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1 Although "The Butterfly and the Tank" is considered one of Ernest Hemingway's Spanish Civil War stories, as Will Watson reminds us, Hemingway wrote the Chicote's Bar stories "over the summer and fall of 1938, mostly in Paris" (148). Those stories, he adds, in addition to being "counterpropaganda pieces, explorations of the dark underside of war and, as such, affirmations of a realism too often suppressed in the clamor of partisan politics," are also "agitated by matters that seem to have a more personal and troubled relevance to Hemingway" (149).

2 Watson builds a compelling case for linking one of the stories, "The Denunciation," to a feud Hemingway had with a fellow writer, while Allen Josephs concludes from his own research that "the first-person narrator" in the five stories "is clearly Ernest Hemingway himself" (315). If the ambivalence in "The Denunciation" stems from "Hemingway's own denunciation of an old friend, John Dos Passos, in a Ken essay" that was published shortly before the story was written (Reynolds, The 1930s, 290), I would suggest that a similar ambivalence in "The Butterfly and the Tank" is the result of Hemingway's ongoing love-hate relationship with F. Scott Fitzgerald. The story, written in France, contains a convincing number of parallels and allusions to Scott, Zelda, and the Fitzgerald's bad behavior in Paris and Juan-les-Pins.

3 As with most Hemingway stories, the framework is simple. The narrator, a foreign correspondent walking home from the censorship office, decides to get out of the rain for a "quick one" at Chicote's. The bar is crowded and the nameless narrator sits at a table with a "thin, white-faced, Adam's-appled German" censor and a "forceful looking girl" who is with the "school-boy-looking-young-man with the old school tie" (101). Then, a civilian in a brown suit, who appears not to notice that "he was in a city under siege where everyone was under a strain, and that he was one of only four men in civilian
clothes in the place,” enters the Madrid bar and, laughing, begins to squirt waiters with a “flit gun” filled with perfume (103). One waiter eventually takes exception, and three men forcefully eject the flit-gun man from the bar, punching him in the face. The man re-enters and provokes another confrontation by squirting at the room in general. A group of uniformed men grab him and the flit-gun man is fatally shot. The narrator dives for the kitchen door, forcing the forceful girl to the floor and the German censor also dives for safety, while the school-boy-looking-young-man stands frightened against the wall, three blondes standing alongside him, screaming. The other men, all uniformed, have their guns drawn, and as police arrive the men responsible for the shooting form a "line-up of a football team coming out of a huddle and head out through the door" (105). Later, when the narrator says that it would make a good story, the forceful girl tells him he must not write it because it would be prejudicial to the Spanish cause. But when the narrator returns the next day, the manager insists that he write about it, and that he must title it "The Butterfly and the Tank."

Though it is indeed an "elegant title" and "pure literature," as the manager insists (109), the story has prompted little critical commentary. Julian Smith sees the flit-gun man as the center of the story and an ironic Christ figure, while Martin Light focusses on the narrator caught between the politics of writing or not writing a story. Kenneth Johnston observes that the butterfly and tank metaphors apply "not only to the dead civilian in the story, but also the narrator-writer" (184), while Allen Josephs argues that the stories could be considered alongside Hemingway’s journalistic dispatches.

Light and Johnston long ago established the details of the core narrative, which was based on a factual account that also appears in Langston Hughes’ autobiography, I Wonder as I Wander (184), and in Hemingway’s Spanish Civil War play, The Fifth Column. But while the "flit-gun man" may have been a real wartime casualty, Hemingway himself was responsible for the variant "Spanish metaphysics" of the insistent Chicote’s manager who wanted the story symbolically titled (109). If Hughes’ memoir is accurate, Hemingway also changed the one-on-one confrontation of the original episode to a mob action not unlike a scene from then recently published Tender is the Night (224-26), in which Dick Diver is beaten by police in Rome, as Fitzgerald was in a 1924 episode he described as "the rottenest thing that ever happened to me in my life" (Bruccoli, Correspondence, 349). In all three cases, the intoxicated victim provokes an initial physical confrontation, then courts tragedy by starting it up all over again.

In his initial letter responding to Tender is the Night, Hemingway took Fitzgerald to task for his composite characters, charging that he "produced not people but damned marvellously faked case histories" (Selected Letters 407). In a letter to Max Perkins, Hemingway was even more outspoken about Fitzgerald’s fashioning incompatible composites from Zelda and Sara Murphy and himself and Gerald. He cited in particular the "beating up by the Carabiniere in Rome" as unbelievable, as something that could only happen to Scott, and not to Gerald Murphy (Bruccoli, The Only Thing, 208-09). Gerald Murphy was, by all accounts, reserved and dignified, but as a New Yorker reporter once wrote, the Riviera was quiet until the Fitzgerallds arrived, with Fitzgerald looking "more as the undergraduate would like to look" (Milford 131-32). According to Andrew Turnbull, Scott "wanted each evening to be adventurous, spectacular, unpredictable, and when nothing happened, as was usually the case, he either fell asleep or made a scene" (160), usually by annoying others at social events and trying to get a rise out of them—not unlike Hemingway’s flit-gun man.
"It is very interesting and important, the misunderstood gaiety coming in contact with the deadly seriousness that is here always," the Chicote's manager says (109). In Hemingway's version, not Hughes', the flit-gun man had a respiratory problem and "fought in the Sierra but he was too weak in the chest to continue." The manager comments how "in the gaiety, with the singing, he became gay too." "He was gay all right," the narrator says. "He was practically floating around." The manager concludes, "That is the gaiety of drinking with a weakness of the chest" (108).

As Meyers notes, "The month after his stories [Taps at Reveille] were published, an X-ray examination revealed that Fitzgerald's lungs had, as he feared, deteriorated during the past two years" and a tubercular tumor was discovered(254). Fitzgerald's own preoccupation with his congestive problem, as well as his incredibly low tolerance for alcohol, left such an impression on Hemingway that the episodes warranted detailed comment in letters and three chapters in A Moveable Feast. "Most drunkards in those days died of pneumonia," Hemingway writes, "but it was hard to accept him as a drunkard, since he was affected by such small quantities of alcohol" (A Moveable Feast 166). Hemingway's flit-gun man had the same low tolerance, for having bought the gun across the street in order to play a joke at a wedding he was to attend later in the evening, he stopped in Chicote's to get out of the rain. Yet, after only a short time of drinking, he was "clowning around from table to table" (103) in a manner that was pure Fitzgerald.

At their first meeting, Fitzgerald stunned Hemingway asking about the comparative size of his member and by passing out after drinking (A Moveable Feast 147-94), and his antics, while drunk, ranged from throwing figs down the dresses of society women and tossing expensive stemware over the balcony, to chewing hundred franc notes and spitting them out of taxis, or stealing a three-wheeled delivery wagonette and scooting around the Place de la Concorde "while policemen whistled and motorists swore" (Turnbull, Scott Fitzgerald, 229, 167, 161).

But as Jeffrey Meyers observes, on the Riviera "pranks that had once been playful and innocent now became menacing and malicious" (162). As with Hemingway's flit-gun man, many of Fitzgerald's pranks were directed at waitstaff and service personnel. "Anything that he drank seemed to stimulate him too much," Hemingway wrote, and as he was drunk "in the day time or at night. He had begun to be very rude to his inferiors or anyone he considered his inferior" (A Moveable Feast 174, 183). Fitzgerald passed out at the feet of a Monte Carlo casino doorman who refused to admit him without a passport, and another time persuaded a barman to lie on a couple of chairs, after which he and a friend tied him up and tried to saw him in half (Turnbull, Scott Fitzgerald, 165). Scott also engineered a raid on a restaurant in Cannes, captured the owner and waiters, and threatened to push them off a cliff" (Meyers 162). Such things, of course, would rank as grievous misbehaviors to someone like Hemingway, whose regard for waiters bordered on reverence. In A Moveable Feast Hemingway remarked upon Fitzgerald's deficiency in this area: "I knew he did not care about waiters nor their problems nor their great kindnesses and affections" (168).

More than the mischievous Fitzgerald, it was the image of Fitzgerald passed out that apparently unsettled Hemingway. Just as the incident with the flit-gun man is described as being muy raro, Hemingway begins his recollection of Fitzgerald years later by noting, "The first time I ever met Scott Fitzgerald a very strange thing happened... As he sat there at the bar holding the glass of champagne the skin seemed to tighten over his face until all the puffiness was gone and then it drew tighter until the face was like a death's head."
The eyes sank and began to look dead and the lips were drawn tight and the color left the face so that it was the color of used candle wax" (152). Later in his memoir Hemingway refers again to the "waxy color" of Fitzgerald's face, noting that in looking at him in such a condition, "I felt the death loneliness that comes at the end of every day that is wasted in your life. I was very tired of Scott and of this silly comedy" (165-66).

In "The Butterfly and the Tank," a similar comedy "waxes" thin after the shooting: "When the police came... they commenced by smelling all of the pistols. In this manner they would detect one which had been fired recently. After about forty pistols they seemed to get bored with this," the narrator explains. "Then they sat at a table placed directly behind the late flit king, who lay on the floor looking like a grey wax caricature of himself, with grey wax hands and a grey wax face." The narrator concedes that "with his grey wax hands and his grey wax face, his arms spread wide and his legs drawn up... he did look a little like a butterfly" (105-06).

Hemingway will later use the butterfly comparison in A Moveable Feast to describe Fitzgerald's fragility—"His talent was as natural as the pattern that was made by the dust on a butterfly's wings" (147)—and in so doing he echoes a line from The Great Gatsby: "For a while these reveries provided an outlet for his imagination; they were a satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing" (111).

That line, in 1925, is intended to be associated with fancy and romance. But in "The Note-Books," Fitzgerald's entries indicate a curiosity for, if not a slight preoccupation with, the evolving slang term for homosexuals. "Fairies: Nature's attempt to get rid of soft boys by sterilizing them," he writes in one entry. "Fairy can only stand young girls on stage, where they're speaking other people's lives," he writes in another (The Crack-Up 205, 201). In Morley Callaghan's memoir, That Summer in Paris, he's quoted as saying, "Remember that night I was in bad shape? I took your arm... You thought I was a fairy, didn't you?" (207). By 1929, Robert McAlmon was spreading Callaghan's malicious suspicions that Hemingway, because of his close friendship with Fitzgerald, was a "fairy" (Brucoli 144-45), much to Hemingway's anger. Yet, if, as Bruccoli suggests, "Fitzgerald apparently began to worry about his possible latent homosexuality—or at least was concerned about acquiring his reputation" (109), he certainly was not overly compensatory in his relationship with Hemingway, whose first impression was that Scott was "rather effeminate, a man 'who looked like a boy with a face between handsome and pretty'" (Donaldson 45). In a letter to H.L. Mencken, Fitzgerald laments his "relations with men" since his "tacit break with Ernest Hemmingway [sic]" and implies that their estrangement was because of the rumors. "I suppose like most people whose stuff is creative fiction there is a touch of the feminine in me," he admits (Brucoli, Correspondence 421). Before the famous terse "Lay off me in print" letter following the pointed reference to him in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," Fitzgerald playfully calls Hemingway "Sweetie" in a letter written shortly after the publication of Tender is the Night (Turnbull, Letters, 311, 310). So when Hemingway writes flippantly of the "flit king" in "The Butterfly and the Tank," although Johnston is absolutely correct that Flit was a brand-name syringe intended for use in spraying insecticides, by 1936 "flit" has already worked its way into American dictionaries of slang as referring to an "effeminate man" or "male homosexual" (Berry and Van Den Bark 405.2), and Hemingway's otherwise inexplicable use of the phrase "flit king" to describe the practical joking civilian suggests that he is, in fact, alluding to slang usage.
Hemingway felt that while Fitzgerald yearned to achieve more discipline in his writing life, Zelda was too quick to drag him off to more parties and more bad behavior, "this rich bitch, this kindly caretaker and destroyer of his talent" (Hemingway, *Short Stories*, 60). He complained, in a letter to Max Perkins, "Almost every bloody fool thing I have ever seen or known him to do has been directly or indirectly Zelda inspired" (Bruccoli, *Fitzgerald and Hemingway*, 101). If the flit-gun man and the school-boy-looking fellow in "The Butterfly and the Tank" incorporate a number of Fitzgerald's features and traits—including a manner Hemingway thought effeminate—then Zelda may be hinted at in the forceful girl, the one person in the bar who laughs when the flit-gun man squirts everyone after the waiter has already registered his protest. After all, in *The Fifth Column*, Hemingway uses the "tank" metaphor to describe another forceful woman. As Philip talks with Anita at Chicote's, she tells him, "You make a big mistake with that big blonde," a woman she describes as being "big like a tank" (41). Though physically slight, Zelda was a tank compared to her husband. Zelda had "ordered" the top of their car in France to be cut away, and Hemingway concluded that "only two events could possibly redeem him: either Zelda must die, or Scott must develop a stomach disorder severe enough to make him stop drinking. Why did he refuse to grow up" (Baker 238).

Just as Matthew Bruccoli speculated that "it seems more than possible that the first name of Francis Macomber was a reference to F. Scott Fitzgerald, and that we are supposed to see certain connections between the two Francises" because "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" was written shortly before "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," I would argue that the sequence of events surrounding the composition of "The Butterfly and the Tank" supports a reading of the characters in the story as rough composites of Scott and Zelda. Hemingway was reading proofs of *The Fifth Column* during the story's composition period, and changing the hurtful reference to Fitzgerald brought to the fore all the reasons for printing the remark in the first place (Bruccoli, *The Only Thing That Counts*, 260-69).

But Gilbert Seldes was also on Hemingway's mind. Seldes' glowing review of *The Great Gatsby* so annoyed Hemingway that he seethed about it in letters and seized upon a phrase from the review—Seldes' praise of Fitzgerald's ability to evoke "irony and pity"—in order to make it the subject of an inane conversation between Jake and Bill in *The Sun Also Rises* (113-14). Shortly after *Tender is the Night* was published and another glowing Seldes' review appeared, Hemingway wrote Fitzgerald, "if you could get rid of Seldes and those guys that nearly ruined you and turn them out as well as you can and let the spectators yell when it is good and hoot when it is not you would be all right" (*Selected Letters* 408). That exhortation was, of course, only half-heartfelt, the other half being Hemingway's obvious jealousy of the excessive praise Seldes was giving his friendly rival. Once again Seldes proclaimed Fitzgerald to be "at the head of the American writers of our time" (68) in a review which was headlined, "Fitzgerald Writes Superb Tragic Novel." One of Seldes' main points was that "Fitzgerald's triumph is that without a trace of symbolism or allegory, he makes this special story universally interesting" (67). And once again, Hemingway was apparently so incensed by Seldes' praise of Fitzgerald that he reserved space in his fiction for characters to banter about Seldes' well-chosen critical phrases. As Paul Smith notes, in a second typescript of "The Butterfly and the Tank" Hemingway added "a long dialogue between the narrator and the manager over the symbolic appropriateness of the 'tank' in the title" (375), which he apparently rethought and shortened for the final version. And as if to undercut Seldes' claim that Fitzgerald had written a "beautiful and profoundly tragic story," a second element of banterish debate in
"The Butterfly and the Tank" concerns the gap which Johnston observed between the narrator's inexplicable "take" on the flit-gun incident as "comic," while everyone else insists that the event was tragic (185).

Smith perceptively notes that in *The Fifth Column* Philip's actions parallel the flit-gun man's, and I would add that it's because the inspiration for both characters—as well as the school-boy-looking-young man with the Guard's tie—was the irrepressible Scott Fitzgerald. In Hemingway's play, Dorothy tells Preston that "Philip's so much more amusing, and so much livelier," to which Preston responds, "He's much livelier, all right. You know what he was doing last night before they shut down Chicote's? He had a cuspidor, and he was going around blessing people out of it. You know, sprinkling it on them. It was better than ten to one he'd get shot" (5). But he doesn't get shot, and Dorothy uses the story of the flit-gun man to persuade Philip, "You don't have to be like that... that was a dreadful thing you did the other night with the spittoon. Trying to provoke trouble" (5). It was something Scott seemed capable of doing. "One time," Hemingway recalled, Fitzgerald's daughter "needed to go to the bathroom. Scott started to undress her [at the foot of the stairs] and the proprietor, who lived on the floor below... said, 'Monsieur, there is a cabinet de toilette just ahead of you to the left of the stairs.' 'Yes, and I'll put your head in it too, if you're not careful,' Scott told him" (*A Moveable Feast* 184).

If, as Smith speculates, "the earlier version of the event in the play underlines Hemingway's sense of identification with the joyful victim," I would suggest that if the joyful victim is not only a composite of Fitzgerald and the actual flit-gun man, but also a composite of Fitzgerald's alcoholic misadventures in Paris and at Juan-les-Pins, that Hemingway may well have been responding to Max Perkins' call to do something about Scott. Such behavior has "always been so of him," Perkins writes. "But it is useless to try to talk directly to him about it. The only way one could make an impression would be by some oblique method, and that takes a cleverer person than I am" (Bruccoli, *The Only Thing*, 210). In recognizing the schoolboy-looking Fitzgerald with his "buttoned-down collar and a Guard's tie" (*A Moveable Feast* 150) in the schoolboy-looking fellow in "The Butterfly and the Tank" and the flit-gun man, who wears a similar tie; in identifying the waxen grey face from *A Moveable Feast* as the waxy-faced flit-gun man in death; in linking the sophomoric, provocative behavior of Scott's and the flit-gun man's; one can't help but take Dorothy's retelling of the flit-gun tragedy in *The Fifth Column* and plea to Philip, "You don't have to be like that," as Hemingway's own oblique attempt to reach out to an exasperating friend, a friend for whom he clearly felt the same ambivalence as did the Murphys.

Although Hemingway often "emphasized how much the friendship with Fitzgerald meant to him" (Donaldson 105), he also made derogatory remarks about Fitzgerald's constant lamenting to him that he had "missed" the big war and envied Ernest his wartime participation. In "The Crack-Up," Fitzgerald admits that his "two juvenile regrets" were "not being big enough (or good enough) to play football in college, and at not getting overseas during the war" (70). Turnbull reports that "Fitzgerald's association with Hemingway revived his regrets that he hadn't been in the war. He would spend whole days in the basement of Brentano's poring over the stereopticon slides of stagnant trenches and torn bodies" (160). After the "Crack-Up" essays were published in *Esquire*, Hemingway wrote Perkins that Fitzgerald "seems to almost take pride in his shamelessness of defeat. The *Esquire* pieces seem to me to be so miserable... I always
thought, from when I first met him, that if Scott had gone to that war that he always felt so bad about missing, he would have been shot for cowardice" (Bruccoli 237).

Although Hughes maintains that the young couple from “The Butterfly and the Tank” were based on “a young English couple in charge of the English-language broadcasts for the Madrid radio” whom Hemingway disliked, he confirms that “in the story, he exaggerated the man’s slightness and the woman’s stockiness, and in the fiction version of the incident, he had the man hiding under a table as the shots rang out, leaving his wife unprotected” (364-65). In "The Butterfly and the Tank," perhaps Hemingway brought Fitzgerald to Madrid to show him what, given his embarrassing and unremitting behavior, and Zelda’s “forceful” presence, may well have happened if he had gone into a battle zone—or even a Fifth Column bar.

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**ABSTRACTS**

Lorsque, encore en France, Ernest Hemingway compose « The Butterfly and the Tank », le souvenir de conduite outrancière des Fitzgerald à Paris et à Juan-les-Pins est certainement présent dans son esprit. Le nombre d'allusions à Scott et Zelda sont trop soulignées pour qu'il en soit autrement. La structure de cette nouvelle, avec un Hemingway qui tient le rôle habituel de correspondant aguerri confirme ce postulat.

Hemingway s'est souvent montré critique par rapport aux lamentations de Fitzgerald qui aurait « raté » la grande guerre. « Depuis que j'ai rencontré Scot j'ai toujours pensé que s'il avait participé à cette guerre qu'il regrette tant d'avoir manquée, il aurait été fusillé pour lâcheté » écrit-il à Max Perkins. Le présent article émet l'hypothèse que, pour illustrer ce propos, Hemingway a subrepticement introduit Fitzgerald dans « The Butterfly and the Tank » en tant que personnage.

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