William & Mary
CHARTERED 1693

W&M ScholarWorks

Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects

Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects

1972

Politics and Literature: Power and Commitment in the Works of Hemingway and Fitzgerald

John R. Dempsey
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd

Part of the American Literature Commons

Recommended Citation

Dempsey, John R., "Politics and Literature: Power and Commitment in the Works of Hemingway and Fitzgerald" (1972). *Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects.* Paper 1539624776.
https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-ye8m-gn81

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@wm.edu.

POLITICS AND LITERATURE: POWER AND COMMITMENT IN THE WORKS OF HEMINGWAY AND FITZGERALD

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Government

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

---

by

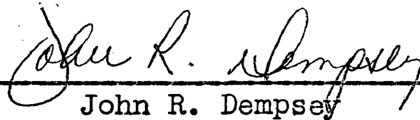
John R. Dempsey

1972

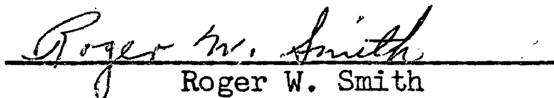
APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

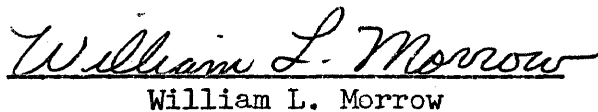
Master of Arts


John R. Dempsey

Approved,


Roger W. Smith

Jan B. de Weydenthal


William L. Morrow

559872

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
CHAPTER I. THE NOVEL AND POLITICAL INQUIRY	2
CHAPTER II. POWER	10
CHAPTER III. COMMITMENT	39
CONCLUSION	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY	66

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to Doctor Roger W. Smith, under whose guidance this paper was prepared, for his patient assistance and thoughtful criticism. A debt of gratitude is also owed Doctor Jan de Weydenthal and Doctor William L. Morrow for their careful reading and criticism of the manuscript.

ABSTRACT

The premise of this paper is that the study of literature can be heuristically valuable to those who seek to understand the world of politics. In the course of the study, two political concepts--power and commitment--are examined as they appear in the work of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway. The purpose is to isolate and examine these concepts as they appear in serious fiction, and to reflect on these appearances in such a way as to contribute to an increased understanding of politics.

POLITICS AND LITERATURE: POWER AND COMMITMENT IN THE WORKS OF HEMINGWAY AND FITZGERALD

CHAPTER I

THE NOVEL AND POLITICAL INQUIRY

Roger Spegele has written, "In order to understand social and political behavior, we must first understand the concepts which compel individuals to act."[1] This paper is an effort to aid the student of politics in his attempts to "understand the concepts" which underline and motivate political behavior. In this paper, two such concepts - power and commitment - will be examined as they appear in the fiction of two American authors, Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

In introducing a paper on a topic such as this, two pertinent questions must be answered: first, why has literature been selected as the medium in which to examine political concepts; and, second, why have power and commitment been selected as the particular concepts to be examined? The first question can best be answered by briefly outlining some of my views on the nature of politics and the methods of inquiry into it, as well as by showing how the use of literature fits into the view.

To begin with, the subject of politics, as I see it, is a very broad one - one whose breadth is continually increasing as the modern advances in technology and communication bring diverse aspects

---

[1]Roger Spegele, "Fiction and Political Theory," Social Research, XXXVIII, (Spring 1971) 134. Though Spegel's notion that concepts 'compel' behavior may be a bit strong, the relationship between concept and action is a very close one.

of our society into closer contact with each other. As politics becomes more closely intermeshed with other facets of society, traditional learning boundaries begin to dissolve and the student of politics finds that knowledge of his subject matter can be acquired by the employment of techniques and methods formerly the exclusive "tools" of other disciplines. The recent proliferation of mathematical, psychological, and systems approaches to the study of politics give testimony to this trend. I see it as a healthy and helpful trend. The aim of political science is to increase our knowledge and understanding of politics, and it is the prerogative - perhaps even the imperative - of the serious student to pursue that knowledge on all reasonable fronts.

What can be said, though, of the political knowledge likely to be gained from a study of literature? Some would contend that "real" knowledge cannot possibly be acquired through such a study, emphasizing their opinion that hard knowledge consists only of empirically verifiable observations.[2] Adherents to this school of thought, loosely termed the "behavioral" school, place severe limitations, not only on the "stuff" of which knowledge can consist, but on the method by which it can be acquired. I contend in rebuttal that political knowledge and understanding are not limited to so narrow a definition. On the contrary, political knowledge can often

---

[2]For a definitive treatment of the notion of "real" knowledge, and the method by which it can be acquired, see Arnold Brecht, Political Theory: The Foundations of Twentieth Century Political Thought (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959)

be of a shadowy, elusive nature, able to be achieved only after the most harrowing and roundabout of scholarly "journeys."[3] It can be what Sheldon Wolin has called "tacit political knowledge."[4] He writes:

> Taken as a whole, this composite type of knowledge presents a contrast with the scientific type. Its mode of activity is not so much the style of search as of reflection. It is mindful of logic, but moreso of the incoherence and contradictions of experience. And for the same reason, it is distrustful of rigor. Political life does not yield its significance to terse hypotheses, but is elusive and hence meaningful statements about it often have to be allusive and inimative.[5]

Wolin contends, and I agree, that knowledge of this type need be no less "true" than that acquired by the scientific method:

> In actuality the contrast is not between the true and the false, the reliable and the unreliable, but between truth which is economical, replicable, and easily packaged, and truth which is not.[6]

It is my contention that no important political questions should be ignored, regardless of the extent to which they do or do not readily lend themselves to empirical investigation. Further, I believe that no potential source of political understanding should be overlooked because it does not promise to yield "hard data." All sources and methodologies must be tapped and employed if their use

---

[3]For a description of the "journeys" which often lead natural scientists to their seemingly orthodox discoveries, see Thomas Kuhn, <u>The Structure of Scientific Revolution</u> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962)

[4]Sheldon Wolin, "Political Theory as a Vocation," <u>American Political Science Review</u>, LVIII, (December 1969), p. 1070

[5]<u>Ibid</u>. p. 1071

[6]<u>Ibid</u>. p. 1071

can lead to a further, deeper understanding of our subject. One such potential source is literature.

The basic purpose of this study is to cite and examine the occurrence of power and commitment in serious literature, and deal with them in such a way as to increase our understanding of these phenomena as they occur in the political world. It is, in a sense, a new way of looking at some old ideas - a way which can help us appreciate the old ideas in a fresher, clearer light, and make us more aware of their substance and ramifications as they appear in political life. Literature is uniquely suited to this task. In Spegele's terms,

> Novels inform by calling our attention in a vivid way to facts and experiences with which we are already familiar, but which have either been ignored or whose implications have been under-valued. In the verbal pictures presented by the novelist we are informed by reflection, by looking again at facts and experience, by changing our attitude and our style of thinking.[7]

In the pages which will follow, the novelists' keen perceptions of power and commitment will hopefully be employed to aid us in understanding the concepts as we encounter them in politics.

Literature is suited to the task of political investigation in other ways as well. In many ways the novelist resembles the social scientist in that the verbal pictures which he paints are models of reality as he views it. From a store of observations (invariably inadequate, whatever its size) the social scientist attempts to build models by which we can observe and predict human behavior. The novelist

---

[7]Spegele, op. cit., p. 126

draws on his own experience to engage in a like endeavor. Though the empirical model has the advantage of a larger body of experience on which to draw, the novel has the advantage of being an act of creativity, sometimes even of genius.

Another use of literature in the study of politics is as a sort of "teaching aid" for students newly initiated to the subject. Since many of the classic political tracts (and contemporary ones as well) are rather elusive and distant in style, Phillip Green and Michael Walzer suggest the use of literature.

> The world of literature, in contrast, is a storehouse of materials that can touch the political imagination, that have done so in the past. Good literature offers us an exceptionally keen perception of the vital elements in political life; the ways in which seemingly abstract ideas become dramatically realized in the behavior of individuals, groups, and even nations; the ways in which seemingly impersonal institutions become intertwined in the lives of persons; the ways, conversely, in which individuals and groups subtly mold institutions and abstract ideas to achieve their own ends. To see an idea or an institution in operation, to see political life as a personal problem, obedience and disobedience as compels human choices - all this adds a dimension to one's understanding of politics that can rarely be achieved by academic description.[8]

Green and Walzer see the political novel as a useful supplement to the traditional approaches to politics:

> What it adds to the disciplined, scientific description of experience is, in a sense, experience itself; for as John Dewey observed, the perception of the meaning of a work of art - letting it flower in one's mind - is one of the deepest forms of experience. And in experience understanding begins.[9]

---

[8]Philip Green and Michael Walzer, eds. The Political Imagination in Literature (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1969) p. V
[9]Ibid. p. VI

The use which I intend to make of literature in this paper conforms most closely to Spegele's idea. He has said, as I mentioned earlier, that to understand politics, we must "understand the concepts" related to political behavior. By using the novelists's ability to call our attention to familiar experiences which have been "under-valued," I hope to analyze these concepts as they appear in the work of Hemingway and Fitzgerald. I want to isolate and examine them, fit them into a political framework, and show instances where the light shed by literature can be helpful to us in understanding the concepts as they occur in everyday political life.

The concepts of power and commitment have been selected because of the intimate relationship they bear to the essence of political life. In order to point out the importance of the concepts in political thought, the sections in which they are to be examined will be preceded by brief synopses of what classical, modern, and contemporary political authors have had to say about them. For some time I have been aware that, despite the importance of these notions in political lore, a knowledge of what we might call their substance has been lacking. It is hoped that the following analysis will contribute somewhat to correcting this gap.

In the pages to follow, the problems outlined above will be examined. First, power will be discussed as described by political thinkers. It will then be examined as it appears in the fiction of Hemingway and Fitzgerald, and an effort will be made to show how their treatment of the concept is relevant to politics. A similar chapter will follow, on commitment, as will some conclusions as to the nature

of the findings. It is important to note that no exhaustive definition or typology of the concepts is intended. The aim is merely to shed a newer, clearer light on some already familiar ideas in order to make them more easily understood as we encounter them in politics. Neither is any comparative study intended, since the paper's purpose is not so much to compare the authors as to examine the concepts. There will be no attempt made to give each author equal "billing." If, for example, Hemingway has much to say about power, or an aspect of power, that is useful for politics (as he does) then much effort will be expended in that area.

Perhaps before we proceed with the analysis, a brief description of the writers' styles and concerns is in order. Though neither writer is what we might narrowly define as political, both have a great deal to say about power and commitment, and are thus able to enrich our political knowledge while keeping their fiction free of ideological overtones.

The fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald, though somewhat spotty, exposes us to one of the greatest American stylists. When he is "on key," there are no stylistic flaws to his writing. When he is "off" it is usually due to his heavy-handedness or to his desire to produce saleable material. The central theme of Fitzgerald's writing is a fascination with wealth, and the"style" and power which he thought accompanied it. It is a fascination which sometimes leads him astray in his portrayal of human motivation, but one which can be put to excellent use by the student of politics.

Hemingway's writing can best be described as the labor of a talented (though not "gifted") craftsman totally dedicated to the perfection of his work. Writing is difficult for Hemingway, and the anguish behind every story is painfully obvious to the grateful reader. For many years, he shunned the novel, considering it an artificial, commercial form, and much of his best work is contained in his short stories. The consumate theme of his writing is that of challenge, the maintenance of "...grace under pressure."[10] But he is also interested in the "wounded man" and the reactions to the loss of power, as well as in a code of commitment to which his heroes adhered but to which he himself could not.

---

[10]Hemingway's famous three word definition of courage was coined in an interview he granted <u>The New Yorker</u> magazine in 1947.

CHAPTER II

POWER

> We must understand that power comes in many forms and sizes.
>
> Peter Odegard, Political Power and Social Change

In the history of political thought, there have been two basic and differing interpretations of the notion of power. The two views are not contradictory, but complement each other in such a way as to make the inclusion of both necessary to a discussion of the full meaning of the concept. One view, the "modern" view, sees power in somewhat harsh, narrow terms, placing its emphasis on power's employment for purposes of influence or coercion. The traditional or classical view, on the other hand, sees power in a much broader context as the ability to effect a given end. There is an element of creativity present in the traditional view and in this sense the concept of power is more flexible and open-ended than it appears in modern thought. This paper will try to examine both views of power, but first a brief look at what the modern and classical schools have said about the concept is in order.

Peter Odegard, of the modern school, writes that "...power in human affairs involves the control of human behavior for particular ends through the express or implied threat of punishment for those

who refuse or fail to comply."[1] Odegard and others of the modern school seem to have taken their cues about the nature of power from the writings of those individuals generally considered the founders of the "modern tradition" in political theory. Machiavelli, the alleged advocate of despotic methods of political control, saw power as the unimpeded employment of any means necessary to effectuate harmony and tranquility in society (which he saw as a necessary pre-condition to the flowering of the republican process).[2] It may well have been Machiavelli's graphic and often cold-blooded description of the elements of power that led the modern tradition on the path it seems to have taken - a path which could lead even John Locke, the alleged champion of enlightened liberal democracy, to call political power:

> ...a right of making laws with the penalty of death and consequently all less penalties, for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community in the execution of such laws...[3]

Relying on the background given them by the founders of their "tradition," the modern writers' discussions of power generally follow similar lines. Robert Dahl equates power with what he calls "coercive influence" and defines it as "...influence based on the threat or expectation of extremely severe penalties or great losses, particularly physical punishment, torture, imprisonment and death."[4]

---

[1] Peter Odegard, Political Power and Social Change (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1966) p. 76
[2] Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince (New York: Random House, 1950)
[3] John Locke, Of Civil Government (Chicago: Regnery, 1968) Section 3
[4] Robert Dahl, Modern Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1963) p. 8

In perhaps the most interesting of the contemporary accounts of power, Bachrach and Baratz offer us insight into some of the subtler aspects of the concept:

> Of course power is exercised when A participates in the making of decisions that affect B. But power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innoccous to A.[5]

Though these contemporary views of power differ as to accent and emphasis, they all center around the idea of power as influence or coercive force.[6] Quite a different picture is given to us by the "classical" tradition. In the classical picture, as mentioned earlier, power is seen as creative force and ability. Its base is broadened to encompass many of the areas in which man reaches outward in the attempts to improve himself. It is, in one sense, the human capacity for enrichment and fulfillment. Included in the notion is man's ability to strive toward the completion of a goal, and to advance himself and his civilization through pursuit of the arts and of the sciences. This view sees man's accomplishments in those arts and sciences as manifestations of his power, and rejoices in the notion of power as a positive force necessary in the evaluation of the human condition. It is a view that has deep-rooted historical tradition. Herman Rosinski writes:

---

[5]Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," in Political Power ed. by R. Bell, D. Edwards, R. Wagner (New York: The Free Press, 1969) p. 95

[6]Harold Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950) p. 74

> Strange as it may seem to our contemporary minds, this universal view of power, this perception of the infinite multitude of existing things as so many manifestations of power, was a matter of course to all the earlier civilizations...[7]

Nietzsche's "will to power" relates to this traditional view. Paul Tillich describes it:

> Sociological power, namely the chance to carry through one's will against social resistance, is not the content of the will to power. The latter is a drive of everything living to realize itself with increasing intensity and extensity. The will to power is not the will of men to attain power over other men, but it is the self-affirmation of life in its self-transcending dynamics, overcoming internal and external resistance.[8]

This notion of a will to power as a drive of everything to "realize itself" is at the heart of the traditional view of power. But rather than merely consisting of a "drive" for self-realization, the classical idea of power includes the ability for self-realization. In the classical view, this ability for self-realization is human power, and the efforts exerted toward the goal of fulfillment are manifestations of that power.

We see then the delineation of two traditions on the subject of power - the modern and the classical. Of the two, the modern view is perhaps the more precise and efficient, while the classical view is broader and more open-ended. We shall examine examples of both views in the pages that follow.

---

[7]Herman Rosinski, Power and Human Destiny (New York: Praeger, 1965) p. 14

[8]Paul Tillich, Love, Power, and Justice (London: Oxford University Press, 1954) p. 36

The analysis of power will begin with a look at the way Ernest Hemingway treats the loss of power. Despite his professed bravado, and seemingly boundless courage and energy, Hemingway was a man deeply concerned about the prospects of losing his powers. A great deal of this concern found its way into his writing, and a recurrent theme of that writing is the problem of the "wounded man" and the reactions to the loss of power. The section below will examine Hemingway's treatment of the loss of power. It is a particularly fitting subject for politics, I believe, since the loss of political power is such a common phenomenon in everyday events. As we look at Hemingway's "wounded" men, we can see the emergence of certain reaction patterns to the loss of power. I suggest that similar reactions occur in politics, and that the observation of Hemingway's men can help us understand these reactions as they occur in politics. One of the chief concerns of any such examination is, of course, what is the effect of power loss on political man, and how is the experience likely to affect him and his actions should his power be restored. Hemingway's writing gives us ample opportunity to explore these questions. If we can discern a pattern of possible reactions to the loss of power in Hemingway's fiction, and successfully transpose this knowledge to the world of politics, much can be gained. With the aid of literature, we can be given an insight into the thought processes of wounded men, tentatively assess their changes for a return to power, and offer some hypothetical suggestion as to their likely actions upon such a return.

The aim, again, is to illuminate familiar occurrences (the loss of power) by examining them, in a very "human" way, as they occur in literature.

As mentioned earlier, Ernest Hemingway's fiction is not strictly political,[9] but its use of certain themes does allow us to glean certain types of political knowledge from its content. Hemingway's treatment of the wounded man is one such case. The paper will now look at six cases where the loss of power is discussed, and try to show how each case can be illustrative of political phenomena. It is hoped that the light shed on the subject by an examination of Hemingway's fiction will be helpful to us in our attempts to gain a fuller understanding of the loss of power as it appears in political life. To be examined in turn are Harry (a thinly disguised portrait of F. Scott Fitzgerald[10]) in The Snows of Kilimanjaro, Pablo in For Whom the Bell Tolls, Jake Barnes in The Sun Also Rises, Roger Davis in Islands in the Stream, Santiago in The Old Man and the Sea, and Francis Macomber in The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber.

When a man loses his power, perhaps the easiest (and, therefore, the most common) way to react is to accept it, reluctantly but passively, and devote his time to mourning the sad trick which fate has played him, and attempt to fix (on someone else) the

---

[9]His Spanish Civil War writings might be considered political, but For Whom the Bell Tolls told both sides of the story and demonstrated that, whatever his political predilections, his first dedication was to his writing.

[10]Fitzgerald was understandably irate over Hemingway's unfavorable portrayal, and the appearance of the story was instrumental in the dissolution of the Hemingway-Fitzgerald friendship.

blame for his new state of powerlessness. Another favorite pastime of the newly powerless is to reflect nostalgically on those times when power was a reality rather than a memory. The political figure dispossessed at the polls often experiences this reaction. In many cases the extent of the figure's ambition will be the chief determinant in whether he will pursue this passive course or opt for one of the more active courses described below. Harry, the pathetic protagonist of The Snows of Kilimanjaro, has suffered the ignominy of a double power loss. His surface and immediate concern (understandably enough) is his impending death caused by the gangrenous infection of his leg. More deeply, however, Harry is troubled by a loss of power which can even be said to transcend his impending loss of life. For a number of reasons (many of which Hemingway leaves to the imaginations of those familiar with Fitzgerald's life) Harry has lost his ability to write. As noted earlier, writing for Hemingway was hard work, dependent as much upon dedication as upon native talent. It is this determination that Harry has lost, and Harry sees it as having ebbed away at the arrival of the financial security he acquired upon marrying his present wife.

> The steps by which she had acquired him and the way in which she had finally fallen in love with him were all part of a regular progression in which she had built herself a new life and he had traded away what remained of his old life...He had traded it for security, for comfort too, there was no denying that, and for what else? He did not know.[11]

---

[11]Ernest Hemingway, The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway (New York: Scribners, 1925) p. 59

In his deeper moments of self-pity, Harry lays the blame for his loss of power on his wife, but in his better moments he is able (unlike most of Hemingway's "wounded men") to own up to the responsibility of his own failure:

> She shot very well this good, this rich bitch, this kindly taker and destroyer of his talent. Nonsense. He had destroyed his talent himself. Why should he blame this woman because she kept him well? He had destroyed his talent by not using it, by betrayals of himself and what he believed in, by drinking so much that he blunted the edge of his perceptions, by laziness, by sloth, and by snobbery, by pride and by prejudice, by hook and by crook...[12]

As he lies dying in the African summer, Harry is able to live with the culpability for his own loss of power. In what is perhaps a magnanimous gesture for a man on the edge of death, Harry's chief regret is that, now stripped of his power, he will be unable to do the good he might have been capable of otherwise. "Now he would never write the things that he had saved to write until he knew enough to write them well..." This final lament, a sorrow not for himself perhaps, but for those who could not now read what he could write, casts Harry's suffering in a poignant light. Though he dies shortly thereafter, the impression emerges that Harry has squared himself with his conscience (perhaps he is a failure, but he is an admitted, and thus wiser failure) and the story ends on a hopeful note.

A fair and safe analogy can be drawn, I believe, between Harry and the political activist who, having fallen from power, is most sorry that his once-held power can no longer be put to the good use for

---

[12]Ibid. p. 60

which he intended it. It is being dangerously cynical to suggest that there are not many political figures who are sincerely convinced (rightly or not) that their continuance in power is in the best interests of the people. Their lamentations over their powerlessness are probably quite similar to those expressed by Harry. It is a touching plight, and one laments the fact that Harry does not recover from his injury, and perhaps from his loss of power, so that the analogy could be carried further. There are individuals in Hemingway's writing, however, for whom the loss of power is not accompanied by the loss of life, and perhaps these are the most interesting to us as we seek to apply our observations to increased political understanding.

One such figure is Jake Barnes, whom we encounter in Hemingway's first novel, The Sun Also Rises. Jake has been castrated by a war accident, and the book is, among other things, the story of his attempted adjustment to his new state of powerlessness. Though the case has not yet been definitively settled, a preliminary analogy must be drawn between Jake and Governor Geroge Wallace of Alabama. Though the Governor's loss is not precisely a political one, it is surely one which will affect his political future, and it may be helpful to us to keep his case in mind as we observe other losses of power. In this way, perhaps a deeper understanding of his plight can be gained, and a better assessment of his likely future actions can be made. In Jake's case, the loss of power is a permanent, irreversible fact, and he is concerned, not with regaining his lost power, but with accomodating himself and his life to his new condition. Jake is able, due to the well-adjusted psyche Hemingway equips him with, to

live with his loss - a loss that must be particularly painful and humiliating to a man in the prime of his life. Unable to be active sexually himself, Jake comes to view sexuality as the primary motivating force in human behavior - a not uncommon fallacy for one on the "outside." Since he thus views himself as a man set apart from the mainstream of life, he is able to comment quite rationally and objectively on the activities around him, giving to his commentary a detachment that would probably be impossible for any active participant in the sexual game. The observations that he makes are often poignant, and always revealing. Similarly, when a political man is stripped of his power with no hope of its recovery, he can often be relied upon to provide incisive, objective political commentary. Machiavelli (though he certainly had aspirations for his own return to glory) produced his best political writing after he had been stripped of political power, and other political writers such as V. I. Lenin flourished during periods of exile or imprisonment. Though as yet we have no final indications as to his ultimate plans, Governor Wallace's appearance at the recent party convention and his indications that he will remain on the sidelines as the "conscience" of his party, show a strong resemblance to Jake's position among his friends. In a sense, Jake's injury, like the Governor's places him above the fray, and gives his pronouncements a tone of authiruty they might not otherwise have.

Since a political man is generally an optimistic sort, his willingness to admit to the irreversibility of his power loss is rare, but a study of those individuals who will make such an admission can be useful, since it might yield valuable objective

insights on the power game and on politics in general, from the viewpoint of a former player.

For Whom the Bell Tolls is the story of an American idealist and his relationship with a band of loyalist guerillas during the Spanish Civil War.[13] The guerillas are led by a woman named Pilar, who has come to power upon the more or less voluntary abdication of her husband, Pablo. Pablo, the novel's tragic figure, owes his present powerlessness, in a very real way, to the strength of his own conscience. Having once been placed in the position of supreme authority within his guerilla band, Pablo has known the experience of absolute power. Horrified by what he observed to be the excesses of his own brutality in ordering the execution of Fascist sympathizers in a nearby village, he is driven by his conscience to surrender his power, rather than permit himself to use it again. Pablo's apparent reaction to his new state of impotence is not uncommon - he broods, drinks too much, and chides his wife, whom the band has chosen to succeed him. Outwardly, Pablo appears to miss his lost power, and resent the new authority of his wife. But a closer analysis of his character shows us that this resentment is only on the surface - a matter of pride - and that Pablo, acutely aware of his own limitations, has been forced by his conscience to accept his new position quietly and with resignation. He realizes that he is incapable of using power judiciously, and is too decent and realistic a man to want to see it back in his hands. In this

---

[13] Ernest Hemingway, For Whom the Bell Tolls (New York: Scri[illegible]

respect Pablo is unlike most of the other wounded men in Hemingway's fiction, but it would seem that in politics his type, while certainly uncommon, is not unheard of. It is not inconceivable that there are persons who, aware of their own deficiencies or incompetence, realize that, in their hands, power is a dangerour commodity, one which they are not capable of handling well. Given these circumstances, some nebulous sense of interpersonal responsibility can often cause them to withdraw from the power game. Having done so, they seem to exhibit no genuine desire to return to it. It might prove very interesting to analyze the cases of such individuals as William Scranton, George Romney, Lyndon Johnson, and others, who have withdrawn from active politics in unusual fashion to determine if an awareness of their own shortcomings was a motivating factor. (There are certainly numerous other motivations for withdrawal from the political "wars" but this is one which should not be overlooked.) Further study of this type of individual would perhaps be of rather limited value to political scientists because of the unlikelihood of his eventual return to power. But an analysis of the psychological factors active in the decision to withdraw might be helpful, as would a closer look at the motivations spurring these men to seek power in the first place.

The last "novel" Hemingway wrote was Islands in the Stream.[14] One of the book's major characters is Roger Davis, a once brilliant novelist who has, for various reasons, lost his ability to write good fiction.

---

[14]The term "novel" is used tentatively here, since the work was published posthumously, and there is some critical opinion which holds that the stories were not meant to be presented as a novel. The title Islands in the Stream lends credence to this contention.

Davis' frustration over his loss is heightened by his close association with the story's hero, Thomas Hudson, a talented and prolific artist who has been able to retain his creative power for several decades. Unlike Pablo, however, Davis is grimly determined that he will regain his lost power, and unlike Harry or Jake Barnes, such a recovery is a distinct physical possibility. The lifestyle which Davis assumes in his struggle to recover his powers tells us much about his reaction to their loss and the way in which he views his world. He lives now in a small beach shack on the island of Bimini, and while the beach shack may have been forced upon him by an economic consideration, the choice of Bimini certainly was not. It connotes his desire to withdraw, temporarily at least, from the arena in which his power was once displayed. He does this, apparently, in an effort to get closer to himself and to his talent - to regroup his forces, as it were, for a new assault on the society that has rejected him. His change of lifestyle shows us that he is experiencing panic at the loss of his power, and he hopes that this rather drastic move will somehow aid him in its recovery.

The drive of the man intent on regaining power, and the way in which it causes him to withdraw and regroup, is a common phenomenon in the political world. The dispossessed feel alienated and cheated by society, and the move toward withdrawal is a symbolic attempt at revenge, as well as the manifestation of an attitude of self-sufficiency. Additionally, the drastic change in one's pattern of life shows an insecurity, a questioning of the worth of one's abilities, and indicates a lack of confidence in one's capability to recover power

through the continued application of "conventional" methods. Another aspect of this "withdrawal" is its use as a period in which to build up a reserve of personal strength, to re-charge one's "batteries" for a new assault on the political structure. Historical instances of such withdrawals, and the bursts of power and energy which follow them, are not uncommon. From Napoleon I to V.I. Lenin, even Richard Nixon, we see the flashes of energy which follow periods of estrangment as being sometimes capable of propelling the political figure to heights previously unattained. The political man in "exile" is often the man to watch. The way in which this withdrawal period alters one's perceptions of power - and indeed of society itself - would be most helpful in telling us about the likely actions to be taken by such an individual if he or she were to be returned to power. If we look at Roger Davis closely, we can see him undergoing changes which are bound to affect his work, even after his creative powers are regained. One might, in a similar vein, compare the 1969-1973 Nixon Presidency with what might have occurred in a 1961-1965 Nixon Presidency to determine the impact of the withdrawal period. Such a comparison, while highly conjectural, would certainly point up some likely differences. And perhaps by a study of Roger Davis we have been able to hint at the reasons for those differences.

The Old Man and the Sea, perhaps Hemingway's finest novel, is a story set in a Cuban fishing village, where livelihood (and even life) is dependent on the ability to catch fish. Santiago, the novel's hero and once a great fisherman, seems finally to have lost his power, and for a very long time he has been without any fisherman's luck. During

this "dry" spell, he has been the object first of derision, and then of pity from the people in the village, except for one small boy who keeps his faith in Santiago to the end. Santiago is perhaps the most sympathetic of Hemingway's heroes, and his conduct in reaction to his loss of power best examplifies adherence to the Hemingway "code."[15] Rather than attempt to change his lifestyle or even his style of work (retention of his lifestyle is obviously, for Santiago, a matter of economic necessity), Santiago is able to overcome the fears and self-doubts which the long period of hard luck has created simply by hard work. He continues on his way, confident (if not certain) that such a course will eventually lead to the recovery of his skills, and that his efforts will be rewarded. This patient wait, and continued application of effort, may not appear to be a novel or imaginative course of action, but it may lead, as Hemingway tells us, to the biggest fish of all. The picture here is not so different really from that of Islands in the Stream. In both cases an "exile" is involved. While one man withdraws and the other continues to work, both have in mind the same goal - recovery of power. The message about politics that Hemingway has for us here is that recovery of power is not limited to one method, or one avenue. Different modes, tailored to the personality involved, can be explored. Power can be recovered in many ways and political man should leave no path unexplored

---

[15]The fabled Hemingway "code" is really nothing more than a type of machismo which the author admired. He tried to live up to the code himself, demanded it in his contemporaries, and often injected it into his writings.

if he is intent on the recovery of his skills and power.

The picture of a plodding, methodical effort to return to power is not alien to politics. One can only hope that those who choose this path emerge from it with the same humility and purity of spirit that Santiago displays.

In The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber, Hemingway describes the full "cycle" of the loss of power, showing us the loss itself, the reaction thereto, and the recovery of power and subsequent behavior of the person experiencing it. The power in question here is the ability to display courage, or "grace under pressure" as Hemingway called it, and the setting is an African safari. Faced by a charging wounded lion, Francis Macomber runs away (apparently a classic faux pas in the code of conduct of the hunt), exposing himself as a coward to the "white hunter," the safari party, and worst of all, to his wife. Cowardice was for Hemingway the worst of sins, and his depiction of Macomber's flight is graphic and unmerciful.[16] He completes the picture of Macomber's emasculation by having his wife desert his bed for that of the "white hunter."

Macomber, however, piqued both at his cowardliness and his position as a cuckold, is fanatically determined to get his power back and reassert his manhood. Unfortunately, Hemingway fails to describe the process of Macomber's metamorphosis, and we are not privy to Macomber's thoughts as he plans to recover his power.

---

[16]Hemingway, Short Stories, pp 19-20

All we have are the thoughts of Wilson, the white hunter, as he observes Macomber's rapid and complete recovery of his power:

> Beggar had probably been afraid all his life. Don't know what started it. But over now. Hadn't had time to be afraid with the buff. That and being angry too. Motor car too. Motor cars made it familiar. Be a damn fire eater now. He'd seen it work in the same way. More of a change than any loss of virginity. Fear gone like an operation. Something else grew in its place. Main thing a man had. Made him more of a man. Women knew it too. No bloody fear.[17]

Particularly of note are Wilson's comments on what the "new man" will probably be like, for these represent Hemingway's thinking on the likely actions of those persons to whom power is restored. Setting off into the bush for the next day's hunt, Macomber indeed exhibits the traits of "...a damn fire eater." He himself is aware of the change: "'You know, something did happen to me,' he said. 'I feel absolutely different....'"[18] This difference is displayed in the reckless abandon with which he pursues his dangerous quarry, the wild buffalo. Macomber's recovery of power is complete, and though his reckless actions lead to his death, his conduct gives us ample opportunity to observe the man who has recovered his power.

In the world of politics, we have many notable examples of individuals who have recovered their lost power. Whether these individuals can be classified as "damn fire eaters" is open to question, but we can certainly be sure that their appreciation of power has been sharpened by its absence, and that their actions in

---

[17] _Ibid_. p 33
[18] _Ibid_. p 32

exercising their newly recovered powers are likely to differ from their old performances. Whether these new actions be characterized by more abandon, or by more caution, Hemingway shows us that, in the recovery of power, something does "happen," and that those of us who expect actions based on previous records may quite likely be in error. No student, for example, of Richard Nixon's record of the 1950's could safely have foretold his friendly overtures to Russia and China of the 1970's.

In looking at Hemingway's treatment of the loss of power, I have tried to point out six separate (if not completely distinct) types. These types differ in the extent to which their further study could increase our knowledge of politics, but each has its counterpart in the political world, and their observation can lead to a deepening of our "tacit" political understanding.[19] To summarize these types briefly, they are:

1. The individual whose loss of power makes him aware of its value, and increases his maturity and worth as a person;

2. The individual whose power loss is permanent and irreversible, and whose main concern is not with its recovery, but with adjustment to the new state of powerlessness;

3. The person who, aware of his inability to handle power, abdicates it voluntarily and has no desire to regain it;

4. The person whose power loss may well be temporary and who, in attempting its recovery, pursues drastic changes which he hopes will help him;

---

[19] S. Wolin, op. cit. p. 1070

5. The individual who has sufficient confidence in his own abilities to react to his power loss in an unruffled fashion and pursue its recovery through the patient application of old skills; and

6. Finally, the individual who is able to recover his power, and who then exercises it in a reckless fashion.

These types by no means constitute the entire spectrum of possible reactions to the loss of power, or its subsequent recovery, but they are interesting for their parallels to the everyday world of politics. We have seen some of these parallels pointed out, and I have tried to show that by an understanding of these phenomena as they occur in literature, the everyday events of political life can be seen in a newer, clearer light - one which may directly contribute to their understanding.

Since we have looked at some length at the loss of power in Hemingway's fiction, we can now turn (more briefly) to power which is not lost, perhaps which even can be said to be flowering. In The Undefeated, a short story, Hemingway creates a situation in which Manuel, a slightly washed-up bullfighter, attempts to convince the critics (and, to a certain extent, himself) that his power has not been lost.

As Manuel approaches Retona, the empresario of the local bullring, his determination and desperation are evident. Told by Retona that his recent series of gorings and accidents would make him a poor gate attraction, Manuel tells him, "They'd come to see me

get it."[20] When he accepts the small sum of three hundred pesetas to appear in a nocturnal, he is convinced of his ability as a fighter and confident he can prove himself to the public. He goes so far as to promise a friend that he will "cut the coleta" if he is not successful in the ring.[21]

Despite the tragic ending to the fight, it is one in which Manuel's courage (if not his technique) is vindicated. And it is interesting to observe Manuel's attitude toward the audience, once this power has been displayed. After killing the bull (and in the process incurring what is perhaps a fatal goring) he turns to the crowd:

> All right, you bastards. He wanted to say something, but he started to cough. It was hot and choking. He looked down for the muleta. He must go over and salute the President. President hell! He was sitting down looking at something. It was the bull. His four feet up. Thick tongue out. Things crawling around his belly and under his legs. Crawling where the hair was thin. Dead bull. To hell with the bull! To hell with them all![22]

We see here a man whose power is questioned, at least in some quarters. In the face of this, he sets out to show (to himself as well as others) that these questions are misguided. When the issue is sufficiently resolved, the "newly proven man" is able to turn his back contemptuously

---

[20]Hemingway, Short Stories, p. 237

[21]Ibid. p. 244. The reference is to the pigtail style of hair worn by bullfighters. This pigtail is the traditional mark of the fighter, and cutting it off is the symbolic gesture made when one decides to leave the bullring for the last time.

[22]Ibid. p. 264

on those who doubted him. This could well be an example of what has been called the "arrogance of power," and its application to the world of politics is readily apparent. We might surmise, for example, that a political man once dispossessed by the "people," retains a deep distrust and disdain for those people even after they have returned him to power. If the newly recovered power is treated as Manuel treats the hard-won admiration of the crowd, then a dangerous situation could result. One can only hope that the political man returned to power will have an even greater appreciation for the interests of the people whom he is to lead.

We have dealt so far in this chapter with what was called earlier the classical interpretation of power. Discussing the "modern" idea of power as influence in Hemingway's writing is difficult for a number of reasons. For one, power relationships are complex things and Hemingway was a simplistic sort of person. Cooperman writes, "That Hemingway insisted upon reducing a complexity to some sort of manageable simplicity was totally characteristic of him both as a person and as a writer...."[23] Given this penchant for simplicity, coupled with the violent nature of his personality, Hemingway was almost inevitably drawn to picture power as forceful and violent. The subtleties of power relationships escaped him, and were he forced to give a definition of power, he might have claimed that it grew out of the

---

[23] Stanley Cooperman, Tender is the Night: A Critical Commentary (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965) p. 3

barrel of a boxing glove. Nonetheless, violence is a part of power (Hannah Arendt notwithstanding) and in The Killers, Hemingway shows us that power in action.

Two men, obviously paid assasins, have come to Summit, Michigan, to murder Ole Anderson, a one-time boxer who has apparently run afoul of the big-city gamblers. Hemingway's description of one of these "powerful" men is reavealing: "He wore a derby hat and a black overcoat buttoned across the chest. His face was small and white and he had tight lips. He wore a silk muffler and gloves."[24] A picture of consummate evil emerges from his description, displaying perhaps the author's own feelings about those in possession of power, especially violent power.

One of the interesting aspects of this story is the way in which Anderson, the target of the killers, resignedly accepts his fate, connoting a helplessness in the face of the application of violent power.

> Nick looked at the big man lying on the bed. "Don't you want me to go and see the police?"
> "No," Ole Anderson said, "That wouldn't do any good."
> "Is there something I could do?"
> "No. There ain't nothing to do."[25]

Political power is rarely so monolithic or irreversible as the power Hemingway describes in The Killers, nor is the notion always so dark as it appears here. It is both broader and more flexible, and in many ways, it can be more elusive. These characteristics of power

---

[24] Hemingway, Short Stories, p. 280
[25] Ibid. p. 287

relationships are examined more thoroughly by Fitzgerald.

Two stories that indicate some of the subtleties or power relationships are the love stories of Jay Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan, and of Dick and Nicole Diver. Due no doubt to the tempestuous and all-consuming nature of his own love life[26] Fitzgerald's preoccupation with love stories is second only to his fascination with wealth as a central theme of his fiction. The novels in which these particular stories appear are Tender is the Night and The Great Gatsby, the two high points of Fitzgerals's literary career.[27] In the stories, the shifting "balance of power" between lovers, and the power of the rich over the not-so-rich are examined. Also important are the ways in which the author points out the rather fleeting and transient nature of financial power, even though he admits he is awed by it. It will be my purpose here to analyze Fitzgerald's portrayal of power relationships in such a way as to shed light on some common political relationships in which power is a key factor. One of the key aspects of power that Fitzgerald highlights for us is its slippery, elusive nature. This elusiveness is a characteristic of political power, and hopefully his treatment of the subject can aid us in understanding some of the changes that occur frequently in our own political "wind." Peripheral figures in the power

---

[26]On this theme, see, for example, Nancy Milford, Zelda (New York: Harper and Row, 1970)

[27]Ironically, though not unusually, Fitzgerald's two critical successes were his biggest popular and financial failures. Neither received the spectacular popular response he achieved with This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and the Damned.

relationships of the two novels are Tom Buchanan, Daisy's husband and Gatsby's obvious rival, and the hangers-on who habitually inhabit Gatsby's summer estate on the north shore of Long Island.

The story of Dick and Nicole Diver is a particularly touching one, and it illustrates the ways in which power relationships can change, and the speed with which these changes can occur. Dick Diver is one of the most "decent" characters in Fitzgerald's fiction, and the sad fate that befalls him shows us that the author tends to view the world as a "moral wasteland" in which virtue, far from being rewarded, is often the cause of ruin. (One is reminded here of Machiavelli's warning that the man of virtue - though praiseworthy in his right - should steer clear of politics).

Nicole Diver is a mentally disturbed woman, her disturbance the result of an incestuous liaison with her father. Dick, the physician in her charge, falls in love with her, marries, and decides to dedicate his life to the reclamation and rebuilding of her deeply scarred personality. In the beginning of their relationship, Dick is husband, doctor, lover, and (very softly) father to Nicole. Her dependence on him, and consequently his power over her, are complete. The Divers are, of course, headed along a dangerous path, since one of the basic purposes of their relationship - the rebuilding of Nicole's personality - can ultimately lead to the dissolution of their bonds. Perhaps unfortunately for his sake, Dick is too effective a healer, and the extent of Nicole's recovery is such that she yearns for a "normal" love relationship - one that her therapeutic marriage cannot provide. As Dick's healing "powers"

take their effect, Dick loses the power he held over other facets of their relationship. He becomes the dependent partner, as his love for the now-healthy Nicole places him in a position of subbordination. Dick, as the unloved lover, is willing to go to any lengths, and endure a succession of painful humiliations, to prevent Nicole's leaving him. Given such an attitude, it is easy to see how he becomes subject to his wife's will - the victim, in a sense, of his own creation.

There is certainly a lesson here for the student of politics, in that the story illustrates the sometimes tenuous nature of power relationships, and focuses on the possibility of the rapid shifting of power-dependency roles. It was Machiavelli who spoke of the advisability of liquidating those who help one come to power, and the student of politics does well to observe that maxim's application in this case.[28] If Fitzgerald is correct (as in many cases he might be), anyone who would exercise his power for the just cause of strengthening another, weaker party should be aware of the potential consequences of his action. This is not to say that one's power should not be employed to aid or strengthen others, but merely to point out that, when such a course is undertaken, the potential consequences be considered. One can not, at this point, fail to draw an interesting (if rather contraversial) parallel between Dick Diver and our own Democratic Party. For years, the Democratic Party (right or not) claimed itself to be the champion of the cause

---

[28]Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince (New York: The Modern Library 1950)

of the young, the poor, and the members of minority groups. The party looked on these underrepresented individuals as its responsibility and sought (or so it claimed) to improve their lot, and to include them in the decision-making process. It is interesting to see that the newly "healed" patients, who have finally acquired their rightful power, have somehow turned the tables on their former "benefactors" and have indeed taken control of the party structure. The Democratic Party, though surely not as guiltless as Dick Diver, has been the victim of a power-shift in which the patient is healed to such an extent that he is now "running the asylum."

In The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald deals with many power relationships. Certainly one of the most revealing deals with the awe in which the monied peoples of Long Island society are held by Nick Carraway, the young narrator. From start to finish, the book describes Caraway's awe (if not his approval) of the rich and the very rich. Even as he describes Tom Buchanan, a thoroughly despicable character (in Nick's eyes) who is married to his cousin Daisy, Nick speaks in reverent tones:

> His family were enormously wealthy - even in college his freedom with money was a matter for reproach - but now he's left Chicago and come East in a fashion that rather took your breath away; for instance, he's brought down a string of polo ponies from Lake Forest. It was hard to realize that a man in my own generation was wealthy enough to do that.[29]

---

[29]Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (New York: Scribners, 1925) p. 6

For Fitzgerald, money was power, and the road to happiness. He knew this, or thought he knew it, from first hand experience - it was because of his lack of money that Zelda Sayre refused to marry him. Andperhaps coincidentally, when he finally "struck it rich," she consented to be his bride.[30] (Fitzgerald brazenly recreated this episode between Amory Blaine and Rosalind Connage in This Side of Paradise.)[31] Given this rather harsh experience with money, and the lack thereof, Fitzgerald's passionate concern for wealth is easier to appreciate. Cooperman stated:

> It cannot be stressed too heavily that Fitzgerald's courtship of Zelda was in many ways the vital experience of his life. The matter was actually quite simple: either he proved that he was a "success" and won the girl, or he did not prove that he was a success, and lost the girl. Money, in short, was the magic wand that would turn the land of ashes into a Golden Palace, and Zelda was a fairy princess with a price tag attached to each gossamer wing.[32]

For all his preoccupation with wealth, however, Fitzgerald harbored a lingering doubt that its value and the power it brought were of a fleeting nature (a doubt which he was to see realized in his own life). Even as early as 1925, when he and Zelda were still the toast of Europe, he could write in The Great Gatsby of the fickleness of the power of money. He tries to show us this in the closing pages of the book, when Gatsby, innocent to the end, is laid

---

[30] Nancy Milford, Zelda, op. cit., p. 15

[31] In addition to his attempts to "win" her by his writing, Fitzgerald often used his fiction to reassert his superiority over his wife. He accomplished this by exposing her weaknesses through incorporating them into his fiction heroines.

[32] Cooperman, op. cit., p. 15

to rest after his murder by George Wilson. Along with some household servants, Nick has discovered in trying to make funeral arrangements that none of Gatsby's "friends" are interested in paying their respects. The funeral is a lonely scene, with only Nick, the servants, and one spectator present.

> I tried to think about Gatsby for a moment, but he was already too far away, and I could only remember, without resentment, that Daisy hand't sent a message or a flower. Dimly I heard someone murmur "Blessed are the dead that the rain falls on," and then the owl-eyed man said, "Amen to that," in a brave voice. We straggled down quickly through the rain to the cars. Owl-eyes spoke to me by the gate.
>
> "I couldn't get to the house," he remarked.
>
> "Neither could anybody else."
>
> "Go on," he started. "Why, my God! They used to there by the hundreds."
>
> He took his glasses and wiped them again, outside and in.
>
> "The poor son-of-a-bitch," he said.[33]

In observing Fitzgerald's treatment of the power of money, we begin to come to a better understanding of political power. It, too, can be of a rather fleeting nature, and its loss like the loss of money can mean the loss of the conveniences and amenities that accompany positions of importance. (One wonders about the courtesies - physical protection, clerical staff, etc. - extended to former leaders: are they a matter of practical necessity, or are they but a symbolic gesture to ameliorate the ego-deflation which must accompany being removed as the center of attraction?) As political power slips away, its ability to attract slips even faster. When the last hurrah is heard, and the once powerful political man is deserted by his

---

[33]Fitzgerald, op. cit., p. 176

one-time friends, there can be no more appropriate description of his plight than Owl Eyes' words at Gatsby's grave: "The poor son-of-a bitch."

Though the means of its acquisition vary greatly, Fitzgerald shows us how political and financial power share many characteristics. Both can shift rapidly, and, in both cases, when power is lost many of the niceties that once accompanied it are also lost. From Fitzgerald's treatment of power, we can see how rapidly shifts in the power balance can occur, and we can begin to appreciate some of the reasons _why_ the shifts occur. If Fitzgerald's treatment of the subject tells us anything, it is that power is a dynamic quality, one constantly shifting and changing in daily events. His account of the Divers' story shows us how the balances can shift over time, and his description of Gatsby's desertion adds to the impression. One is reminded of the Hobbesion description of man in the state of nature. The struggle to become more and more secure leads to a desire for more and more power. This determines that the power struggle is a ceasless, never-static war in which there are no real winners, only very tired combatants. How much of Hobbes' philosophy Fitzgerald would agree with we do not know. But we can see from his writing that he shared Hobbes' view of the "shifting sands" of the power balance, and in this way, by "humanizing" this opinion in the form of his writing, he contributes to our knowledge of power and of politics.

By his exploration of the concept of commitment, Fitzgerald makes an additional contribution to our political understanding - a contribution to be discussed in depth below.

CHAPTER III

COMMITMENT

Various forms of commitment become apparent to us as we observe political society. To reconstruct this commitment chronologically, we might start with the commitment of one man for another. This commitment of one person for another, or at least the awareness that mutual interests could be served best by an alliance, was probably one of the cornerstones of political society. Once the state was conceived, it became an entity in itself and soon became an "object" of the commitment of its citizens. Both these forms of commitment continue to exist in modern political life, though a deterioration of the former has been going on for some time, and is now beginning to spread to the latter, or state oriented form of commitment. Our purpose here, however, is not to comment upon the dissolution of societal bonds, either horizontal or vertical, but to attempt an analysis of the nature of commitment so it can be porperly understood, in its political setting. We seek to explore the nature of the force which causes men to forsake the comforts of private luxury in order to attempt to influence the course of public events. We will try to understand what lies beneath the decision to devote one's life to the service of others. If we can learn about the nature of commitment, we can learn about the bonds that solidify a political culture, and thus be in a better position to analyze and understand

that culture. Put very simply, the commitment we are speaking of parallels closely what Harold Laski has called citizenship. "Citizenship," he writes, "means the contributions of our instructed judgment to the common good ...[1] It is commitment which compels us to contribute anything so precious as our "instructed judgment," and this paper is concerned with determining the nature of commitment.

In the literature of political science, commitment is a subject which has not been given a great deal of attention. Accounts of the responsibilities and problems of citizenship are not uncommon,[2] but examinations of the commitment on which that citizenship is based are rare indeed. Kenneth Kenniston's book, The Uncommitted, gives us a vivid account of alienation (the social and political antithesis of commitment) and its symptoms and causes, but it tells us very little about the positive nature of commitment.[3] One can learn from Survey Research Center data the statistical extent to which individuals "participate" in the political process, but very little is known about the degree to which this participation is a manifestation of commitment, and, if it is, what the sources of that commitment might be. The recent proliferation of national social legislation might indicate a widespread commitment by Americans to other less fortunate

---

[1]Harold Laski, Democracy in Crisis (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935) p. 22

[2]For example, see Robert Pranger, The Eclipse of Citizenship (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968) and Dennis F. Thompson, The Democratic Citizen (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970)

[3]Kenneth Kenniston, The Uncommitted (New Yori: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1960)

members of society. But the criticism to which both the principle and practice of this legislation have been subjected could easily indicate the contrary. The scope and extent of commitment in America is not, however, the subject of this study. What this study aims to do is to examine the nature of commitment as Hemingway and Fitzgerald describe it, in the hopes that the knowledge thus acquired will enable us to better understand the phenomenon when we encounter it in politics. An effort will be made to draw parallels between the literary man of commitment and the political man in the hopes that the authors' treatment of the former can teach us something about the latter.

If we are to learn about the nature of commitment as it applies to politics, one of the best ways, I believe, is to observe the actions of a man embarked upon a quest of commitment, and compare him to the political man similarly engaged. In the pages following, Gatsby's quest to recapture Daisy Buchanon's love is examined, and a comparison will be made between Gatsby and the man of political commitment.

The Great Gatsby owes its lasting significance to the way in which Fitzgerald examines the phenomenon of the man committed to a dream - how that commitment is nurtured, and the means the dreamer uses to bring it into being. Viewed in this light, we can see certain parallels between Gatsby and the man of political commitment - the activist or visionary - who, committed to his vision of a new and better political world, seeks to make that vision a reality by having it understood and accepted by those around him. If we can then observe Gatsby in his quest, we shouldbe able to learn something of the situation in which

the political activist finds himself, and make some observations as to what might be his most effective courses of action. Gatsby, unfortunately, fails in his quest (though not for lack of commitment) but this need not bode ill for the activist of today. Rather, by observing the reasons for Gatsby's failure, we can perhaps advise the activist on what actions should prudently be avoided. In any event, Jay Gatsby's story represents commitment "in action." As we observe this, we can become more aware of the characteristics of commitment, as well as appreciate the similarities which it has to the world of politics. To begin, we must understand the precise nature of Gatsby's quest.

Jay Gatsby is a man committed, quite literally, to recapturing his past. Based on his favorably distorted recollections of a happy period of his past life, he has decided to reject the present, and opt instead for the total re-creation of that past. This desire to return to "things as they were" is not uncommon in American literature, nor is it, in this novel, confined to Gatsby alone. Tom Buchanan, Gatsby's rival and the villain of the piece, goes through the motions of life "...seeking, a little wistfully, for the dramatic turbulence of some long irrecoverable football game."[4] It is no doubt symbolic that, at the novel's end, Fitzgerald's narrator, Nick Carraway, goes back to his midwestern home, hoping to recover the memory of "...coming back west from prep school and later from college at Christmas time."[5]

---

[4]Scott Fitzgerald, <u>Gatsby</u>, p. 6
[5]<u>Ibid</u>. p. 176

The last line of the story shows us Fitzgerald's belief that all of us are committed, to some degree at least, to the recovery of our long forgotten past: "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."[6] What separates Gatsby from Tom Buchanan and the rest of us is, first, his absolute certainty that the past can be re-created and second, the intensity of purpose with which he is committed to its recovery. "Can't repeat the past?" Gatsby asks Nick. "Why of course you can!"[7] Having convinced himself that his quest is possible, he goes about it as if he were a man committed "...to following a grail."[8]

Gatsby, the dreamer, resembles the political visionary in that this vision can be fully realized only when the object of his dream joins him in an awareness of its desirability. In a non-totalitarian society, the first task of the man of political commitment is to get others to share that commitment. This requires powers of persuasion, or the force of a commanding personality, and is often the biggest obstacle to political success. In the public sphere at least, commitment, to be truly effective cannot operate in a vacuum. Operating alone, while it is no less noble a trait, it has small chance of having any major impact. For Gatsby the object of his dream is Daisy Buchanan, while the object of the political vision is usually the society which the visionary is attempting to re-order. Also, as Daisy's marriage to Tom presents a formidable obstacle to the execution

---

[6]<u>Ibid</u>. p. 182
[7]<u>Ibid</u>. p. 152
[8]<u>Ibid</u>. p. 136

of Gatsby's plans, so the bonds which unite a people to its traditional political order may become a hindrance to the efforts of the visionary, if those efforts are directed at a major reordering of society. Still another similarity can be seen by observing the light in which these obstacles are viewed by their respective adversaries. Gatsby sees Tom Buchanan as a bestial character whose every action is based on self-interest and physical satisfaction. He is, in Cooperman's words, "...a representative of the moral and idealistic Wasteland."[9] I am, I believe, correct in saying that this one-sided, overdrawn caricature which Gatsby has painted of Tom is often repeated by the man of political commitment when he attempts to describe the institutions or conditions he wishes to change. One of the major characteristics of commitment is the passion that accompanies it. While this passion is necessary in that it gives commitment its impetus, we must also be aware that this impetus is sometimes purchased at the cost of objectivity.

There are then, several strong parallels between Jay Gatsby and the man of political vision - both are intensely committed to their quest; both have an object they believe will benefit from the realization of their vision; both encounter serious obstacles in the course of their endeavors; and both are prone, as are most combatants, to paint onesided and perhaps inaccurate pictures of their opposition. Gatsby, of course, fails in his quest, and we will do well to examine the causes of that failure if we hope to offer any

---

[9]Stanley Cooperman, op. cit., p. 41

salient advice to the politically committed of our age.

It has been suggested by several critics that Gatsby's failure can be attributed to a lack of depth and sincerity in his love for Daisy (if this is the case, the man of political committment is home free - assuming, of course, that his commitment is truly sincere). In my opinion this interpretation of Gatsby's failure is incorrect. Although his love is surely misguided, in that its object is a misperceived image of the past, I do not believe his sincerity can legitimately be questioned. Despite the fact that his love is directed toward the image of Daisy as he knew her in the past, Gatsby convinces himself that he is prepared to accept any changes that have occurred in her during the period of their separation. Nick Carraway describes Gatsby's first meeting with Daisy after their five year separation: "There must have been moments even after that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams - not through her own fault but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion."[10] But if Gatsby is disappointed in the "new" Daisy, Fitzgerald never lets us know. In any case, Gatsby's confusion of image with reality is unimportant in this context, and should not be used to call into question the sincerity of his love.

If we do not doubt the depth of Gatsby's love for Daisy, as similarly the political activist's concern for the welfare of his fellow citizens is probably above suspicion, where do we search to find the causes of the failure? Perhaps the first place we should

---

[10]Fitzgerald, op. cit., p. 97

look is Gatsby's inability to recognize the existence of a possibly viable alternative to his dream - a situation in which Daisy could be even moderately happy without him. He views Daisy's situation as being much bleaker than it actually is, and he is consequently convinced that life has been miserable for her in his absence. He displays this belief in the unhappiness of her condition when he tells Tom, "She only married you because I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me. It was a terrible mistake..." Gatsby's blind faith in the validity of his own dream drives him to the belief that Daisy shares the dream in its every detail. In her absence life was a misery for him, and he is unable to believe that she has not shared the depth of his misery. His impression of the situation is, of course, incorrect, and Daisy gently tells him so. Near the end of the novel Nick observes Daisy and Tom seated at their kitchen table: "They weren't happy and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale - and yet they weren't unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air of intimacy about the picture..."[11] Gatsby's inability to admit that Daisy's existence during their separation could have been less miserable than his own causes him to oversimplify her position and leads him to a fatal overconfidence.

This lack of peripheral perception can become a serious shortcoming of the political activist. In reflecting on the magnificence of his own political vision, the committed political man

---

[11] _Ibid_. p. 145

is often prone to overlook the creditable aspects of the order which he is seeking to change, as well as the possibility that the people he is trying to help are not quite so unhappy as they may appear to him. This is not to say that the man of commitment should compromise the purity of his ideals to cater to "realistic" possibilities, but to warn that such an oversimplification can often lessen the prospects for his vision's actualization by rendering him insensitive to a salient feature of the people with whom he is dealing, and creating in him an overconfidence that can cause the misdirection of his efforts.

Gatsby's misperception of the extent of Daisy's unhappiness is not the only reason for his lack of success. Another factor is his insistence that she completely repudiate the five years she has spent with Tom. There can be no compromise: "Just tell him the truth - that you never loved him - and that it's all wiped out forever."[12] When Daisy equivocates and is willing only to admit that she no longer loves Tom now that Gatsby has returned, Gatsby is adamant: "You never loved him."[13] It is essential to him, as a man trying to re-create completely a time in the past, that his lover disavow all that has transpired since that time, saying in effect, that it simply has not happened. For Daisy, such a repudiation is impossible and, had Gatsby lived, this surely would have become a critical problem in their relationship. His total

---

[12]Ibid. p. 132
[13]Ibid. p. 152

commitment to the eradication of the past is shown when, even after Daisy has admitted that she cannot wipe away her marriage to Tom, Gatsby persists and tells Nick,

> I don't think she ever loved him. You must remember, old sport, she was very excited this afternoon. He told her those things in a way that frightened her - that made it look as if I was some kind of cheap sharper. And the result was she hardly knew what she was saying.

(After a pensive pause)

> Of course she might have loved him just for a minute, when they were first married - and loved me even more then, do you see?[14]

Gatsby's fanatical insistence on Daisy's repudiation of her past connections is an ailment which can often afflict many of those who would offer us their political visions. What Gatsby, and like him the visionary, seems to neglect is the natural tendency for a people to have a certain degree of pride and sentimental attachment for their past history, due primarily to their role in its formulation. Insistence on a clean break with traditional values involves an ego deflation to which few people are willing to submit. Again, this problem brings to the fore the question of the extent to which the man of commitment must compromise his ideals in order to "get along" in society as it exists. All that is suggested here is that the commitment - to whatever goal - be tempered by a compassion for those who make up the society, and a sincere respect for their feelings and sensibilities.

---

[14] Ibid. p. 152

Gatsby's third failure is his incorrect estimate of Daisy's perception of him. It is true that Daisy holds Gatsby in great affection - holds him, in fact, as a dream and vision of her own. But where Gatsby makes a conscious effort to have his dream become reality, I believe that Daisy is committed to ensuring that her own dream remains well outside her grasp. Daisy's love, like Gatsby's, is directed at an image; yet while the image in Gatsby's mind is that of Daisy at a different point in time, her image is not of him at all, but of the chivalric gestures of unrequited love which he has made to her. She takes the cliche of "being in love with her" one step further in that she is affected, not by her own love, but by Gatsby's. The green light on the dock cannot satisfy Gatsby because his love goes beyond the light to the woman it represents. But for Daisy the light itself is the end of her affection, and its characterization as the "...orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us..."[15] is perfectly suited to her needs. The attempt to actualize the vision of the light, which is the sole purpose in Gatsby's life, has the effect of destroying it in Daisy's eyes.

Like Daisy, all of us are susceptible and amenable to visions of a new and better life, one which we promise ourselves will someday be achieved. But while we are willing to move in the direction of those visions, as she was, we are reluctant to take the final step toward their actualization for fear that, once achieved, they may

---

[15]*Ibid*. p. 182

disappoint us, and leave us without further horizons to seek in the future. We are content, then, to live with the fiction of our dreams, pointing ourselves toward their realization, but inevitably pulling back at the brink, the architects of our failure, willing to say "...that's no matter - tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms further...and one fine morning..."[16]

What place, then for the politically committed man with a vision which commends itself to failure in its quest for the green light? A legitimate and vital place, I think, if, through the activism of his commitment a man can refine and advance the visions and horizons of society, while adding to them contributions of his own. While the ultimate attainment of the vision may be beyond our grasp, progress toward it is not; thus the committed man who can articulate his vision before us can be instrumental in the progress of society. Further, if he is continually able to refine and uplift his ideas, he can lead us, in progressing toward them, to surpass the goals from which we have fallen back in the past.

Gatsby's quest for his dream ended in failure. But his was a noble dream, one he was committed to with all his heart. His message for us is that the man of political commitment, whether or not he succeeds is his avowed endeavors, can be an ennobling force in the world - that the greatest reward of a dream earnestly pursued is merely to have dreamed it. The dream, Gatsby shows us, may indeed by a fiction, but it can be in pursuit of that fiction that

---

[16]<u>Ibid</u>. p. 182

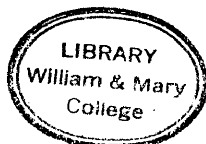
man reaches his highest fulfillment. Pursuit of the dream cost Gatsby his friends, his fortune, and ultimately his life. But it never cost him his happiness, or his human worth. Fitzgerald says it best: "They're a rotten crowd' I shouted across the lawn, 'you're worth the whole damn bunch put together..."[17]

As we look at Fitzgerald's treatment of commitment, we see that he offers the politically committed individual certain advice about the right and wrong ways to involve himself in a political quest. He has shown us the passion of commitment and has given us insight into some of the ways in which political man can meet his downfall if he is not careful. But another characteristic of commitment Fitzgerald shows us is the way it can be an uplifting force in a man. Having observed his treatment of commitment as Gatsby exhibits it, he has given us what must certainly be a warmer appreciation and, hopefully, a better understanding of the man of political commitment.

In Ernest Hemingway's treatment of commitment, it is important to remember the importance that the concept had in the author's own thinking. Hemingway demanded commitment to him from the people around him, even though he was unable or unwilling to promise his own commitment in return. It was a trait he admired in a person, and it is a subject that he deals with often in his writing. Perhaps the most interesting (and for politics the most illuminating) aspects of Hemingway's treatment of commitment are his concern with

---

[17]<u>Ibid</u>. p. 154


LIBRARY
William & Mary
College

the idea of commitment to a "code" (of conduct, or of life) and his interest in the man committed to the development of skills, or to the recovery of lost skills. Commitment to one's self, manifest by a drive to perfect one's abilities, was perhaps the only form of commitment that Hemingway could say with certainty that he possessed. Consequently, a great deal of his writing deals with that theme. As we examine this notion to commitment to the recovery and perfection of personal skills, we will be able to see the idea linked to other Hemingway writings dealing with the loss of power, and will be able to observe the connection he makes between the loss of power and the commitment necessary for its recovery. First, however, I wish to examine Hemingway's treatment of the idea of commitment to a "code."

There are several examples in Hemingway's writing of men, or groups of men, committed to a way of life that entails certain hardships and sacrifices if the ultimate goals of the group are to be accomplished. (On the other hand, The Sun Also Rises gives us a portrait of the life lived by the uncommitted - the wandering, "lost" generation). These accounts have interest for the student of politics, since they tell us much about some of the sacrifices that inevitably must be made as concessions to the purposes of the political group - the "cost," as it were, of commitment. The best of these accounts comes to us in For Whom the Bell Tolls.

In this Spanish Civil War novel, Hemingway tells of the life led by a group of loyalist guerillas in hiding in the mountains of Spain, as they plot and execute the destruction of an important

bridge controlled by the Fascits rebel forces. Into the group has come Robert Jordan, an American demolition expert, and it is Jordan's interaction with members of the group that points up many of the particulars of the code of conduct which determines and inhibits the actions of the group members. What Hemingway shows us is a group of politically committed men and women whose commitment is sufficiently intense to command their allegiance to a way of life which is, to say the least, extremely uncomfortable for them. Their discomfort is two-fold: First, their zeal leads them to choose a life of physical discomfort and deprivation, and one of very real danger; and, second, the nature of their commitment is such that it compels them to adhere to certain modes of group conduct which, while necessary for the success of the group, must certainly be stifling and frustrating to the individuals concerned.

The first "rule" of the code by which this guerilla band lives is its allegiance to the absolute authority of its leader. Since the leader in this particular case happens to be a woman, the price of commitment must be painfully high to the proud Spanish men, but it is a price they willingly pay, aware as they are that the unity and direction they need to function effectively can only come from a single person. Additionally, there are unwritten, but widely obeyed, rules concerning patterns of behavior permissable with regard to sexual matters and the consumption of alchohol. The group is a sexually mixed one, and sexual encounters between the girl, Maria, and the group members are forbidden by Pilar, the leader, in the interests of keeping the community peace. (Jordan, as an "outsider" has Pilar's

tacit permission to sleep with Maria, a permission which causes no little consternation in the camp, but which, because of Pilar's authority, is never openly and finally questioned.) The wine supply of the band is kept, purposely, in the cave of the leader, and it is dispensed only in rationed amounts. While this may be a logistical necessity, it is also, I feel, a tactical move on the part of the band's leadership to prevent the rowdy drunkenness which might accompany an unlimited supply of alchohol. (Pablo's exemption from this rationing, while rather inexplicable, shows us that, whatever the case, the wine is not in short physical supply). Important in all these instances is not so much the fact that the rules exist, but that the guerillas freely submit to them (albeit with some grumbling) as part of the price they are willing to pay to see their ideals realized.

Another of the "rules" to which this band of committed men subscribes deals with their relationship to outsiders, such as Robert Jordan. Though outwardly the group is anything but a closely-knit, homogeneous band, there are certain fences they have constructed around themselves from which "outsiders" are excluded. In their dealings with Jordan the guerillas are seemingly open, and for the most part cordial, but there remains a residue of distrust and resentment, a "closing of the ranks," as it were, in the presence of outside interference, which represents another characteristic of the "code." This family-type solidarity is apparent in the band's propensity to seek Pilar's nod of approval before imparting serious information to the ears of an outsider,

even one so highly regarded as Jordan.

There are several conclusions we can draw about political commitment from the picture Hemingway gives us in For Whom The Bell Tolls. We can see that when groups of individuals band together to advance political or other ideals, a certain pattern of group behavior is established. This "code" of behavior aims at tailoring the actions of group members toward the common end of the accomplishment of the group's goals. Since certain elements of this code will no doubt require sacrifice on the part of group members, it is in one sense, the "price" of political commitment. Depending on the circumstances this price can be nominal - or it can be very high. Youthful supporters of Senator McCarthy in 1968 found their effectiveness increased if they trimmed their hair, certainly a small sacrifice; but the followers and supporters of Mao Tse Tung and Fidel Castro found the price of their involvement to be years of deprivation and danger during which time strict codes of behavior were enforced.[18] In most

---

[18] For examples of these revolutionary codes of conduct, see Che Guevarra, On Guerilla Warfare (New York: Praeger, 1961) pp. 38-43, and Robert S. Elegant, Mao's Great Revolution (New York: World, 1971) pp. 116-220. Describing the code of behavior which worked so well for Castro's guerillas in the mountains of Cuba, Guevarra writes, "...Discipline is a must. The soldiers should retire and arise at fixed hours. They should not be permitted to idle away their time at games. Alchohol is out..." Elegant describes an elaborate instruction manual designed for participants in the long march, detailing regulations on the distribution c food, carrying of equipment, proper pace of marching, and even the cut and demensions of clothing and accessories. This instruction guide was reprinted in full in the Canton Red Guard Journal in 1966, as a source of guidance and inspiration to the youthful Red Guards, who were engaged in the "long march" of the moment.

cases the cost of political involvement is less than that paid by Pilar and her guerilla band, but in every case there is a cost involved - a cost which political man must be willing to meet before he can legitimately claim to be seriously committed, and, perhaps, before he can be effective.

Commitment to one's self, and commitment to the development of one's personal skills, were important concerns of Hemingway. As mentioned in Chapter II, he was always worried about the possibility of losing his creative powers. Hemingway saw that, should these powers be lost to a man, a great deal of energy and determination would be necessary for their recovery. This energy and dedication could result only if the person involved were truly committed to the recovery of his skills. To express this concern, and to examine the personal commitment necessary for the recovery of skills, Hemingway wrote The Old Man and the Sea. In the story, Santiago's commitment to recover his ability to fish and to earn a living is depicted in a way that can shed light for us on political phenomena. The "wounded man" of politics was discussed earlier, and I would suggest that there are many similarities between Santiago and the "wounded" political man intent on the recovery of his own power. If this is true, then an understanding of Santiago's situation can lead us to a better appreciation of the plight of the man intent on political recovery, and an examination of Santiago's commitment may enlighten us about the nature of political commitment.

There are several aspects of Santiago's commitment which impress us immediately, and which begin to show us some of the similarities and parallels between him and successful political men. First, we

are shown that Santiago's commitment is absolute. There seem to be no limits bounding his willingness and determination to pursue his quest. In the story, the powerful fish pulls Santiago's little boat far from land - farther than Santiago has ever been - but Santiago holds on without complaint. This symbolic ride with the fish shows us that Santiago is willing, quite simply, to go as far as he must, and his words to the fish tell us this in no uncertain terms: " 'Fish,' he said softly, 'I'll stay with you until I am dead.' "[19] The stakes in this battle are clear, and Santiago leaves no doubt about the extent of his involvement. He is clearly willing to endure the hardships that commitment demands of him, and is willing to follow the course of that commitment, wherever it leads him. Another aspect of Santiago's commitment is the quiet confidence with which he approaches his challenge. He is a humble man, but in this humility there is a sense of dignity and pride which leads him to the belief that, if the fish can be caught, he, Santiago, is the man who can do it. This pride is shown as Santiago vows to represent the finest in man against the fish as he tells it, "I'll show you what a man can do and what a man endures."[20] Like Santiago, the political man committed to recovering his powers must possess a dedication both deep and intense. The road to political recovery, be it the recovery of political skills or political power, is invariably an uphill road, and it is one

---

[19]Ernest Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea (New York: Scribners, 1954) p. 41

[20]Ibid. p. 43

not easily traveled by those who are ambivalent, or only superficially committed to their political ideals. Like Santiago, political man must be willing to follow the course of his commitment to points and places often far from the security of his private existence, and the limits he sets on the sacrifices he is willing to make may go a long way toward determining the extent of his eventual political success. While commitment alone is no guarantee that that success will be achieved, a lack of personal commitment tremendously enhances the likelihood of political failure. (Following a discussion of several other salient aspects of commitment as Hemingway treats it, comparisons will be made between the situation faced by Santiago, and those faced by historical political figures. Whatever else that can be said of the figures involved, one thing is certain - each possessed a commitment to his own recovery of skill or power that knew no bounds, and this intense commitment played a large part in his political recovery). To complement the quiet confidence that he possessed, Santiago had the additional support of his young assistant. Through all of his trying times, Santiago was continually bolstered by the unflagging optimism of the young boy who was his helper, and this optimism helped him through the periods of personal doubt which he inevitably experienced. The unfailing support of a devout band of followers is essential to the political man, necessary to sustain his sagging spirits when the political fortunes seem to be turning against him. Though its extent is something we will never know with certainty, the spiritual "lift" given Senator George McGovern by his small but dedicated band of

youthful activists during the 1971-72 ascendancy of Senator Muskie must have been a source of encouragement to him during some rather dark political times.

Still another similarity between Santiago and the man of politics is the patience and sense of timing exhibited by each in their successful endeavors. Patience is, for the fisherman, Santiago, a very critical quality, and in his "dry" spell, it is patience that ultimately rewards him with success. Similarly, in politics, the successful man is often the patient, methodical man, whose sense of timing tells him the proper moment at which to attempt the recovery of power. Like Santiago, the wise political man avoids "pressing the issue" and is content instead to follow a course which, while not particularly quick or direct, has the best chance of achieving its objective. This quality of patience is very definitely a form of commitment, in that it demands of its adherent a very strict self-discipline. There is without doubt a sort of tension involved in this situation, and in politics generally, in which the desires of the moment must be weighed against the long-term effects of impulsive action. To do this well requires a patience and a self-discipline which can often be born only of serious commitment. The political man so committed, and so disciplined, plays the political game from a distinctly advantageous position.

This section of the paper has maintained throughout that there are certain parallels and similarities between Santiago and the man intent on the recovery of political powers and skills. Having

observed some of the elements of the commitment displayed by Santiago, I would like to point out several historical instances of political men who have recovered their skills or power by employing a commitment similar to that shown by Santiago - a commitment characterized by its intensity, its confidence, and its patience.

One of the most pertinent examples of political man's recovery of skills and power through the determination and commitment exemplified by Santiago is the case of Winston Churchill. In Churchill's case, the loss and subsequent recovery both of political power and personal political skills were involved. Driven from his position as Lord of the Admiralty after the disastrous Dardanelles campaign in 1915, Churchill's political downfall was completed when his bellicose pronouncements against the Turkish government cost him his parliamentary seat and precipitated the dissolution of the post-war coalition government. Abandoned even by the partisans of his own constituency, he retreated temporarily into the haven of his writing and painting, waiting patiently for the opportunity to begin his recovery. During the next two decades his political progress was made slowly and meticulously, as he sought to regain both the political power of his earliet years, and the political skills he knew he would need to effectively exercise that power. In 1939 his patience and determination were rewarded with his re-appointment as Lord of the Admiralty, and a year later the recovery was climaxed by his selection as Prime Minister. Churchill's ultimate triumph was testimony to the depth and

intensity of his political commitment, to his unfailing confidence in himself, and to the patience and diligence with which he set about rebuilding his political career.[21]

American politics has its own examples of the committed man who, after much effort, achieves the recovery of his lost skills and powers - Harry Truman rising from the failure of public confidence which plagued him after World War II to the triumph, both personal and political, of the 1948 election;[22] John Kennedy, exposed as a less-than-skillful commander at the Bay of Pigs, recovering both his skills and his confidence in time to deal surely and expertly with the dangers of the Cuban Missile Crisis; and Richard Nixon, the political outcast, rising patiently and methodically to achieve the highest price of American political life. Each of these figures shows us, in his own way, the commitment which Hemingway so aptly portrays in The Old Man and the Sea.

Looking at commitment as it appears in Hemingway's work, we see a concept extremely valuable to political man, but one which, like all things valuable, must be purchased at a price (perhaps, some would say, an exhorbitant price). Commitment is shown by Hemingway to demand sacrifice, discipline, and possibly most difficult of all, patience. Hemingway shows us, both in For Whom

---

[21] See Virginia Cowles, Winston Churchill: The Era and the Man (New York: Harper, 1963) pp. 244-56, and Sir Peter Grelton, Winston Churchill and the Royal Navy (New York: Conrad McCann, 1969) pp. 222-230

[22] For a discussion of this recovery, see Irwin Shaw, The Loneliest Campaign: The Truman Victory of 1948 (New York: American Library, 1968)

the Bell Tolls, and The Old Man and the Sea, that the seriously committed man is willing to pay this price. It can, I suggest, be argued from what Hemingway shows us that political man's willingness to pay a similar price may be a large, if not crucial, factor in his eventual success.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis has been intended to increase our understanding of politics. Toward that end, the concepts of power and commitment have been examined. By looking at these notions as they are treated in literature, I have tried to pick out some of their characteristics which can be most helpful to us as students of political experience.

In looking at Hemingway's treatment of the loss of power and the "wounded man" we have seen the emergence of possible reaction patterns to that loss. An appreciation of those reactions puts us, I believe, in a better position to understand the loss of power as it actually happens in political life. An insight into the thought processes of literary "wounded men" can give us clues to the likely thoughts and actions of those who lose power in the political arena.

As we observe Fitzgerald treat the subject of power, we become freshly aware of some of the concept's properties that we might otherwise have overlooked. Power, Fitzgerald shows us, is an extremely slippery substance, and the political man intent on maintaining power must be continually engaged in its preservation and enhancement. There is no static quality to the concept, and a *status quo* exists only when the myriad of conflicting forces balance each other out. The politically powerful man who forgets that the maintenance of his position is dependent upon the constant exertion

of effort will soon find himself in the unhappy category of the "wounded man." The picture that comes to us from both authors is that, while the term 'power' has very strong connotations, it is indeed a rather fragile substance whose preservation can be assured only by constant vigilance and application of energy.

The subject of commitment, as the authors see it, contains some complexities that should be considered in political situations. While both authors treat the concept favorably, and ascribe to commitment many of the aspects of a virtue, they each do so with their own words of "warning." Fitzgerald shows us that, for all its ennobling qualities, commitment, and the passion inherent in commitment, are often the cause of lapses in objectivity and sound judgment. Hemingway, while showing us commitment as a necessary ingredient in any serious endeavor, shows us that some commitment may often require of us some severe hardships and sacrifices. In essence, while both men tell us that commitment to noble ideals is a worthwhile, perhaps even vital part of the human experience, serious commitment should be approached and undertaken only when the demands it entails are fully understood.

Both power and commitment have been examined and discussed many times previously in the literature of political science. Some of these discussions have been very perceptive indeed, and they have often yielded a great deal of useful information about the nature and substance of the two concepts. This paper makes no claim to offer any exhaustive, precise definitions, either of power or of commitment, and thus its findings stand neither in refutation nor in contradiction of the

earlier studies. It is hoped, however, that the use of literature in the paper has given us a new viewpoint from which to observe these political phenomena, and has increased our political understanding by illuminating some facets of the concepts which may previously have been hidden or ignored. In the paper, a new look has been directed at some very familiar political ideas, and perhaps it can be said that the old road of political inquiry has been trod in something of a different fashion. One of the keys to solving problems - be they political or otherwise - is gaining a circumspection and appreciation of all facets of the situation. This necessitates that the problem be viewed from all feasible angles. As students of politics, it is incumbent upon us to seek that circumspection as we approach political questions. The use of literature in politics certainly offers no immediate solutions for our political problems, but it does offer to shed new light on some aspects of those problems. As such, it represents to me a useful and potentially very valuable avenue for political investigation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arendt, Hannah. _On Violence_. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World 1969

Baker, Carlos. _Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story_. New York: Scribners, 1969

Brecht, Arnold. _Political Theory: Foundations of Twentieth Century Political Thought_. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959

Cooperman, Stanley. _Tender is the Night: A Critical Commentary_. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965

Cowles, Virginia. _Winston Churchill: The Era and the Man_. New York: Harper, 1963

Dahl, Robert. _Modern Political Analysis_. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1963

Elegant, Robert S. _Mao's Great Revolution_. New York: World, 1971

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. _Tender is the Night_. New York: Scribners, 1934

________ _The Great Gatsby_. New York: Scribners, 1925

________ _This Side of Paradise_. New York: Scribners, 1920

Gillett, Sir Peter. _Winston Churchill and the Royal Navy_. New York: Coward McCann, 1969

Green, Philip and Walzer, Michael. _The Political Imagination in Literature_. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1969

Guevarra, Che. _Guerilla Warfare_. New York: Praeger, 1961

Hemingway, Ernest. _A Farewell to Arms_. New York: Scribners, 1929

________ _A Moveable Feast_. New York: Scribners, 1964

________ _For Whom the Bell Tolls_. New York: Scribners, 1940

________ _Islands in the Stream_. New York: Scribners, 1970

________ _Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway_. New York: Scribners, 1925

__________ The Old Man and the Sea. New York: Scribners, 1954

__________ The Sun Also Rises. New York: Scribners, 1926

Hobbes, Thomas. Leviathan. New York: Collier Books, 1962

Howe, Irving. Politics and the Novel. New York: Horizon Press, 1957

Kuhn, Thomas. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962

Lasswell, Harold and Kaplan, Abraham. Power and Society. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950

Locke, John. Of Civil Government. Chicago: Regnery, 1968

Machiavelli, Niccolo. The Prince. New York: Random House, 1950

Milford, Nancy. Zelda. New York: Harper and Row, 1970

Odegard, Peter. Political Power and Social Change. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1966

Pranger, Robert. The Eclipse of Citizenship. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968

Rosinski, Herman. Power and Human Destiny. New York: Praeger, 1965

Shaw, Irwin. The Loneliest Campaign: The Truman Victory of 1948. New York: American Library, 1968

Tillich, Paul. Love, Power, and Justice. London: Oxford University Press, 1954

Thompson, Dennis F. The Democratic Citizen. London: Cambridge University Press, 1970

VITA

John R. Dempsey

Born in Wyoming, Pennsylvania, in 1945. Educated at the University of Notre Dame and The College of William and Mary in Virginia, he is now studying toward the Ph.D degree in Political Science at the University of Massachusetts.