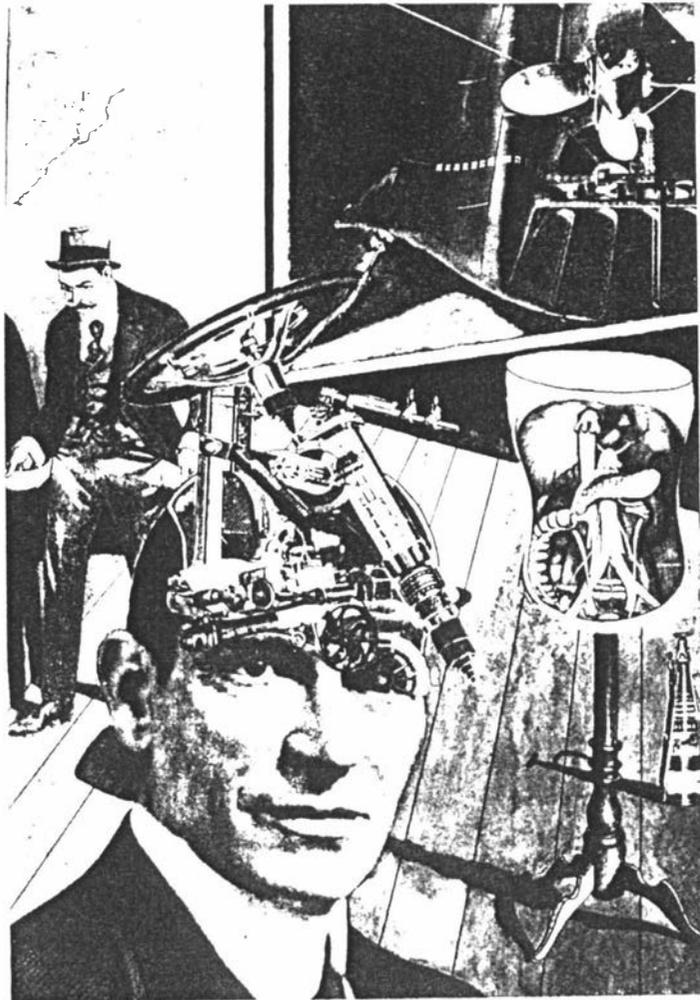


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***Narratives of Conquest
and Destruction:
The Automobile in the Major Fiction of
E. M. Forster and F. Scott Fitzgerald
1910 - 1925***



Paul L. Ryder

Narratives of Conquest and Destruction:
The Automobile in the Major Fiction of
E. M. Forster and F. Scott Fitzgerald 1910 – 1925

By Paul L. Ryder

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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For Anna

And when I looked, behold the four wheels by the cherubim, one wheel by one cherub, and another wheel by another cherub: ... And as for their appearances, they four had one likeness, as if a wheel had been in the midst of a wheel.

(Holy Bible: Ezekiel 12, v. 9-10)

Everything in life is somewhere else, and you get there in a car.

(E. B. White)

Narratives of Conquest and Destruction:

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N*arratives of Conquest and Destruction* argues that the automobile is the mechanistic oxymoron of the modern era. The motor-car uniquely encapsulates the ambivalence which lies at the heart of modern consciousness in that it is at once object and abstraction, icon of romance and of brutality, and symbol of social collocation and cultural dislocation. As the two parts of *Narratives of Conquest and Destruction* argue, in the works of Fitzgerald and Forster the motor-car is applauded and condemned as: emblem of 'home' and token of quintessential rootlessness, as mechanism for systematised capitalist compliance and for uncheckable transgression, as sign of Weberian instrumental rationality but sign also of romantic consciousness, principal means of self-actualisation (whereby one might be set free) and of annihilation. The motor-car is, furthermore, seen as an index of privilege and powerlessness, art and commodity, symbol of imagination and bland homogeneity, fashion accessory and utilitarian necessity, exponent of virility and icon of impotency, emblem of raw power and of lost aboriginal strength. In short, the motor-car is represented in the literature of Forster and Fitzgerald as both idol and iconoclast: enslaver of all who it liberates; destroyer of all that it conquers.

Whilst such oppositions merit close examination, an even more fundamental tension emerges: that the automobile is at once a principal sign of and *modus operandi* for modernist sensibility. The automobile, then, is not merely epi-phenomenal; not simply the object of more or less abstracted semiological significance but rather erupts through the fictions of Fitzgerald and Forster as a powerful narrative engine: a causative, generative, and transformational necessity thereby becoming not merely a sign but something of a textual *agent provocateur*. To this extent, and to the extent that the motor-car is not unequivocally condemned by the two authors, the structuralism that underpins Part One and Part Two of the thesis is occasionally abandoned in favour of a surface reading that considers narrative texture, thus foregrounding a more complex view of the automobile.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations for Texts

Introduction pp. 2 – 5

PART ONE: CONQUEST

Chapter One: *Superiority*

<i>The roots of desire</i>	pp. 7 - 11
<i>The automobile arrives</i>	pp. 12 - 13
<i>The demise of the horse</i>	pp. 13 - 18
<i>Power for the privileged</i>	pp. 18 - 27
<i>To play the king</i>	pp. 27 - 30
<i>Protection from the poor</i>	pp. 30 - 31
<i>Provoking the poor</i>	pp. 31 - 32
<i>Impertinent servants</i>	pp. 32 - 34
<i>The colour of agency</i>	pp. 34 - 36
<i>The car as home</i>	pp. 37 - 39

Chapter Two: *Freedoms*

<i>The love of machines</i>	pp. 40 - 42
<i>A new sound</i>	pp. 42 - 48
<i>Sedan seductions</i>	pp. 48 - 59
<i>Getting away from it all: into the garden</i>	pp. 59 - 63
<i>Going faster: the abolition of space and time</i>	pp. 63 - 74
<i>The open car</i>	pp. 74 - 76
<i>Women at the wheel</i>	pp. 76 - 78
<i>Freedom from schedules and responsibility</i>	pp. 78 - 83
<i>Desire for the new</i>	pp. 83 - 85

Chapter Three: *Transcendance*

<i>A knight on the open road</i>	pp. 86 - 98
<i>Magnified man</i>	pp. 98 - 102
<i>Metaphysical yearnings</i>	pp. 102 - 108
<i>Those magnificent men</i>	pp. 108 - 111
<i>A God from a crane</i>	pp. 111 - 114

PART TWO: DESTRUCTION

Chapter Four: *Servitude*

<i>The stolen purse</i>	pp. 116 - 118
<i>The commodification of artefacts</i>	pp. 118 - 120

<i>The mass-produced automobile</i>	pp. 121– 125
<i>The colour of conservatism</i>	pp. 125 – 126
<i>Public cars and the public mind</i>	pp. 126 – 130
<i>The absent automobile</i>	pp. 130 – 133
<i>Philosophy and technology: the background</i>	pp. 133 – 136
<i>The literary background</i>	pp. 136 – 144
<i>The rebirth of rationalism</i>	pp. 145 – 146
<i>Fordism</i>	pp. 146 – 154
<i>The technical daemon</i>	pp. 154 – 160
<i>The mechanised mind in the visual arts and film</i>	pp. 160 – 164
<i>The technical mind in modern poetry and prose</i>	pp. 164 – 191
<i>The dehumanised driver</i>	pp. 191 – 193

Chapter Five: ***Moving On***

<i>Homelessness and the automobile</i>	pp. 194 – 197
<i>The homeless mind: England and Forster</i>	pp. 197 – 203
<i>The homeless mind: America and Fitzgerald</i>	pp. 203 – 217
<i>Outpacing ourselves</i>	pp. 217 – 220
<i>The narratives of hurry: Forster and Fitzgerald</i>	pp. 220 – 223
<i>The machine in the garden</i>	pp. 223 – 225
<i>A highway to hell</i>	pp. 225 – 228
<i>Objectionable noises</i>	pp. 229 – 232
<i>Signage and advertising</i>	pp. 233 – 235
<i>Motoring in paradise</i>	pp. 235 – 239
<i>Be careful washerwoman!</i>	pp. 240 – 244

Chapter Six: ***Broken Connections***

<i>Some introductory bits and pieces</i>	pp. 245 – 246
<i>Shattered linkages: Forster's novels</i>	pp. 246 – 250
<i>Disconnections: the fiction of Fitzgerald</i>	pp. 250 – 261
<i>More broken connections: <i>A Passage to India</i></i>	pp. 261 – 263
<i>Putting the pieces together: foreshadowing and foregrounding death in <i>The Great Gatsby</i></i>	pp. 263 – 272
<i>Reconnections: the machine breakers</i>	pp. 272 – 280

Conclusion	pp. 281 – 284
Notes	–
Works Cited	–
Index	–

List of Figures

Between pp. 142 – 143

<i>Figure no.:</i>	<i>Description:</i>	<i>Source:</i>
Cover:	Raoul Hausmann: <i>Tatlin at Home</i> (1920)	Rubin: 42
1.	The defeated horse no. 1	Roberts: 42
2.	The defeated horse no. 2	Roberts: 20
3.	Another view of the horse: <i>Punch</i> 1905	Williams, R. ed.: 117
4.	An advertisement for Benz, c. 1920.	Roberts: 77
5.	1921 Rolls-Royce tourer	Garnier et. al.: 50
6.	A view of police traps: <i>Punch</i> 1906	Williams, R. ed.: 118
7.	The displaced chauffeur	Roberts: 21
8.	1902 Baker electric	<i>OFW</i> : 87: 549
9.	<i>Keystone Kops</i>	Clymer: 180
10.	<i>Keystone Kops</i>	Clymer: 181
11.	Buster Keaton (from an unknown film)	Pursell, C. ed.: 227
12.	Charlie Chaplain: <i>Modern Times</i> (1926)	Pursell, C. ed.: 233
13.	Cugnot's steam-tractor of 1771	Whyte: 8
14.	The Benz of 1885	Whyte: 10
15.	A 1914 Roll-Royce Silver Ghost tourer.	Eves: 61
16.	Aimee-Jules Dalou: <i>Levassor Monument</i>	Tubbs: 18
17.	Charles Sykes: <i>Spirit of Ecstasy</i>	Eves: 48
18.	Andre Aucoc: <i>Gordon Bennett Trophy</i>	Tubbs: 23
19.	Jacques-Henri Lartigue: <i>Hispano Suiza 32 hp</i>	Naylor, C. ed.: 358
20.	Pirelli advertisement	Roberts: 19
21.	Russolo and Patti with Noise Intoners	Bozzela, et. al.: 112
22.	Francis Picabia: <i>L'enfant Carburateur</i> (c.1917)	Green: 51
23.	Marcel Duchamp: <i>The Bride</i>	Golding: Fig 85.

- | | | |
|-----|---|------------------------|
| 24. | Advertisement for the Jordan Playboy (1923) | Burness: 149 |
| 25. | Advertisement for Pierce-Arrow (c.1920) | Burness: 211 |
| 26. | 'The eyes of a chauffeur' | Roberts: 26 |
| 27. | Henry Ford and the 'Model 999' | OFW: 129: 2,562 |

List of Abbreviations for Texts

Dowling, D:	BA	<i>Bloomsbury Aesthetics and the Novels of Forster and Woolf</i>
	MD	<i>Mrs Dalloway: Mapping Streams of Consciousness</i>
Eagleton, T:	IA	<i>The Ideology of the Aesthetic</i>
	CI	<i>Criticism and Ideology</i>
Fitzgerald, F. S.	BD	<i>The Beautiful and Damned</i>
	GG	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>
	SP	<i>This Side of Paradise</i>
	SS	<i>The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald</i>
Forster, E. M.	HE	<i>Howards End</i>
	LJ	<i>The Longest Journey</i>
	PI	<i>A Passage to India</i>
	SS	<i>Collected Short Stories of E. M. Forster</i>
Heidegger, M.	PT	<i>Poetry, Language, Thought</i>
	QT	<i>The Question Concerning Technology</i>
Lawrence, D. H.	LC	<i>Lady Chatterly's Lover</i>
	PS	<i>The Plumed Serpent</i>
	SL	<i>Sons and Lovers</i>
	Tales	<i>The Tales of D. H. Lawrence</i>
	TR	<i>The Rainbow</i>
	TT	<i>The Trespasser</i>
	WL	<i>Women in Love</i>
Lawrence, T. E.	OA	<i>Oriental Assembly</i>
	SP	<i>Seven Pillars of Wisdom</i>
Leavis, F. R.	CP	<i>The Common Pursuit</i>
	LP	<i>The Living Principle</i>
Marx, L.	MG	<i>The Machine in the Garden</i>
	PU	<i>The Puzzle of Anti-Urbanism in Classic American Literature</i>
Mumford, L.	CH	<i>The City in History</i>
	MM	<i>The Myth of the Machine</i>
Shaw, B.	CP	<i>The Complete Prefaces of Bernard Shaw</i>
	MS	<i>Man and Superman</i>
	P	<i>Pygmalion</i>
Woolf	CR	<i>The Common Reader</i>
	MD	<i>Mrs Dalloway</i>
	JR	<i>Jacob's Room</i>

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