cerise's reply, in metaphors of fencing, shows how little she's changed: "'Your proposition about love and sex is true, perhaps,' parried Cerise, 'but it's much truer the other way. I couldn't stand having a man touch me unless I loved him, and I don't love men, somehow'" (p. 286). Two pages on we see reasons for her distaste:

No, Gloria was not beastly, she was heart-rending. Sex was all right, it was rot to think it was nasty. A girl like Gloria couldn't feel that way
if it were really nasty. But, well, she liked blue mountain gorges where the wind blew, the long sea crashing on the beach. They had something clean and free that the idea of sex somehow spoiled. (p. 287)

This aversion to sex—unclean, probably "nasty," inimical to freedom, making people heart-rending if not beastly slaves to the way they are made—characterizes the whole book, not just Cerise's adolescent anxieties. The disapproving bias of the epigraph, urging us to "Wipe off all idle fancies" and to "keep out of this my soul all wickedness and lust, all concupiscences . . . ," suggests that sexual confusions are prominent in Cozzens' plans. The novel discusses sex repeatedly, usually to worry over it, get around it, and generally disapprove of it. Horatio Lane, Lynn Carruth, Mrs. Knuckle, and Cerise all arrive separately, for example, at the question of whether sexual desire interferes with art (pp. 359, 319, 255, 287, resp.). The inference seems fairly obvious, that Cozzens himself was worried. His own bias can be guessed, since the three sympathetic characters favor celibacy, asceticism, the pure spirit, and so forth, whereas Mrs. Knuckle, a loud vulgarian, is criticized upon taking the opposite view:

"I don't believe a normal sex life interferes with true creative activity in the world of art. It didn't in the case of any great man you can mention, almost. People are still afraid of sex."

Cerise felt suddenly that the conversation was getting unpleasantly personal as far as Mrs. Knuckle was concerned. She felt that Mrs. Knuckle's normal sex life was a distasteful matter. (p. 255)
At the time, Cozzens surely agreed with Cerise that anyone's "normal sex life was a distasteful matter," the antithesis of what he has found most admirable, civilized and tasteful. As Horatio Lane says, "The civilization of the spirit is of course, shattered by grossness of any sort; you cannot be master of your lines unless you are first master of yourself. The true artist's asceticism of body and soul is imperative" (p. 359). For heroism, this aversion to sex has wide implications, considering that the heroic vignettes (pp. 287-88) are introduced by Cerise's reflections on the nastiness of sex. Her heroes "had something clean and free that the idea of sex somehow spoiled" (p. 287). But so do Cozzens' heroes. He admires masters, not slaves; cynosures, virtual deities, far above ordinary life. There is no room in this scheme for the grossness, distastefulness, subjection to biological law, brutish breeding and dying, that he associates with sex.

In short, he has created another dilemma. For if sexual interests are incompatible with heroism, and Cerise is meant to be a heroine, they ought to be incompatible with her. And yet in rejecting ideal love and still accepting Blair, she has consciously chosen him because of her sexual desire. The point could be that Cozzens has changed his own mind, or veiled his opinion all along, about the
nastiness of sex. I find no evidence to support such a hypothesis. He must accept the fact of sexuality, of course, but nowhere does he find it admirable or even palatable.

If he thinks sexual interests are inappropriate for heroes, one of two conclusions must follow about Cerise. Either she is finally meant not to be heroic. Or else she remains heroic in his eyes regardless of her shamefaced acquiescence to her own sexuality. As for the first possibility, there is no support for it, though by his own criteria, Cozzens actually has strong reason to disapprove of Cerise, who knew that ideal love was fallacious; found sex variously degrading and shameful; and accepted Mrs. Allenby's and Jacqueline Atkinson's bitter case against the demeaning biological laws, the baseness of men, and the sloppiness of the compromises that marriage involves.

Cerise, upset, decides to marry Blair anyhow. Yet Cozzens shows no disapproval of her choice. Possibly she remains heroic because Cozzens does not require perfection of his heroine. Yet Cerise is all superlatives. She herself takes life to task for its eternal imperfection; and throughout, she is unconvincing because Cozzens lets her come entirely too close to being perfect. In his admirations he is far too uncompromising to have found room, suddenly at last, for distasteful imperfection in a heroic character.
No, it's likelier that he simply lost control of his novel, and that, having created an exalted heroine, he could not bring himself to topple her. Rather, having admired her, he also pities her for her confusion. Her humanity, he regrets to say, is inescapable, and as Aunt Hortense observes, "Man's fate is that he is a man; all turmoil and confusion must arise from that fact, not from blind intervention" (p. 36). Hortense may be wrong about blind intervention, but not, apparently, about the nature of man. Though as heroine Cerise is drawn only in superlatives, even she is vulnerable to the confusions caused by passions and by the human need to believe in something, whether religion, salvation by human endeavor, or love-on-any-terms. But Cozzens, pitying her, pitying the whole human predicament, is still far from his attitude in _Men and Brethren_, that "pity was a form of disparagement" (M&Br 234). He intends no disparagements of Cerise.

In sum, _Confusion_ is a botched but revealing novel. Cozzens evidently wishes to believe in the most exaggerated and stereotyped forms of heroism. All his values spring from the assumption that mankind, at best, is capable of heroic stature and achievement, whether in war, physical prowess, noble work, intelligent thought, artistic
creativity, or aristocratically civilized living. Partly from the overstatement of such heroisms, partly from their heavy reliance on hackneyed borrowings, the novel reads like the most implausible of romances. And yet Cozzens' mind is already rejecting romance as incompatible with empirical reality. To stay clear of the "latter day romanticists" whom he disparages (p. 219), he resorts to an equally exaggerated and, in the long run, very subversive pessimism framed mostly in naturalistic language. The latter ought to have buckled his whole system of heroism, yet he is unwilling for now to follow his premises to their logical conclusions. Instead, the novel ends in despair. Heroism notwithstanding, wisdom is bitter; religion is unempirical; human endeavor in Bold's "general terms" is fallible, subject to chance and death; and love, a dubious source of hope in particular terms, is likewise perishable. Therefore, all is hopeless, fit only for lamentation. The novel, in short, has been confused by an inexperienced author who thinks he believes in romantic heroism, yet whose own insights appear to make such a belief impossible.
Michael Scarlett: A History (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1925), Cozzens' second book, is superficially different from all his others in being his only historical novel. Set in England between 1588 and 1593, it is as far removed from Cozzens' usual contemporary settings as the surrealism of Castaway is distant from his realism. But Michael Scarlett can be understood most profitably, not as an exception, but as one of the four eventually rejected novels, all similar in their youthful romanticism, all showing signs both of continuity with, and of progress beyond Confusion.

Michael Scarlett resembles its predecessor in betraying Cozzens' confusion about his own intentions. In fact, his attitude toward romance poses an even greater problem here than in Confusion, paradoxically because Michael Scarlett is better disciplined. Placing the line between intention and accident becomes commensurately more difficult, for the author's intentions are likely to be more subtle and pervasive as he matures. But many indications
remain that Cozzens still did not have control enough to let his book say or do what he intended.

Most readers would agree with Frederick Bracher's conclusion, if not with his reasons, when he says that Michael Scarlett, like Confusion, is romantic. In 318 pages we find a plethora of extraordinary events, heightened actions, picturesque scenes, and daydreams come true. We have, for instance, many sword fights, valiant stand-offs, drunken brawls, a formal duel, two riots, a Numidian giant's burning at the stake, two shipwrecks, a whore-baiting, a bear-baiting, a runaway maiden in male disguise, a love-at-first-sight elopement from a woodland chapel into a rainbowed sunset, a hold-up of the Queen's messengers, a gallows corpse thrown through a Puritan's window for a prank, various galloping escapes, a theatre fire, assorted court intrigues, an encounter with the plague, several murders, a lover's suicide, access to Queen Elizabeth's court and the wings of Shakespeare's theatre, a youth's sudden ascent to the leadership of London, and his death by noble self-sacrifice. The protagonist's familiars include Marlowe, Greene, Donne, Nashe, Jonson, and Shakespeare. A book thus overstuffed with gaudy improbabilities is normally called a romance.

1 The Novels of James Gould Cozzens, p. 27.
And yet Cozzens, theoretically at least, disapproved of romantic tendencies in literature. He implied as much in *Confusion*, and how else can we explain the inclusion here of strongly anti-romantic speeches by characters he evidently admires? Speaking to Donne of literature, Greene exhorts:

"Sheer off thy nicenesses, thy dancing for my elegant lord Dunbury, thy elbow-rubbing with the court, thy elegising after Horace, and look at life. By the Lord, I do love these wretched people, Jack. I'm about writing a book, no painted chivalry, no vizard forms and scrappings. God's eyes, I'll give 'em life! They do show mincing princesses, I'll show Cynthia [a de-based slattern] there--I'll purvey no lying romance. My romance, 'tis henceforth the dark life of man, not a hundred spruce gentry in silks posturing atop, crossing blades for their precious honours, making love with the guise of being as are the angels of God in Heaven. I'll have life, stark life" (pp. 224-25).

Greene illustrates "lying romance" with examples from mannered courtly love and chivalrous fighting. Marlowe agrees, especially about love:

"Ben, I do wonder at these wench-riders who show such tender airs. What's love, Ben? Thou knowest. It hath but a coarse name. Faith 'tis a fine thing to keep a brave girl from her sleep--but mark me, Ben, why tears and sighs, why whisper oaths, why bandy honour, on what's neither more nor less than hound to bitch, than horse to mare?" (p. 199)

The weakness of Jonson's retort further undermines the case the book makes for lovers: "'God school thee, Marly, there's a tenderness--nay, we're all fond and fools if you're minded to squint at us'" (p. 199). Sounding like Marlowe, Sir Edward Germane can observe, "'God's Death, Michael, the
fall of a rose is over-lamented. . . . Thus much soft rubbish aside. The heir of ages turns to writing rose deaths that he may win a bed-fellow to hug and dandle and kittle. I want no man to be an Origen, but must he drag beauty to his breeding?" (pp. 43-44).

When estimable characters discuss it, chivalrous fighting fares little better than romantic love. Michael's followers at the Golden Asse fight several times "for their precious honours," yet the Queen's contempt is as blunt as Greene's: "'Tis a bawdy love which doth require the wicked fracture of my peace and distress of my subjects. Plainly, my lord, I find thy Asse a most intolerably behaved beast" (p. 281). No writer would include such strong and unrefuted speeches against the favorite themes of a literary mode he admired. How, then, can these anti-romantic contents be reconciled with the glut of materials in Michael Scarlett that any reader would call romantic, and that Cozzens, by way of Greene's speech, seems to deride as such? There are three available positions from which a critic might answer this question.

He might conclude that the anti-romantic statements are flatly inconsistent with the romantic elements of Michael Scarlett and are simply proof of a young writer's ineptitude. Such a conclusion will be difficult to defend. For one thing, it ignores the fact that anti-romantic
contents, occurring repeatedly and emphatically, cannot be dismissed as minor accidents of inconsistency. It also disregards Cozzens' prior deliberations about romance and realism in *Confusion*. He has obviously given this subject thought. The argument takes no account, either, of the general improvement of *Michael Scarlett* over its predecessor, or of Cozzens' efforts not to be guilty by at least some of Greene's criteria, focusing, for instance, mostly on the tumultuous "dark life of man" as found away from court rather than on life among pampered aristocrats such as people *Confusion*.

A second opinion could be that a subtle and pervasive design underlies the seeming inconsistencies, and in truth, there are some good reasons to think so. Consider Michael's elopement, for example, when he comes upon the disguised Ann Shelton at Moss Mary's chapel. The scene is so patently borrowed that Cozzens confesses the debt: "Out of Malory a dead lady in a woodland chapel occurred to him so vividly he could have cried aloud" (p. 54). The nature and extent of the debt, however, are less certain. Has Cozzens merely borrowed an isolated picturesque scene that beautifies love? Bracher maintains that *Michael Scarlett* is romantic in its "sympathetic picture of romantic love," yet as we

2 Ibid., p. 27.
shall see, that claim is untenable and quite the opposite of true: both subplots that involve Michael in love lead to bitterness, betrayal, and violence. That being the case, the Moss Mary's scene deserves special attention, since the subplot that begins picturesquely there ends very differently later. Is it possible, then, that Cozzens has tried to borrow from the whole plan of the Morte d'Arthur, including its progress away from merely colorful, inconsequential episodes of chivalry, toward the broodingly unified study in calamity and disillusion that Malory's work finally becomes? Like Malory (whom he also mentions admiringly in Confusion), Cozzens does write a tale in which love and chivalrous exploits seem glorious at first, but catastrophic by the end. Moreover, the bloody and love-torn disintegration of the Round Table resembles the disbanding of Michael's fellowship of the Golden Asse when Marlowe is killed: "'Avaunt,' he whispered, 'aye, all of you. Begone, and come no more,'" whereupon "The circle vanished slowly . . ." (p. 303).

If we allow such considerations full weight, then Michael Scarlett, like the Morte d'Arthur, can be called a romance only in a qualified sense, for both works do finally "look at life . . . the dark life of man," just as Greene enjoins, even though elements of conventional romance dominate the beginnings of both books and persist,
in some ways, throughout. But arguing for a pervasive design, which either parodies or imitates Malory's romance for the sake of unromantic ends, seems as unwise as contending that romantic and unromantic components have been strewn about in haphazard inconsistency. Such a pervasive and subtly ironic scheme would mean that the nineteen-year-old author of Confusion had improved astonishingly in only a year. Neither ordinary expectation nor Michael Scarlett itself encourages so strong an assumption. More conclusively, Cock Pit, his third novel, shows many of the same romantic traits that characterize Confusion and Michael Scarlett, yet it has nothing to do with Malory. And of course, Cozzens as a mature judge later rejected Michael Scarlett with the others. In short, the book must not be mistaken for some subtly successful tour de force.

A third available position—claiming partial but not utter inconsistency—yields the most satisfactory explanation of anti-romantic speeches in a romantic book. Such an argument maintains that Cozzens, philosophically opposed to what he took to be romance, probably sought to write an unromantic book—that is, a book which avoided some usual romantic characteristics, perhaps parodied and surely scoffed at others, and included some anti-romantic ones, all to show fallacies in romance—and then was only partly successful in carrying out these unromantic intentions.
Such an interpretation accepts the anti-romantic speeches as the likeliest indication of Cozzens' philosophical stance, allowing that the book's tremendous freight of implausibilities still may not have qualified Michael Scarlett as romance in the way Cozzens conceived of it. The argument regards realistic changes in subject matter and treatment since Confusion as deliberate efforts to avoid "lying romance," and recognizes the possibility of Malory-like subversion of the hero-dominated plot. On the other hand, it contends that the novel reads like a romance in spite of Cozzens' intentions, chiefly because any efforts to subvert romance would stagger beneath the burden imposed by a writer who still liked romance, and especially romantic heroism, far better than he knew.

The beauty of such an interpretation is that while acknowledging Michael Scarlett as an unsuccessful book, it keeps attention focused on its true significance: the many improvements on Confusion, the conflict between romantic and subversive influences in Cozzens' writing, and the anticipation here of his next book. Principal changes in technique can be seen in the shift away from the expository ruminations, pronouncements, and set speeches of Confusion, toward action and dialogue as the chief literary vehicles in Michael Scarlett. Plotting and construction are also markedly improved. Confusion seems clumsy in its proportions and unsteady in intention; it is cluttered with
gratuitous incidents, and ends on chance events neither necessitated by, nor illuminating, the plot. In all four respects, Michael Scarlett exhibits new technical competence. Perhaps finding a male protagonist more congenial than Cerise, Cozzens also replaces much of Confusion's sighing and high-minded philosophizing with humor, bawdiness, witty banter, lively profanity, insults, imprecations, slang, and the like, which animate the writing and bring the young author down to earth somewhat.

Shifts in content resemble those in technique. Although Cozzens again portrays a titled protagonist, Michael as aristocrat in the 1590's is more believable than Cerise in the twentieth century. And if recreating the whole constellation of Elizabeth's literary luminaries is a bit brash, at least such secondary characters make a stronger claim on us than do John Bold and Horatio Lane. Cozzens also broadens his novel to include many new low-life characters--harlots, madams, bullies, bohemians, outlaws, drunkards--without ignoring their aristocratic counterparts. Besides providing welcome relief from the stuffy proprieties and aristocratic myopia of Confusion, such changes produce a breadth of social depiction absent from the first book, yet suggestive of the later novels. It is also important that Greene's "dark life of man" is now an integral part of this novel: if the conclusion
seems melodramatically a bit too dark, at least that result arises from thoroughly plotted materials that hang together. In sum, the content as well as the technique of Michael Scarlett moves Cozzens closer to the sane realism, social breadth, taut construction, and masterful dialogue that typify his best writing.

Having discussed the problems of classifying Michael Scarlett, locating it among the early novels, and criticizing it, we should look more closely at three of its main themes—love, violence, and freedom—before turning to the particular question of heroism.

The plot resembles that of Confusion, for Michael, like Cerise, is an aristocratic young cynosure; the novel details his career from promising beginnings to great successes, then down through various confusions and entanglements to a premature death. And although easy to criticize, this book expresses some surprisingly mature thoughts more intelligibly than the first did. The causes of Michael's fall emerge from the action, and without the help of blind chance or the facile formulas of naturalism with which Cozzens tried to rescue Confusion.

A thematic parallel between Michael Scarlett and Confusion is that love, both as romantic ideal and sexual
attraction, is closely involved in the protagonists' confusions and calamities. Michael's life was "happy and constantly occupied" (p. 37) at Gull House, when he "knew precious little of women, adding truthfully, he wanted less of them, so did he contemn them" (p. 44). But Michael, like Cerise, elopes impulsively. When Ann Shelton has to marry someone else, and Michael is sent back to Gull House, he finds his life there no longer satisfying. Later at Cambridge, because Nashe involves him in a riot to rescue a whore named Peg, Michael must abandon his education and flee to London. Next he becomes enamoured of Delia Cob, a married woman who seduces him for her husband's profit, falls in love with Michael in spite of herself, and commits suicide when he accuses her. Thereafter, the Queen, ironically with Michael's welfare in mind, induces Ann Shelton (now married) to rekindle Michael's love, and he takes the bait unsuspectingly. Still later, in the fight between Donne and Michael's best friend Marlowe, it is the rescued whore, Peg, who stabs Marlowe from behind. And when Michael himself is dying, wounded by the Queen's men, he mistakes the whore first for Ann Shelton, then for Death (pp. 316-17).

In all of this, a pattern is obvious and undeviating: love and sex lead to disorder, ultimately to deaths. And women—whether maidens, wives, or whores—are not to be
trusted. Though less lucidly, *Confusion* offered the complementary warnings from feminine points of view: that love springs from and exacerbates confusion, and that men are not to be trusted. The common ground, of course, is that Cozzens finds love and sex perilous, whether for men or women. Thirty years later when writing *By Love Possessed*, he was only the more convinced.

Michael Scarlett, again like *Confusion*, thus studies the world's punishment of a fatally innocent protagonist who comes too late to disillusioning wisdom, in this case about love. But Sir Edward Germane is right that "'One can't be wise who's never been a fool'" (p. 44). Disillusion begins for Michael after his foolish elopement: when Ann claims that she can marry Lincoln's son and still love Michael, he answers first with sarcasm, then with the question, "'When we are both so young,' . . . 'how is it I am the greater fool?'" (p. 79). In the more worldly affair with Delia Cob, Michael sheds his virginity, yet Nashe is right that he remains "'a most innocent boy'" (p. 238): Michael lets the Queen manipulate him because of his passion for Ann, just as he let Cob do by means of Delia. Only at his own death does Michael intuit the truth when he hallucinates that Peg, the whore, is really the same as Ann, the lady; and the same as Death.
Marlowe has already reinforced this broadly damning view of women:

"Thou'st never cared for a woman, Marly."
"God's Elbows, never a whore! And forsooth so all woman [sic], been, be, or are in quest to be" (p. 119).

Donne is equally cynical when he refers to Delia gulling Michael, "'she putting in what she could—a woman's staple commodity'" (p. 237). That Cozzens shares their view is clear from an ironic title—"The Star to Every Wandering Bark"—that he supplies for Chapter 11. The allusion is to Shakespeare's Sonnet 116, which insists that love can be known by its constancy:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark . . . .

The ironies abound. For his own advantage, Cob has admitted no impediments to the adultery of his own wife. Far from showing constancy, Chapter 11 concerns Delia's faithlessness, first to her deceived lover, then to her deceived husband. Her inconstancies are mirrored by Michael's own as he turns from rapture to rage. The chapter, having

---

shown that such love is not love, closes on the broadest irony, a contrast that at first seems to be between Delia's false love and Ann's star-like constancy for Michael: having been betrayed by Delia, Michael ends the chapter babbling deliriously about Ann. But she, at the Queen's prompting, will reenact Delia's treachery herself. In the book's final scene, the carved rose that has symbolized love between Michael and Ann is entrusted to the demented whore, Peg. When she drops it in the fire, the disillusion about love is made symbolically complete.

Michael Scarlett culminates in disillusion also about bloody chivalry, which, in fact, bears a heavier burden in Cozzens' plot than love does: Ann, Delia and Peg are variously messy characters who bring Michael a vision of Death. But his own demise is not directly caused by women. Rather, his dying marks the nadir of a knightly career which, dominated by the sword, sinks from genuine valor to plain outlawry and murder, perpetrated for confusedly chivalrous motives.

In this theme, too, Michael Scarlett studies an innocent protagonist whose folly is punished and whose experience brings wisdom at a fatal price. The book begins as Crochet—"as obviously a gentleman as he had been unquestionably the fastest sword and boldest fighter in the Saragossa" (pp. 16-17)—instructs the boy in courtesy,
courage, and swordsmanship. Early scenes demonstrate that Michael has learned his lessons. He fights honorably to save Don Pilar and the Numidian; elsewhere, he defends his lady against a slander. Such scenes, like the Moss Mary's love episode, remain conventionally chivalrous. Events at first necessitate and reward such conduct. Don Pilar did need to be rescued from his eventual murderers; Ann Shelton was slandered; at Cambridge, Peg was being mercilessly flogged. Later, Essex involves Michael in a duel against insulting Puritans. Because of his spectacular swordsmanship ("'Sword of Caesar,' whispered Essex faintly, 'thou'rt a paladin!'" [p. 143]), Michael becomes the popular choice for the leadership of London.

From here on, however, chivalrous justifications of Michael's heroics become increasingly murky. The duel itself has violated an edict. The bloody theatre brawl, in which Michael leads one faction, results from his own politically provocative play. Marlowe's grisly drunken joke--throwing a corpse through a Puritan's window--leads Michael's friends to more murder and flight. And Matthew April's comment points out the downward course of all the violence: on Michael's rash willingness to fight for little reason, he says, "'Hare-brained, my Lord. You talk daily more in Tom's [i.e., Nashe's] vein!'" (p. 146).
Eventually, Michael sees the horrors he has become party to: "'I do dread my dreams. Murder and wordless fantasies and bloody deeds!'" (p. 249). He adds that "'Mine eyes have swallowed such an host of horrors, I fight frantic in the dark,'" and he abominates "'This cursed city, and them that fight and struggle in it! For what end but hate and blood-spilling? The brute senselessness doth enrage me till I could scream for God's havoc on us!'" (p. 250). We are a long way here from the world of romantic chivalries, where right and wrong are plainly distinguished, and butcheries by knights on the sympathetic side are glorious. Instead, Michael sees a moral blur, a constant bloodbath.

But wisdom does not bring disentanglement. Just before the end, the Queen sums up Michael's position as the wealthy but naive young patron of people less innocent than he:

"At a vile ale house called the Golden Asse he keepeth the young and disreputable from both universities, who have made him and themselves and my peaceful people more riots, brawls, murders, and debaucheries than thy so delicate ears could hear told, nay, than my tough old tongue could tell. In fine, though I do believe him guiltless, I'll much marvel if he remaineth so another twelve months" (p. 278).

Her scepticism is promptly justified. Violence soon claims his best friend Marlowe. And although Michael disbands the Golden Asse with the words "'Kill no more!'" (p. 303),
he has more killing to do before he dies himself. Michael's fatal battle is against the Queen's officers who have come to arrest Nashe. Michael knows that Nashe murdered Clermont, yet he fights off the watch to let Nashe escape. Though admirably loyal to his friend, Michael has divided his loyalty to include riotous people and bloody causes in a world not very gentle to chivalrous young innocents.

In handling this theme, Cozzens has changed his intellectual posture somewhat since Confusion, in which a recurrent inconsistency is its glorification of medieval battling and simultaneous horror at modern war. Michael Scarlett, moving back in time, reconsiders the romance of chivalrous bloodbathing. But the disparity between Cozzens' unromantic theories and contradictory practices makes especial trouble here. By the end he has impaled that he deplores the violence, yet scene by scene he shows that he actually likes it slathered on, matinée style. For instance: "Rapier in one hand, cutlass in the other, Michael leaned into it, cool and grim" (p. 312). Or again: "Michael flicked out a dagger with his left hand, putting it to the hilt in the fellow who would have closed with him" (p. 110). Such shallow theatricality spoils much of Michael Scarlett and should rightly stop us from taking the book too seriously on its own merits. And yet the criticism of
romanticized violence, being central to the serious thinking of the novel, anticipates Cozzens' mature work.

Sceptical treatments of love and chivalry belong to an even broader movement in Cozzens' writing, toward a suspicion of all kinds of freedom. Michael, left on his own, falls from a well-regulated life at Gull House, to a premature death among disorderly if brilliant people in London. Gull House and the Golden Asse, as the opposite poles in Michael's life, prompt us to interpret this fall, for Cozzens plainly admires Gull House:

The well-ordered ruling of Gull House by Crochet fashioned his life into a round of duties, regularly arriving, to be regularly discharged, with the subtle influence of Crochet himself to free such a scheme from any shadow of drudgery, causing every study and exercise to take on a quality of privilege. . . . the prize of Crochet's pleasure made Michael feel that it was his singular good fortune to be able to live in this almost monastic regimen. Strict and inflexible it was . . . (p. 36).

Although resemblances to Cerise's early life are obvious, Cozzens now resists the urge to philosophize about utopian education. The effect is to make Gull House stand instead for a whole way of life, a strict but enlightened, "almost monastic" regimen in which life, though not free, is happy and fruitful, classically ordered.

Sir Edward Germane first tempts Michael with freedom: "'You bide at Gull House, and life is on the road . . . '"](p. 46). Michael may be "'too old to stay at Gull House.}
There's honey in the lion . . ." (p. 44), yet when he elopes to London, he is also "woefully unprepared to encounter the wise or the wicked" (p. 61), and much later it is still "'an evil thing he ever came to London. See how an unplanned, undesired chain of event hath placed him in the saddle where he sits neither safe nor happy'" (pp. 158-159). Plainly, Michael needs freedom to test himself and his world. Yet the violence, amorous entanglements, and lawlessness after Gull House all suggest that Cozzens, now as in Confusion, associates personal freedom with calamitous disorder, best symbolized in the Golden Asse. Nor are the implications narrowly personal: just as Michael suffers from too much liberty, so does the whole Elizabethan world, which Cozzens may be consciously comparing to his own Lost Generation when Matthew April says:

"How split and strained are the times when youth, which should quest knowledge and decency in life, revels like tavern brawlers, wasting sense and substance. Like this generation will end our England. They do despise God, destroy themselves, care nothing for the morrow. Debauchery there's always been, but never did it run so high among the youth. Men will tell you 'tis the unrest following on the Spanish War" (p. 99).

Cozzens does not simply moralize against freedom and disorderly living, though the plot alone might seem to. Stripped to essentials, the book's treatment of freedom reveals another perplexing and unresolved contest in the author's mind. Nashe, introducing Michael to English life
outside of court, says it "'narrows down to this: on the one [High Party] side the gay, the witty, the pleasant livers, the light hearted; on the other [the Puritan], the dry and drab, the no-wine, no-play, no-smile, ethnic barbarians, prudish dog-bolts'" (p. 107). Michael, of course, chooses the former, and the plot appears to punish him for doing so. This view is reinforced when, near the end, Ann asks Michael "'who did trap thee in with these scheming men?'" and he replies, "'So I have sown,' . . . 'I reap no more than my just harvest of earned deserts'" (p. 286). Yet nothing suggests that Michael should have joined the Puritans instead. From these two observations, the author's bias would seem strongly classical, upholding Gull House and Elizabeth's court as models of rational government, domestic and civil respectively, as against both of Nashe's alternatives in the tumultuous, freedom-abusing city. Reaping what one sows will always interest Cozzens, but here the moral is confused. For we can hardly suppose that a hero should, to avoid disorderly ways, have shunned the company of such as Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Nashe and John Donne. Surely not for their undistinguished Puritan counterparts, nor even for Elizabeth's court or Crochet's Gull House. And of course Cozzens realizes that Matthew April is wrong: the free-living Elizabethan generation, far from ending England, in many ways crowned it. The
truth is that Cozzens is caught here between fundamentally incompatible values. He admires the libertine Marlowe's defiance of order as much as Crochet's and Elizabeth's reasonable upholding of it. As Cozzens matures, though always concerned about the liberal dilemma, he will grow increasingly doubtful about freedoms like those he depicts at the Golden Asse tavern. For now, however, his closing tone of sentimental regret stands in place of a philosophical resolution to his problem and is consistent with that heard at the end of Confusion: a young character must seek his freedom, and will probably be punished by a fundamentally unjust world for finding it alluring.

Comparing Cerise and Michael shows that Cozzens has not altered his idea of a novel's hero very drastically since Confusion, and that although changes are generally toward moderation, youthful overstatement is still conspicuous. He again depicts and apparently admires a man of action, even while scrutinizing a whole system of chivalry. As an Elizabethan nobleman, Michael can more plausibly engage in manly combat than Cerise could. The result is less outright silliness in the plot, less substitution of sports for actual fighting, less effort to glorify pedestrian matters, and less need of a shopping list of
credentials for the hero. Since Michael always fights well, his additional success as a dramatist is adequate proof of his versatility. Yet he is, like Cerise, another wish-fulfilling cynosure: a mere teenager, he springs with ease into the company of Shakespeare and Marlowe. His first play, praised by Shakespeare himself, causes English politics to boil over, just as his swordsmanship makes him London's darling. The extent of his success, which "'hath turned the rabble to thee, and it's all Dunbury and God comfort his lordship . . .’" (p. 176), should remind us of the near deification of heroes that occurs in Confusion. Cozzens is certainly not yet cured of overstatement in characterization.

He must have seen, though, that a hero needed far fewer credentials than he supplied Cerise with. For instance, he worries much less over Michael's formal education than over Cerise's:

He had now [at sixteen] a good knowledge of Latin and Greek, a proficiency in the French tongue, a smattering of Italian. He had been instructed in the elements of mathematic, logic, poetic, and music. With history and natural philosophy he possessed some familiarity. What Michael knew Crochet saw he knew well, as Crochet took care that he should be humble and appreciative before scholarship without planning that he should be a scholar. Crochet considered it better, if everything could not be acquired, to perfect Michael in the more necessary and manly exercises of the sword and horse, being content otherwise merely that Michael should not be a barbarian. (pp. 37-38)
Resemblances to Cerise's education are obvious, yet after this summary, Cozzens says little more on the subject.

He retains but moderates his interest in aristocracy, too. Crochet, a mentor unmistakably descended from Tischoifsky, provides Michael with the training that an aristocratic hero needs. But unlike Cerise, Michael is only the third generation of Dunbury noblemen. As such, his own literary ancestry traces back to the upstart Scott family as well as to the ancient D'Atreés. Cozzens reviews Michael's lineage and the gradual refinement that, in Confusion, he had claimed was "a process of ages" (Conf. 205).

Lord Michael [the first Lord Dunbury] was a handsome yeoman. Lord John [the second], not so handsome, drawn to a scale more delicate. That delicacy he had from his mother . . . . So, reflected Crochet, we make an aristocracy. To the next Lord Michael [i.e., Michael Scarlett] it would belong naturally, by every right, for he combined his grandsire's handsomeness with his father's refinement of feature; even now, Crochet saw . . . an authentic bearing seldom enough found in England; the subtle smoothing of every manifestation--bluff good humor becoming urbanity, boorish rudeness becoming confident insolence, and so with each emotion. (pp. 18-19)

Without reversing himself on the desirability of an aristocratic upbringing--good blood well trained--Cozzens has nevertheless reduced his protagonist's unearned claims to admiration. Less of an aristocrat than Cerise, Michael also lives in a novel in which aristocracy, though
historically more plausible, is actually emphasized less than in Confusion. Michael's title assures him the money and eminence he needs in a romance still largely unconcerned with petty ways and means. But the prominence of untitled people like Marlowe, Nashe and Shakespeare effectively prevents Cozzens from overstating the hero's advantages of birth. Michael Scarlett therefore seems far less snobbish than Confusion.

Michael's remark, "' . . . I reap no more than my just harvest of earned deserts'" (p. 286), gives a glimpse of another important way in which Cozzens' concept of heroism is both continuing from, and beginning to evolve beyond, its first manifestation in Confusion. For in a sense, Michael is absolutely right: the plot shows us, and would have shown Cozzens a few years later, that his character has gotten more or less what he deserved. Considered without sentimental extenuations, Michael has been impetuous, violent, lawless, carnal, irresponsible, undisciplined, improvident, gullible, easily used, and in short, disastrously young. The proof of Michael Scarlett's continuity with Confusion is that similar criticisms could be made of Cerise, and that Cozzens continues to be sentimentally unable to topple his hero in either book. Rather than encourage dispassionate appraisal of his protagonist, Cozzens indulges in a flurry of swashbuckling action, followed by the banal
pathos of the last scene with Peg. The parting impression is that Cozzens wistfully regrets that the world can deal so sternly with promising characters whose intentions are good. But on the other hand, signs of change since Confusion lie in the fact that Michael is given these reap-as-you-sow lines to speak in the first place. Cozzens abandons the tough-minded criticism of his hero that this speech promises, and yet, disapproval of Cerise was never even ventured. All the same, the distance that still separates Michael Scarlett from Cozzens' ironic handling of protagonists in the middle novels can be seen by juxtaposing Michael's wooden reap-and-sow self-accusation, to Francis Ellery's thoughts at the collapse of his unheroic little comedy: "What, indeed? What advice from Mrs. Cunningham to the lovelorn [i.e., Francis]? You could not easily imagine telling Mrs. Cunningham such a story; but you could imagine easily enough what she, what any woman, would say to the problem presented: It serves you right! My advice is: it serves you right" (AskMeT 336). In short, the progress from Cerise to Michael constitutes the beginning of a trend that will carry Cozzens from sentimental sympathy with exaggerated heroes, toward rational, aloof, ironic criticism of non-heroic protagonists in later books.
Hindsight reveals an equally important and subversive trend among the secondary characters in Michael Scarlett, notably Marlowe and Queen Elizabeth. Both of them occasion some of the best writing in the book; represent types that will grow increasingly interesting to Cozzens; anticipate major changes in his thought; and overshadow Michael Scarlett himself in most respects, though Cozzens seems unaware of that fact as he writes.

Marlowe, a new sort of character for Cozzens, is a demonic and paradoxical genius. Cozzens alludes often to the dichotomous aspects of this personality, which has "both the sinister high-coloured front shown to the world, and the bleak reverse, the seams and knots, the clipped threads . . ." (p. 307). Matthew April, who regards Marlowe as "'wholly mad,'" concedes that "'There's the curse of company, to be brilliant it must be bad, methinks'" (p. 97). Though an immortal dramatist, Marlowe is also the leading spirit among "'Witty rogues, sans morality, sans decency, sans temperance. In an hour they'll be roaring drunk, fit to wench or set on the watch or slay each other'" (p. 97). Like Michael, he is both an artist and a man of action, but he differs in being without innocence or illusions, a tough anti-sentimentalist, a vehement atheistical libertine and hell-raiser who admits that "'the devil hath his house i' my heart'" (pp. 296-97). He is a
consummate master of vivid language, especially sarcasms, execrations, and bawdy jests. When, upon Marlowe's death, Michael laments that he has "lost the better part of the world . . ." (p. 307), we can agree that in Marlowe some of the best and worst human possibilities have been brought rather successfully together in a tortured character that defies over-simplification.

Besides new, this strangely divided man is prophetic. Though a secondary character, Marlowe is more impressive than Michael himself. In Confusion, a solipsistic novel bent on turning Cerise into a heroine, secondary characters have only minor roles. But the greater prominence of secondary characters in Michael Scarlett corresponds with the gradual shift from solipsistic novels to the broad social novels of Cozzens' maturity. An important trait of those later books is the repeated use of dominant secondary characters who overshadow protagonists. Here in Michael Scarlett Cozzens must have struck by accident on the pattern he was later to cultivate, for non-heroic purposes, with seeming deliberateness. Neither the intended hero nor an entirely fictitious person, Marlowe doesn't need to be puffed up into something unmistakably admirable. Hence, he seems less of an authorial contrivance and preachment than Michael is. Moreover, as a paradoxical heaven-defying poet and enfant terrible, Marlowe naturally gets some of
the saltiest, most readable lines in the book. In writing Michael Scarlett Cozzens probably did not intend for anyone to upstage his hero. But it is surely prophetic that Marlowe does so, mainly by embodying attributes that would disqualify him from the conventional heroism that Michael is afflicted with.

Another of Marlowe's claims to importance lies in the kind of friendship he forms with Michael, for it is the chief precedent for a whole category of relationships involving later protagonists. As Cozzens' romanticism gives way to the anti-sentimental realism of his later books, his suspicions about love and sex become increasingly acute, culminating, of course, in *By Love Possessed*. At the same time, he examines non-sexual intimacies, especially between masculine friends, with growing interest, using those friendships as foils to messy sexual affairs. Although something of the kind is found between Betty Connant and Cerise in *Confusion*, the Marlowe-Michael friendship affords the first clear evidence of interest in such substitutes for sexual love. Better examples will occur between Marty Bunting and Abner Coates, Bus Beal and Benny Carricker, and Henry Worthington and Jon LeCato; and eventually Julius Penrose and Arthur Winner will best exemplify such relationships. But an important difference between the Marlowe-Michael friendship and its successors
is that the latter afford protagonists social protection, an effective and sexually uncomplicated sustenance in times of trouble. Quite the opposite is true in Michael Scarlett. When Michael is distressed and asks Marly, "'Prithee whence came thy warm grip on life, thy sureness, thy understanding?'" (p. 250), Marlowe says nothing. In fact, friendship with him and Nashe has led Michael into the Queen's disfavor and leads ultimately to his own undoing. That pattern, which probably doesn't reflect Cozzens' sober judgment even now, will be reversed in later books.

Marlowe's importance rests also on his subversive transitional status between romantic and realistic characters in Cozzens' fiction. As literary genius, man of action and passionate libertine, he belongs among gaudy romantic figures like Michael. Differences between the two, though, show Marlowe to be the more realistic character, not as representing typical humanity, but as Cozzens will mean the word in The Last Adam: "Like many smart people, Henry Harris had always been a realist. The qualities of plainness, poverty unashamed, had their value mainly in his father's mind" (LA 116). Though not ordinary himself, Marlowe, like Henry Harris, can see life without distorting it. He is highly rational, worldly, and without other people's illusions. All Marlowe's sarcasm and cursing, his atheism, cynicism, irreverence, and lack of sentimentality derive
from a sense of reality that repudiates and ridicules romance. Yet Marlowe is also a more striking character than Michael. Cozzens must eventually have seen that. For he surely appears, especially after the first four novels, but to some extent in the very next one, to have adopted an entire point of view from people like Marlowe. This is evident in the later novels as wholes. And Marlowe also numbers among his literary descendants some of the best characters Cozzens ever drew: Morris, the sarcastic radio operator (SSSP); Henry Harris (LA); Harry Wurts (J&U); and Julius Penrose (ByLP). These, and in some ways Jo-Jo Nichols (GoH), all show conspicuous similarities to Marlowe, whose only feeble predecessors in Confusion are Horatio Lane and Stanley Meredith. In short, the success of a Marlowe meant, sooner or later, the abandonment of Cerises and Michael Scarletts as heroic types. The insights that made Marlowe a good character had to make Michael look foolish.

But Queen Elizabeth leads Cozzens even further, in his admirations, away from romantic young heroes than Marlowe does. In fact, the Queen is so nearly the opposite of Michael in most ways that Michael's survival as the author's apparent favorite is a wonder. I have already challenged Bracher's point that Michael is an active rebel, "fighting
authority in its various forms," a "hot protestant against authority." Michael intends no rebellion against authority, even when his divided loyalties involve him in lawless acts and with lawless companions. Yet the contrast remains striking, for the Queen is authority, is the law. Where he is a young and hot-blooded male, she is a tough old female so little bothered by unruly passions that she can say, "'An a maidenhead is showed political I do own she's zany who'll not set reason beyond affection in preserving it'" (p. 277). She allows no womanly sentimentality to interfere with important matters. When Ann, for instance, asks her, "'Would have me heartless, Madam'" the Queen's reply sums up an unsentimental attitude that will soon be fully Cozzens' own: "'Aye, where the heart misleads'" (p. 276). Passionate young Michael complains that "'... I fight frantic in the dark'" (p. 250), but the Queen, on the contrary, "was the wisest of them, then as always ..." (p. 17). Finally, she is the one character who succeeds: whereas Michael and Marlowe both lose their disorderly lives, the Queen, who stands for civil order and threatens to crack the skull of the Golden Asse if need be, keeps her word.

She traces her literary ancestry from two minor characters in Confusion who resemble her. Mrs. Pelton,

selecting a summer camp for Cerise, combines in a wealthy old woman the velvet manners and iron inflexibility that sometimes characterize the Queen: "Sooth, thought Michael in the passage, there's velvet enough, yet I think steel beneath" (p. 284). And Mrs. Allenby, the imperious, cynical grande dame who summons Cerise to tea, anticipates the Queen in her crackling manner toward presumptuous juniors and inferiors, as in her aggressive lack of sentimentality and nonsense. The family of characters thus begun turns out to have a powerful effect on Cozzens' fiction, for it focuses his attention on attributes that contrast sharply with those he originally took to be heroic. The Queen's most important and direct descendant is Mrs. Cunningham, the secondary character who nevertheless dominates *Ask Me Tomorrow*; and many other characters also bear obvious relationship with Queen Elizabeth as portrayed here.

In the long run, however, the Queen's signal importance derives, not from her literary progeny, but from her having begun Cozzens on a great new theme, perhaps the most fruitful single subject in his mature writings, namely, responsibility for the workings of human organizations. For Elizabeth, the organization in question is England itself, and the nature of her responsibility is political. In *Confusion*, however, Cerise believed that "all this legislative business was inexcusable foolishness" and that
"Politics . . . take up time for people who haven't the mental initiative to do anything else" (Conf. 173). Nothing suggests that Cozzens disagreed with her then. Michael Scarlett thus reveals a big change in Cozzens' thought, for Michael himself, though he pronounces far less on work than Cerise does, nevertheless plunges directly into two sorts of interrelated and surprising work: politics, and the writing of politically inflammatory plays. Cerise may have gone to bed "hating Edwards [the politician] and all the silliness he stood for" (Conf. 73), put in Michael Scarlett everyone tacitly agrees that political control is important. Coincident, then, with the first movements in Cozzens' writing toward realistic notions, we find, centered on the Queen herself, this reversal of attitude toward politics.

The young author's eagerness to provide his hero the best of everything—Shakespeare, Marlowe, Nashe, Donne, Jonson, and Queen Elizabeth too!—may adequately explain Elizabeth's presence. And yet, in portraying her, he does not give us Gloriana. He dwells instead on the Queen in her more pedestrian occupations, as tough-minded manager, businesswoman, strategist, disciplinarian, and shrewd lady. She is neatly captured in the following passage, where the author's still uncorrected habit of exaggerating whatever he wants us to admire is outweighed by the new and realist­ic grounds for admiration that are implied here:
"Give me the total for all foods and drinks for the garrison by the year."
"Eight thousand three hundred forty-two, shillings ten, Madam."
"God's Body, 'tis a rare luxurious establishment! Last year 'twas not beyond eight thousand two hundred, shillings ten. The preceding [sic] year, an I slip not, eight thousand forty-four, shillings three. Yet the garrison decreaseth" (p. 280).

The full force of his admiration must not have been immediately felt even by Cozzens, for he proceeds in the heroine of Cock Pit, his next book, to disregard much that the Queen should have taught him about realism and the characters he actually admired. But in retrospect, the Queen is plainly prophetic. The person responsible for the hero's lamented death might well be an arch-villain, but the Queen is nothing of the kind. Cozzens could not escape for long the subversive conclusion, that she was actually more admirable to him than the character he set out to admire. Thus she, like Marlowe, must be reckoned as part of the composite force that eventually toppled Cozzens' youthful concept of romantic heroes.
Although *Cook Pit* (New York: William Morrow, 1928), Cozzens' third novel, is like the other three discarded works in being far below his mature standard, it compensates us, as they do, by disclosing the roots and early growth of his career. Resembling *Confusion* and *Michael Scarlett* in many pattern-confirming ways, *Cook Pit* also affords glimpses of new tendencies in Cozzens' art, that will develop further in the other Cuban novel, *The Son of Perdition*. But the great uniqueness of *Cook Pit* lies in its being the only Cozzens novel to depict a protagonist who is, despite some new connotations of heroism, both roundly admired and melodramatically successful. In Ruth's success, the author's early taste for romantic heroism attains its fullest expression. But even as heroism culminates in *Cook Pit*, the forces that are soon to topple it can also be observed in greater strength and clarity than ever before.
Cozzens has continued to gain in technical skill since *Confusion*, especially in imposing formal unity on his fiction. All the events occur within the region of Cuba mapped on the endpapers. Instead of wandering through several years, as *Confusion* and *Michael Scarlett* do, *Cock Pit* transpires within a few weeks. A unity of action is also approached in that most events concern the conflict between the Mickses and Don Miguel Bautizo. Finally, the symbolic title alludes to an intended thematic unity. The conceptual difference is worth noticing, between "confusion" as the title idea for his most disunified book, and "cock pit" as a symbol that focuses attention on a particular conflict in a definite place. That *Cock Pit* is, despite its unity, still a mediocre book is immaterial, for the contrast with its predecessors already anticipates the astonishing feats of narrative unification in, for instance, *Guard of Honor*.

Nevertheless, the plot remains in many ways typical of the early books, especially in its weaknesses. Cozzens still supplies too many episodes, too much action, too little development of his materials. Narrated events are still sensational. They include a cane fire, a sabotaged bridge, the start of a *fiesta intima*, a blackmailing, an unsuccessful ambush, the discovery of a murdered spy, the murder of an arsonist, and the torturing of an assassin,
as well as many less lurid incidents. Cozzens remains capable of outrages against credibility and taste. The plot rests on flagrant coincidences, such as that Lancy Micks should be wondering about Martinez, his enemy, just as he passes Quita's hut (p. 65); that she should happen to have seen Martinez that very morning, in another town, doing just what Lancy is interested in, and that she, without knowing of Lancy's interest, should happen to mention seeing Martinez, whose name she doesn't even know (p. 68). Examples could be proliferated. Nor is Cozzens above articulating his plot with garish theatrical devices, as when he closes Book Two by literally spotlighting the heroine who will soon save the day: "She choked a little and stood frozen, holding her hands against her mouth, while suddenly the white, fierce radiance of a locomotive headlight poured blindingly over her" (p. 231).

The novel suffers also from the author's self-consciousness. At twenty-five, Cozzens was still affecting a worldly nonchalance. Stylistically, the whole book is damaged by this pose, which fosters glib narration and dialogue. Even the plot falls victim to the affectations, for it concerns intricate business relationships, rivalries, and machinations. As Cozzens tries to drop these details offhandedly, especially in the allusive shoptalk of insiders, the plot gets confusing. Look at Mr. Britton's
baffling lines: "'I'd hate to have any one hear me say this,' . . . 'but without aspersing Bautizo's loving charity, and supposing it happened to be the United that cut Central Baria's Toledo right of way, Central Chicago certainly would have had the drop on Baria if Bautizo hadn't come rushing up and been so nice to them!'" (p. 34).

Such writing obscures the plot, but it also discloses two subversive changes since Confusion. One is the importance tacitly conceded to business and politics. Having preferred in Confusion to ignore or scorn such matters, Cozzens now recognizes that to seem worldly, he and his characters must be familiar with them. It is also worth noticing that although business and politics in Cock Pit are still rather extravagant, they are less so than in Michael Scarlett. There he imagines the Queen's business, and the political stakes include the leadership of London. Here he tells about sugar tycoons angling for control of a Cuban province. The material, being less pretentious, is proportionately more believable. In origin, it is also, of course, closer to the author's direct experience, and in its Cuban sugar details, necessarily less reliant on literary sources. As one reviewer began by observing, "While almost, if not quite, every other kind of so-called
'big business' has been exploited many times in fiction, the sugar industry of Cuba has been generally neglected."

The second change to be observed in Mr. Britton's shoptalk is Cozzens' increasing willingness to entrust narrative chores to characters speaking colloquially. Beyond the purely technical difference in how the story is transmitted to the reader, this change affects how and what the author himself is apt to see, for if he requires dialogue to sound natural, he must study real people and the subjects they would naturally discuss. That is, increasing reliance on natural dialogue (a technical expedient) conduces to realism (a perceptual and thematic as well as technical matter). Persistent striving after a worldly manner, though it cost Cozzens temporary setbacks, must rank as another of the subversive forces that thwarted his first romantic impulses and led him toward new and fruitful subject matter.

Criticism falters, however, when an author seems more concerned with how he says something than with what he says. Cozzens' eagerness to appear worldly probably explains his nonchalance about potentially shocking material. He approaches taboo subjects like Edith Fletcher's adolescent

lesbianism with studied aplomb. He lets his heroine coolly announce herself Ramon's mistress. Ruth, who is, among other things, profane, irreligious, flippant, disobedient, condescending, and immune to punishment, is unimpressed by the crime and sordidness around her. She takes danger and violence in stride. During the cane fire, she goes sightseeing on horseback. She directs the torturing of Cirilo with bantering good humor. In short, Cozzens employs adolescent ways of declaring that he is no longer a naive adolescent. This ulterior motive, familiar from Confusion and Michael Scarlett, is still so conspicuous that one must interpret Cock Pit cautiously.

Predictably, characterization is sometimes inconsistent. Lancy Micks, Ruth's father, is an important instance, for he is handled as a second protagonist, and the whole plot depends on the situation his behavior creates. In resisting Don Miguel's scheme to crush competitors, Lancy, without very convincing motives, jeopardizes his own life and provides Ruth her reason to become involved in company intrigue, that is, to protect him from killers hired by Don Miguel. It is difficult, however, to tell how Cozzens thinks of Lancy Micks. By some evidence he appears a tough-minded genius of efficiency, "the best man who ever rode cane" (p. 29), stoutly unbribable, but impatient with fools like Ramon who don't "'know what it's all
about" (p. 21). By other evidence he is a naive, irresponsible, murderous hothead and drunkard who is called a fool himself by estimable characters. Not having foreseen the obvious consequences of his own actions, he must be rescued by his daughter. Reconciling such discrepant versions of the same personality is an uneasy business with serious interpretive implications. Opposing Don Miguel, Lancy is apparently a conscientious individual acting on moral principles against an amoral, organized force. Several subjects of lasting interest to Cozzens are thus exasperatingly involved with this inconsistent character: the place, for instance, of individual humans in relation to big organizations; the distinction between admirable and merely stubborn forms of conscience; the right relation between means and ends, particularly when expedient but illegal means lead to desirable ends. Cozzens' sober thoughts on these subjects cannot safely be extracted from his contradictory portrait of Lancy, for the abundant signs of authorial immaturity should, I think, argue not that Cozzens has embellished a portrait with subtle complications, but that he has accidentally smeared the canvas.

Ruth is sometimes equally inconsistent. Try to understand her as lover. Does she love Ramon? Is she his bedmate? There is evidence to support contradictory answers to both questions. At one point, for instance, she tells
her father, "'I really love Ramon very much!'" (p. 175). But she says this "idly," and on page 213 she retracts the remark by saying, "'You never thought I loved Ramon, did you?'" On the whole, although she feels pity, "of all odious things" (p. 106), and accepts Ramon's constant attention, she probably does not love him, for she comforts herself elsewhere by remembering, "But I never said I loved him . . ." (p. 150). Surely, the book's numerous disparagements of Ramon make him a doubtful choice for Ruth. Yet if love is not involved, then what is? Though Ramon is a millionaire with a suspicious mother, Ruth is not fortune-hunting; at least, she says "'I'm not going to marry him, Daddy!'" (p. 177). She also asks sarcastically,

"Do you think I'd love him for his brains?"
"Well, that's a fine thing for a decent girl to say," announced Mr. Hicks.
"Now, Daddy, what makes you think I'm decent?"

(pp. 175-176)

The implication is that perhaps she is not "decent," though elsewhere she makes a great point of her decency: "'I'm trying to be as decent as I can, you know!'" (p. 253). Nevertheless, when rejecting Mr. Nortz's proposal, she lets her relationship with Ramon sound frankly sexual—or, in her father's terms, indecent. Nortz has asked whether she is Ramon's mistress, and she replies, "'If you like, dear!'" (p. 230). This seems reasonably clear until Cozzens blurbs it again. Nortz says, "'But you didn't tell me that
because you thought it would make me love you less, did you?" and she easily contradicts her confession by saying, "I suppose so!" (p. 230). The result of all this is a badly muddled love story. Basic information about the heroine and her motives is either lacking or contradictory, and since central inconsistencies about Lancy and Ruth are never resolved, all interpretive inferences become suspect. Cozzens does not control his materials well enough to make them express themes unambiguously. And here again, Cock Pit resembles its predecessors.

Thematically, the crucial question is the meaning of the title. "Cock pit" refers most literally to the place where Lancy takes his game cocks to fight. Plainly, however, Cozzens intends the cock pit to be symbolic. Here he enlarges upon its literal significance:

"Lost an eye," observed Roy Fletcher. "He [a game cock fighting against Lancy's bird] isn't hurt any. Nothing like that jab in the neck your bird got." 

Lancy Micks drew a deep breath. He could feel it himself, feel the fight, the drive of death-bent spirit, the beauty of hard muscles straining in a fit body, and the magnificent starkness of it. One of them would die; neither of them would quit. Blood, injuries, sentimental concerns dwindled to their true relativity in the face of such resolutions clashing. He really didn't care, in a way, whether his bird won or lost; one of them would win. (p. 54)

Cozzens wants us, of course, to look for clashes like these
among the human characters. Besides Lancy, who "could feel it himself," another character rendered in cockpit imagery is Don Miguel, the villainous sugar magnate. His appearance is melodramatically postponed until the last chapter, which opens with this description of him:

Probably it was the droop of lid, someway suggestive of the typical film sheathing a falcon's eye, which was responsible for the whole impression. Even so, you had to imagine a falcon, or any swift and savage bird, grown old, fat, slow and infirm in manner, yet retaining a trace of former instincts. Nothing left of the lean young bird but the intrepid eye, now usually veiled. (p. 286)

Cockpit symbolism thus applies to both Lancy and Don Miguel, on whose conflict the entire plot is based. But we must also include Ruth, who eventually fights in place of her father; plus secondary characters allied with either of the principals: Britton, Fletcher, Congo Gomez, Hilario Ruiz; Cirilo, Duarte, Martinez. The competition among sugar mills permits even broader interpretation of the cockpit, to include the whole world of battling business empires. Furthermore, when Mr. Grove warns Elmer Kirk against the fiesta intima (which has nothing to do with business competitions), he selects an image from the cockpit fighting scene quoted above: "... it's no place for little boys. You might lose an eye!" (p. 214).

The symbolism of the cockpit should make us think, as in Confusion, about naturalism. Naturalistic ingredients
are surely found in this book. Characters, for example, are likened to animals struggling violently to survive or dominate. Cozzens dwells on their physical aspects—their appetites, especially for liquor; their lusts; their physical strengths and vulnerabilities. There is much talk of manliness, toughness, prowess, the attributes of persons fittest to survive in a cockpit. On the other hand, sissified characters like Mr. Nortz, Mary Fletcher, and Elmer Kirk are made to look puny, their conventional concerns and manners piffling.

On a larger scale, the rival sugar corporations are depicted as in naturalism. They are greedy, unprincipled conglomerations of power that battle for still more power. Mr. Britton sketches them: "'the big boys will have a conference in Habana with a lot of mutual admiration and sweet sayings about what Cuba needs, God bless her, and then they'll get down to business and just cut the heart out of all the little independent mills they haven't managed to break so far'" (p. 33). The result is centralization, the Darwinian triumph of large forces over small: "'Concentration,' soothed Mr. Britton. 'Five years ago there were three sugar mills right around here. Now there are two. First thing you know, there'll only be one'" (p. 31). The "lives of those held in the shadow of the Central" show how orthodox the book's determinism can be. The large
sugar centrals swallow "little independent mills," and reduce ordinary persons to insectival insignificance:

All the people, comfortable on verandas, the idlers in . . . the tienda, the passing guard . . . , the very women resting in the . . . plaza--all the Company's, and over them brooded the masses of Central San Mario. They . . . seemed to take their ease, but actually they waited, free only until the whistle . . . called for cane. At that simple signal all their lives would be remorselessly taken up. Like cane itself their whole existences seemed thrown on those slow conveyers, moving implacably into the monstrous steel hills of the crushers and shredders, molded mechanically into the alternate six-hour shifts. (pp. 69-70)

In short, Cock Pit, even more than Confusion, can look temptingly like plain naturalism. Yet the more astute observation is that both books are romances, their incompatible ingredients notwithstanding.

The naturalistic hypothesis staggers, since the passage just cited is half of a contrast, the remainder of which is this: "Lancy Micks, moving down the street with a quiet fall of tired hoofs, pitied them from the great heights of the freedom of the fields, the riding of the cane" (p. 70). Where conventional naturalism would deny that anyone enjoys a freedom from circumstance, Cozzens describes ordinary people to emphasize how extraordinary Lancy Micks is. The passage thus appears to use naturalistic formulae in the service of hero-glorifying romance. But perhaps this conclusion is hasty. Lancy's "freedom of the fields" is nothing very secure. When the
cane fire begins, he must drop everything. As Mr. Fletcher says, "'it's hard,' . . . 'but Lan's job is that way. . . . Sometimes for weeks there isn't much of anything, and then all of a sudden the telephone rings and you have a year's work in one night'" (p. 83). Surely, too, it is a spurious freedom, the exercise of which leaves him at Don Miguel's mercy unless his daughter rescues him. In this light, the novel might seem like a naturalist's proof that even lives like Lancy's, though seemingly free, are actually determined. But Ruth herself spoils this interpretation.

The objection to any thoroughly naturalistic reading is that Ruth enjoys a charmed freedom from circumstance. As such, she is a wish-fulfilling heroine of the most banal kind--a stock character in a juvenile romance. Occupying the center of a hyperdramatic plot in an exotic setting, she is the local marvel, the acclaimed favorite of virtually everyone. Her involvement in the melee is implausible to begin with, yet she coyly means to "'do something simple and fool them'" (p. 252), and is so successful that the villain admits himself beaten, grants her every request, volunteers to pay her costs, and gives her "'jewels Queen Isabella pawned'" (p. 300). Far from being an insectival nonentity crushed by overwhelming circumstances, Ruth is a puissant heroine who easily dominates the
greatest force in her world. She also has the satisfaction of stunning her elders and rescuing her lovable but foolhardy father. In brief, we have at the heart of Cock Pit, not determinism, but an adolescent daydream about veritable omnipotence—a plot and a heroine that cannot be taken seriously except as illustrating an important stage in the author's literary development.

One characteristic of this stage is literature divided against itself. Cock Pit resembles its predecessors in being another romance that is bluntly contemptuous of romance, along with melodrama, sentimentality, and the people who relish such evasions of empirical reality as the author construes it. For example, having dismissed Nortz as "an awful fool," Mr. Britton considers

Romanticists! His own practical mind made allowances for it [sic], as one would make allowances for the difficulties of a cripple.

That cool and calculating efficiency of thought and judgment which made him one of the bank's most trusted managers, appraised it, considering them all. (pp. 168-69)

Lancy Micks, reflecting on youth, chooses the same metaphor of crippling disease:

Accustomed to thinking in a hard, clear way about people, he had no use for youth. He gave it no more quarter than life itself did. A disabling disease, a disease from which Ramon, at twenty-three, should have recovered. The curious, sensitive wistfulness
in Ramon's fine eyes, which would have attracted almost anyone else was explained amply for Lancy Micks in the curt phrase, "he doesn't know what it's all about." To Lancy Micks it made Ramon worse than negligible. (pp. 20-21)

Even Don Miguel, the antagonist, shares this appreciation of hard, clear, efficient, practical minds, contrasting them to witless and sentimental ones. He tells Ruth, "'I wished merely to warn you that he [Ramon] is, like his father before him, entirely witless, so far as I can judge. Probably sentimental, too. His father's sister, my departed wife, had many of those qualities, endearing, but impractical . . .'" (p. 289). And although Don Miguel is a melodramatic figure himself, he slurs melodrama when he asks Ruth to "'pardon it [an explanation] if it is only melodramatic'" (p. 296). Such attitudes attain their greatest inclusiveness when Lancy ties "sentimental concerns" into the title symbolism: in the cock pit, "Blood, injuries, sentimental concerns dwindled to their true relativity in the face of such resolutions clashing" (p. 54).

But if *Cock Pit* and the earlier books are similarly self-contradictory about romance and naturalism, the incompatible ingredients are now forced together under more pressure than ever before. Cozzens has intensified both the romantic and naturalistic extremes of his fiction. This anomalous situation does not last long, but while it does we can see how romance shapes Cozzens' naturalism,
and more important, how naturalism alters romance, including his original concepts of heroism.

Romance affects the naturalism in *Cock Pit* insofar as conventionally naturalistic contents are introduced—and distorted—to glorify Ruth, a romantic heroine. The contrast (p. 70) between Lancy's freedom and the mill people's deterministic lack of it is spurious: closely examined, Lancy is no more free than they are. But neither is he the hero. Ruth, on the other hand, is the heroine, and the contrast between deterministic lives and her own life holds good to the last. As in a child's fantasy, she is free of confining circumstances of all kinds; favored by chance; dominant over hostile forces; and withal, acting in a righteous cause, widely admired, even by the opponent she foils.

Because she is nearly exempt from it, naturalism suffers a twofold distortion in *Cock Pit*. On the one hand, it becomes inconsistent and toothless: though implying that men's lives are determined by various internal and environmental forces in conflict, the book reverses itself by giving us Ruth, a heroic exception.

Simultaneously, naturalism also undergoes the opposite distortion. Naturalistic forces hostile to Ruth are made as formidable as possible, since the more she overcomes, the more wonderful a heroine she will seem. Exaggerated
naturalism is evident, for instance, in the depiction of
the mill as an inexorable crusher of lives; in the extrava­
gantly violent corporate misdoings (a tremendous fire, a
murdered man, a dropped bridge); and in the sophomoric
toughness of the characters.

Overstated naturalism culminates in Don Miguel. If
he began in Cozzens' mind as a representative of the
naturalistic forces arrayed against Ruth, he turned finally
into a melodramatic villain, the only one Cozzens ever drew.
The case for Don Miguel as a naturalistic figure is strong.
He and his corporation are sketched in cock pit imagery,
which bears naturalistic connotations. He remarks that he
is widely disliked for his "megalomania" (p. 291), thus
opening the possibility that he is driven to behave as he
does, is not free to choose otherwise, and cannot fairly be
called evil at all. His son, in a feeble rage against the
family's circumstances, raises the same issue of determin­
ism: "'Why do we have to be the biggest corporation? What
good is that? Hasn't he enough money now?!'" (p. 274, ital­
ics mine). He also recalls his father's words about having
people killed: ""I regret the necessity deeply," he [Don
Miguel] said'" (p. 274, italics mine).

But regardless of these naturalistic credentials, Don
Miguel is finally indistinguishable from a melodramatic
villain. There are several reasons. First, as the
antagonist to a one-sided romantic heroine, his excesses mirror hers. He comes to personify all the evil that Ruth overcomes, and the more, the better. We know he's guilty of much skulduggery, and his own son has averred that "'He would have every one in Cuba shot if it were worth it'" (p. 273). Furthermore, he is associated with a scheming daughter-in-law and various unsavory hirelings: Cirilo, the assassin; Javier Duarte, "the lowest white man in the West Indies" (p. 25), an oily bearer of bribes; and Martinez, the arsonist. Thus, when Don Miguel makes his long-postponed appearance, we are prepared for a villain. So many conventionally melodramatic conditions make it virtually impossible for Don Miguel to remain within naturalistic limits. Any character who could personify all the evil or antagonism in Cock Pit's hyperdramatic plot had to become melodramatic.

Clearly, when the raw materials of naturalism are used to contrast with and exalt a romantic heroine, they become, as it were, denatured. By themselves, they seem melodramatically exaggerated and sensationalized until the presumptive tie between naturalism and realism is severed. But within the scheme for the whole book, they seem hardly naturalistic at all, for the plot focuses on the heroine, an exception to the determinism on which naturalism is premised.
But the converse relationship—naturalism's effect on romance—proves even more important. In *Confusion*, Cozzens distinguishes between romance, such as flourishes in Malory, and realism, as in modern New York (Conf. 81-82). Romance offers Cerise a welcome evasion of present realities. Discussion of the romantic tendency in Cozzens' early books depends on this minimum concept of romantic writing—i.e., that which provides a fanciful and emotionally gratifying escape from present realities, into, for instance, a remote past, a distant setting, an exotic life, some stirring adventure. Cozzens, by offering characters whose lives are exceptional and desirable, invites readers to participate in the romantic process themselves. By the time of *S.S. San Pedro* (1931), the one momentous job he had performed was to recognize and reevaluate the banal patterns of romantic heroism on which Cerise, Michael, and Ruth are all drawn. Influences from literary naturalism are partly responsible for this change. Cozzens never does espouse orthodox naturalism, but in *Cock Pit* the debt that his later realism owes to naturalism becomes clear. For Cozzens develops ideas and characters here that, being familiar in naturalism, interfere with escapism, making the usual attributes of romance seem silly. These subversive materials deserve much of the credit for having sabotaged
Cozzens' career as a romantic novelist. Lancy Micks is one such subversive character. Mr. Britton and Don Miguel are better examples.

With respect to romantic and naturalistic traditions, Lancy occupies an ambiguous position. On the one hand, he conforms to a stereotype in popular American romances, especially westerns. He is the hard-riding, straight-shooting, widely known, incorruptible tough guy, the man's man who won't be intimidated by the town bully and who, beneath his tough exterior, conceals a heart of gold with a special soft spot for daddy's little girl. Ramon, admiring this view of Lancy, connects it explicitly with romance:

He liked Mr. Micks and Mr. Fletcher. There was a quality uncompromisingly manly about them; they contrived, both of them, to preserve the romance of horses and guns—a flavor of adventure which Cuba no longer had, and yet you felt quite appropriately could have. They were men, and Ramon, whenever he was with them, felt like a man himself. (p. 71)

A single glance at Cook Pit will assure us that, disclaimers notwithstanding, the romance of horses and guns persists here.

Seen somewhat differently, however, Lancy's romance is not very alluring. His life is violent, and as in Michael Scarlett, there is slender difference between
knightly violence (here, the "romance of horses and guns") and bestial violence, for we are repeatedly told that Lancy resembles fighting animals. He is the man closest to the cock pit imagery: "He could feel it himself, feel the fight, the drive of death-bent spirit . . . " (p. 54). Before killing Martinez, "He could feel things like that, as an animal feels them . . . " (p. 114). Moreover, Lancy's real antagonist is not Don Miguel, but the whole sugar industry, against which Lancy's single-handed defiance is a bit pathetic. Without the deus ex machina of Ruth's intervention, the plot of Cock Pit would be roughly this: a brash individual, having quixotically resisted a powerful monopoly, now assumes that he will lose his job (p. 279) and has barely escaped an assassin's bullet. Moreover, "The chances . . . were not bad for the man's getting him, if he shot that way" (p. 258). Without Ruth, the plot looks not like escapist romance but like anti-romantic naturalism in which scrupulosity counts for nothing and individual lives, rather bestial anyway, are easily snuffed out by immense, organized, modern forces reminiscent of the packing industry in Upton Sinclair's The Jungle,2 or the railroad in Frank Norris' The Octopus.3


Thus, Lancy should seem perplexing. He conforms to a romantic stereotype of a hero in some ways, but to a naturalistic stereotype of a victim or loser in others. One thing seems certain: Cozzens must not utterly renounce the romanticism in Lancy's portrait, for Lancy is saved by his hard-riding, straight-shooting, widely known little girl, a character from much the same family of stereotypes.

In the first three novels Cozzens' admirations have grown increasingly incompatible, until Cock Pit reveals, in Lancy, the climactic impossibility of a writer's being an ardent romantic and consistent naturalist at the same time. In Confusion, Tischoifsky, Pelton, and Pierre D'Atrée are all, in their parental relations to Cerise, loosely analogous to Lancy in relation to Ruth. But although these characters from Confusion are all admirable as men of action, the emphasis has shifted, in Cock Pit, away from the wealth, leisure, culture, urbanity, and aristocratic lineage for which these men were also admired. We arrive at Lancy Micks, who has a hard job, little leisure, and little wealth. Culturally, he is common; whereas Tischoifsky wrote poems, Lancy "sincerely regarded what people called art as trifling and ridiculous" (p. 8). His drunkenness, profanity, brawling, and abrasiveness take the place of their urbanity. And Lancy boasts, not aristocracy, but a resemblance to fighting cocks. Such
shifts in emphasis suggest that the primitive characteristics needed in the cockpit have crowded out the less necessary attributes seen in Lancy's forebears until, for him, romantic heroism lapses into a transitional ambiguity. In other words, pressure from the book's naturalism has forced Cozzens' romantic man of action into a barely recognizable hybrid of romantic hero and naturalistic victim.

Mr. Britton, the banker, is less ambiguous than Lancy, and more subversive of romance. Partly, this is because he is not involved in Cozzens' complicated feelings about men of action. Britton's prestige rests instead on his shrewd grasp of the book's political and financial situation. The banker is less dashing than Lancy, but by naturalistic criteria he appears, in some ways, more impressive—better equipped to survive. He tells Lancy, "'Besides being somewhat better informed on things that really matter than you are,' . . . 'I've never gotten my head so far into the cane that I can't see sugar for mosaic!'" (pp 32-33). It is also Mr. Britton whose practical mind makes allowances for "Romanticists!" (p. 168). He correctly predicts Don Miguel's monopolistic strategy against Central Baria, and points out the danger of Lancy's defiance and reckless talking. When Ruth hopes to protect her father, she
applies to Mr. Britton. In short, by Lancy's own standard—whether a person knows "'what it's all about'" (p. 21)—Mr. Britton overshadows Lancy. His shrewd mind, sharp tongue, and familiarity with money and politics should recall Queen Elizabeth. Cozzens was apparently impressed by such practical business people, even while he was letting Michael, Lancy and Ruth play at the incongruous romance of horses and guns.

Serious thematic intentions may underlie the contrast between Lancy and the other principals, including Britton. If a coherent meaning does inform Cock Pit, I take it to be something like this: modern life, at least in the presence of vast competitive organizations, is like a contest in a cock pit, where opposing forces meet, where victory is to the strongest, but where strength can assume various forms and is not necessarily monopolized by villains. This interpretation, while recognizing the naturalistic influence on Cozzens' description of life, leaves him room for the big romantic exception that Ruth and her success bespeak. The novel, read this way, compares kinds of strength. We should therefore resist grouping the characters melodramatically, that is, the protagonist group (Ruth, Lancy, Britton) versus the villains (Don Miguel and cohorts). Instead, to get at Cozzens' thought, we should group characters by strength, by proven effectiveness in
the conflict: Lancy, the weakest; Don Miguel, threateningly more powerful; Ruth (and Britton), ultimately most powerful. This arrangement raises two questions: what liabilities put Lancy at the bottom of this list, and what assets put Ruth on top?

Although in 1928 Cozzens evidently warmed to Lancy's tough manliness, he must also have been very ambivalent about such a character. In the Van Gelder interview in 1940, Cozzens, recalling the composition of Confusion as a nineteen-year-old (1922-23), says that "When I was that age I admired a friend of mine who got drunk at 9 o'clock in the morning. . . . you are very young when you think [such] a fellow . . . is entirely admirable." By 1929, his admiration of such characters had very definitely reversed itself, as The Son of Perdition makes clear. But sandwiched between first and fourth books, Michael Scarlett and Lancy Micks both show increasingly strong signs of the author's disenchantment with men of action and some of their usual doings.

On the one hand, the Tischoifsky motto in Confusion--"take care that you be a man" (Conf. 34)--echoes in many passages about Lancy, and whenever we are seeing him from the points of view of young men. Elmer Kirk, for instance,

writes that "I like one of them called Mr. Micks . . . . He is a great one for hunting and shooting etc." (p. 133). Hilario Ruiz looks up to Lancy for having been "a good man to me" (p. 190). And Ramon "admired Lancy Micks very much" (p. 21) for his manliness, which makes him feel "like a man himself" (p. 71).

But on the other hand, Lancy attracts criticism from older characters for his tough-guy behavior. About Lancy's heavy drinking, for instance, Roy Fletcher says, "'By God, you make me believe in prohibition!'" (p. 206). Elsewhere he says Lancy is "'Cracked' . . . 'but harmless. Lan gets his mean spells every now and then, and he'd dress down God Almighty for being dishonest about too much rain'" (p. 35). Mr. Davis agrees: "'Everyone knows how Micks loses his temper . . . .'" (p. 207, Cozzens' ellipsis). He generalizes the criticism: "'Well, there are a lot of people getting on their ears about the Micks [sic]'" (p. 207). And Mr. Arnold says insultingly, "'We're all sick of you swaggering around this place like a ten-cent bad man. You go a little too far sometimes!'" (p. 205).

The balanced view seems to be that although Lancy shares the physical and temperamental toughness of his own fighting cocks, his kind of manliness has some highly uncivilized manifestations that the author does not approve of. As the heir to the original man-of-action heroes, Lancy
can thus be taken as a sign that an important strain of heroism is dying out.

And in the cockpit— that is, against Don Miguel's money, organization, purpose, and brains— neither manly brawn nor nerve helps Lancy much anyway. Mr. Britton, who alludes once to Lancy's "abysmal dumbness" (p. 32), knows his main trouble. Hearing of the assassin, he says to Ruth, "'Your father is a fool in some ways!'" and she answers, "'Honest people are always fools, Mr. Brit'" (p. 250). How far we can trust such a cynical generalization is debatable, especially since Ruth thinks that "Cynicism . . . is both cheap and immature" (p. 61), but events do justify her estimate of Lancy as a fool. If we can ignore the implausibility that a renowned fighter and boss would jeopardize his life as stupidly as Lancy does, and having been attacked, helplessly await a second attempt, then Lancy's poor showing in the cockpit implies that the handicap of folly can outweigh the strengths of a man of action.

Lancy fares little better as a man of conscience. Cozzens is evidently less impressed by the purity of Lancy's motives than by the tactical folly of his stubbornness. The precise reason for opposing "'the biggest crook in Cuba'" (p. 35) is never made clear, so we must settle for Ruth's interpretation, that he is simply an honest fool
dealing bluntly and ineffectually with an injustice. Yet he flaunts his righteous indignation, making a spectacle of booting Don Miguel's emissary in the behind. In this flaunting, along with the vagueness of his reasons, Lancy is an early example of a type that will dominate later books—the stubbornly righteous man whose niceties are more egotistical than moral, more obstructive than constructive, more emotional than rational. These characters—such as Abner Coates (J&U), Francis Ellery (AskMeT), and Nathaniel Hicks (GoH)—must discriminate among the moral grays of existence. Unimaginatively, they reduce them to black and white, then inconsistently protest against someone like the biggest crook in Cuba, while accepting his paycheck and overlooking their own misdeeds—in Lancy's case, tampering with evidence after killing Martinez. As a stubbornly righteous prototype, Lancy is scarcely developed; the moral problems he represents are swept away by Ruth as deus ex machina. Yet he does signify the author's gathering interest in problems of moral ambiguity, as well as his mounting contempt for fools of conscience.

Don Miguel shows us the kinds of strength that can overpower a Lancy Micks. Don Miguel is neither foolish nor honest. "If he [Lancy] though old Miguel Bautizo was a fool, he was making a big mistake . . ." (p. 32). Moreover, even though Don Miguel has "grown old, fat, slow and
infirm," and cannot mount a horse without two assistants (p. 286), he threatens the man of horses and guns. These are the competitive advantages that put him ahead of Lancy: (1) he is a shrewd and logical planner, not an impulsive fool; (2) having plenty of money to hire people like Cirilo and Duarte, he does not need physical prowess himself; (3) he has a large organization, in contrast to Lancy's vulnerable singleness; (4) he has no scruples about seizing what he wants. The antithesis of the honest man of action, Don Miguel has more force and, until Ruth outmaneuvers him, wields it more dangerously, than Lancy. If success alone were admirable, Don Miguel, whose villainy is sketched with a naturalist's pen, would be more admirable than Lancy, drawn according to the romance of horses and guns. The subversive implications of this fact are all the plainer when we realize that Don Miguel and Mr. Britton, though from opposite camps, actually resemble one another in their differences from, and superiority over, Lancy.

This brings us to Ruth, the winner who determines the novel's place in the Cozzens canon. She is unmistakably descended from Cerise and Michael, the romantic cynosures of the preceding novels. In depicting Ruth's heroism, Cozzens returns to the ideas, methods, and difficulties
we have seen before. *Cock Pit*'s strongest claim to uniqueness, if not distinction, is that Ruth is the only Cozzens hero whose story ends in an unqualified triumph. Although there is no likelihood that Cozzens thought so at the time, Ruth Micks cannot help seeming in retrospect like the writer's last determined effort to make a romantic stereotype work.

Ruth unquestionably is the heroine. A protagonist could hardly be more unanimously or unambiguously admired. Twelve different characters\(^5\) speak in admiration of her, sometimes most glowingly. Since creating heroes by acclamation will soon die out in Cozzens' fiction, we should inspect it here. Loosely speaking, Ruth has two categories of admirers: those smitten by her feminine desirability, and those impressed by her masculine competence. But these classes often blur together as people marvel at or adore the character who is at once the most womanly woman and the most manly man in the book.

\(^5\) For examples: Gil, p. 3; Edith Fletcher, p. 37; Mr. Nortz, pp. 42, 230; Mrs. Bautizo, pp. 61, 293; a nameless beer drinker, pp. 96-97; Muriedas, p. 97; Ramon, pp. 105, 269; Mr. Grove, pp. 126, 173-74; Elmer Kirk, pp. 133-34; Mr. Britton, pp. 169, 251, 253; Mrs. Fletcher, p. 284; Don Miguel, pp. 296, 298.
At the Fletchers' party Ruth, while dancing with Ramon, attracts amorous attention from Edith Fletcher, the fifteen-year-old girl who blushingly "adored Ruth" (p. 37); Ramon, the handsome young millionaire who loves her; and Mr. Nortz, a forty-year-old engineer who eventually proposes to her. The scene should recall Cerise being trailed by fifty eager partners:

"She's so pretty," blurted Edith helplessly. She knew her eyes were full of tears, so she looked around over the edge into the soft blackness. "I think," stated Mr. Nortz, "that she is the prettiest thing on earth."
There was something in his tone that brought Edith up . . . .
. . . . The music stopped and Ramon released Ruth, gazing at her a moment. (p. 42)

Ruth's desirability is generalized by the lecherous Mr. Grove. "By Gad, . . . that Ruth sure sets them on their heads!" (p. 174).

At the opposite extreme, Ruth is appreciated for the toughness and competence expected of the men. The head stable man praises her as a rider who might master an unbreakable horse (p. 3). A beer drinker marvels that she drinks aguardiente without flinching, rides well, and braves a dangerous fire (pp. 96-98); his exclamation is always "Hombre," the Spanish for "man." Ruth's tough-guy virtues shine best, of course, in her calm direction of Cirilo's torture, which leaves her lover nonplussed: "'Good God,' said Ramon laughing weakly" (p. 269).
But praise of her hard intelligence is comparably enthusiastic. Mr. Britton "had nothing but admiration for Ruth, unlikely to criticize an intelligence which he felt to be understandable, like his own. Across it ran the softer stuff, the gentler, yes, stupider, sentiments of Mary [Fletcher] and Maurice [Nortz]. Ruth went through them like steel through wax" (p. 169).

Cozzens describes Ruth as if a fully heroic character should excel as man and woman at once, and he lets Don Miguel allude to her bi-sexual role. He asks whether "'a slow pace will not irk you, Miss Micks'" (p. 287). When she answers "'Certainly not, sir,'" he remarks, "'Your 'sir' sounds very boyish, Miss Micks.'" By the end of the scene, he has spied her pistol, tested her good sense, proved her to be "'unexpectedly resourceful'" (p. 293), and confessed to "'a certain sympathy for any one inadvertent enough to cross your path at right angles'" (p. 294). In short, he finds her formidable in masculine ways. Yet he also treats her with elaborate courtliness, praising her "'ability to work in the grand manner'" (p. 298), bestowing many compliments, presenting her with antique jewels, and inviting her to an intimate supper, in addition to granting all her terms. Near the end he returns to her bi-sexual role: "'even in your most magnificent moments, you manage, as you say, to show you're glad you're not a
boy. Something feminine, Miss Micks. I really sympathize with my nephew [Ramon]" (p. 298).

This deliberate mingling of Ruth's masculine and feminine attributes has nothing to do with literal bi-sexuality. Rather, it arises from Cozzens' early methods of exalting heroes. He wants us wholly impressed. A kind of logical exhaustiveness is achieved when he and many characters praise her, both in her masculine and feminine roles, for her excellences of mind, body, and temperament, as for her motives and accomplishments. The method, also practiced on Cerise and Michael, still conduces to deification. Instead of normally fallible, limited people, we get idealizations, virtual gods, complete with people like Edith and Nortz to adore them. Moreover, no one is allowed not to admire Ruth. Even people with reason to dislike her--Mrs. Bautizo, Mrs. Fletcher, and Don Miguel--approve or recant at last.

Because heroism by unanimous acclaim and universal accomplishment is familiar from Confusion, an interesting conjecture becomes possible. Between Cerise and Ruth as similar characters, the greatest difference is that Ruth finds something to do with her talents, and does it, thus perfecting her claims to our admiration. But except in the lamented confusion and demise of Cerise, we were apparently to have had an unimpeachable character in her,
too. I therefore suspect that Ruth is the sort of winner heroine that Cozzens wanted for his first book. If so, and even though Ruth's success makes her unique, she represents the fulfillment of a concept of heroism that has been present in all three novels, and frustrated in the first two.

But if the progress from Cerise to Michael to Ruth suggests no abatement of Cozzens' interest in heroes, it does show a considerable redefinition of heroism, accomplished mainly by the elimination of former heroic attributes, and sometimes even by their inversion. Where much is made of Cerise's superb education, for example; but far less is claimed for Michael's; hardly anything at all is said of Ruth's, except that at twenty-one she has returned from "school in the north" (p. 13). Where Cerise is exemplary in manners and breeding; and where Crochet has trained Michael in chivalrous courtesy, "content otherwise merely that Michael should not be a barbarian" (MScar 38); Ruth, the offspring of a bad-mouthed field engineeer, is often rather strikingly unmannerly, and in fact, Cozzens appears to admire her free-thinking ways and unconventionality. She is flippant toward her elders and casual about things they respect: chastity, modesty, decorum, obedience. Mr. Nortz sums Ruth up as a slightly alarming young liberal among stuffy conservatives: "We may be a little too settled
to understand her, but I think she's true to her own principles... That is, I don't think she is just one of these drinking, petting flappers by any means. She just has a different way of doing things and thinking about things..." (pp. 284-85). And of course, heroism for Cerise and Michael is also firmly buttressed by aristocracy and wealth, whereas Ruth has neither one. Apparently, then, some formerly crucial qualifications--money and ancestry, education and manners--have become nonessential for heroes. Cozzens may even suppose that Ruth's lack of adscititious assets will increase, in Cinderella fashion, her appeal as a fantasy heroine. Lacking them, she is still indubitably heroic, triumphant, and able to attract (and reject) the wealthiest and best-born men in the book.

But another very important subversion can be detected here. It is easy enough for an author to discard heroic characteristics as unimportant. But having done so, he cannot well be imagined insisting on them in subsequent heroes. The effect is not only to alter the concept of heroism, but gradually to destroy it.
In the adjusted definition of a hero, as elsewhere in *Cock Pit*, the naturalistic and romantic extremes of Cozzens' thinking have undergone a simultaneous intensification. The contrasts between Cerise and Ruth suggest that naturalistic ideas, though present from the first book, have had an increasing influence on Cozzens' conception of heroism. In the *Cock Pit* world, the characters are embattled; performance counts toward mere survival; and competitive success becomes the surest ground on which to praise a character. Thus, Ruth is less like a pampered young sonb, more like the toughest bird in the pit, but she is also more unequivocally admired than Cerise was.

As I have said, Ruth's charmed exemption from her naturalistic circumstances is the greatest romantic donnée in the book. Although they have changed since *Confusion*, Cozzens is still writing about goddesses, belles of the ball, girl saviors, the hackneyed heroines of juvenile fiction. Now, in fact, he is more deeply committed to an escapist heroine than ever before, since he asks us both to admire her and believe she could succeed. Frequent and hyperbolic praise of Ruth is explained by Cozzens' need to perform this almost impossible feat. The more convincingly he creates a naturalistic environment for Ruth, the more implausible her romance becomes. If Lancy were truly jeopardized by Don Miguel and the sugar interests, then
inexperienced young Ruth should be doubly jeopardized. The many encomiums are lavished on her because Cozzens doubts their efficacy. When medicine has little potency, you need to take it in big doses.

In *Cock Pit* the dosage of heroism is so much bigger that differences in degree become a difference in kind. As a heroine who succeeds, Ruth is unprecedented and never equaled. Still, she is no more than we might have predicted, given the stubbornness of romance, which keeps Cozzens depicting cynosures; and the encroachment of naturalism, which forces him to admit that if life is mainly conflict, then we should not be asked to admire exquisite losers. Accordingly, Ruth the cynosure is also the book's big winner. Much later, a character like Arthur Winner in *By Love Possessed* may appear to invite comparison with this winner, Ruth Micks. But by then Cozzens' view of life has become so much more complex that the problem is how to recognize winners despite the many conditions and qualifications appended to their victories. In short, Ruth stands alone.

How, then, should her success be interpreted? Standing alone, what does she stand for? Ruth's principal success is against Don Miguel, who tells what she has won: "'When I [Don Miguel] had failed first to buy and second to--er--suppress, my bad third is to come to a friendly
understanding" (p. 296). By having kidnapped and tortured Cirilo until he betrayed Don Miguel, Ruth has forced Don Miguel out of his own forceful methods—like bribery, murder, arson, sabotage. She is the ironic peacemaker in that, by force, she brings about "a friendly understanding." Since everyone praises Ruth, and nothing indicates that Cozzens himself abstains, we can infer his belief that the peaceful ends she attains—the agreements with Don Miguel, instead of more assassinations and reprisals—are more praiseworthy than the dubious means she uses to achieve them are reprehensible. If this inference is correct, Cock Pit has taken a tolerant preliminary stand on the question of expediency, conceding that ends can sometimes justify means.

Ruth's success is not, at any rate, a simple triumph for virtue, because she is surely not irreproachable by conventional morality or civil law. She expediently bends theory to suit a practical situation. When Cerise and Michael compromise on moral and legal matters, we have to wonder whether Cozzens disapproves, or is inconsistent not to disapprove. Is Michael, for example, punished for being violent and lawless, or not? But such doubts do not surround Ruth. She is an early and utterly approved character who does make moral and legal compromises. In theory, perhaps, kidnapping and torture can never be defended, yet
in practice, Cozzens intimates, Ruth must resort to these means to save her father. In place of unqualified rectitude, she shows an effort to be "as decent as I can!" (p. 253).

There is an arbitrariness and a tendency to circularity in such ethical thinking. Mr. Nortz shows this when he responds to Ruth's admission that she is Ramon's mistress. Nortz decides, "I guess you wouldn't do it if it weren't all right" (p. 230). The implication is that moral principles can be deduced from the actions of a heroic individual, rather than that the morality of a hero's actions can be judged by preexistent moral criteria. According to Nortz's logic, arbitrariness and moral solipsism would be enthroned, for an approved character like Ruth would become, not just exempt from other men's laws (as when she kidnaps and tortures with the author's tacit approval); nor merely capable of making laws for herself (as in her self-imposed rule to be as decent--according to her own definition--as she can). Instead, she would become the law for others, the solipsistic heroine whose example defines the right. But this reading probably distorts Ruth's intended moral significance. The point is not that she can redefine morality and legality, so much as that she can be approved without being rigidly bound by them. Practice counts for more than theory in the cock pit.
Since Ruth is concerned first with winning her father's safety, Cozzens presumably wants her judged first on competitive grounds. He approves because she wins.

He approves again because her diplomacy, which he never calls blackmail, produces peaceful, civilized results, in contrast to the violent suppressions that Don Miguel intended. The courtliness of the closing scene, the wit, the manners, the compliments and gifts, the non-violent end to differences, all underline the ironic fact that Ruth, in spite of her toughness, and partly because of it, is the book's strongest force for civilization after all. But since Cozzens does not boast that she is also morally or legally irreproachable, a hierarchy of values is implied. Ruth's success means the subordination of moral and legal flawlessness, to civilized expediency. From winner-heroes we can apparently expect, not irreproachability, but "decency," the civilized (though rather arbitrary) compromise between morally impeccable failure and morally oblivious success.

But if Ruth's is a success for civilization, a corollary is that civilized life ultimately rests, not on morality or law, nor on the social vacuities of "civilized" characters like Nortz and Mary Fletcher (p. 170), but on force. Having seized the more powerful position, Ruth can exact the civilized agreement she wants. By force, she can demand that
force be put aside. Hence, in this she does not contradict the naturalistic description of conflict. That civilization originates in force is not a new idea for Cozzens: in Confusion Tischofsky's flawless courtesy is founded on "savage" generations of "haughty and cruel aristocracy" (Conf. 212), and similar observations are made of Michael Scarlett's forebears (MScar 13-15). But in Cock Pit, emphasis shifts onto the idea that civilization must also be maintained by force in a perpetual struggle.

Another meaning of Ruth's success is that her methods for dealing with Don Miguel prosper after Lancy's fail. Moreover, exploring for contrasts between Ruth and her father reveals interesting similarities between her and Don Miguel. She says of her blunt father, "'Honest people are always fools, Mr. Brit'" (p. 250), but she says of herself, "'Lord God, Mr. Brit, do you know what I am? I'm a designing woman'" (p. 254). In this respect she is much like Don Miguel, a shrewd and logical planner, not an impulsive fool. Britton commends her by saying, "'Make a good plotter, don't you'" (p. 252), and Don Miguel congratulates her at length. Again like Don Miguel, she has no scruples that prevent her from torturing Cirilo to get the advantage she wants, whereas Lancy's scrupulosity embroiled him in the first place. At root, of course, all three cock-pit characters represent force. The important differences are
only in how the force is exerted. Against Lancy's noisy, foolish and actually rather feeble pugnacity, we find Ruth and Don Miguel, who are comparable in their civility, discretion, shrewd attention to tactics, their marshaling of real force, and their unflinching determination to succeed, even by nefarious means. As for tactically decisive differences between Ruth and Don Miguel, there really are none. Ruth simply outplays the master plotter, getting the incriminating facts and witnesses that will make him cooperate before his people get Lancy. That Ruth's motive is love, and that her collaborators are loyal friends, actually have little bearing on why she succeeds.

Ruth's similarity to Don Miguel raises the question of whether she should be called a melodramatic heroine. One glossary explains that in melodramas, "characters clearly virtuous or vicious are pitted against each other in sensational situations filled with suspense. . . . melodrama is improbable, and virtue triumphs over unlikely circumstances." 6 In several ways, Ruth does not conform to usual expectations for melodramatic heroines. She pretends to decency, but not unsullied virtue; she is a strong combatant, not a weak victim of villainy; and in her strengths

---

she resembles the villain she overcomes. Adding to this Don Miguel's slur of that which is "'only melodramatic'" (p. 296), we have grounds to doubt that Ruth is meant to be a melodramatic figure. To the extent, however, that Cock Pit plainly is melodramatic, Ruth as its protagonist will seem melodramatic herself. The situations, for instance, are sensational, suspenseful, and improbable. They end in a triumph for the heroine, if not for "virtue." As the title insists, the opponents are "pitted against each other." If Ruth is not "clearly virtuous," Don Miguel, as a self-interested man who will kill, bribe and sabotage to get his way, is clearly vicious if anyone is. Observing his conformity to the type of melodramatic villain, we can be forgiven for illogically accepting that the much-praised protagonist who foils him is the melodramatic heroine. The sum of all this is yet further proof of literature divided against itself. Just as Lancy occupies an ambiguous position in relation to romance, so does Ruth in relation to melodrama, which I take to be an element of romance. For that matter, so does Richard Chase, as when he writes that along with "pastoral feeling," melodrama is "the other main element of American romance."  

Not only is Ruth designing where Lancy is not, but she is a designing woman. In the cockpit, ironically, a hen rules the roost. But the same was true in Michael Scarlett, for the velvet-gloved Queen rules the kingdom with an iron hand. Although Ruth is the last feminine protagonist, she is certainly not the last descendant from the Queen. Ruth's combination of force with diplomacy probably denotes Cozzens' disillusion with masculine violence and lack of finesse, and a growing respect instead for feminine methods of getting things done.

Other connotations of Ruth's success, however, involve Cozzens in obvious and therefore subversive inconsistencies. Although he disparages youth, for instance, as a crippling disease, and although the Queen found Michael Scarlett "'Too young for dispatching on weighty business'" (MScar 278), Ruth, despite her age, triumphs where her elders fail. Likewise, since Coty's pronouncements in Confusion, Cozzens has continued to be impressed, not only by age, but by practical experience. In Cock Pit, Hilario's "work at a bank in Habana had done as much for him as Princeton had ever done for Ramon," so Hilario "would find nothing unexpected, and Lancy Micks approved of him disinterestedly" (pp. 47-48). Similarly, Cozzens admires Mr. Arnold's experience: "It was, in effect, his mill; he had made it and cared for it; he knew it, as no one else did or ever
would" (p. 83). Yet Cozzens allows Ruth, an utterly inexperienced amateur, to master a professional assassin and then easily outmaneuver an experienced business potentate. Furthermore, Cozzens' opinions about youth and experience persist through all the subsequent novels. His determination to have a successful romantic heroine thus becomes the only satisfactory explanation of these inconsistencies.

For understanding Cock Pit's place among the other books, the most important meaning of Ruth's success is that Cozzens here admires an individual who confronts a large organization. As Mr. Britton tells Ruth, "'Just remember this. You're bucking a big organization!'"(p. 252). In this role, Ruth is a heroine we might have been able to predict, yet she is also an augury of drastic changes soon to come. She belongs among the solipsistic protagonists of juvenile romance: implausibly, the characters, narrative persona, and plotted events all conspire to demonstrate Ruth's unique importance in the world. Such solipsism also appears in Cerise and Michael.

Yet the first four novels show Cozzens' increasing willingness to concede the existence of formidable human organizations beyond the self-important heroes. That is, these novels reveal a gradual reapportionment of the author's attentions. Confusion is preoccupied with Cerise's all-important individuality. She is permitted to shut out
the organized world in brief gestures of dismissal. Politics, education, social work, religion, and theatre are all disposed of this way. Moreover, her demise cannot be traced to any organizational cause.

Michael Scarlett concerns another hero's brilliant individuality as he takes up various activities—politics, writing—that let him vault into spectacular prominence. But organizations are now much more important than in Confusion. In fact, the individualistic hero becomes fatally entangled with them: writing plays leads Michael into political factionalism; accepting his noble title involves him in court intrigues; befriending Nashe and the others involves resisting the Queen's forces and thus losing his life.

Of the first three novels, Cock Pit apportions the author's attention most equally between a heroic individual and a comparably impressive organization. Looking back from Cock Pit will reveal that the important development in the first three novels is, not any decline of heroic individuals, but the rise of organizational antagonists to pit them against. In light of Ruth Micks, the truly important fact about Michael Scarlett is, not that his demise traces to an organizational cause, but that his individuality expresses itself so much more aggressively than Cerise's does. Seen this way, the progress toward
Ruth Micks and the Bautizo Sugar Company seems almost inevitable. For here in *Cock Pit* organized force is concentrated more than ever before, in the company which, melodramatically sinister and naturalistically powerful, easily overshadows any organizations as depicted in *Confusion* or *Michael Scarlett*. Moreover, it threatens, not merely to entangle the unwary, but to overwhelm everyone. The heroine to oppose this modern dragon is Ruth Micks, another individualist and cynosure, direct descendant from Cerise and Michael, but so much more aggressive that she succeeds where they fail.

As Ruth completes this pattern, she also destines it to be overthrown. *Cock Pit* is simultaneously the first of Cozzens' *bona fide* organizational novels, and the last one in which the bias is romantically anti-organizational. Almost inescapably, Cozzens would soon see that he had made a more convincing case, competitively speaking, for Don Miguel's organization than for Ruth. Not only does his next protagonist head a sugar company instead of opposing one, but the maverick, Findley, is the opposite of a hero, for all that he descends from Ruth. In short, Cozzens is soon to reconsider his early position on dazzling individualists, though the growth of his interest in organizations continues unabated, well beyond the juvenile novels, as *Guard of Honor* testifies best.
Cock Pit is an organizational novel in two senses. First, the sugar industry imposes a circumstantial organization on Ruth's romance by supplying all the characters—their identities, concerns, biases, their social and occupational relationships—and virtually all of the plot—its conflicts and stakes, chronological limits, key events, plus many interlarded details, sketches, topics of conversation. In the second sense, ultimately more important, the industry's organization sometimes becomes a foreground subject. That big organizations could interest Cozzens might have been inferred from his sketch of Queen Elizabeth managing her kingdom. Yet organization as a major theme must have emerged from the background. To Cozzens tutoring children at a sugar central, the industry would have seemed like an obvious, convenient circumstance for his fiction. Exotic to American readers, it was becoming familiar to him already and would confer verisimilitude on his next book, a Cuban romance. Cock Pit bears the unmistakable signs of the two incompatible artistic processes that went into its making. Ruth Micks is a romantic heroine engaged in an utterly implausible melodramatic action, yet she is environed by a Cuban world that Cozzens describes rather convincingly from his own experience. In writing about
the Cuban novels to Pierre Michel, Cozzens himself mentions the way the material was observed: "'While observation is first-hand and settings are real (in the Cuban books, at least), . . . the people are imperceptively handled.'"

What Cozzens found in this organizational material proved to be much more substantial than he expected. The fourth novel, also Cuban, gives much more space to organizational details; is written in sympathy with a company person; and discards heroines altogether. With technical exceptions for *Castaway* and *Ask Me Tomorrow*, all the later books are organizational novels in both the circumstantial and thematic senses. Again, therefore, *Cock Pit* merits an important place in Cozzens' literary history. It is the romance in which romance suffers its mortal wound, though the fact will not be obvious until the next novel.

Discovering organizations as fertile literary territory, Cozzens now finds that work is often interesting. In *Cock Pit* he stops for a minor character like Elmer Kirk, whose laboratory job occasions some good writing:

> It was getting on toward three o'clock [a.m.]. One lab boy had just finished washing down the smooth cement around the work tables. Another had gone for the three o'clock samples. The tepid, faintly sweet smell of the mill came to his consciousness. Under the roar of the grinders steady as a river falling, struck in the periodic muffled crash of a pair of Richardson weighers, catching their ton of

---

8 James Gould Cozzens, p. 24.
juice, holding it quivering with a sublime intelligence, relinquishing it at the fraction of the ounce, to thunder down while they tilted deftly a white flood of lime into it. All that took place a little to the left, up beyond the laboratory ceiling, and made the white bowl hung on chains which held the lighting, give a regular quiver all its own. (p. 217)

Workers now have far more prominence than in Confusion or Michael Scarlett, where work was mostly ignored or idealized.

Here, reputations may be based on a character's work: Mr. Fletcher is "one of the best administrators in Cuba" (p. 73); Mr. Britton is "one of the bank's most trusted managers" (p. 169); Arnold is "'a good superintendent!'" (p. 72); Carlonegro is, among bird handlers, the "'Best in the pit!'" (p. 51); and Lancy Micks, of course, is "'probably the best man riding cane in Cuba!'" (p. 165). Ruth, who has no regular employment, is not an important exception, for she distinguishes herself from Cerise chiefly by doing a job that justifies her reputation for being "'pretty competent'" (p. 251).

In Lancy's case, Cozzens shows us the work:

he was distributing fresh squads of men, checking up on the strings of cane cars and directing the movements of the big locomotives to clear Flores del Alba. He even gave Muriedas a hand in arranging quarters in Marin and letting through the Central Baria trains. Everything went through his hands; the arrangements for the great inrush of labor; the establishment of extra cook-houses, the detailing of shelter for the men in two disused tobacco barns, the arrival of supplies. All day long he stayed in the saddle and at mid-afternoon the carettes were coming in behind their five yokes of bulls, the loaders were running, the cars filling. Even on the
burnt Marin fields his good order and management had proved contagious. Central Baria was actually getting things done . . . . That was what mattered, getting in the cane. (pp. 118-19)

Although such writing about work and organization is still proportionately scanty, its prevailing tendency is away from romance and toward realism. Cozzens' new concentration on people's work also lets us regard Cock Pit as the earliest of his professional, as apart from organizational, novels. The distinction cannot be observed well, however, until The Last Adam (1933), which is an organizational novel by virtue of Cozzens' interest in the micro-cosmic town of New Winton, but becomes a professional novel through George Bull's medical practice. In Cock Pit, though work is emerging, the organizational and professional aspects of the sugar industry cannot easily be separated.

Cock Pit also affords the first clear glimpse of what I shall call "abstract heroism." By this I mean the ascription of heroic attributes to inanimate things. In the early books, this phenomenon is difficult to distinguish from ordinary metaphoric description. Later, however, as Cozzens becomes more obviously admiring of human organization and intelligence, while less willing to admire individual humans as heroes, the fact that metaphors of human heroism repeatedly describe non-human subjects
becomes harder to overlook, and carries with it some powerful implications.

We have encountered a simple example of abstract heroism already, in the Richardson weighers over Elmer Kirk's head, that catch "their ton of juice, holding it quivering with a sublime intelligence, relinquishing it at the fraction of the ounce, to thunder down while they tilted deftly a white flood of lime into it" (p. 127). Ascribed to them are strength, intelligence, efficiency, deftness, and thunderous impressiveness. These attributes might be sought in a human hero. In fact, we can say without much distortion that such characteristics do occur in Ruth and, less systematically, in Lancy. But to appreciate abstract heroism, we should notice that the weighing machines contrast with the scene's human character. Elmer Kirk is annoyed by mere mosquitoes. He is engaged, not in efficient, mighty or necessary work, but in a letter to his sweetheart, and even that is most unimpressive: "He had difficulty in expressing himself, particularly with waiting for that damn weigher to let go . . ." (p. 128). Sublime intelligence is not implicit in his banal message that he cannot live without his girl. After "struggling futilely" a while, he finds that he is using the wrong pen and must begin again. Later, with a routine computation he is handicapped by still having to look the formula up.
But after a night of such unintelligent, inefficient, clumsy and unimpressive performance, "he was usually so tired when he went off, he didn't get things done . . ." (p. 128). In other words, describing the weighers in heroic metaphors has intimated two things: (a) what a truly admirable performance would be, and (b) how an actual human performance falls short of the truly admirable. The possibilities of such a device are great.

Other instances of abstract heroism appear in discussions of a beautiful bridge (pp. 7-9) and of the sugar crop (pp. 82-83). One more should be examined, for it occurs immediately before the Elmer Kirk episode, resembles it, and therefore suggests that Cozzens is aware of the contrasts he is creating:

Very high up, so high that one used a crawling, open-work steel elevator to get there, Mr. Grove stood staring vacantly. He could see far below him the defecating vats; some full, covered with a dirty foam; some empty, showing their coiled pipes. Turning his head, he could look past the fat white shoulders of the quadruple-effects to a rail whence one might look down again, on the titanic fly-wheels, the flickering governors, and sliding pistons which wallowed in their troughs—all the tremendous mechanism of the nine-roller grinders. Looking further, at an angle, it was possible to watch the elevated head of the cane conveyor pouring steadily its tangled tons of cane into the shredders. (p. 123)

This description of the mill consciously evokes a giant, a titan, both in adjectives like "titanic" and "tremendous," and in the anatomical metaphors: "defecating vats," "fat
white shoulders," "elevated head." Cozzens is evidently impressed by the mill's scale, power, and efficiency. But his purpose, as in the Elmer Kirk passage, is not simply descriptive. In contrast to the grinding mill is Mr. Grove, who

had nothing to do but think, which he did, darkly, bitterly, annoyed . . . . Pfaff! Manilla! Nortz! Arnold!

He spat them down the tremendous void drenched with electric light into one of the dirty cream pools of a defecator. (pp. 123-2^)

The passage next describes Grove inwardly raging against his fellow workers and resenting Arnold for always talking "about his damned efficiency." Rage turns to lecherous daydreaming, while Grove remains "pleasantly oblivious" to Pfaff, who is silently doing Grove's work for him. The contrast between titanic machinery and the messy individuals who run it is clear. Cock Pit, then, by introducing abstract heroism, anticipates another important development in the later books, for this fruitful concept, though it begins with ideas of heroism borrowed from human heroes and applied to non-human subjects, can also be turned about so that non-human subjects begin to suggest criteria for human heroism. Moreover, as the examples of Elmer Kirk and Mr. Grove show, abstract heroism lends itself to contrasts that can subvert the whole idea of heroic humans.
Considered as a whole, *Cook Pit*, though a poor book on its own, is an important one for Cozzens. This is true in a few positive senses: he appears, for instance, to have discovered congenial new materials and methods while writing it. And amid the tangle of inconsistencies and affectations, some ideas that will survive into his maturity can be glimpsed. His technical skills are also markedly improved. But the negative values of this novel are probably the more noteworthy after all. In *Cook Pit*, the concept of heroism that Cozzens began with in *Confusion* is fully revealed. Though worried by the hounds of naturalism, though opposed by the force of the author's actual observation, romantic heroism reaches the top of the mountain in *Cook Pit*. After *Ruth*, it has no higher ground to seek. Accomplished in every way that matters, acclaimed on every side, and spectacularly successful in a noble cause, *Ruth* leaves her romantic novelist nothing more to do. But having such Olympian prominence, she cannot escape notice, either. That is, she soon compels her author to reconsider, criticize, and even repudiate in embarrassment. In *The Son of Perdition* Cozzens has already started down the other side of the mountain.
In the fourth book, *The Son of Perdition* (New York: William Morrow, 1929), a stage in Cozzens' career ends. This novel is the last of the eventually rejected apprentice works. There are, of course, telltale remnants of immaturity, and Cozzens was probably right to disavow it, but on the whole, *The Son of Perdition* is well disciplined, surpassing *Confusion* by far, and promising first-rate fiction soon to come. Its importance does not, however, depend nearly so much on its own merits, as on its instructive value. For *The Son of Perdition* is plainly a pivotal work in the author's career, and in fact, no other Cozzens novel can lay stronger claim to being so. Again and again, patterns that characterize the juvenilia are either confirmed or overthrown here so decisively that there can be no question of the author's deliberateness. The book is full of luminous contrasts, for it is the work in which the subversive contents of three romantic novels finally prevail.
Cozzens' technical expertise has continued to improve. This book is more tightly unified than its predecessors. The several weeks in Cock Pit have been reduced to a mere five days, counting from Findley's departure from Jati-bonico on Tuesday, May 28 (p. 100), and ending on Saturday, June 1 (p. 5). The action is organized around the paired railway arrivals at Dosfuegos of Findley and Stellow, the one bringing various troubles to crisis, the other putting these crises to rest. In general, incidents are more fully developed, interconnected, and plausible than formerly. A good illustration of craftsmanship can be seen in Quintin's goat, a minor detail that Cozzens shepherds adroitly through his story, letting it generate and unite sundry incidents, revelations of character, and intimations of themes.

The greater unity suggests improvement of prior narrative skills, but The Son of Perdition is also quite innovative—technically more daring, more supple, rich and full than its predecessors. For the first time, Cozzens departs from sequential narration; the book opens in medias res on the morning of June 1 with several actions already at crisis pitch—Osmundo dead, Cuchita dead, Pepe in panic. Chapters II, III, and IV (171 of the 304 pages) provide flashbacks, and the story does not advance chronologically beyond Chapter I until Chapter V.
Technical innovation is also evident in the management of perspective. Although *The Son of Perdition*, like all the novels until *Morning Noon and Night*, is told by a third-person omniscient persona, Cozzens distributes his attention among no less than seven principal viewpoint characters: Stellow, Findley, Nida, Fray Alejandro, Pepe Rijo, Quintin Mederos, and Doctor Palacios. These people do not narrate, but the narrative persona gets close to them and lets us see as if from their eyes. The abundance of such characters anticipates the narrative dispersion typical of Cozzens' maturity; it also helps to accomplish the demise of solipsistic and overly simple romances, making way instead for the great realistic novels, which look at organized society from many perspectives, skilfully asking far more questions than they purport to answer—and, incidentally, creating doubts about facile heroism. In a remark about Findley, Cozzens reveals new sensitivity to point of view and its epistemological implications, particularly for makers of social novels:

He [Findley] didn't make the error of thinking you could really understand people. You simply lined them up with yourself and judged. He was reminded of the once popular pictures showing ocean liners standing on their sterns next to tall buildings. You did get an idea, but not a very practical one, as you never saw a steamer standing up, or a sky-scraper lying down. (p. 133)
Presumably to minimize the disadvantage of this inescapable relativism, Cozzens writes a social novel that lines up the characters and judges them from many of their own points of view.

A third innovation is allegory. It has precedents in such allegorical embellishments as Cerise's boat, the _Pandora_, and Michael's residences, "Gull House" and "The Golden Asse." Making _Cock Pit_ enlarge systematically on its symbolic title is a similar and more ambitious undertaking. Indeed, _The Son of Perdition_ continues the experiments with symbolism—as in, for instance, the attempts to make railroad trains seem more than literally suggestive. For that matter, literary allusions—especially to Shakespeare and the Bible—suddenly proliferate, too. But much more prominent than symbolism or allusion is Cozzens' resort to sustained conventional allegory. The book's title, which demands close inspection, is quoted from Scripture and confers on Oliver Findley an allegorical identity. Other characters, notably Stellow, also take on such identities, either because of the author's further allegorizing, or because of their relations to Findley. As a result, the book has to be read on two planes of interpretations.

Such a reading shows how far Cozzens' books have come since _Confusion_, in content and technique alike.
The Son of Perdition, though organized both allegorically and realistically around the sort of conflict seen in Cock Pit, between a heroic protagonist and a villainous antagonist, actually marks a sharp departure from Cozzens' former conceptions of heroes, villains, and the social values they either uphold or threaten.

Oliver Findley, the son of perdition, is not like Michael Scarlett, the only earlier character to lend his name to a Cozzens book. The substitution in the title of a derelict for a hero conveys, perhaps intentionally, the great change that has occurred in Cozzens' thinking. Both more and less than a usual villain, Findley organizes The Son of Perdition as allegory and realism. He also reveals drastic rethinkings, particularly about Cock Pit's Don Miguel and what Cozzens soberly takes to be villainous.

An understanding of Findley or the book's allegory must begin with the epigraph:

--those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.--St. John 17:12.

Jesus speaks these lines to God the Father before departing from the Last Supper, John 17 being devoted entirely to Jesus' prayer for his loyal disciples, "those that thou
gavest me." St. John carefully separates the disciples from the rest of mankind: "I [Jesus] pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine" (John 17:9). In this deliberately narrowed context, "the son of perdition" is unmistakably Judas Iscariot, the disloyal disciple whom Jesus has already designated by the sop: "He it [the traitor] is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And . . . he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon" (John 13:26). When Jesus speaks the "son of perdition" sentence, Judas has already left on his treacherous mission.

Although this information seems unambiguous, applying it proves difficult. Doubts arise concerning both the gospel's meaning and Cozzens' adaptation of it. The son of perdition should be Judas, yet Findley's allegorical identity in the text of the novel is mainly (and explicitly) as Satan, not as Judas. (Similarly, the epigraph should liken Stellow to Jesus and keep him distinct from God the Father, yet Stellow is compared to God as often as Findley is to Satan.) In John 13:2 a distinction between the devil and Judas is clearly preserved: "And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him . . . ." Somewhat later, however, these
separate persons seem to coalesce: "And after the sop Satan entered into him" (John 13:27). From these indica­ctions one might infer either that the devil used Judas, or actually became Judas. In other words, Scripture is not entirely clear about this relationship.

Cozzens compounds this uncertainty by often encour­aging thoughts of Findley as the devil. For instance, "Rijo thinks you're the Devil, Findley," Stellow says, and Findley replies, "'Not a bad idea'. . ." (pp. 297-98). Yet Cozzens elsewhere adheres closely to St. John's gospel, where the "son of perdition" may also denote the devil, but surely denotes Judas. One prominent allusion to St. John is Cozzens' subtitle for Chapter IV: "Not Iscariot." This phrase appears in John 14:22 to dis­ttinguish Judas Iscariot from Saint Judas, one of the faithful disciples (also called Lebbæus and Thaddæus).\(^1\) The verse reads: "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" The only certain effect of the sub­title, "Not Iscariot," is to keep attention focused on Judas Iscariot and St. John's gospel. Various characters might be intended as "not Iscariot"—Fray Alejandro, a

faithful servant of God; Doctor Palacios, humane despite his atheism; Quintin Mederos, innocent of treachery despite the murder he commits. And since Findley is conspicuous in this chapter, bringing the Monagas to disaster, it is even possible that he is somehow "not Iscariot." Confusion prevails.

The novel's closing line also alludes to John 14, yet here the conflict between the gospel's meaning and Cozzens' adaptation is quite plain:

He [the officer of the ship that will deport Findley] thought Oliver Findley was unnecessarily drunk. He looked at him with rigid contempt. His straight, tightened lips opened and he said coldly: "There is a place prepared for you" (p. 304).

The suggestion seems obvious, that Findley, like Judas Iscariot and Satan, is lost, consigned to an allegoric Hell. Jesus, however, uses this "place prepared" expression twice in John 14 for drastically different purpose, that is, to promise comfort and salvation to his not-Iscariot disciples:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.
In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14: 1-3)

The language of Christ's promise makes neither literal nor ironic sense when applied contemptuously to Findley.
Literally, it would mean that Findley is being deported to some heavenly place; ironically, to some hellish place. But in fact, he's merely being sent to France, where the ship happens to be going. The Scriptural passage has simply been uprooted from its original meaning and context. The sum is this: although Cozzens writes allegorically and does borrow often from Scripture, we cannot trust his allegory to remain strictly within Biblical outlines yet.

"Dosfuegos," the seaport town where most of the action occurs, provides clearer insight to the allegory. The name, which means "two fires" in Spanish, emphasizes the book's consistently dichotomous organization. The ordinary sinners of Dosfuegos—like Nida and Quintin—occupy the middle earth, figuratively pulled between Findley's hell and Stellow's heaven. Whether Findley resembles Judas or Satan matters less to Cozzens, it seems, than that he represent the opposite of Stellow. The abiding truth of the allegory is the dichotomy, the hero-versus-villain relationship between Stellow and Findley.

The literature is more sophisticated than "hero-versus-villain" sounds. Cozzens, who views Findley both realistically and allegorically, sorts his characters according to whether they are superstitious about Findley. By narrating from their various points of view, some
superstitious, some not, Cozzens accomplishes two jobs at once, for while the flavorful beliefs of a person like Pepe Rijo, for example, characterize Pepe, they also amplify the novel's allegory.

Pepe guides us far into the allegorical meanings of Findley as villain. The American's name first appears on the impersonal memorandum sent from the United Sugar Company to Pepe, the alcalde: "Transportation order. FINDLEY, Oliver. The American who had come down last night" (p. 5). When Pepe's wife Agueda mentions Findley the next time, Pepe, affecting the nonchalant realism of a U.S.C. bureaucrat, gives us the unembellished fact: "'Don't you think I have my report? . . . Well, he was sent down from Central Chicago! He is a tramp--vagabundo!'" (p. 14). But Pepe's next lines broaden Findley's realistic significance: "'At all centrales, when they [i.e., tramps in general] appear, they are given transportation. He will leave on the sugar boat to-morrow!'" (p. 14).

But Pepe cannot hold to this unsuperstitious literalness. As his feelings get heated up, his thoughts about Findley become volatile. In a rage he strikes his wife. "A tide of confidence, based on so small a success as the silencing of Agueda, made him warm . . ." (p. 16). His next thought is that "That American, Findley, looked like some one" (p. 17). For a moment, "Ideas went harmless
around in his head. . . . Through all stood out the thin face of the American" (p. 17). But when the elements of this mental disorder fall in place, the new order is less literal and realistic, than superstitious and conducive to allegory: "He knew then, with a clearing flash. . . . The American's face was like the face of Satan shown, quelled by Michael and his angels, in a chapel in the Sancti Spiritus church" (p. 17, italics mine).

When we and Pepe actually meet the American, he looks simultaneously like an ordinary bum and "a little like a ghost" (p. 25). Findley's "resemblance to the Sancti Spiritus picture was so marked that he [Pepe] wondered with a tremor, half excitement, what he was doing, talking to this man" (p. 27). Moments later, Pepe transforms Findley from a man who simply resembles the devil into the devil himself: "It was the Devil, of course" (p. 28). This superstitious transformation makes fun of Pepe, supposedly "a 'modern' man" (p. 28). But it also proposes an allegorical identity for the novel's villain. As Pepe sees it, Findley is the problem, and calling him the devil provides the solution "with a clearing flash" (p. 17). Cozzens, of course, sees the matter otherwise. He knows that Findley is only a bum. To him, the unknown must lie in the other half of Pepe's equation: one must
solve for some understanding of evil as manifested in this representatively Evil One—an understanding of villainy in this villain.

Pepe, enlarging upon the idea that Findley is really the devil, offers a definition: "The Devil . . . was what made things go wrong" (p. 29). Stripped of its supernaturality, this thought sounds compatible with what Cozzens himself, as social novelist or writer of organizational novels, might say. And Cozzens' plot amply illustrates this aspect of Findley's villainy, in that Findley constantly does cause things to go wrong, for the Company and for individuals. Without abandoning the allegory, Pepe's next embellishment again broadens the social significance of Findley's villainy: "One did not slay the Devil so easily [as the Sancti Spiritus picture would imply]. The Devil persisted, death-defying. He merely became some one else" (p. 29). But more, Pepe sees that "the Devil became not one other person, but a legion. He could tell that, because so many things went wrong. . . . Thus one might be certain that the world harbored a large number of individuals who were the Devil, who made thousands on thousands of things go wrong" (p. 30).

Closely observed, Pepe's fantasies about Findley come full circle, back, as it were, down to earth. There is only a little difference between the realist's starting
point (that Findley is just a "tramp—vagabundo") and Pepe's fully elaborated superstition that Findley is the devil. At first the devil is darkly attractive to Pepe, but the more Pepe considers, the more the devil's exalted uniqueness degenerates: "the Devil became not one other person, but a legion." The word "legion" might recall the Biblical episode of Legion and the Gaderene swine (Luke 8), for either of two reasons. First, the Gaderene allusion occurs frequently in Cozzens' later books, and second, the episode supplies a debased view of Legion's devils, as swarmingly numerous and fit to inhabit swine. Perhaps such a reading is over-subtle. There is no doubt, however, that The Son of Perdition is crowded with low bestial imagery, especially to provide naturalistic overtones for the book's debased common people. But Pepe's closing image of the devil is also bestial, for he finally sees that "There could be no alliance with the Devil, no bold leaguing with the Evil One. You could as well be friendly with a shark; as profitably tell him you were on his side while his belly whipped over and his snout swerved on you" (p. 35). In short, though Pepe first promotes Findley from a mere tramp to the devil incarnate, Pepe himself ultimately strips Findley of his satanic stature, bringing him back down once again among natural phenomena. There is a peculiar appropriateness in Findley as
Satan resolving into the figurative shark, for when actual barracuda later devour Osmundo Monaga, the similarity will recall Findley's share in the fate of Osmundo and the Monagas. And through all of this, Pepe, by mapping out the title allegory of Findley as a satanic villain, is also preparing the way for Stellow as hero.

A few characters—Stellow, Fray Alejandro, Palacios—remain rational about Findley. But without supposing he is literally the devil, they still recognize that he is evil and troublesome, apparently for the author's own reasons. As a social novelist, Cozzens begins from a poor opinion of unimproved humanity. He dwells on human bestiality, as in the Negro laborer killed at Central Chicago: he "straightened up, hanging the wrench in his dangling black paw, his mouth open with surprise on his white teeth" (p. 123). An American engineer complains earlier about another man as "that ape on the crane," and Findley replies with "a gesture, disposing tolerantly of all apes on cranes" (p. 121). Elsewhere, Cipriano "drove now a young negro carrying a pail and mop" (p. 207, italics mine). Cozzens' racism, which is uglier and more outspoken in The Son of Perdition than in former novels, is embarrassingly obvious in these passages, yet his point is not
merely racial, for derogatory animal images apply sooner or later to virtually all the characters, irrespective of race. The simian surprise of the Negro described above has appeared first in the town's alcalde, Pepe Rijo, whose nickname is Mono Padmado: "Small, dark, his countenance resembled a surprised monkey--mono pasmado . . ." (p. 8). Dr. Palacios makes the derogation general. First Cozzens shows a whole wharf of employees fearing the approach of a storm: "They sat apathetic, but desperately attentive, fearing a silence as sheep fear to be separated from the flock" (p. 166). When the power fails, they succumb to "unreasonable terror" that exasperates the doctor with his atheistic "view of humanity": "'They aren't human beings,' he said, 'they're animals. Filthy, ignorant animals!'" (pp. 168, 169). Elsewhere he fumes about their "dirt, disorder, and rampant asininity" (p. 225).

Rational characters understand that Findley can disrupt the order that civilization--represented by Fray Alejandro's church, Doctor Palacios' science, and Stellow's sugar company--has imposed on such crude humanity. Superficially, Findley's threat to civilized order is evidenced in his panhandling, finagling, and stealing. Theft, in fact, is his only actual crime, yet the astute characters do not care about such small change. Stellow's Chinese servant, whose "Unguessable and probably awful experiences"
had "schooled him in humanity," knew that "men who possess nothing must perforce steal. He did not object to thieves on principle" (p. 116). Stellow agrees about mere property: "'I know you're no good,'" he tells Findley. "'You can't live without liquor, and you're a liar and I presume a thief. I don't hold that against you, only it's not much of a recommendation!'" (p. 130).

Stellow comes closer to the real objection when he remarks, "'Wherever you go there'll be trouble . . .'" (p. 144). The plot lavishly proves him right. Findley causes some trouble, as when he pilfers Stone's twenty dollars; but he also turns up wherever things are going wrong, and often makes them worse. When the bartender is fired, Findley is the only customer (p. 136). When the laborer is killed, Findley is the visitor (p. 123). When Pepe strikes his wife, Findley has been the topic of conversation (pp. 14-16). When Pepe calls out the guard, Findley is the reason (p. 35). When the storm hits Dosfuegos and the power goes out, Findley--who, contemplating death, elsewhere likens it to a power failure and blackout (pp. 119-120)--is the stranger whose gas car has just arrived (p. 173). When Osmundo's incest, jealousy, and filial scorn are revealed to Vidal, Findley has provoked Osmundo's rage (p. 202). In the closing scene, when Vidal refuses Stellow's pardon for murdering Osmundo,
Findley is the eavesdropper (p. 301). Fray Alejandro, too, accuses Findley with Stellow's word, "trouble": "'You have made a great deal of trouble,' said Fray Alejandro . . . . 'But I am obliged to you for telling me [about the Monaga incident],'" and Findley replies, "'That is all right,' . . . . 'It's all in my day's work, senor'" (p. 212). Despite the implication that his only work is to make trouble, however, Findley is seldom solely responsible for what befalls. Nor is his affinity for trouble ultimately what makes him the book's villain.

Fray Alejandro dissects Findley's villainy before getting to the heart of it. "The curious face, the eyes, lacked a quality noticeable only in its absence, of docility or steadiness; of the responsibility, however small, however forced, bred from employment by others. The social side of Fray Alejandro, priest in the ranked order of hierarchial [sic] authority outstanding against the chaos of such individuals, saw no good in the man. The moral or spiritual side, by indications even slighter and intuition even less definable, felt in him nothing but evil" (pp. 192-193).

Priest, doctor, administrator, and probably Cozzens himself admire an orderly society in which hierarchical authority is respected. Such a society depends, as Fray
Alejandro implies, on docile, responsible, productive members. Findley, of course, does not fit into such a scheme. He is "impudent" (p. 128), not docile; far from responsible, he "respected nothing" (p. 117); he is useless, not productive, for, having "spent years avoiding any mechanical knowledge there was very little that he understood" (p. 122). After Stellow illustrates the unreliability of a person who is also given to drunkenness, thievery, and lying, he asks, "'Well, what can you do with him?" and even Findley admits, "'Nothing!'" (p. 130).

Coming still nearer the mark, Stellow observes that Findley is incorrigible. "'It's too late to make you over, Findley'" (p. 144). He's actually worse than useless. Social stability requires docility from people whom Cozzens insists are childish and bestial, like the laborer Findley notices: "the negro drinking his water looked so perfectly at ease, untroubled, a humble sample of the world of people who had made their adjustment, their reconciliation" (p. 133). To protect this docility, Stellow doesn't "'like my niggers to see an American like you. Gives them ideas. Bad for Morale'" (p. 129). And in fact, Findley impairs the steadiness and morale of many characters, like Pepe, Nida, Quintin, the bartender, Stone, and the engineer who is fired. As administrator, Stellow is being practical in his stopgap solution to
deport Findley: "Wherever you go there'll be trouble, and it's not going to be here!" (p. 144). Cozzens' increasing maturity shows in the absence of facile optimism about reforming or disarming Findley. Findley's name first appears on the order that will deport him, and Stellow's only success with him is that Findley is last seen boarding the boat.

But Fray Alejandro goes to the heart of Findley's villainy, for "This person made him conscious of a certain inhumanity. If the affected surface was a sneer, none the less, under it like a core of rock was the actuality of revolt against the whole human world, a spirit like a moving stone to break down the barriers of belief and hope which staved off from men the consciousness of that great immortal, futility" (pp. 193-94).

This analysis contains two paradoxes. One is that man's well-being depends on a sort of enlightened ignorance about the ultimate futility of his existence, and that such an ignorance must be carefully protected behind "the barriers of belief and hope." The passage thus testifies a philosophical change. In Confusion Cozzens was already rather adolescently impressed by the futility of life: "the weary brightness of sand and sea grass seemed a reiteration of futility; futility in her [Gerise's] wondering and yearning, futility in her struggle and
denial, futility in the truth if it could be found ever" (Conf. 362-63). The difference in The Son of Perdition is not the author's conclusion that life is ultimately futile, but that anyone is villainous to break down men's defenses against the consciousness of this futility. The spectacle of futility in Cerise's life led Cozzens to confused despair. By his fourth novel, however, he has made his peace with this ultimate but dispiriting insight and has seen a need for compromises, circumventions, and disguises of it. His emphasis, in other words, has shifted from what to regard as a cosmic truth, to how to live with it. Findley is villainous chiefly because he makes the necessary hopes and reconciliations difficult for others. He concerns Cozzens as social novelist because Findley's cynicism undermines all society, making human life, whether personal or social, seem worthless.

The second paradox is that such arch-villainy should be found in anyone as contemptible as Findley. Pepe, Stellow, and Fray Alejandro all agree that Findley is a mere bum—weak, rootless, shameless, degenerate. Yet Pepe and later Nida can also mistake him for the devil himself, personifying all the world's evil; and Fray Alejandro, powerfully discouraged, finds him a satanic figure in "revolt against the whole human world." Thanks to this paradox, Findley is not a stereotyped villain, though
Don Miguel in *Cock Pit* is. We should therefore examine Findley's fictional antecedents—notably Don Miguel and Ruth Nicks—to appreciate Cozzens' growth in *The Son of Perdition*.

Being the villain in Cozzens' second Cuban novel, Findley is just close enough to Don Miguel for the differences to be obvious. Both characters are adversaries of their respective protagonists. Both personify the evils of their respective worlds. Cozzens, perhaps consciously, underscores their similarity when he echoes *Cock Pit* in *The Son of Perdition*: Miguel Bautizo says of Don Miguel, "'I wish he'd stay away. He never goes anywhere without rotten things happening all around him . . . .'" (CP 275, Cozzens' ellipsis), and Stellow says much the same thing of Findley: "Wherever you go there'll be trouble, and it's not going to be here'" (p. 144).

Except for these broad similarities, Findley is almost perfectly the opposite of Don Miguel. The main difference is organizational: where the former villain is the boss of a huge company, Findley is a vagabond, a pauper, an unassimilated outsider. Because Don Miguel resembles the tyrannical tycoon, the moustache-twirler of melodrama, he reads as a stock character, not the
result of much thought or observation. Findley, on the other hand, represents gains in two directions at once. The allegory of Findley as Satan will not be as easily misread for attempted verisimilitude, as will the melodramatic rendering of Don Miguel. Hence, even though Findley's villainy has, allegorically, the broader and more sinister implications, it should seem less implausible than Don Miguel's. Cozzens also gains realistically, for Findley as a troublesome bum, regardless of the allegory, is a more believable, typical, and socially thought-provoking creation than Don Miguel. Less easy to reject as a stock character, Findley looks like villainy seriously reconsidered. On second thought, Cozzens says, a really evil man—a true enemy of mankind—is likelier to be found at the bottom of society than at the top. He would personify chaos sooner than order; sloth sooner than industry; mean vices rather than anything bold enough to command respect; cynicism instead of hope; failure sooner than success.

If the inverse relationship between former and present villains suggests that Cozzens has reconsidered villainy and heroism, this inference will be strengthened by the observation that Stellow, the new hero, resembles Don Miguel, the erstwhile villain. Stellow too is the
most powerful man, the company head. In short, Cozzens has reversed himself, admiring types he vilified a book ago.

There is also truth in the converse, for similarities between Findley and Ruth Micks prove that Cozzens now sometimes vilifies what he formerly admired. As Stellow and Don Miguel are analogous heads of sugar companies, so Findley and Ruth are analogous outsiders, mavericks, who oppose those companies. Admired as a romantic individualist, Ruth enjoys a mildly rebellious freedom from conventional restraints of many sorts. As such, she belongs among a group of early characters with whom Cozzens sympathizes for their personal brilliance and individualism. As cynosures, Cerise and Michael belong in this category, but its better representatives are secondary figures like John Bold, Horatio Lane, Lynn Carruth, and the eccentric jeweler; Thomas Nashe and above all, Christopher Marlowe, in whom the satanic qualities of the romantic individual flourish. It is an ironic comment on these flamboyant individualists that their chief descendant should now be Oliver Findley.

Though Findley and Ruth are analogous as mavericks, the portrayal of him retracts misimpressions the author gave when depicting Ruth. Her breezy attitudes about sex, for example, are reconsidered for the next book,
in which Findley's fornicating with Nida seems consistent with the rest of their squalor. And whereas Cozzens appears taken with Ruth's flippant manners, Stellow calls Findley impudent for behaving much the same way. Ruth is applauded for drinking her aguardiente like a man, but a whole chapter of *The Son of Perdition* is titled "Aguardiente," since Findley cannot live without it. It stands for him, an antonomasia, representing his failure: "He reflected candidly that the only time he was free from anxiety during these later years was when he was drunk" (p. 115).

The author uses Findley to probe again at freedom, about which Cozzens is always ambivalent. But Findley marks a turning point, for there is little doubt, now or later, that Cozzens' suspicion of freedom has over-balanced his youthful sympathy for it. Bearing down relentlessly on Findley's worthlessness, Cozzens emphasizes how squalid this embodiment of freedoms is. Findley may be a maverick like Ruth, a satanic figure like Marlowe, but nothing good will come of him. Being outside the sugar company, Findley suffers the freedom of a man left out of a rather good thing: as a U.S.C. train passes, "A curious image came to Oliver Findley. Everyone was aboard it: . . . all except himself. He watched it pass, strong and safe in its purpose and determined end, while
the night settled down on him, leaving him uncertain, far from any home" (pp. 147-48). He does have the beggar's comfort of being accountable to no one: he tells Stellow, "'I don't "must" anything,' . . . " (p. 132). Yet even he realizes the paltriness and irony of this, the final boast of a derelict. Findley considers himself "an enemy of the Company--or victim, rather . . . ; one might be an enemy in the sense that one was against a thing, but against man in general, against the United Sugar Company, against God, perhaps, one was a signalized victim, not an opponent worth any consideration" (p. 199). Cozzens' youthful flirtation with rebellious freedoms has ended. Ruth still shows independence and high-spirited nonconformity as the stuff of appealing romance; Findley, free like a man cut loose from everything valuable in life, is a villain "in revolt against the whole human world" (p. 194).

Between Findley and Stellow stands a select cast representing mediocre, non-heroic humanity. Mostly common people, in a book whose social center of gravity is lower than ever before, they reveal Cozzens' poor opinion of ordinary mankind. But they also embody--less melodramatically than Don Miguel embodied them for Ruth--the sorts of
problems that the hero of a social novel might have to solve. These ordinary people therefore influence the definitions both of Findley's villainy and Stellow's heroism.

Nida Monaga, a lively and important character, can—like Findley—be profitably contrasted to Ruth Micks. Nida and Ruth are the principal women in their respective books, but everywhere Nida's portrayal emphasizes how unlike a romantic heroine she is. Ruth is admirably selfless, acting heroically to save her father, and ignoring Ramon's tempting millions. But Nida is obsessed with getting rich by any means, and is, above all, selfish: "Hers was the one perdurable spirit, the one reliable human strength, her unspoiled, unassailable selfishness" (p. 259). Ruth is a cynosure, but Cozzens laughs at Nida, the mock cynosure, who enjoys confession because it "made her and her doings the theoretical center of a profound interest both in Heaven and on earth" (p. 56). Like Ruth, Nida acts in several love subplots, but Cozzens revises his earlier views, making Nida a travesty of a conventional love heroine. Instead of holding off a handsome young millionaire like Ramon, Nida fornicates with Findley, a mere tramp, and dupes Pepe, a simian fool. The ardent platonism of Ruth's relationship with her father, or Cerise's with Pelton, has gone.
Instead, we now get Nida's brutish incest with her brother, and scorn for her father. Before, we had Edith Fletcher as the heroine's adoring protegee. Now Cuchita, a horrid old witch, fills her place.

Too numerous to ignore, such ironic distortions of Ruth's story reach down to the fundamentals of the plot. In *Cock Pit*, Ruth's heroic feat is to save her father, whereas in *The Son of Perdition* Nida's promiscuity leads to her brother's death and her father's imminent execution for murder. Ruth triumphantly outplays the magnate, blackmailing Don Miguel and winning his respect to boot. Nida's climactic scene is analogous, for she, too, tries to blackmail the other sugar magnate, Stellow. Yet this time the magnate outsmarts the girl, who is anything but respectable, and who, unlike Ruth, fails to win her way. Cozzens may have gone too far with Nida, but the attempt to withdraw from the position that *Cock Pit* left him in--with a much-too-good-to-be-true romantic heroine dominating the intellectual landscape--seems unmistakable. A similar withdrawal of approval is, as discussed, the gist of the contrast between Findley and Ruth.

Unromantic thinking continues in Nida's brother Osmundo. His life is succinctly conveyed by the song he writes. It "was titled, with appropriateness very
odd, . . . *Idilio Mar Caribe*" (p. 43). The novel's non-idyllic ironies extend far beyond Osmundo, but surely Cozzens illustrates that Osmundo's life is no Caribbean idyll. Rather, it is brutish, violent, incestuous, friendless, ignorant, and short.

Revealing how far Cozzens has come from his romantic beginnings, the Monagas take him back to material that occupied him in *Michael Scarlett*. There, Cozzens' division of mind was troublesome, for he indulged in the romance—chivalric battling and courtly love—that he was ostensibly rejecting. But in *The Son of Perdition* he spurns these kinds of romance with unequivocal vehemence. For the first time, we get no love story at all. Love is never even mentioned. Instead, we are told about sordid sex, incestuous and otherwise. Chivalrous defenders of the weak have become just the opposite in Osmundo, the utterly selfish man who lives by force alone: "If he insisted on managing his own business, he was perfectly ready to let anyone else do the same. Unless, of course, these two businesses were to meet head on. In that event it seemed to him right and natural that the stronger or cleverer should (as experience amply proved he would) have his way" (p. 52). Accordingly, he knocks Nida out with a block of wood, and she later cracks him with a spoon and draws a knife on him before these stirred
passions send brother and sister to bed together. Such lurid actions are highly implausible, yet their unromantic intention is now beyond question.

Osmundo lets Cozzens comment on two related themes. One is the noble savage cliche, which asserts the dignity of Natural Man. The earliest view of the Monagas is idyllic: "Vidal [Osmundo's father] swam like a lion, paddling with artless, impressive strength, beyond where his two children, naked and brown, splashed in the shadows" (p. 243). By turning these children of nature into partners in incest, Cozzens bluntly rejects the myth about man's natural dignity. Their naturalness is bestiality. In Cock Pit, Cozzens admired resemblance to predatory animals as a part of the manliness in Lancy Micks and Congo Gomez, but in The Son of Perdition brutality is simply a disparagement. Osmundo, "more like a pig than a person" (p. 88), is "a pig in a dung heap" (p. 66). He threatens to throw his sister "'into the sea for the barracuda!'" (p. 60). And Nida is a "little animal" (p. 55), a "little dog" (p. 256), and best of all, a "baby shark" (p. 256). These sharks and barracuda should remind us of Findley, just as Osmundo's intimacy with Nida should: "You could as well be friendly with a shark" (p. 35) as with Findley. These threatening metaphors are prophetic, for Osmundo, thanks to Findley the shark and Nida the
baby shark, is himself fed to barracuda. Obviously, such natural life is being reviled, though the method of rejecting it is still rather melodramatic.

Osmundo also has a share in the book’s discussion of freedom, for like Findley, he is independent of Stellow’s company. A horribly natural man, he epitomizes the unruly humanity that Stellow has had to organize. He also confirms that being outside the company, whether one works (as he does, building boats) or not, is to be outside the company’s probably beneficial order and discipline—the “responsibility” that Fray Alejandro admires. In short, Osmundo is another representative of dubious freedom, whose independence, like Findley’s, looks mainly to be alienation from civilized life.

Another noteworthy character is the witch, Cuchita, whom Cozzens fits, all effortlessly, into most of the book’s patterns. She is the character who elicits Palacios’ allegorical generalization that “Most of the people here really are the devil’s people, make no mistake!” (p. 172). He appears right about her, for she conjures evil spirits, refuses baptism, and attacks the priest. She dies when the son of perdition arrives, and Agueda concludes that “The devil came for her” (p. 12). But Cuchita is not precisely one of the devil’s people:
Her life was a long battle with incantations and charms against the black powers eager to crush out the wisdom which had betrayed them. Here could never be any peace; no parleying, no long relief from peril, just as her only allies must be charm-compelled powers, forced to serve, feverish to escape. Faithfulness or friendship would be easier between a man and a serpent. (p. 68, italics mine)

Written in a powerful, mature prose, this passage is parallel in substance and language to Pepe's discovery that there could be "no bold leaguing with the Evil One. You could as well be friendly with a shark..." (p. 35). In the allegory of Dosfuegos, Cuchita therefore belongs, not at the devil's fire, but among the superstitious, wayward people between the two fires, whether we are thinking of the Christian contest between Fray Alejandro's God versus Satan, or the organizational contest between Stellow's order and Findley's chaos. It is superbly ironic, therefore, that even a witch like Cuchita should be one of the people, the prizes, over whom the opposed religious and organizational forces of this social novel are struggling. In general, the common people resist Fray Alejandro, being drawn instead toward the devil, who, as the above passage asserts, will betray them.

When Nida interprets Cuchita's death, she emphasizes just such a contest, indignant that "Fray Alejandro should be right after all; that his whole intolerable
scheme of life should win so great a vindication" (pp. 252-253) as that he gets to bury Cuchita despite the devil's opposition.

But considered unsuperstitiously, Cuchita is, like Findley, only a troublesome kind of derelict. In fact, she is the first of a series of characters: Mrs. Talbot in The Last Adam, Lulu Merrick and Mrs. Hawley in Men and Brethren, Susie Smalley in The Just and the Unjust, and Caroline Dummer in By Love Possessed. To the realistic social novelist, such people, who take out of society much more than they contribute, are most useful. By imposing on the society, they make it reveal itself, as Cuchita can illustrate.

She has been poisoned by Quintin, an old man who fears her evil eye. Fray Alejandro is the first representative of civilization to visit the dying witch. He sees her miraculously—despite her squalor, her past life, and her stabbing him when he administers the sacrament—as a soul to be saved, over whom there will be rejoicing in heaven. The many ironies of this scene, coupled with Nida's summary of the deathbed contest as between Fray Alejandro and the devil, probably tell us Cozzens' own view: that Fray Alejandro's religious thinking is not much less superstitious than Cuchita's sorcery.
But because Fray Alejandro can also see Cuchita non-miraculously, he involves other representatives of civilization. After the baptism, "The peace of her resting grew more ominous. Fray Alejandro was troubled. At last . . . he . . . went to seek Dr. Palacios" (p. 182). Cuchita has let Cozzens define the limits of the church's power, by calling first upon its spiritual resources (which Cozzens treats ironically), then upon its humane practical function (in which Fray Alejandro requires help). A hierarchy of worldly powers is implied. When Dr. Palacios, in the ensuing scene, proves as dominant as the priest is meek, the inference is strengthened. The man of science scorns priests, whom he calls "'idiots in bathrobes!'" (p. 232). Cuchita can, of course, be seen scientifically, apart from her questionable spiritual and sentimental value, and Palacios, the atheist, when he regards her so, is "elaborately callous, as though warning Fray Alejandro to suspect him of neither charity nor compassion" (p. 186).

Although the doctor's "hard, exact atheism" (p. 169) separates him from the priest, they are comparable men in their compassion for the people, their responsibility, and their recognition of the near futility of their labors. Exasperated, the doctor may rage that the people "'aren't human beings,' . . . 'they're animals!'" (p. 169), yet
beneath the angry manner, Palacios is like the priest, compassionate: "he and the priest were enemies in theory, but there was no room for personalities in Dr. Palacios' indignation at the world which ran so stubbornly athwart the sanity of his science." His life at Dosfuegos "gave him a perverted sympathy for the agonizing unreason of men. He could neither have resented so furiously, nor hated so keenly without a bond to link his frustration with their folly" (p. 169). In Cuchita's case, Palacios is, however, no more help than Fray Alejandro. He allows that baptism "'Probably does people like that as much good as anything I could do. Like the devil, they want to be saints when they're sick. Never occur to them to be sanitary when they're well!'" (pp. 186-87). But even though Cuchita is "'none of [Palacios'] affair'" (p. 172) and "'isn't one of [Fray Alejandro's] people'" (p. 172), the doctor offers to contribute for the funeral that the priest wishes her to have. Cozzens contrasts their selfless concern with Nida's betrayal: when Fray Alejandro asks Nida to prepare her friend for burial, she replies, "'May that witch rot!'" (p. 195).

The problem of Cuchita's death, having first compelled various representatives of the social hierarchy (friend, priest, doctor) to expose themselves and their views of one another, goes finally to the head man for
solution. The priest observes, "'At least, Mr. Stellow will be down to-day . . . . I think he will perhaps have the Company pay for burial in town'" (p. 189). Although Nida ascribes the victory to Fray Alejandro in the thoroughly ironic battle for Cuchita's corpse, Cozzens gives the doubtful triumph to Stellow and the company. Decency requires the burial. Palacios asks, "'Are you going to have the decency to bury her?'" and Stellow replies, "'The Company will take care of it'" (p. 232). The corpse is last seen on a U.S.C. train. Good intentions are finally turning to concrete results. The social problems posed by Cuchita are being disposed of—better late than never—and we can appreciate the book's broadest social irony. For we have learned already that "One did not throw things [like cigarette butts] around in Dosfuegos" (p. 279), and that throwing away a dead goat was "made unnaturally difficult by the Company's refusal to allow dead animals or indeed, any refuse, to be tossed into a convenient corner and left for the buzzards" (p. 156). Our last view of Cuchita is, not surely as a soul to be saved, nor even surely as a human entitled to precedence over other animals, but surely as refuse, like the carcass of a rat or goat, that the company will not allow to be thrown indecently around.
In Quintin Mederos, the old man who kills Cuchita, Cozzens reiterates the naturalistic view of humanity that he implies in her and elsewhere. The goat conveys the similarity. "Just as his goat, being dead, was cast aside and sold for fifty cents, so might he [Quintin] be, for he felt intuitively that the goat and he, whatever their formal diversity, were fashioned from the same perishable stuff" (p. 159). Elsewhere, Cozzens juxtaposes the dying woman and dead goat to make the same point about her: "Plainer still was the carcass of the goat, revoltingly torn. Cuchita, he [Fray Alejandro] saw, was crumpled on an old mattress . . ." (p. 175).

The metaphors of trapped and poisoned rats also unite these characters: Quintin "Figuratively . . . retreated; ran panic struck . . . , turned and saw himself trapped . . ." (p. 159). Remembering how rats are exterminated, he feeds rat poison to Cuchita, preferring to kill her like a rat rather than die like one himself. The same metaphors apply to Pepe Rijo, who discloses the "bared teeth of the trapped rat" (p. 23) and who "darted rat-like out the door" (p. 25).

The telling difference between Cuchita and Quintin is that the witch intends evil, whereas Quintin acts in innocent self-defense against an imagined peril. Thus, irrespective of intentions, common people like these,
being ignorant, superstitious, and hysterical, are potentially dangerous. (1) They endanger one another: Quintin's panic is based on Pepe's nonsense about the evil eye, yet Cuchita, who purposed him no harm, is murdered. (2) They disrupt peaceful society, as when Pepe's panic about Findley creates public commotion, or when Quintin alarms the guard into firing at him. (3) They endanger the officials of the society, as when the old man attacks Stellow with a knife when the administrator comes to question and help him (just as Cuchita attacks the helpful priest). (4) They are dangerous to themselves: Quintin exposes himself, not only to the guard's bullet, but to punishment for an obvious murder. Clearly, then, Quintin too lets the social novelist enlarge upon Palacios' remark, that "Most of the people here are really the devil's people . . ." (p. 172). With or without devilish intentions, Quintin, Pepe, Cuchita, Nida, and Osmundo all make troubles that the society—and they themselves—must be saved from. In short, they create the need for a hero.
At first glance, Joel Stellow, the Administrator General, appears obviously to be the hero they need. Voluminous evidence, both allegoric and realistic, direct and inferential, justifies calling him the hero. When closer examination discloses reasons to qualify that interpretation, they only heighten his interest. For the remark about a minor character applies aptly to Cozzens himself: he was "beginning now to get beyond the first clear-cut simplicity of youth and caste" (p. 114). Standing between Ruth Micks, Cozzens' only uncompromised and successful character, and Anthony Bradell, the compromised protagonist of *S.S. San Pedro*, Stellow is a transitional figure. He can be called a compromised hero. As such, he is the most important character portrayed up to this point in the author's career.

By letting Pepe Rijo open Chapter I, Cozzens begins at once to establish Stellow's allegorical identity. To Pepe, Stellow is as awesome as God. Pepe "saw the United Sugar Company materialized like one of its great oil-burning locomotives, tall as ten horses, rushing down on him. The Administrator rode it like God" (pp. 6-7). And later: "The mere mention of Mr. Stellow's name restored to him that sensation of his smallness, his
helplessness, of the smallness and helplessness of all of them in the hollow of the Administrator's hand" (pp. 27-28). These two passages have several effects on the understanding of Stellow as a godlike hero. First, both passages combine the hero's godlike quality and his powerful corporate position as "Administrator." Second, they suggest an enormous contrast—at least from Pepe's point of view—between the hero and ordinary people. And third, of course, these allusions to Stellow as god pair off with Pepe's comparably direct allusions to Findley as the devil. Pepe is announcing the contestants in the ensuing battle. And although he is foolish and untrustworthy, he proposes that conventional connotations of gods and devils be used to interpret Stellow and Findley.

Findley himself corroborates all three of Pepe's implications about Stellow, and Findley is no fool. He endorses the allegory of Stellow as God when he asks sarcastically, "'Or do you just get sick of being God, Mr. Stellow?'" (p. 295). However wryly, he also accepts the notion of himself as the devil, calling it "'Not a bad idea!'" (pp. 297-98), shortly after he refers to Stellow as God. He is aware, too, that Stellow, Stellow's job, and Stellow's company are difficult to keep separate: "He [Findley] wasn't sure, as he went out, that he understood Mr. Stellow—the man, that was, apart from the
Administrator, the individual in contradistinction to the
United Sugar Company" (p. 132). And he, too, appreciates
the contrast that Pepe feels between Stellow and ordinary
people. When Findley confronts the man, Stellow has the
"voice of that explicit, easy authority which Oliver
Findley had learned to dread; the voice of the man with
everything annoyed a little by the man with nothing . . . "
(p. 110). When Findley sees the mill at Central Chicago
that Stellow runs, he feels "dwarfed to insignificance"
(p. 120). Once this threefold idea—that Stellow is like
God; that a vast contrast separates him and ordinary
people; and that Findley is his satanic enemy—has been
pointed out, all three of its elements become apparent in
Findley's reflection on being "an enemy of the Company--
or victim, rather . . . ," for "against man in general,
against the United Sugar Company, against God, perhaps,
one was a signalized victim, not an opponent worth any
consideration" (p. 199).

Metaphoric deifications of Stellow appear also in
the narrative prose:

The past was more important to Mr. Stellow [than to
Vidal] for out of it rose the possibilities, the
realities of the present; the sea terminal out of
Dosfuegos; his power out of the men and machines
growing like a tree, changing him from the mere
symbol, the advance guard on the deserted beach,
to the thing itself, the United Sugar Company made
flesh, walking in the steel and concrete kingdom
of its creation. (p. 246)
Ideas from Pepe and Findley recur here. Separating the deific man from his company is again difficult. Cozzens insists that the hero has become "the thing itself, the United Sugar Company made flesh," and precisely here, as man and company fuse into a single image, the idea of a deity crops up: the company-made-flesh goes walking, like God in Eden, in the industrial kingdom he created. The metaphor may also mean that Stellow is as different from the ordinary people beneath him, as God was from disobedient Adam and Eve. Indubitably, though, the author himself metaphorically deifies his protagonist. This should not be surprising, since he has been doing so, more or less explicitly, in all his earlier novels.

Narrative evidence of the author's admiration for Stellow grades off from allegoric to realistic. The rise of the United Sugar Company, for example, "was slow only until Joel Stellow had worked his way to the top. After that it gained momentum, standing up like a giant in the eastern provinces" (p. 227). Stellow as God has given way to the company as giant, but the interrelation of man and company makes this giant of a company hard to distinguish from the United Sugar Company made flesh, or from the godlike Administrator holding the people in the hollow of his hand. Even when Cozzens dispenses with allegorical and metaphoric embellishments, confining
himself to realistic narration about his character's life, appearance, and business activities, the writing is still sometimes outsized, as though Cozzens has difficulty holding his hero down to a plausible scale:

... Mr. Stellow of Central Chicago was plainly the Company's pace-maker. Central Chicago, Espalada, and the Santa Clara marine terminal at Dosfuegos were Mr. Stellow's creation, the summing up of a great Administrator's career, but he had still a hand in every other United mill. With or without instruction from Habana he made unexpected weekend trips. He altered methods, seized on irregularities, and checked off men who would not be back next year.

Stellow of Chicago! (p. 112)

A division of text follows, thus making this passage much like the last paragraph of the front-matter, in which a periodic sentence closes on Stellow's resounding name:

Resident at Central Chicago, in charge of United Sugar's Santa Clara unit--these great new centrales, Chicago and Espalada, and the sea terminal at Dosfuegos--Chief of Cuban Operations and Administrator General, Joel B. Stellow. (p. viii)

The grandiosity of both passages bespeaks a young author's still urgent impulse to exalt the central character, though the book as a whole gives a subtler and less one-sided view of the hero than the above passage by itself would suggest.

But such inflated writing probably helps to explain Cozzens' later willingness to disavow The Son of Perdition. Findley's first view of Stellow, for example, is trite enough for Hollywood or the funny papers:
It was a quiet man in a linen suit, tight-fitted on a big frame. Under a white panama, the face was broad with the red of dangerous anger through a pale tan. Gray eyes, wrinkling at the corners, stared accurately. Amazing immobility. The head broad-browed, with the lean, muscled chin and prominent nose of a bust; the stone bust of a Roman general with Germanic blood. Light fell off one high hard cheek-bone. The intolerant mouth set tighter. (p. 109)

Stellow has appeared only once before this, in a scene that is also meant to impress us with the awesome hardness of a tough guy. He arrives after Pepe has audaciously called out the guard, and just as the shot is fired at Quintin. In his terror, Pepe sees "a man carrying a bag; the solid white-clad form of the Administrator General" (p. 38). On the next page, Pepe "remembered not irrelevantly, that story of Mr. Stellow and the man who fired the cane. Mr. Stellow got the man and stood by while guards heated gun barrels red and burnt him so he admitted it" (p. 39). It is hardly possible to miss Stellow's resemblance here to the Mickses, since Lancy, who actually shoots a man for firing the cane, talks about how "'You can shoot a man for that . . .!'" (CP 7) the first time we see him; and later Ruth stands by and directs the torture of a man until he confesses his crime. Stellow's resemblance to the Mickses suggests the continuity of Cozzens' conception of heroism, including some of its banality, from third book to fourth. There is no doubt, in other words, about whether Stellow as protagonist can
be loosely categorized among heroes like Ruth, though—
coming down the mountain—The Son of Perdition is im-
portant chiefly because of the ideas of heroism that it
leaves behind, not the banal ones it reiterates. Moreover,
Cozzens appears to have confined these views of Stellow's
toughness to the early portions of the novel for good
reasons, as I shall discuss.

Cozzens exercises greater moderation and subtlety
here than in Cock Pit, yet he again defines his hero's
claims to admiration partly by the acclamation of well
placed characters. Speaking as if for Palacios, Cozzens
recalls that twenty-five years ago "... Fernando Palacios
found possibilities in Joel Stellow. There was the
strong impersonality and intelligent ruthlessness of
which all great men are made lying just under the crude-
ness and ignorance" (p. 226). As for Vidal--estimable
because in the village he "was, by tacit consent, head
man"--he becomes Stellow's friend at once: they "recognized
each other ... ; each saw the other was strong, each
gauged the other's possibilities ... " (p. 244). Chorus
characters like the rubio also augment the hero's reputa-
tion; in a well written scene, the young bartender speaks
respectfully of Stellow's morality, discipline, and repu-
tation before generalizing that "Mr. Stellow is such a
good Administrator because he understands how things
Another minor character is the clerk who reports on Pepe's commotion: when Stellow arrives, the clerk loses "that first witless aspect," sensing the "comfort of Mr. Stellow's presence." He sums up by saying, "Well, I'm glad you're here, senor." (pp. 215, 216).

Even characters who oppose Stellow, grudgingly testify to his power and other heroic attributes. Nida, for one, laughs unpleasantly and assures Findley, "There are no other people besides Mr. Stellow, senor." (p. 264). Even Findley, Stellow's literal and allegorical enemy, shores up the hero's claims to admiration. Stellow impresses him from the first: "What he [Findley] recalled of the Administrator . . . impressed him with Mr. Stellow's infinite capacity for the usages of command. . . . He did not respect if . . . , but he recognized the uselessness of withstanding it" (p. 117). A page later Findley's response has already warmed somewhat: "He was astonished to find that Mr. Stellow's presence was stimulating" (p. 118), and by the end, "He looked at the Administrator and smiled, for suddenly he knew he liked Mr. Stellow. Not so much as a person, as for the solidity, the integrity of his whole being" (p. 293). In other words, though less obtrusively than in earlier novels, characters help to establish that the hero is admirable.
Stellow also has the successes of a hero. Some of them are allegorical. The visit by Findley denotes, allegorically, the satanic onslaught of sin, trouble, and death upon the human community. Knowing that Findley is a satanic enemy illuminates Stellow's success, for Stellow finally gets the better of him. Pepe predicts that, as Stellow has ordered, Findley "'will leave on the sugar boat to-morrow!'" (p. 14). In simplest terms, the contest between Stellow and Findley is fought over this issue, for Findley resists deportation. He would willingly remain in Dosfuegos: "This ground . . . was where he should stay" (p. 287). Or he would have been glad if he and Nida had succeeded in blackmailing Stellow into letting them go to Habana. But Findley eventually admits himself beaten: "'If you're talking about Habana,' said Oliver Findley [to Stellow], 'I know that I'm not going. Something slipped. I could feel that!'" (p. 294). The book closes as Findley mounts the sugar boat's gangplank, expelled from Dosfuegos as Stellow preferred. To this extent, Stellow as God defeats Findley the allegorical son of perdition.

Stellow's realistic successes are also impressive. "Central Chicago, Espalada, and the Santa Clara marine terminal at Dosfuegos were Mr. Stellow's creation, the summing up of a great Administrator's career . . ." (p. 112).
Moreover, as Nida puts it, "'There are no other people besides Mr. Stellow . . .'" and "'There is no law here except the Company'" (p. 264). In particular ways, Stellow is as successful as this reputation foretells. The entire plot progresses from prevalent disorder, to the relative order that Stellow's authority and ingenuity restore. Findley appreciates Stellow's success shortly before the end, astonished to see Stellow smile for the first time. "A betraying flash of unexpected happiness. Oliver Findley thought: he's happy because he has got things fixed up" (p. 293).

For instance, he has fixed up the Quintin Mederos case. Although Quintin's virtual confession (pp. 276-77) leaves no doubt in Stellow's mind of whether Quintin poisoned Cuchita, he realizes that justice will not be served by prosecuting him. The rationale is spelled out years later in The Just and the Unjust, where Judge Vredenburgh explains that he once had to sentence a Negro named Upson to death: he "'killed the woman he was living with because he thought she was putting a spell on him . . .'" (J&U 417). Vredenburgh explains that "'If the law had left me free, I would have given him twenty years. . . . That black man was killing in what he thought was self-defense. Neither of them [Upson and another convict] was vicious; one was foolish and emotional; the other was}
simple and superstitious. Putting them to death was not
the answer'" (J&U 420). Stellow, rather than sacrificing
Quintin to the law, saves him for the company. He fixes
things up by saying, "'At Central Chicago' . . . 'we
could use another checker at the scales office'" (p. 278).
Dr. Palacios, cooperative about false death certificates,
records "acute indigestion," not "arsenic poisoning"
(p. 300), as the official cause of Cuchita's death. We
last see Quintin leaving on the train and testifying,
in effect, to Stellow's success and justice. "I am
Quintin Mederos, senor, and I am doing what Mr. Stellow
tells me'" (p. 289).

Stellow has also fixed up the Cuchita problem. The
corpse is on the same train, and although Nida credits
Fray Alejandro, Cozzens is more impressed with the com­
pany's part in disposing of Cuchita. When the guard
arrests Nida, she places the empirical success of the
company and the supernatural success of the church side
by side:

The man's uniform . . . threw in her face the law
and order of the United Sugar Company. It was in
essence as alien and unbearable to her as the
different law and order of Fray Alejandro's God.
Authority manifest in its enforcement was another
matter, just as God manifest in the priest's vic­
tory over the dark powers was potent, while God
hidden in Heaven was a joke. (pp. 253-54)

Although Nida superstitiously recognizes parallel realities
--the law and order of God, and the different law and
order of God-like Stellow and his company—Cozzens' scepticism lets us discount her supernatural inference. We are left with the triumphant law and order of Stellow, the priest being, in this realistic view, only another manageable subordinate.

Stellow's realistic successes point out, not only his personal resourcefulness, but also his expedient organization and control of his social environment. Fixing things up depends heavily on Stellow's compliant subordinates. Decency may be served in the Cuchita case, and justice may result for Quintin, but pulling the right strings is actually Stellow's means to these ends. For example, the priest's subordination is evident when Stellow asks him about Cuchita:

"You made arrangements about the Hervas woman's body?"
"Yes, senor. I telegraphed as you kindly allowed me. I am very grateful to the Company for its generosity" (pp. 296-97).

When the priest sighingly agrees to keep silent about Vidal's crime, his subservience becomes more obvious, it being not much different from Pepe's outright servility:

As Alcalde of Dosfuegos, he felt, unprotesting, like the Company's property. ... Without any explanation, the Administrator General put a hand under Pepe, lifted him above every one else at the sea terminal. If, like the freight cars, the locomotives, the very sugar bags, Pepe had been obliged to wear the U.S.C.—property of the United Sugar Company for all to look at, it could be only a decoration. (pp. 5-6)
We learn elsewhere that "... Pepe was made Alcalde because he was too simple to offer any obstacle to Mr. Stellow ..." (p. 9). And indeed, much of the same subservience can be seen in Dr. Palacios, despite his ironic manner. Where Palacios asks Stellow rhetorically, "'Is there a U.S.C. on my private life?"' he echoes the earlier passage about Pepe, and soon shows that the answer should be yes: "'Well, if you want a false death certificate, you can count on me, of course!'" (p. 233).

Stellow's most complicated effort to fix things up concerns the Monaga case. His friend, Vidal Monaga, has killed Osmundo. Nida uses this knowledge to blackmail Stellow into sending Findley and her to Habana. The priest, the doctor, Findley, and Pepe also know more or less of what happened to Osmundo. Ignoring the implausibility of such a widespread secret, it's true that Stellow has fixed everything up when Findley says he has (p. 293). Stellow first lets Nida disarm her own blackmail. He agrees to pay her passage in exchange for a document asserting that she knows nothing about her brother's death. He adds that "'If, when you go, you want Mr. Findley to go with you, that will be arranged!'" (p. 269). Counting on Nida's superstitious nature and Pepe's belief that Findley is the devil, Stellow detains the two together. Pepe thus convinces Nida that Findley is the
devil and that Osmundo’s ghost is warning her not to go
to Habana. The guard observes that “Inside they [Nida
and Pepe] had been doing a lot of shouting and talking,
but Mr. Stellow had said to let them talk . . . ” (p. 286).
In short, Stellow has outsmarted Nida, who is last seen
confessing to Fray Alejandro, not traveling with Findley.

Cozzens prevents lesser characters from disturbing
the hero’s tidy success. Palacios promises the certifi­
Accidental drowning” (p. 300). Similarly, the priest is
silenced, since Stellow can “manage to use even idiots
in bathrobes!” (p. 232). He tells Fray Alejandro:

“You will do what you think best about senorita
Monaga. As a personal favor to me, you will con­
sider the whole Monaga case concluded. I may rely
on your discretion?”
Fray Alejandro sighed. “Yes, senor,” he nodded.
(p. 297)

Stellow also gags Pepe:

“The Alcalde is afraid of you, Findley.”
“For that, I suppose you let him go on being
Alcalde. That ought to keep him quiet.”
“He will keep quiet,” agreed Mr. Stellow. (p. 297)

By outsmarting Nida, Stellow carries out half his plan
to outsmart Findley. He has said already, “’I’m cleverer
than you are, Findley,’ . . . ’Don’t forget it. I have
an idea you’ll sail to-morrow!’” (p. 272). With Nida
frightened, Findley has lost his means of escape. On the
other hand, though detaining Nida and Pepe, Stellow
dismisses Findley with five dollars, supposing correctly that "I can find you at the cafe if I need you." (p. 272). Findley is so successfully detained by his own alcoholism that, despite the appearance of freedom, he drinks enough that finally he sees "no need to do anything... He stopped drinking at this point. No reason advanced itself for raising a glass" (p. 292). Even escape seems futile. "Since then I saw that it [going to Habana] wouldn't be any use. I've tried about everything, Mr. Stellow. I guess I'm tired of things!" (p. 294). In other words, knowing their weaknesses, Stellow controls both Findley and Nida. Thus it can be said, not only that Stellow as God triumphs allegorically over Findley as Satan, but also that Stellow as Administrator triumphs realistically over Findley the vagabundo who was to "'leave on the sugar boat to-morrow!'" (p. 14).

These many evidences that Stellow is both admirable and successful appear to be a massive proof that he is a conventional hero substantially like Ruth Micks. He too is a triumphant cynosure, a deified protagonist who is widely acclaimed, as well as competitively successful in overthrowing a satanic villain. And it's true: this evidence is so copious that we cannot avoid calling him a
hero. But Stellow's real interest lies where the author—
consciously and without the self-contradiction or the
indecision of the first two books—doubts this heroism,
re-examines it, trims it down to size, and settles into
the serious business of the middle novels, namely, the
analysis and ironic criticism of readily believable pro-
tagonists who fall short of heroic attainments and who
make us wonder whether human life can profitably be
measured against heroic standards. Stellow, standing
between Ruth Micks and these compromised protagonists,
may be armed with such a panoply of heroic attributes
that we cannot help calling him the book's hero, but
literarily his best credential is that this heroism is
compromised.

The author's reservations about Stellow's heroism
can be inferred first when estimable characters, although
they may have spoken admiringly of Stellow, also have
moments of penetrating doubt or disapproval, particu-
larly toward the end. Heroism by universal acclaim,
such as flourishes in Cock Pit, is no longer to be found
in The Son of Perdition. In his last appearance, for
example, the priest has misgivings: he is "troubled
whether he had done right about Mr. Stellow and Vidal.
At least he had done all he could, all the Company would
let him. That was nothing, but he did not doubt that
God would understand . . ." (pp. 298-99). Since the
priest and his religion often look foolish (Palacios calls
him "'just a holy fool!'" [p. 232]), these scruples about the
Vidal case do not necessarily mean that Cozzens shares them.
Perhaps Cozzens is more impressed with the Administrator
who so thoroughly eclipses the priest, than he is disap­
proving of Stellow for expedients which, morally and legal­ly,
are no more dubious than Ruth's. Nevertheless, Fray
Alejandro's last scene does make Stellow's heroism sound
a bit minor, if not dissonant.

Dr. Palacios, though he occasions some of the worst
writing, carries the compromising process much further
than Fray Alejandro does. Because of his work and tem­
perament, Palacios is a valuable observer of humanity.
"He had a sense of how relative and ridiculous man's dig­
nity was, since his work habitually showed him men
stripped of it by the operation of pain or the enervation
of illness" (p. 222). The value of this perspective
probably explains Cozzens' frequent re-use of doctors
like Palacios: most notably Reggie Shaw in By Love Pos­sessed, but also Dr. Percival in S.S. San Pedro, Dr. Bull
in The Last Adam, and less prominent characters like Dr.
Casali in Men and Brethren, the French medical officer
in Ask Me Tomorrow, Dr. Mosher in The Just and the Unjust,
Lieutenant Werthauer in *Guard of Honor*, and Dr. Skorupski in *Morning Noon and Night*.

Dr. Palacios can both establish and undermine Stellow's heroism. "His relation to Mr. Stellow was involved and curious, swaying between the ease of an acquaintance dating from days when everything was different, to the constraint of a keen contempt, applied impartially both to the Administrator and himself" (p. 224). Cozzens gives Palacios the credit for having performed miracles with the young Stellow: "He knew that in a sense he had made Stellow what he was. Of course you could not make iron out of water, but it was a miracle of sorts he had performed with an ignorant youth . . ." (p. 224). He recognized Stellow's greatness in advance, and insofar as he testifies to its existence, he bolsters Stellow's heroism: "There was the strong impersonality and intelligent ruthlessness of which all great men are made lying just under the crudeness and ignorance" (p. 226). Palacios taught Stellow "the morality of ruthless good sense," and having "restored his health, corrected his private life. . . . He made him over, directed him intelligently . . ." and some years later "saw his cynical foresight justified" as Stellow reached "the summit--Administrator General" (pp. 227, 230).
It is easy to misread Palacios' present manner toward Stellow. His "keen contempt," like the priest's uneasiness, can be provoked by Stellow's unethical expedients, as when Palacios says ironically, "'I hear and obey' . . . . 'Command me when you want the records falsified'" (p. 235). But then, his contempt is said to apply "impartially both to the Administrator and to himself" (p. 235), and with reason, since "If necessary, he broke his Hippocratic oath with characteristically cynical skill. He had never allowed ethics to interfere with what he considered reasonable human happiness" (p. 229), any more than Stellow does. Nor is it enough to say that Palacios undermines Stellow only because of "the nameless emotion of a person repaid for a service with one far greater . . . ." (p. 224), or because Palacios is indebted to someone he at first "despised" as "obviously a person of no family or breeding . . . ." (p. 225). All these motives, though operative, are thematically unimportant.

The doctor's most penetrating criticism is that Stellow has become inhuman, or is becoming so. And here, amid much juvenile writing about how to choose whores, liquors, and drugs, one of Cozzens' truly subtle insights emerges. It is not that a man can become inhuman, but that a hero can be criticized and even scorned for precisely the things that make him great. Palacios shows
that in Stellow, success and failure, heroism and villainy, are already coalescing into what Cozzens will later call life's "baffling complexity"—"experience's progressive resolving of all things, at first taken to be clear and simple, into their essential baffling complexity" (ByLP 15).

When the doctor first alludes to Stellow's loss of human traits, he does so admiringly. Enraged by the fatuous Cuban people, Palacios was originally "delighted . . . to launch something [i.e., Stellow] far more potentially destructive to the imbecility of Cuba libre than arms or American annexation" (p. 226). In the doctor's view, Stellow's transcending the "dirt, disorder and rampant asininity" (p. 225) of the people is a measure of his success:

First directed by the doctor, the intelligence which would not tolerate such folly hewed close to the hard bones of character. The human guts went out of Stellow, it seemed to Dr. Palacios, leaving him brain chiefly. The hair, disappearing above the wide forehead, seemed eloquent, showing the skull outstanding. The innocence of surprise, the thoughtlessness of anger, the humanness of any appetite, any blind grasp at happiness—they were all gone, useless to the solid operative brain, the compact engine which built the United Sugar Company, built its possessor into the summit—Administrator General. (pp. 229-30)

But Palacios also seizes this same loss of humanity to question how admirable Stellow really is. His lines make it impossible to regard Stellow's heroism as
unanimous, one-sided, the way Ruth's is in *Cock Pit.*

Palacios forces us to scrutinize this heroism, and more important, he reveals that Cozzens himself must have had doubts about it. For after all, the gravest charge that Fray Alejandro could bring against Findley was that "This person made him conscious of a certain inhumanity. . . . the actuality of revolt against the whole human world . . . " (pp. 193-94). Yet Palacios sees evidence of the same inhumanity in Stellow:

"Old Monaga won't live forever. After that you'll be a kind of tree walking. Sometimes I don't think you're human now. . . ."

. . . "A hundred years from now, when we're both rotten, and your God damned Company is bust, men will know what to make of you—that is, one or two will. . . . They'll know what human contact means, and what happens to a man's glands when he gets to be a Company instead of a person—then they'll take him out and shoot him, I expect."

Mr. Stellow waited, smoking, watching.

"Well, I'll tell you this. Hold on to your old man, for you're almost a monstrosity now. He suits you, I guess, that noble peasant" (pp. 234-35).

This speech deserves close attention.

Cozzens may intend—between the "summit" passage and this "monstrosity" one—a simple degeneration of Stellow from past hero to present non-hero. The Stellow-Palacios relationship has unquestionably changed: "It was more than a reversal of role. More, in Mr. Stellow's case. Change, the simple signal of growth, had made the doctor not much different," whereas Stellow, who
"had been no one," became "the summit--Administrator General" (pp. 229, 230). But there is no corresponding statement that Stellow, having risen to the summit, declined to something else.

More probably, Palacios means that by becoming the summit, Stellow also became a monstrosity. Giving with one hand what he takes back with the other, the doctor simultaneously affirms Stellow's heroism and compromises it. We have seen, moreover, that when Stellow is praised as a god-like hero, his human individuality, his position in the company, and the company he created become confused. Now Cozzens, writing from Palacios' point of view, echoes that confusion in both passages: (a) when he says, not that Stellow reached the summit, but that he became it: his brain "built its possessor into the summit--Administrator General," and (b) when he alludes to Stellow as "'a Company instead of a person.'" Thus, the same confusion of man, position, and company that occurs in passages deifying the hero recurs where Palacios compromises him. Two different ways of understanding Stellow are offered. He is exalted, by virtual identification with a powerful job and an almost omnipotent company, into a more-than-human hero repeatedly likened to a god. And on the other hand, he is dehumanized, by this same identification, into some unnatural monstrosity--a brain
chiefly, a tree walking, a summit, a company instead of a person. The Palacios evidence does not permit a choice between these views, for although the doctor feels contempt for inhuman monstrosities, he also feels it for ordinary humanity. But at least the monstrosity speech shows where the allegedly deific hero may be vulnerable.

The speech also enlarges upon abstract heroism. In *Cock Pit* Cozzens personifies machines as foils to puny, ineffectual humans, implying that such machines might suggest criteria for heroes. In *The Son of Perdition* he contrasts Central Chicago and Oliver Findley to much the same purpose:

Like complicated steel sphinxes the mill units crouched side by side. Mammoth sphinxes, with galleries hanging on their flanks and little groups of men working on the metal strainers under the ponderous triplicate rolls of the crushers--twin twelve-fold crushers, Oliver Findley saw. He admitted that Central Chicago was impressive.

He stood, dwarfed to insignificance among the enormous fly-wheels hanging silent in their railed troughs, and stared up at one of the big traveling cranes . . . . It began to move deliberately, paused; unrolled its chains . . . . A group of breathless negroes and an American stared with him . . . .

"Good job," said Oliver Findley.

"Yes, sir," he agreed, "but it would be a damn sight better if that ape on the crane would place it the first time" (pp. 120-21).

This passage should recall the unflattering contrasts between Elmer Kirk and his Richardson weighers, or between Mr. Grove and his nine-roll grinders, particularly since
Cock Pit's implications about the non-heroic men are apparently confirmed here as the scene shows the disastrous consequences of human ineptitude when a man is killed. Dr. Palacios' "monstrosity" speech also delves more deeply into abstract heroism than Cock Pit does. Whereas Findley and the "ape on the crane" confirm the original thought, that ordinary men are less impressive than great machines, Palacios comments now on extraordinary men like Stellow, who actually do come to resemble abstractly heroic machines and organizations. The result is somewhat unexpected, for when Stellow "gets to be a Company instead of a person," Palacios sees, not a hero, but a freak. It may be true that much of the book's civilization is owing to the Company, yet when human heroism patterns itself on machinery, Palacios, and perhaps Cozzens, sounds more concerned with the loss of humanity than with the gain of machine virtues.

One last accomplishment of the monstrosity speech is to focus attention on Vidal. The accurate observation is that Palacios says, "'Hold on to your old man, for you're almost a monstrosity now,'" and that "'After that [the death of Vidal] you'll be a kind of tree walking'" (pp. 235, 234, italics mine). The Palacios evidence is leading but inconclusive. Yet it leads unerringly toward Vidal, and the novel will close when the Vidal subplot does.
Vidal Monaga is difficult to interpret because of his implausible relationship with his children, especially Osmundo. Findley thinks that "The expected flaw in Vidal's integrity would be the blindness of his paternal regard" (p. 201), but no amount of parental blindness could conceal for twenty-one years the loutish brutality of Osmundo. Nida's attitude toward her father's blindness is more believable than Findley's. When Vidal rewards Osmundo and says, "'That, because I am proud of you, my son,'" Nida in response "permitted herself to sniff privately—to be proud of that yokel! Her father's conception of pride had always been as much of a mystery to her as his phrases about honor,—a special species of nonsense, to Nida's mind" (p. 63). Nor would a favorite son who shares with his father "an intimacy of respect perhaps deeper than the bond of blood" (p. 201) be likely to sound like Osmundo: "'Honor? Your house?' roared Osmundo. 'Old brainless pig ...'" (p. 203). Moreover, if Vidal is as noble as Cozzens implies, how do Nida and Osmundo come to be his children? By themselves, these dubious Monaga relationships have merely secondary importance, yet if Vidal is ill-conceived in some roles, perhaps he is badly imagined in others. But all the
same, the closing estimates of the hero, the villain, and their book-long conflict all hinge on Vidal.

Despite his faults, Vidal illuminates the book's heroism in three broad ways. (1) He helps to establish and define it in Stellow. (2) He then compromises it, thereby conforming to precedents set by Fray Alejandro and Dr. Palacios. But above all, (3) he stresses its irony. In fact, *The Son of Perdition* cannot be understood as a whole until the ironies of the Vidal subplot have been unraveled.

The old man helps to establish Stellow's heroism because, being widely admired himself, and having long been Stellow's closest friend, he is an estimable character who knows and approves of Stellow. Cozzens says twice that, until the company swallowed the village, Vidal was "head man" by tacit consent (pp. 9, 244). People think highly of him: Fray Alejandro "respected Vidal" (p. 167); Dr. Palacios calls him "'that noble peasant'" (p. 235); minor characters like the men on the gas car (pp. 149-51) and Agueda Rijo (p. 9) generalize his good reputation. That he has been friendly "for years" (p. 9) with Stellow, his "Very good and old friend" (p. 149), strengthens Stellow's reputation.

Cozzens, by cultivating similarities between Stellow and Vidal, may seem to think of both men as
heroic. Once, Vidal is described in much the same imagery used to exalt Stellow. When punishing Osmundo, Vidal "was like a bronze giant breaking from the monumental calm into disastrous action" (p. 20). The image of the giant applies to Stellow when Pepe envisions him riding a locomotive as "tall as ten horses"; or when his company stands up "like a giant" (p. 227). The word "bronze" recalls imagery of metals and stones used to convey Stellow's hardness, as when Palacios concedes that he could not have made "iron out of water" (p. 224), and when Cozzens compares Stellow to "the stone bust of a Roman general" (p. 109). There, Stellow's "Amazing immobility" is like Vidal's "monumental calm" of a bronze giant.

But even if Vidal and Stellow, closest friends, are both developed in admiring images, they are obviously very different. Hence, the common denominator in Cozzens' admiration of such diverse types should illuminate heroism here. Intuitive respect for one another's strength is their chief similarity when they first meet:

Vidal was, by tacit consent, head man. He came up out of the sea shining . . . . Mr. Stellow met him halfway, . . . shaking Vidal's wet hand.

He and Vidal, looking in each other's eyes, recognized each other without any word, any need for speech; each saw the other was strong, each gauged the other's possibilities as well as he was able. . . . they understood well enough. (pp. 244-45)
This passage contains the first occurrence of the meeting half-way, a motif that reappears in later books. Here it connotes friendly equality and a mutual respect that sees beyond superficial differences, to the essential manhood. Each man senses the strength of the other without doubting his own. Such friendship, always impressive to Cozzens, often involves a silent understanding as is found here. Cozzens returns twice to this notion, one of the few things said about the friendship. The men fish. "far out in a swaying gasoline launch, not talking much . . ." (p. 42). And elsewhere, Findley guesses that

Friendship between these two . . . must have been such a friendship, a silence of understanding. At once more came to him, more of the meaning that he had found missing until now. With the elimination of words and the complications which spent their uneasiness in speech the discrepancy disappeared. A bond of simple humanity joined them, each intent on his different ends, each living his separate life by his individual view of things. (p. 301)

The account of their mutual regard has changed. They begin by appreciating that "the other was strong," yet the outcome is a "silence of understanding" and a "bond of simple humanity" sustaining the warmest, most loving relationship in the book. The common denominator in Cozzens' admiration appears to be this: that each man, being strong enough to command respect and perceptive enough to appreciate the other despite superficial
differences, is also human enough for friendship. Vidal thus augments Stellow's heroic stature in a paradoxical way, by bringing the mighty Administrator down to human scale.

But their friendship is also important for an opposite reason, namely, that Vidal is a character whose criticism the hero himself would respect. And since everything about Stellow's heroism except his capacity for friendship could have been established without Vidal's contribution, the old man's ability to compromise Stellow may be more important than his ability to vouch for him.

Mainly, of course, these men are dissimilar. And in three respects, Cozzens appears to have cultivated their differences with Stellow's eventual compromising in mind. The friends differ in their relationships to time and progress; to humanity and machinery; and to honor.

When Vidal first emerges from the sea to meet Stellow, two opposite ways of life also meet. Vidal is as unconcerned about civilization and progress as Stellow is mindful of them. Vidal has never cared about the future: "his life, his vitality, was a thing of the perpetual present . . ." (p. 245). He "knows that in all truth as yesterday is gone; to-morrow does not exist" (p. 61).
Stellow, however, "thought of only one thing in those days. How United Sugar could move into Santa Clara province . . . . The Company . . . . never knew what was coming. But Stellow had known" (pp. 243-44). By now, Stellow embodies the company and the new order that he himself foresaw. He is as much the head man in Dosfuegos now, as Vidal was before.

At first glance, the character compromised by this unfolding of events is apparently Vidal. As Nida sees him, he has simply been left behind: "She felt comfortably superior to her father's simplicity and Osmundo's surly distrust [of the Company's bank], realizing more clearly than ever what fools they were. Far behind, things left them. Osmundo . . . wouldn't even know what the United Sugar Company . . . was like, what any modern thing was like. . . . Vidal was just as bad . . ." (pp. 64-65). And yet, if Cozzens means that modern progress has gone from good to bad, or bad to worse, Vidal may be enviable or admirable for having been left behind.

The meaning of the friends' differences in regard to progress is not clear without the second contrast, that is, between Vidal's humanity which, resisting change, has remained simple and close to nature; and Stellow's, which since the first days has become so
confused with the company machinery that it may now seem
unnatural and inhuman, as it does to Palacios. When
Stellow and Vidal first meet, Cozzens stresses this
same human-versus-mechanical contrast: "Perhaps the full
meaning of Vidal's manhood was no plainer to the young
engineer than the full meaning of impending machines to
the fisherman who had never seen an oil-burning locomotive
or dreamed of a dynamo" (pp. 244-45).

Several lines of evidence are converging here, perhaps
to reduce Stellow's heroism. For if the "impending
machines" have swallowed up Stellow's humanity, just as
they swallowed Dosfuegos (p. 9), then the contrasts between
the hero and Vidal will have reached the same compromising
point: that to Stellow, being a man of the future meant,
not merely founding, but becoming a company, just as
Palacios accuses. In that case, Vidal will have revealed
the critical flaws in the hero's heroism. Only Vidal,
Stellow's one friend, can be trusted to distinguish
between the man he likes and the company he merely tole­
rates. He regards Stellow as his "'intimo amigo'" (p. 65),
content that each of them is "intent on his different
ends" (p. 301). Yet Vidal would "deny God's Providence,
ignore, if need was, the United Sugar Company, for those
were the things he found it suitable to be doing" (pp. 200-
201). Evidently, Vidal has remained friendly with Stellow
in spite of the company. And if he were to discover that Stellow and the company had become indistinguishable, Stellow's heroism would lose a most important prop.

Yet the old man never does charge Stellow with inhumanity. The last word on that subject is left instead for Findley, who reflects on machines and men. We must pause to let him conclude the matter.

The last word is somewhat unexpected, because Findley earlier seemed to agree with Palacios about Stellow's machine-like inhumanity. Once, for example, Findley "wondered, struck by the thought, if Mr. Stellow, after these many years, had reached a point where he needed to believe that a human being could hamper the Company" (pp. 133-34). Elsewhere, Findley notes that Stellow "lost some of his machine-like precision; not enough to make him lose his temper, to become entirely human" (p. 130). Thus, when Findley eavesdrops on the last scene, in the chapter titled "Twilight of the Machines," his belief that Stellow really controls the mechanical processes is not surprising: "Never in Mr. Stellow's mind, could it have been possible to allow the mechanical processes to grind up the simple stone of this old man" (p. 302). In fact, Findley thinks that Stellow's effort not to seem virtually omnipotent is farcical: "He saw too, the transparent farce of it.
Mr. Stellow setting up himself against himself. Driving the mills and railroads on one hand, covering the face of the machines with the fiction of this necessary illusion on the other, sustaining futilely the legend of man and his dignity and freedom, long after the last remnants were dust under the revolving wheels" (p. 302).

This farcical self-deception—this triumph of machinery over human dignity—would be "the great joke of the machine" (pp. 304-05) that Findley mentions a page later, and that Palacios has prepared us for. Except that Vidal refuses the pardon that Stellow has arranged, which means that the mechanical processes will now grind up Vidal and will be deprived of their triumph.

Of course, if Palacios is right that Vidal alone keeps Stellow from being a monstrosity, then when Vidal chooses to be charged with murder, he seals his friend's fate as well as his own. Stellow in that case would become an inhuman monstrosity. But the book ends before we can know for certain whether Palacios was right.

Yet most of what Findley sees at the last tends not to support the doctor's most damaging conclusions about the hero. Cozzens dwells on the warm humanity of the friendship between Stellow and Vidal, not the inhumanity threatening to consume the Administrator. By Palacios' account, the "human guts" and "any blind grasp at happiness"
had "all gone," leaving Stellow "brain chiefly" (pp. 229-230). Yet in the last chapter Cozzens chooses several images of the heart and of hands as Stellow metaphorically reaches out to save his friend: "The Administrator's voice offered something of himself, as though the heart had hands to be held out and taken" (p. 301). Findley, who is "moved more than he would have thought possible" by this spectacle, has had a similarly warm response from Stellow a few pages earlier, when "suddenly he knew he liked Mr. Stellow" and when Stellow smiles his "betraying flash of unexpected happiness" (p. 293). These are not the closing descriptions of a character who is almost a monstrosity.

Moreover, when Palacios refers to Stellow being the summit, he means he is mighty, able to do nearly anything he wants. But the last scene does not uphold this view of him either. Stellow is powerful enough to engineer even a pardon for murder. Surely, Stellow does personify the company if anyone does. Yet in trying to free Vidal, he attempts the kind of "blind grasp at happiness" that Palacios has assured us Stellow no longer makes. And regardless of his shrewdness and corporate power, he does, in this purely human enterprise, fail. There, according to Findley, is the "great joke of the machine; the machine's inhuman beauty, the reason and might of the machine,
confounded so inevitably by the rooted folly, the poor stubborn pride of man" (pp. 303-04). In other words, the last chapter consciously revives the contrast between the corporate machinery and Vidal's humanity. And although other forms of compromising are implied, at least Stellow proves neither as inhuman nor as mighty as Palacios led us to believe.

Although these Vidal-Stellow contrasts—between past and future, and between humanity and machinery—both compromise Stellow at least by raising serious doubts about him, Vidal does not confirm their undermining implications himself. But when he and Stellow disagree on a question of honor, Vidal, "that noble peasant," betrays his own disappointment in the hero. That the old man's prestigious and long reserved judgment should be revealed a page before the end, in his very last speech, can seem extremely damaging to Stellow, as if the whole book has progressed toward his final undoing.

Happy to have fixed everything up, Stellow tells his friend, "'You are released from the Alcalde's order of arrest,' . . . . 'The matter is officially closed'" (p. 302), and Vidal replies:
"That I could not do, senor."

His voice was troubled, as though his heart were troubled too, that Mr. Stellow had not understood him. After a while he went on: "It is not much to be a Monaga to any one but me, senor. But I will be turned over to the authorities, please."

"Because of justice, senor," he explained reluctantly.

Finally Mr. Stellow answered: "As you wish" (p. 303).

The fact that "Mr. Stellow had not understood him" should recall Findley's speculation of only two pages ago, that the friendship between Stellow and Vidal entailed a "silence of understanding." Now, however, Stellow has disappointed his friend by failing to understand.

The most reverberant effect of this discrepancy is to throw Stellow into a very unflattering analogy to Osmundo. Earlier, Findley thought he saw another such silence of understanding, between Vidal and his son: "One more of the same, thought Oliver Findley [when first seeing Osmundo], sensing some double kinship in the words [of Vidal to Osmundo], the impersonality which had faced the girl [Nida] vanishing in an intimacy of respect perhaps deeper than the bond of blood" (p. 201). Yet the Vidal subplot reaches its murderous crisis precisely because, in this same scene, Vidal discovers that the silence, supposedly betokening a tacit understanding between him and his son, has actually concealed an unforgivable misunderstanding. As Vidal explains it to Stellow,

"... I had brought him up to know what is honorable. Other people may do things which are not my business, but with which I will not have myself, my house, my
name, when it is borne by a man, dirtied. When I saw that he did not understand this, I thought . . . , he does not know what it is to be a Monaga."
. . . "Being sure of this, I saw that he would be better dead" (p. 248).

Vidal prefaces this explanation with the remark to Stellow that "... I do not know whether you will understand!" (p. 247). In the final scene with Stellow, Cozzens echoes the language of understandings and misunderstandings; the heart metaphor; and the what-it-is-to-be-a-Monaga thought, Vidal telling Stellow again, "'It is not much to be a Monaga to any one but me, senor!'" (p. 303). Cozzens is obviously making the scenes parallel. But the crucial difference is that, before, Osmundo was guilty of a disappointing misunderstanding about the meaning of being a Monaga, whereas now, Stellow is.

At worst, Vidal's closing disappointment may decide earlier questions that were left unresolved. For example, when the silence of understanding is belied by Stellow's failure to understand, perhaps Palacios' generalizations are being confirmed after all. Has Stellow's last human contact--the simple bond of humanity with Vidal--been broken already? Has Stellow become as much of a company as Palacios says, and does Vidal finally see that? Is this what Stellow's identification with progress and the future brought him to? The happiness Stellow betrays to Findley suggests that he really thought he had fixed
everything up, yet his expedient solution demeans his friend, treating him just like another Quintin Mederos. Quintin, a superstitious fool, owes his life to Stellow's merciful circumventions of the law. But when we last see Dr. Palacios, immediately before the final scene between Vidal and Stellow, the doctor is signing the two death certificates—one for Cuchita, one for Osmundo—thus making the derogatory parallel between Quintin and Vidal unmistakable. By this logic, Vidal is entitled to his disappointment, having discovered on the same day that both men he valued—Osmundo and Stellow—had underestimated him and fallen short of his high-minded expectations.

But it would be a mistake to allow this reasoning to cut too deeply into Stellow's heroism, compromised though that heroism surely is by now because of all the occasions Cozzens provides for the doubting of it. After all, Stellow is no Osmundo, even if they do share similarities. A single disappointment does not nullify a friendship that is decades old. And in light of the folly that Lancy Micks's conscience plainly leads to in Cock Pit, perhaps Cozzens does not admire Vidal's self-immolating nobility without reservations. Findley regards it as a dreadful joke. And on the other hand, Stellow, when he expediently offers to release Vidal, does the only thing his author can let him do. Were he to presume that Vidal
must be punished, Stellow would seem a poor friend and an inconsistent justice, having already pardoned Mederos, a worthless man, for the same crime. Hence, Stellow must offer exoneration. But Vidal's refusal of it is equally certain, since to accept it, thereby evading justice, would make the murder of his son pointless, would let the father dishonor the name he killed the son for dishonoring. So just as Stellow must offer exoneration, so the old man must refuse it. And although Vidal may seem disappointed at the show of leniency, nevertheless he—and surely we—would have been more disappointed if Stellow had taken the punishment for granted and deprived Vidal of the opportunity to sacrifice himself honorably.

And besides, a much greater compromising has been going on, which does not entrust too much interpretation to the momentary disappointment of an old man whose nobility may indicate either his preeminent fitness to judge, or his foolish eccentricity. I refer to several systems of imagery and allusion that have in common the gradual diminution of Stellow's stature, especially insofar as they reveal ironies in his exaltation; similarities
between him and distinctly unheroic persons and animals; and evidences of his quite ordinary vulnerability.

Cozzens' intention of bringing Stellow low can be surmised when Findley quotes from Richard II: "It was admiration, he [Findley] decided, for the caprice of a just, eloquent and mighty fate. He wondered how Mr. Stellow would like it. Farewell, King . . . He remembered suddenly . . . with a little pin: Bores through his castle wall, and farewell king!" (pp. 257-58). The allusion is, of course, to the "sad stories of the death of kings" and how within the king's "hollow crown," antic Death keeps his court,

Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp,
Allowing him a breath, a little scene,
To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks,
Infusing him with self and vain conceit,
As if this flesh which walls about our life
Were brass impregnable . . . .

The allusion refers to the unhappy outcome of Vidal's case. Findley, like Palacios, recognizes that Vidal is somehow necessary to the Administrator's very existence: "The wordless bond [between Stellow and Vidal] silently and invisibly held them too close. Such destruction [of Vidal by the mechanical processes] would break down something of Mr. Stellow. Some saving faith" (p. 302). But the Shakespeare quotation conveys more than Stellow's

2 III, ii, 156-168.
imminent loss. It stresses first his semblance to regality, then how laughable his might actually is, how little it will take to pierce his hardness, how ordinary his fleshly mortality is.

The title of the last chapter, "Twilight of the Machines," reiterates this thought about the demise of Stellow. Cozzens has presumably borrowed from the familiar Wagnerian operatic title, "Twilight of the Gods," the usual translation of Gotterdammerung. Similarities to the music drama cannot be pushed far, but Cozzens' intention is still plain, for he has repeatedly likened Stellow both to gods and to great machines. The chapter title, which can quite safely be construed to mean "the twilight of Stellow," thus intimates what the chapter itself confirms: that whether we think of Stellow as a hero of godlike or machinelike invulnerability, we will be wrong. We will have asked too much of heroism. We will have forgotten that heroes, being human, are both fallible and mortal. In light of Cozzens' propensity for deifying his earlier protagonists, the obviousness of this reminder about the humanity of all heroes can be forgiven. And if allowed full value, this thought can be seen as a useful guide into the later books, where the author's unflinching acceptance of human imperfection closely circumscribes anything that might be said about his protagonists.
Another and more subtle means of compromising Stellow's heroism is the motif of railroad images. Even the book's opening scene should be regarded as part of this motif, since it closely resembles the one in "Cock Pit" where "suddenly the white, fierce radiance of a locomotive headlight poured blindingly over her" (CP 231).

The Son of Perdition opens on this same image:

PEPE RIO ran.

After him, traveling swiftly, reached the sun.

Clouds breaking let one intense shaft fall . . . .

With the unearthly accuracy of chance this prodigious radiant finger touched Pepe Rijo, poured over him like a focused spotlight . . . .

All the way down to the iron fence and big gates of the railroad yards the wet sandy street was empty. (p. 3)

This passage mentions railroads only incidentally, but two pages later the material is reworked with the locomotive as the explicit organizing image:

He [Pepe] saw the United Sugar Company materialized like one of its great oil-burning locomotives, tall as ten horses, rushing down on him. The Administrator rode it like God. It roared faster and faster, higher and higher, Pepe struggled and squirmed, prayed and screamed but he could not pull himself out of the track. It was the ultimate horror. His innocence seemed to him of no avail. His mind raced up and down and everywhere a wall marked U.S.C. confronted him. (p. 7)

Unmistakably, these images are opposed: Pepe personifies any contemptible human victim caught on the track, whereas the towering Administrator combines the characteristics of a God and a mounted man, riding a gigantic locomotive that
symbolizes what Pepe regards as the unstoppable power of modern industry.

Although its full significance is not immediately clear, the railway imagery provides much of the book's form and articulation. Everything depends on the confrontation of hero and antagonist at the same railway terminal. Hence, their arrivals get special attention, symbolism aside. Pepe's railroad fantasy has created an expectancy about Stellow's approach that Cozzens continues to nourish: "'Mr. Stellow is coming down on train number 9'" (p. 5), and again: "'He arrives this morning'" (p. 28). The whistle "could be nothing but the train from Central Chicago with Mr. Stellow" (p. 38), whose arrival is first viewed from a distance, "down by the railroad yard gates" (p. 38). Later, Chapter V, "U.S.C.," begins with a closer look at "Mr. Stellow, climbing down from the engine cab of number 9" (p. 213). The railroad motif also enforces the contrast between Stellow and Findley, for the latter does not enter Dosfuegos in godlike exaltation. We have seen him panhandling on the Habana Express, getting caught, and being thrown off the train at Zaza: "'Hundred pounds fine American garbage for Zaza del Medio!' and [the train soldier] tossed Oliver Findley off" (p. 106). A train reveals vividly to Findley the contrast between Stellow and himself: "Every one was
aboard it:"—Mr. Stellow, . . . every one . . . all except himself" (p. 148). And when he enters Dosfuegos, it is by gas car at night, as a shameless and sinister vagabond, whereas Stellow arrives in the engine's cab, in the morning, as the most awesome man in the province.

By the end, however, the train imagery no longer implies Stellow's heroic superiority to lesser characters, but insists on his similarity to them. In Chapter I, Pepe enthrones Stellow on his locomotive like a god, meanwhile fearing for himself that the train will run him down. But Chapter V begins as Stellow is dismounting, "climbing down from the engine cab of number 9" (p. 213). The symbolic possibilities of this chapter-beginning, as the hero's descent from his high place to Pepe's low one, appear to be confirmed. Chapters V and VI both begin on comparable action, that is, Stellow observing the emptiness of the railroad yards (pp. 213, 274), just as Pepe began Chapter I by doing (p. 3). Consistently, when the Vidal subplot reaches its catastrophe, Cozzens returns to railroad imagery, which is manipulated to put Stellow, no longer atop the engine, but metaphorically down with Pepe, under the wheels. Findley prepares this important motivic event by alluding to the destruction of Stellow. He assumes that Stellow could not "allow the mechanical processes to grind up" Vidal, because "Such
destruction would break down something of Mr. Stellow. Some saving faith" (p. 302). But those processes will destroy Vidal, and both Findley and Palacios agree that Stellow will also be broken down as a result. The sequence of railroad imagery thus confirms the earlier interpretation of the "Twilight of the Machines" title, showing that even the administrator, though seemingly omnipotent, will be crushed like a mere Pepe Rijo when the loss of Vidal exposes his vulnerable humanity.

Yet the railroad image that apparently confirms this imminent destruction of the hero can be easily misread. Before Vidal announces his resolve, Findley thinks he sees the farce, namely, that Stellow, actually in control, pretends not to be, so as to maintain a fiction about man's dignity:

He saw too, the transparent farce of it. Mr. Stellow setting up himself against himself. Driving the mills and railroads on one hand, covering the face of the machines with the fiction of this necessary illusion on the other, sustaining futilely the legend of man and his dignity and freedom, long after the last remnants were dust under the revolving wheels. (p. 302)

He refers, not to remnants of crushed men, but remnants of "the legend of man and his dignity and freedom." By fixing the machinery so that it would not destroy Vidal, Stellow had actually prepared the farce that Findley was expecting. Stellow would have saved Vidal at the expense of the old man's "dignity and freedom."
Refusing this expedient salvation, Vidal defends man's dignity and freedom, his capacity for heroism, though doing so will cost him his life. Here, then, is the other available meaning of "Twilight of the Machines": not only that Stellow will be crushed when Vidal is, but that against such quixotic stubbornness (or laudable heroism) as Vidal's, the most powerful machinery will be confounded. This is the "great joke of the machine" that Findley closes on: that even though Stellow retains nearly godlike control over "the reason and might of the machine," neither he nor his machinery can overcome "the rooted folly, the poor stubborn pride of man" (p. 304), which impels Vidal to throw himself under the very wheels.

In fact, here may be the most farsighted comment in the juvenilia on the fate of abstract as well as human heroism. The plural, "Machines," in the chapter title brings up the company's demise as well as its administrator's. Palacios speaks of the time when "'your God damned Company is bust'" (p. 234) in the same paragraph in which he alludes to Stellow's death and dependence on Vidal. The chapter title thus anticipates both the fall of the personal hero, Stellow, and the finitude of the company, the only manifestation of abstract heroism in this book. And if so, The Son of Perdition provides the first occurrence of a most
important pattern in Cozzens' best fiction, namely, that the noblest of human institutions depend ultimately on the disruptive fallibility of individual humans like the wrong-headed jurors in *The Just and the Unjust*, the easily duped people at the town meeting in *The Last Adam*, the broken captain in *S.S. San Pedro*.

But whether we see "Twilight of the Machines" referring to Stellow's merely mortal vulnerability, or to the ultimate fallibility of all machinery, the effect is the same. Both interpretations entail the compromising of a hero who at first is set apart from other characters by his allegedly inhuman and superhuman attributes.

With regard to Stellow's heroism, the animal imagery is like the imagery of railroads. The common characters are constantly compared to animals, especially base ones, and Quintin makes the naturalistic point that he and his dead goat, "whatever their formal diversity, were fashioned from the same perishable stuff" (p. 159). Stellow, however, is at first lifted metaphorically above such base nature, for he rides like God, and his locomotive is as tall as ten horses. But as his dismounting from the locomotive has symbolic importance, so the eventual naturalizing of imagery applied to him accomplishes a similar
diminution of his heroism. When Findley last talks with Stellow, he likes the Administrator:

Not so much as a person, as for the solidity, the integrity of his whole being. It was similar to the indefinable repose, the sense of well-being which went with powerful animals; a big muscled dray-horse; a half-ton bull standing quiet. Oliver Findley laughed. "I was thinking that you were like a horse," he said. (p. 293)

Imagistically, this passage diminishes the hero from being like a god on a tenfold horse, down to being like a mere barnyard animal; as, from being a man riding a locomotive, to being a man in the way of one. Yet we might have expected that the animal and railroad motifs and the "death of kings" allusion all reach the same mortal conclusion. The hero, though seemingly exempt from ordinary circumstances, is naturally as vulnerable and mortal as any goat or any Cuchita. Tying all this neatly together, the train which, leaving Dosfuegos, carries Cuchita's corpse—that "memento mori" (p. 291) in which Findley observes a "Slight odor or mortality" and a "Trace of corruption" (p. 290)—is, after all, the same train that brought Stellow down.

Cozzens compromises the hero still more by narrowing the gap between him and Findley, reducing their melodramatic antagonism. At the outset, of course, Cozzens cultivates this contrast, using Pepe to put Stellow as far above ordinary people as he puts Findley beneath them.
When we first see Stellow, he is physically imposing, once as "the solid white-clad form of the Administrator General" (p. 38), then confronting Findley as "a quiet man in a linen suit, tight-fitted on a big frame. Under a white panama, the face was broad with the red of dangerous anger . . ." (p. 109). Soon after this, Findley taunts Stellow about the image he projects: "'When they [Negro workers] say "American,"' he guessed, 'they've got to think of a big hard-boiled boy in a white suit running things'" (p. 129). Even such a "big hard-boiled boy" falls short of Pepe's fantasy god on the locomotive, yet Stellow seems still smaller on each successive appearance, and increasingly like Findley as well. At their second meeting, Findley revises his first impression: "Mr. Stellow, Oliver Findley saw now, was not so tall as he remembered him. He was big, heavily proportioned, but not fat. His age it would be impossible to guess. You could never imagine him as a child, nor yet as an old man" (pp. 117-18). This material needs to be seen along with the idea of making people over. Stellow's career was launched years ago when Palacios "corrected his private life" and "made him over" (p. 227). But when Stellow remarks, in the twin passage, that it's too late to make Findley over, it's also become too late for himself:
"It's too late to make you over, Findley."

A change close to expression had moved Mr. Stellow's face . . . a trace of a sag, a contraction of the gray eyes. . . .

For the first time he saw Mr. Stellow as a person. He saw him in the ultimate, incredible obviousness of a human being apart from his position . . . Mr. Stellow was old, simply, and tired; as all men must be sooner or later. In the Administrator's last words had been also his own epitaph, and all his life . . . could serve him no better than to make him understand it. (p. 145)

Stellow suffers in all of the comparisons implied here. Made over once before, he cannot be made over again. Although initially contrasted to Findley, he now shares this disheartening similarity with him. And instead of being a towering god or an imposing "big hard-boiled boy" running things, he is now seen stripped of his mystique, reduced to the "ultimate, incredible obviousness of a human being." Although Findley has assured us that Stellow's age would be impossible to guess, and that one could not imagine him an old man, Findley revises his impressions a second time to say that Stellow "was old, simply, and tired." Moreover, Findley will soon say the same about himself: "I guess I'm tired of things" (p. 294). The approximation of these characters is continued by occasional pointed details, such as the similarity between Findley, who is "adroit at grasping attitudes and atmospheres" (p. 150), and Stellow, who has "An acute appreciation of atmospheres..."
and situations" (p. 213). By the end, the distance has been closed enough that Findley, who began by throwing a punch at Stellow (p. 111), now finds that "he liked Mr. Stellow" (p. 293). In fact, while eavesdropping, Findley gets a "sweeping sense of dreadful things about to happen" between Vidal and Stellow, and sympathizes with Stellow so thoroughly that "He could almost have cried out, 'Keep still, keep still!'" (pp. 302-03).

In their last conversation, Findley, though he supposes that the Administrator makes "allowances" for his own "short-comings," is still impressed primarily by the great difference between success and failure that separates them. So he tells Stellow about the sensation of failure in life, "'since probably you'll never find it out any other way . . .'" (p. 295). The novel, however, does not close there. Cozzens emphasizes the convergence of these seemingly opposite lives. An earlier passage showed Findley being "dwarfed to insignificance" (p. 120) by Stellow's mill. But for the closing scene the hero and villain enter "The vast interior of the wharf" (p. 295) together: they "walked into the emptiness alone" (p. 296). Inside, of course, Findley is on hand to witness the scene with Vidal. Hero and villain come closest together—the difference between success and failure seems smallest—
when Vidal refuses Stellow's pardon, for at that point Stellow finally joins Findley in being brought low himself.

We have now seen copious evidence that Cozzens compromises Stellow. But why he does so remains a question. Two possibilities are available. Either Cozzens wishes, despite first appearances, to deny Stellow's heroism; or he wishes to qualify it. The first view is unconvincing, since most of Stellow's claims to being extraordinarily successful and admirable survive the scrutiny to which they are subjected. The Administrator does, after all, personify a force for civilization that Cozzens values, especially in contrast to the book's many uncivilized alternatives. And as Findley admits, Stellow has—except in the Vidal case—successfully fixed everything up somehow. Surely no one else can make such a boast and rival Stellow's preeminence. So if Stellow is not the hero, then for the first time there is no hero. But allegorically and realistically, Cozzens goes to great lengths to make Stellow seem conventionally heroic at first. And even after the subtle compromising, which discloses Stellow's merely human failings and weaknesses, he remains a character who is mainly successful, admirable, and extraordinary. Irrespective, then, of the compromising,
we should probably conclude that for a fourth time Cozzens has depicted a hero, not merely a protagonist.

Hence, the second explanation for the compromising ought to be correct: that Cozzens wishes only to qualify Stellow's heroism, perhaps by sharpening his own definition. Stellow is not some misleading anti-hero who has needed only to be properly deflated. But he does prove that Cozzens is now aware of how easy it is to overstate heroism, in effect exempting an admirable character from ordinary human conditions. In The Son of Perdition he allows Pepe Rijo, an indubitable fool, to commit the most flagrant overstatements of Stellow's heroism. Then gradually Cozzens corrects the distortions and completes the portrait himself. One obvious direction of all the compromising is to deny any literal deifications of Stellow. Cozzens insists on the hero's fleshly mortality and normal vulnerabilities. At that merely physical level, there is small difference between a Stellow and even a Findley. A compromised hero may, in short, be extraordinarily successful and admirable, but his heroism does not finally contradict his own humanity, mortality, and imperfection.

In qualifying Stellow's heroism, Cozzens is clear on one other point that he implied less convincingly in Confusion and Michael Scarlett. It is that heroism
is likely to entail ironies. In *Ask Me Tomorrow* a decade later, Cozzens lets his autobiographical young author-protagonist, Francis Ellery, describe an early novel of his in which "'The situation is ironic, but also heroic'" (*AskMeT* 15). Quite the same can be said of Stellow's situation in *The Son of Perdition*.

Although the novel's outcome reveals the most important ironies, Cozzens also bundles them artfully together in an allusion that, I think, testifies to his increasing skill. As Findley overhears Stellow greeting Vidal at the beginning of the last scene, he thinks of a Biblical line: "What, wondered Oliver Findley, still gazing at the stars, shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor . . . ." (p. 301, Cozzens' ellipsis). The expression, "the king delighteth to honour," occurs six separate times in *The Book of Esther*, Chapter Six, but the allusion is verbatim from the sixth verse: "And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?"

Here is the story told in the Book of Esther: Ahasuerus, king of the Persian Empire, chooses Esther for his new wife, not realizing that she is a Jewess, the adopted daughter of Mordecai. Some time later, Mordecai learns of a plot to assassinate the king. He reports it to Esther, the conspirators are captured, and Mordecai's
action is chronicled, though the king neglects to reward him. Haman, meanwhile, is a favored courtier; everyone does him reverence except Mordecai. To punish this insolence, Haman plans to destroy all the Jews in the Empire. Mordecai, lamenting at this news, tells Esther she must intercede with the king, and she risks doing so. The king promises to grant whatever wish she will name, so she plans a banquet as the occasion for stating her wish. Meanwhile, Haman, still dissatisfied about Mordecai, orders a gallows constructed and resolves to ask the king to have the Jew hanged from it. But the king, as it happens, has just been reading the chronicles and has discovered that Mordecai was never rewarded for saving him from the assassins. Thus, when Haman comes planning to ask for Mordecai's life, Ahasuerus opens by asking him, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" and Haman, supposing that the honors are for himself, describes a public procession. With unconscious irony, "the king said to Haman, Make haste, . . . and do even so to Mordecai the Jew . . . ." (Esther 6:10). Haman is chagrined. But worse is to come at Esther's banquet. Now, at last, Esther tells the king her wish: "If I have found favour . . . let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: For we are sold, I and my people, to be
destroyed . . ." (Esther 7: 3-4). Astonished, Ahasuerus demands the culprit "who durst presume in his heart to do so," and Esther names "this wicked Haman" (Esther 7: 5,6). A chamberlain tells the king, "Behold also, the gallows . . .," and the king responds, "Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai" (Esther 7:9-10). The king also gives Haman's house to Mordecai, reverses Haman's orders, and decrees the slaughter of 75,000 of the Jews' enemies, including all ten of Haman's sons. This event, in which the "wicked device" of Haman, the "enemy of all the Jews," was made to "return upon his own head" (Esther 9: 24, 25), is commemorated every year in the days of Purim.

Cozzens exploits this allusion with considerable skill. Esther is an ironic story to begin with, since Haman must give his enemy the honors he wanted for himself, and he and his people must suffer the punishments that Haman had planned for Mordecai and the Jews. In short, a divine sort of poetic justice is done three times in Esther.

Yet when Cozzens adapts this material in The Son of Perdition, he compounds its principal ironies. The parallels between Ahasuerus and Stellow, Mordecai and Vidal, are perfectly clear. Just as Mordecai is the man "whom the king delighteth to honor," so is Vidal the man whom
Stellow would honor. "The Administrator's voice offered something of himself, as though the heart had hands to be held out and taken" (p. 301). And when Findley thinks of the line, he still expects that, as in Esther, Vidal will benefit from the Administrator's esteem. But from here on, nothing follows its Biblical script. The chief irony, of course, is that Vidal, though possibly the noblest character in the book, will be punished for murder despite Stellow's wish to save him. "'Because of justice,'" Vidal says. Thus, in place of the poetic justice that Mordecai enjoys, we see ironic justice done to Vidal. It is also ironic that if anyone corresponds to Haman, the enemy of all the Jews, then it must be Findley, the villain "in revolt against the whole human world," whose only punishment is free passage to France, even though the scene he catalyzed in the Monaga house led to all the other suffering. Likewise, it is ironic that instead of an Esther, daughter of Mordecai, faithful wife to the king, and savior of her people, we are given Nida, the daughter of Vidal, faithless slattern who helps make the trouble that will destroy her family. Ironically, her only punishment is to be denied her trip to Habana and to be turned over to Fray Alejandro. Finally, Stellow's lot is ironic, for all of his efforts have been expended on problems not of his making, and
promising no profit to him, yet the one time his own happiness becomes involved, he fails to fix things up. Moreover, instead of the happiness of the citizen depending on the justice of the king, as in Esther, we see Stellow's happiness depending on Vidal's sense of justice. In other words, ironic justice is also the lot of Stellow, the compromised hero.

Anticipating the extensive use of irony in the mature novels, the ending of *The Son of Perdition* is ironic in ways not to be seen in its predecessors, *Confusion* and *Michael Scarlett*. As those works end, irony serves merely to heighten the contrast between fine lamented heroes and the coarse-grained world that destroys them. In short, the conscious ironies turn against the world while sparing the romantic heroes. As for *Cock Pit*, in this broadest sense it is not ironic at all, since the world, though as coarse as ever, is unable to stop a heroine like Ruth, and in fact, it appears determined to crown her heroism with the laurels of success.

In *The Son of Perdition*, however, the Esther ironies, touching everyone, show the non-romantic application of ironic techniques. They apply, not only to the description of fates in an atheistic world where ironic justice still replaces poetic justice; but also to the deliberately compromised characters themselves, and to their functions
in a most imperfect society. Cozzens does not want his plot either to lament the demise of a hero too fine for the real world, or to appear to reward him for accepting a hero's place in that world. Instead, we are to see him as a responsible—and to that extent admirable—part of an imperfect world which, ironically, is constituted so that the least deserving people—like Cuchita, Nida, Quintin, and Findley—will probably create the most trouble, and thus demand and get the most attention; whereas the reward for assuming heroic responsibilities for them will be mostly a heroic share of nuisance and ironic justice.

Finally, Stellow must be examined in relation to his literary antecedents, to see how drastically Cozzens has revised his notions of heroism. How sharply the author has come about can be inferred from the astonishing fact that Stellow, the hero of The Son of Perdition, rather closely resembles Don Miguel, the villain of Cock Pit, they both being heads of great sugar companies. Moreover, Don Miguel is just one among various "'big boys . . . in Habana'" (CP 33), yet this phrase is close to the one Findley uses to describe Stellow: "'a big hard-boiled boy'" (p. 129). Stellow, again like Don
Miguel, is a man of ripe years, no mere girl like Cerise or Ruth, or boy like Michael. He also has the magnate's characteristic resources: shrewdness, money, power, organization, and freedom from inconvenient scruples. There are differences, of course, between great capitalists and great administrators, but the fact remains that the hero of book four would not be too badly out of place among the villains of book three.

Stellow's title, "Administrator," also links him explicitly with Roy Fletcher, the "Administrator" of the sugar company in Cook Pit. In The Son of Perdition the Administrator General wields much more power than Fletcher does. Nor is Stellow shown subordinate to anyone, though Fletcher is largely overshadowed by Don Miguel. Nevertheless, the connection between Stellow and Fletcher confirms the subversive effect that Fletcher the Administrator, Britton the banker, and Elizabeth the businesslike Queen have had. The point seems all the more conclusive when we observe that simultaneously, the line of romance heroes has died out and even degenerated into parodies of itself. Findley as maverick, for instance, is a descendant from Ruth Micks. Nida Monaga as a nubile focus of love interest is another. By now the romance heroes have plainly lost ground to the men of affairs, the tough-minded, illusionless realists.
Stellow is the earliest positive proof of this change. Granted, his being the most powerful man in the novel makes him a bit gaudy and exceptional. Yet Stellow is nevertheless more closely akin to the get-us-through-the-day people whom Judge Coates admires at the close of *The Just and the Unjust*, than he is to a sensational heroine like Ruth or hero like Michael. Judge Coates, like Cozzens himself in the later books, in effect sings the realist's praises of the world unsung heroes:

"In the present, every day is a miracle. The world gets up in the morning and is fed and goes to work, and in the evening it comes home and is fed again and perhaps has a little amusement and goes to sleep. To make that possible, so much has to be done by so many people that, on the face of it, it is impossible" (J&U 434).

Moreover, the class of characters responsible for this everyday miracle will thrive in the later books, whereas the tendency for Cozzens to parody people who in any way recall the romance heroes will become increasingly strong.

Stellow's relationship with Lancy Micks also reveals Cozzens' new disenchantment with romance, including the "romance of horses and guns" and the men of action who best embody it. Micks and Fletcher were "uncompromisingly manly," contriving "to preserve the romance of horses and guns" (CP 71). But the corresponding passage in *The Son of Perdition* bluntly reverses this nostalgic attitude:
Habana was full of such people; adventurers, misinformed idiots, knaves, murderers, thieving contractors, corrupt officials, lease hunters—every form of rogue and rascal. It was then the last and worst American frontier, with the ethics and atmosphere of all frontiers; life, depraved and violent; honor, non-existent; and fabulous money loose for the stealing. (pp. 225-26)

Stellow, of course, does not strive to preserve such an atmosphere, but to replace it with its orderly and productive opposite.

In *Cock Pit*, disapproval of Lancy's folly and violence is mingled with adolescent approval of his manliness. But this ambivalence now looks to have been overcome. Stellow, though a comparable protagonist in being a tough, famous boss, is mostly Lancy's antithesis. In general, Stellow's "Amazing immobility" (p. 109) replaces Lancy's explosive action. Micks is a brawling, drinking, gambling game-cock of a man who uses, not only a coarse vocabulary, but also fists and guns. Stellow, however, is reasonably temperate in speech. He fights with no one, wears a gun only once, and never fires it, not even when Mederos throws a knife at him. Lancy Micks drinks very heavily, in one scene consuming a pint of whiskey in an hour (CP 203). But in the whole novel, Stellow takes only one drink (p. 293), and he repeatedly disapproves of Findley's alcoholic habit. Though Lancy bets heavily at cards, and his fighting cocks give the
novel its very title, Stellow is never shown gambling. Likewise, Stellow is the last character in *The Son of Perdition* to be likened to animals, and then the connotations are, not of Lancy's game-cock pugnacity, but of the solidity, repose and well-being "which went with powerful animals; a big muscled dray-horse; a half-ton bull standing quiet" (p. 293).

A further proof of Cozzens' disenchantment with men like Lancy Micks is that Lancy's identifying qualities have now passed down, not to the hero, but to unmistakably contemptible successors. The heavy drinker in *The Son of Perdition* is the American bum, Findley. The guard who fires his gun impulsively is demoted. The most notable characters for violent tempers are Osmundo and Pepe. Cozzens, having clarified his thinking since *Cock Pit*, unequivocally rejects Lancy as a model of what is either admirable or successful. But insofar as the man of action has been an admired type throughout the first three novels, the progress from Lancy Micks both up to Joel Stellow, and down to Findley, Osmundo and Pepe, should be recognized as a most important event in the maturing of Cozzens' conception of heroes. It amounts to the overthrow of the most persistent heroic stereotype in the juvenilia.
The best contrast to conclude upon is between Stellow and Ruth Micks. The change in Cozzens' thinking about heroism has already been evident in such surprising facts as (1) that variously contemptible characters like Findley, Osmundo, and Pepe all strongly resemble Lancy Micks; (2) that Stellow the hero descends from Don Miguel the villain; and (3) that Findley the vagabond villain descends from Ruth the maverick heroine. The primary evidence, however, lies in the direct line from Ruth Micks, heroine of the third book, to Joel Stellow, hero of the fourth.

Although the differences between Stellow and Ruth are most interesting, a few similarities should be noticed first. Some characteristics that Cozzens discarded when depicting Ruth remain absent from the portrayal of Stellow, namely, aristocracy, education, and wealth. Stellow, like Ruth, lacks aristocratic background. Now Cozzens even slants one scene away from aristocracy. Dr. Palacios, whom Stellow once saved from ruin and probable suicide, is a "Cuban gentleman" who is "royalist by family and instinct" (pp. 223, 225). As such, he is as close as the fourth novel comes to genuine aristocracy, whereas Stellow was originally a "young American, obviously a person of no
family or breeding" (p. 225). Cozzens exploits this contrast in a sarcastic scene in which Stellow is asking Palacios about Findley, the "'American bum'" (p. 231):

"You might take to him. He used to be what you call a gentleman."
"From America?" marveled Dr. Palacios, taking his hat. "But this is very sad! Imagine a gentleman sunk so low that a person of your antecedents runs him out. Perhaps you don't see the tragedy of it?"
"Perhaps not," admitted Mr. Stellow. "Antecedents don't impress me, unassisted. I have seen a good many examples."
"Thank you for that," bowed Dr. Palacios. "I could quote Latin to you, but you have no education."
"No," assented the Administrator. "This Mr. Findley has, however. I won't caution you against believing anything he says" (pp. 233-34).

This excerpt nearly reverses the attitude toward aristocracy in Confusion. It also slights extraordinary education. As Palacios says, Stellow has no education—nothing comparable with Cerise's academic extravaganza in seven languages. And on the other hand, a good education does not keep Findley from being a derelict and liar. Nor is Stellow notably rich. As Administrator General, he is presumably well paid. And in the contrast with Findley, he is "the man with everything annoyed a little by the man with nothing" (p. 110). Beyond this, however, Stellow's wealth is ignored. His prestige surely doesn't depend on money. He is thus comparable to Ruth, the first protagonist whose heroism isn't founded on unusual wealth, education, or ancestry.
Ruth and Stellow would also appear comparable in having succeeded with the immediate problems posed by their antagonists, Don Miguel and Findley. Yet in Ruth's case, the success is melodramatically sensational, complete, and uncomplicated. The same cannot be said for Stellow. Cleaning up after Findley's troublesome visit, he restores order and gets rid of Findley, yet Stellow's success cannot be called sensational, complete, or uncomplicated.

We have already discussed the other persistent similarity in adequate detail, namely, that Ruth and Stellow are both treated as more or less deified cynosures. In *Cock Pit*, however, the trend of the plot is toward the apotheosis of the heroine, whereas in *The Son of Perdition*, just the reverse is true: we begin with a deified protagonist, and the further we go, the less deific he seems. The heroine-to-hero evidence thus leads to the same conclusion that less direct lines of reasoning lead to: that Cozzens performs an about-face as he moves from *Cock Pit* to *The Son of Perdition*. In a word, even the similarities between heroine and hero oblige us to talk about contrasts.
Between Stellow and Ruth the contrasts provide a concise review of what Cozzens has left behind him by the end of his fourth book. Ruth, for example, is a pretty girl of twenty-one, and thus comparable with Cerise D'Atree. But never again will Cozzens give such prominence to a feminine character.

Being only twenty-one, Ruth also compares with Michael Scarlett, but never again will Cozzens ascribe heroic stature to anyone so young. In fact, when returning to young protagonists like Anthony Bradell in S.S. San Pedro and Francis Ellery in Ask Me Tomorrow, Cozzens seems persistently concerned with compromising them, to show that they are not heroic, unless it be in their own fatuous misconceptions of themselves.

But now consider Stellow. Neither a girl nor a youth, he is a balding man with no particular physical attractiveness, who must be between forty and fifty-five. He puts

3 Stellow and Palacios met twenty-five years ago (p. 229) when "young Dr. Palacios" was "just back from the University of Pennsylvania" (p. 225). Palacios would have been between twenty-five and thirty-five at that time. Yet Stellow was "the younger American" (p. 227), old enough to be on his own, yet young enough to be called "an ignorant youth," "the young man," and "the boy" (pp. 224, 226, 227). We can safely assume that Stellow then was not less than fifteen nor more than thirty. He would thus be between forty and fifty-five now.
one in mind of the remark about Arthur Winner Senior in *By Love Possessed*: "To appreciate his [i.e., young Arthur Winner Junior's] father as a person, he would clearly have to wait until time made him wholly adult, gave him the full status--was it given to anyone under forty?--of a grownup. The slow, seldom painless accreting of self-knowledge must take place before there could be reliable knowledge of other people . . . " (ByLP 8-9).

Palacios was able to watch as Stellow matured, becoming "brain chiefly. The hair, disappearing above the wide forehead, seemed eloquent, showing the skull outstanding" (p. 230). Already in *The Son of Perdition*, Cozzens has begun to form a new vision of the people he finds genuinely admirable and successful. Stellow belongs, not among the emotional youngsters and men of action like Cerise, Michael and Ruth, but among the grownups like Arthur Winner's father, "the nearly unique individual; the Man, if not perfectly, at least predominantly, of Reason" (ByLP 9).

Ruth and Stellow differ even more profoundly in relation to organizations. The importance of Ruth Micks being a maverick heroine must not be underestimated. It means that for a third time Cozzens devised an escapist
fiction. Ruth, being an inexperienced outsider to the dominant organization in her book, has little if any believable power at her disposal. When such a person defeats the Goliaths of her world, we know that Cozzens is still in his nonage. Unlike the "Man of Reason" whom he will come to admire, Cozzens in his third novel is still being misled by "the emotional thinker's futile wishing and excesses of false feeling." Imagining Ruth as a triumphant heroine, he forgets, or still doesn't know, that "Any end being proposed, the Man of Reason considered means" (ByLP 9).

Stellow, on the other hand, is no puny outsider to his organization, but the key man in it. He has plenty of power—enough so that if he performs wonders, his ability to do so will not seem utterly implausible. Here is a big difference from Ruth. Another is that, at first glance, his opponents and problems seem trifling in contrast to her melodramatically inflated ones. Stellow must calm the mono pasmado in his superstitious frenzy; he must

4 Though not nearly so blindly as most critics have implied. Even Winner Senior proves to have been possessed by love, after all.
bury the town hag; bargain with the town slut; find a job for a murdering old fool; get rid of an itinerant alcoholic whose only work is making troubles. In this compound contrast, both halves testify to the realist's maturing and self-restraint. Stellow's success would be much more credible than Ruth's for, he has more power and weaker opponents than she had. But in spite of this double advantage, Stellow's success is far more limited and imperfect than Ruth's. There is a great difference between the writer who imagines for a pretty young heroine as stunning a success as her plot permits; and the writer who can deny any such triumph, even to a puissant man like Stellow. Never again, of course, will a Cozzens protagonist succeed as resoundingly as Ruth does.

Instructive differences occur also between the parts for which Ruth and Stellow are cast. Consistent with the bi-sexual range of her heroic accomplishments, Ruth acts out a twofold—and doubly banal—part in the romance of horses and guns. She is the hard man of action who gallops ahead of the cane fire, plots boldly, tortures, blackmails. Simultaneously, she plays a conventionally feminine role in a love story with a handsome young millionaire, while also behaving either coquettishly or maternally toward other men.
Stellow, however, does not play the masculine parts analogous to hers. He is no man of action. Harum-scarum activity is left for Pepe. Nor is Stellow's relationship to the novel as potential love story conventionally romantic. When he first met Palacios, Stellow was "an ignorant youth suffering from what one would expect," picked up from "the filth on Economia Street" (pp. 224-25). Now, though, Stellow has no amorous affairs himself (p. 134). And since love, manifest only as troublesome carnality, is relegated to characters like Nida, Osmundo, and Findley, the subject only emphasizes Stellow's antithetical role. He is not the lover or the man of action, but the man who must restrain such persons. He stands for order, reason, responsibility. The blond bartender explains that Stellow does not permit promiscuity at Central Chicago, but that his concern is not particularly with morality. "'I think it is more good order,' he offered" (p. 134). Thus, if the formula for a popular romantic novel is exciting action plus love interest, the gap between Ruth's and Stellow's roles could scarcely be wider.
VI
CONCLUSION

From the examination now completed, a number of broad observations about the apprentice fiction have emerged. Taken together, they press upon us one irresistible and, I think, critically very important conclusion.

At risk of oversimplifying, and without systematic review of all that has been written here, I must try to connect the patterns from this evidence that show its significance, not merely as it illuminates a group of inferior books, but as it sheds a bright light on all of Cozzens criticism.

The apprentice period has a recognizable shape, imposed by the processes of artistic maturing that occur within it. That shape is not symmetrical, as it would seem at first. Much more can be learned about the period by regarding Cock Pit as the culmination of the heroic fiction, than by thinking of it as the first of the two Cuban novels. In retrospect, the period can be envisioned as a progress up to, and then down from, the apotheosis of Ruth Micks, a romantic stereotype of heroine.
In the first stage (Confusion, Michael Scarlett, and Cock Pit), romantic writing is prevalent, best embodied in heroic cynosures. And despite the copious evidence of discordant elements that subvert and confuse romance, this juvenile stage reaches its apotheosis when Ruth, both admirable, and triumphant over a melodramatic villain, achieves a perfect wish-fulfillment, a complete evasion of reality.

But the second stage contradicts the first in almost every imaginable way. In The Son of Perdition, so many clearly established patterns are reversed, so many subversive influences now prevail, and so much of what appears here persists in the mature writing, that the book's repudiation of the romantic novels must be deliberate. With respect to romantic heroes, this repudiation is exceptionally clear and pervasive. In the earlier books, deification is plainly going on, creating gross implausibilities, and culminating in Ruth Micks. Yet no character is more explicitly, blatantly deified than Stellow. The Son of Perdition is far, however, from seeking the apotheosis of another hero. On the contrary, it steadily compromises a protagonist who is first deified by Pepe Rijo, an idiotic man. Here, in short, is more than the compromising of Stellow. It is the deliberate evocation and
repudiation of the entire concept of heroism that blemishes the first three books.

It is simply not conceivable that a writer who rejected a concept of heroism as thoroughly as this, and who persisted through his mature years in obvious embarrassment at his first hero-dominated books, would ever return from the ironic handling of protagonists that typifies his middle novels, to literature again centering on protagonists intended as heroes.

Normally, a conclusion like this would have to be left as conjecture, but in this case, the author himself has confirmed the point. Having explained in a letter to Mr. Cozzens the gist of my findings, I received an extraordinary reply. I shall conclude by giving extracts from those letters.

I had written, in part, as follows:


I've been trying to decide just how much you reject. In particular, I've studied your early heroes . . . . I've argued that you must have been conscious of this turn-about [in The Son of Perdition], and that one of the main things you repudiate, when you reject the first books, is the now embarrassing idea of a romantic hero. . . . Most critics are--very rashly, I think--willing to assume that you and your later characters are virtually interchangeable. In effect, they take the characters for little other than mouthpieces for you. To put it another way, their assumption
means that the ironic distance that you began to impose between you and the middle protagonists (in or after The Son of Perdition) has once again closed up in the later books. In other words, that you have come full circle. . . . On the one hand, (if all this is right in its premises), we have a career that begins by depicting unmistakable romantic heroes of whom you enthusiastically approved; leads next to a stretch of books in which you seem ironic and critical of protagonists whom you do not intend as heroes; and then doubles back (as many critics appear to think) to books in which you again admire and approve of your central characters and, in effect, offer them as heroes, though of a very different kind from the romantic ones you began on. Or on the other hand, we have a career that begins with romantic heroes; progresses to compromised protagonists who are treated ironically; and never returns to characters whom you mean for heroes. . . . if the second hypothesis is right, and you meant for all of these later characters to be seen more or less ironically, and not to be understood as heroes, then an awful lot of criticism has been dead wrong.

To this Mr. Cozzens replied (7 Aug. 1976) as follows:

Frankly I don't remember what Van Gelder or Du Bois printed--but I'm sure I'd have said, late arrived-at but persisting, something to the effect that my writing idea had nothing to do with heroes or people admired or not admired --that is; I haven't anything to sell; just the egoistic hope that in setting down observations of life & people taught me by my own experience I can give readers Milton's "new acquist", useful or interesting to him. If you have Morning Noon & Night you'll find comment pp. 54-64; 401-404 that might help make what I mean clear. The result's that "an awful lot of criticism" --particularly the New (present) Establishment's--has been dead wrong because of attempts to find what isn't there; and not finding it, either denigrating the lack, or making out that it's really there only hidden through mean partisan bias or something.
When an author asserts that hostile critics have been dead wrong about his books, the evidence must, of course, be treated with care. Yet in the present case, Mr. Cozzens seems only to confirm what the literary evidence itself suggests. By a curious irony, the main value of the author's first books now appears to be their ability to illuminate his last.
A NOTE ON BIBLIOGRAPHICAL GUIDES

The chief bibliographical guides to studies of Cozzens are the two indispensable book-length checklists I have already noted: *James Gould Cozzens: A Checklist*, by James B. Meriwether (Detroit: Bruccoli-Clark/Gale Research, 1972), and *James Gould Cozzens: An Annotated Checklist*, by Pierre Michel (Kent, Ohio: Kent State Univ. Press, 1971). Mr. Cozzens appears to have cooperated with both these bibliographers. The Meriwether list, for which Cozzens wrote a brief introduction, confines itself to works by Cozzens, tracing the history of editions and printings for each title, publishing some letters and other materials for the first time. Michel, on the other hand, concentrates principally on the secondary sources. The two checklists thus complement one another handsomely and supersede the earlier list that Meriwether published in the Cozzens number of
Critique.  Richard M. Ludwig's survey of Cozzens scholarship as of 1959 continues to provide a good introduction to the subject, as the earlier Granville Hicks article, "The Reputation of James Gould Cozzens," does in a more discursive fashion. Two other works of fundamental importance in the bibliographical approach to Cozzens are Meriwether's "The English Editions of James Gould Cozzens" and Ludwig's "A Reading of the James Gould Cozzens Manuscripts," that is, the manuscripts in the Princeton University Library.


3 College English, 11, No. 4 (Jan. 1950), 177-83.


LIST OF REFERENCES


-----------, The Last Adam. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1933.


Duggan, Francis X. "Fact and All Man's Fictions." Thought, 33, No. 131 (Winter 1958-59), 604-16.


Frederick, John T. "Love by Adverse Possession: The Case of Mr. Cozzens." College English, 19, No. 7 (April 1958), 313-16.


"The Hermit of Lambertville." Time, 70, No. 10 (2 Sept. 1957), 72-74, 76, 78.


Hyman, Stanley E. "James Gould Cozzens and the Art of the Possible." New Mexico Quarterly, 19, No. 4 (Winter 1949), 476-98.


--------------. "A Note on James Gould Cozzens." Revue des Langues Vivantes, 26, No. 3 (1960), 192-209.


Scholes, Robert E. "The Commitment of James Gould Cozzens." *Arizona Quarterly,* 16, No. 2 (Summer 1960), 129-44.


