1964

Novels of James Gould Cozzens; a study of the theme of passion and reason, self division's cause

William N. Dehon

The University of Montana

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

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Dehon, William N., "Novels of James Gould Cozzens; a study of the theme of passion and reason, self division's cause" (1964). Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers. 3106.

https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/3106

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
THE NOVELS OF JAMES GOULD COZZENS

A Study of the Theme of
Passion and Reason, Self Division's Cause

by
William N. Dehon

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Master of Arts in English

Montana State University

August 1964

Approved by:

Chairman, Board of Examiners

Dean, Graduate School

AUG 1 1964

Date
My thanks to my family for their patience and consideration during my work on the Cozzens novels, and to Professor Jesse Bier for his invaluable guidance and encouragement.
INTRODUCTION

The following pages will be devoted to an examination of a theme which I take to be the epicenter of the eight most recent novels by James Gould Cozzens—the theme of the man of reason versus the man of passion. This theme, sounded in an epigram by the diarist Charles Fulke Greville and quoted by Julius Penrose in *By Love Possessed*, "Passion and reason, self division's cause," is developed most fully in Mr. Cozzens' latest novel, but it has been gestating in his eight most recent books, and its roots tap the earliest four novels: *Confusion* (1924), *Michael Scarlett* (1925), *Cock Pit* (1928), and *The Son of Perdition* (1929). I see the theme, and the conflict it presents, as providing the central motivation and meaning to the author's major work.

After discussing Mr. Cozzens' development from novel to novel, I wish to examine the novels with particular emphasis on the development and exploration of the theme quoted above.

The first of Mr. Cozzens' novels was written when he was an undergraduate at Harvard University, and its title, *Confusion*, aptly summarizes its contents. The book charts

---

the exploits and reckless self-destruction of a heroine
named Cerise d'Atree. *Michael Scarlett,* his second work,
is closely akin to *Confusion,* if not set in the same period--
the Elizabethan age--then at least in its genre, a galloping
romanticism. The next two novels, *Cock Pit* and *The Son of
Perdition,* were outgrowths of the author's experiences while
teaching American dependents' children in Cuba; both treat
of heroic goings-on at sugar plantations on the island, and
both are written in a more or less romantic vein.

Mr. Cozzens' next book, a short novel, *S. S. San Pedro,*
is a fictionalized account of the mysterious sinking of the
USS *Vestris* on November 3, 1928. In this novel, the reader
senses an abandonment of the author's earlier, rather
sentimental and sensuous characters and subject matter.
And it is perhaps in this short novel, as I hope to examine
carefully later, that one sees the emergence of the prototype
of the man of reason, surely not yet fully developed, but
identifiable nevertheless.

Following *S. S. San Pedro,* Mr. Cozzens wrote *The Last
Adam* (1933), the hero of which, an aging and robust New
England physician named, appropriately, George Bull, is the
last of the "earlier" Cozzens heroes as they appear in the
four earliest books. While we see such characters in later
works (*Benny Carricker* in *Guard of Honor,* etc.), they are
anti-heroic in stature. These are people of great appetite, passion, and sensuousness.

In these two books, _S. S. San Pedro_ and _The Last Adam_, the reader becomes fully aware of the author's burgeoning competency as a realist, his increasing mastery of characterization, and his growing concern with the structure of his work. I feel that one of the major reasons for Mr. Cozzens' excellence as a novelist is that this burgeoning has not ceased during the forty years of his writing career. He has developed slowly but steadily.

The next novel, _Castaway_ (1934) is atypical. Its psychologically labyrinthine subject matter and Kafka-esque style represent, as Frederick Bracher has pointed out, "a vein which Cozzens chose not to follow further."\(^2\) Although it is atypical, _Castaway_ provides the reader with some important psychological insights into the nature of the world in which the man of reason finds himself. The _Castaway_ nightmare can be interpreted to provide important clues to the reason for and nature of many of the stresses and pressures endured by the man of reason. Indeed, to say that the world of Arthur Winner in _By Love Possessed_ is a

realistic drawing of the surreal world of Mr. Lecky, the
anti-hero of *Castaway*, would not be unfair. Mr. Lecky's
world is peopled with fears, fantasies, and his own
doppelganger, an idiot alter ego. Similarly, Arthur Winner's
enemy is himself as he remembers himself in the past, and
as he acts in the present action of the book.

In the next Cozzens novel, *Men and Brethren* (1936),
we find the metamorphosis of the man of reason more or less
complete. Ernest Cudlipp is an Episcopalian minister, and
the novel charts his responsibilities, as well as his
activities, during a weekday. Cudlipp, in contrast to the
rebellious heroes of the earlier books, is resigned and
self-controlled. It should be pointed out here that he is
the fourth Cozzens hero (Joel Stellow, Anthony Bradell,
and George Bull were before him) who is a professional man,
although the author’s attitudes toward professionalism have
been changing through these novels. The responsibilities of
the professional man are stressed in most of the later novels:
those of the doctor in *The Last Adam*, the minister in *Men and
Brethren*, the military leader in *Guard of Honor*, and the
lawyer in *The Just and the Unjust* and *By Love Possessed*. One
might argue that *S. S. San Pedro*, in pointing up the conse-
quences of a too-strict regard for the precepts of good
seamanship, shows us what happens when the professional man becomes completely inflexible, and uses his professionalism as a crutch. I hope to examine this phenomenon later at greater length, and to show its bearing on the development of the archetypal man of reason, Anthony Bradell.

Following *Men and Brethren*, Mr. Cozzens published *Ask Me Tomorrow* (1940), in which the reader watches the moral coming of age of a young writer, Francis Ellery, an American visiting parts of Europe. The novel examines the youthful pride of Ellery and observes his gradual disillusion and maturity. In a letter written in 1955, Mr. Cozzens admitted that the account of the young writer in *Ask Me Tomorrow* was partly autobiographical, a factor which would serve to indicate that the author had reached a point in his development when he could afford a backward glance, considering objectively, perhaps, his earlier admiration for the type of impetuous, rebellious individual who was at the center of the four earlier novels.

*The Just and the Unjust* was published in 1942, and it is the first of the author's novels concerning the law (the other is *By Love Possessed*). The hero of this book, somewhat the same age as the young writer of *Ask Me Tomorrow*, has

---

3Bracher, p. 59.
outgrown the pride of youth. Abner Coates, while youthful, is in the process of learning about some of the central ironies of his profession as well as some important lessons about maturity. The novel charts Abner's acceptance of a hard lesson: the man of reason characteristically works within the limitations of the possible. Judge Dealy, a character of the later novel, By Love Possessed, suggests that "freedom is the knowledge of necessity," a statement that presents the essence of what Abner learns.

In 1948, after having served during World War II, Mr. Cozzens wrote Guard of Honor, considered by many readers as the finest novel written about the war. By this time, the theme of self-division caused by passion and reason has come strongly to the fore in Mr. Cozzens' work, and Guard of Honor fully examines the responsibilities of the man of reason in the service, and his actions and reactions in accommodating himself to certain war-induced stresses.

The titular hero of the book is General "Bus" Beal, commander of an air base in central Florida. The book describes the harrying of the General during a period of crisis at the base; it shows him, like The Just and the Unjust showed Abner Coates, in the process of learning some subtle things about the reasonable man's responsibilities in a world thrown off-center by the war.
The secret hero of Guard of Honor, however, is Colonel
the book deserves a larger share of attention than that
given to each of the other novels in this paper.

In concluding this section, it might be well for me to
reiterate that Mr. Cozzens' novels are twelve in number, all
of which represent a process, on the novelist's part, of
taking up certain themes and questions, resolving some of
them, and saving others for later more intricate development.
In the first four novels, Confusion, Michael Scarlett, Cock
Pit, and The Son of Perdition, the youthful novelist develops
a youthful hero: brash, rebellious, impetuous to a fault,
and sensuous. Cerise d'Atree in Confusion, Michael Scarlett,
and Ruth and Lancy Micks of Cock Pit are good examples.

The last eight novels, beginning with S. S. San Pedro,
which broaches the theme of a man's responsibility to his
profession, perhaps with the result of showing how not to
survive through reasonableness, and moving through Castaway,
finally reach a concern with a mature hero as typified by
Abner Coates and Arthur Winner, serious-minded, reasonable,
without cerebral in type, and at times rather priggish.

In the following pages, I shall develop a brief survey
of the four earlier novels, and then examine the development
of the man of reason in sections devoted to the last eight
THE EARLY NOVELS

In reference to his first three novels, Mr. Cozzens has stated, "My first novel was written when I was nineteen, and that, and the next, and the next, were about what you would expect. I have the advantage of being older now." His displeasure with his first four works has caused him to delete them from published lists of his works; only eight books are listed opposite the title page of *By Love Possessed* in the Harcourt hard-cover edition. Copies of the earliest books are not easily available; not only are they out of print but publishers—undoubtedly at the author's own request—have refrained from reprinting them.

In Mr. Cozzens' early books, the central figures are, in most cases, youthful rebels; they are romantic in their thoughts and actions, and the works themselves are romantic in their attitudes and settings. It is obvious that their youthful author plainly admired such fiction, although his treatment of it is uneven and somewhat inaccurate. Nevertheless, the early books represent a considerable achievement.

---

4 *Twentieth Century Authors*, ed. Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft (New York: R. W. Wilson, 1942), pp. 323-324. This reference presents one of the few autobiographical notes by Mr. Cozzens.
when one considers the extreme youthfulness of their author.

Confusion, written while Mr. Cossens was a sophomore at Harvard, charts the meteoric rise and fall of a glittering girl, Cerise d'Atree, the rich, beautiful, and talented descendant of a noble French family. She literally has everything: intelligence, wit, masculine courage and strength coupled with feminine sensitivity, and social position. The book follows her on a tour of the fashionable centers of America and Europe, and while it is rather ostentatious, the account "anticipates the detailed picture of upper-middle-class life that distinguished By Love Possessed."

The fact that Confusion was well received by the critics attests to its succès d'estime. The reviewer for the New Republic, for example, considered it a qualified success:

At intervals, the author becomes a little too obviously well lettered, and the first half of the book—where people drop glibly in from Paris, St. Petersburg, Budapest, Madrid, Algiers, and Vienna—betrays somewhat over frankly his familiarity with the lands that bound the Seven Seas. In occasional paragraphs, too, his characters are forced to stand aside in order to provide

5James Gould Cossens, Confusion (Boston: B. J. Brimmer Co., 1924).

6Bracher, p. 29.
a kind of right away for the passage of a full-freighted idea. . . . One is tempted to say that his last twenty pages could scarcely have been written better. 7

Cerise's adventures, culminating in her abrupt end in an auto crash, hardly need reiterating here. Suffice it to say that her rather headstrong and impetuous nature is in sharp contrast to the seasoned, careful ratiocination of the later Cozzens heroes. We find echoes of her type as late as By Love Possessed—Clarissa Winner is the character who comes to mind. She, too, possesses Cerise's masculine strength and character, although Clarissa is not so impulsive and violent as Cerise.

Cerise's masculine counterpart appears in Cozzens' next novel, Michael Scarlett, 8 a "roaring cloak-and-dagger romance of Elizabethan England." 9 Michael, the future Lord Dunbury, is the epitome of Elizabethan courtliness. His loyalties are divided among the Queen, his lover, a Spaniard he tried to rescue after the defeat of the Spanish armada, and a group of roistering poets and writers he has befriended


It also offers the certain constancy, as an answer," the man said. "It also offers the certain constancy, as an answer, to the reader a good time.

Wonderful and bloody fight. In an attempt to protect his home, and to kill in a stupor, the author offers the reader a good time.

In an obligation to serve the lady, and a lover, the man in support of the forces of law and order for the queen in duty.

The law intrinsically with the author's cause.

Further to the interesting to observe that reason, duty, and see this germinal theme so early in the constancy canon, and duty and love, and reason and feeling. It is interesting to locate these explanations to the att, which he says, this spirit.

Rome. He is wounded through the book by the varnous at the golden nest. Kermow, Nash, Ben Johnson, and John.
defeat, and by Shakespeare’s production of “A Winter’s Tale” some fifteen years before the event.  

Both of Cossens’ next books, Cock Pit and The Son of Perdition, concern a Cuban background. Instead of going back to Harvard after the publication of Michael Scarlett (he had taken a year’s absence to finish the book), Mr. Cossens went to Cuba, where he spent a year teaching the children of American engineers in Santa Clara Province, and the next two books are evidently outgrowths of the author’s experiences during this time.

Cock Pit presents the reader with a glorification of the ruthless world of the Cuban sugar plantations and of the strong, aggressive individuals who battle for power within that world, as typified by Chief Field Engineer Lancy Hicks, whose Irish name typifies Mr. Cossens’ ability to pick names for his characters which onomatopoetically identify their personality types—“George Bull” is another such name, as are “Ernest Cudlipp,” “Caroline Dummer,” etc. Lancy is a violent man but he is honest, and in battling the great, impassive machinery of the company, he ultimately defeats the villains in the book.

10 Ibid.

In Cock Pit, Cerise d'Atree reappears as Ruth Micks, who is nearly as masculine and strong-willed as her father. Ruth is "an entirely modern young woman; she does precisely what she pleases, and some of the things she pleases to do narrowly miss getting her into water so extremely hot as to be almost boiling."12

Ruth is slightly more reasonable than Cerise d'Atree, and, of course, compared to the men of reason of the later novels--e.g., Arthur Winner--Lancy Micks' reasonableness is scarcely discernible, but it is, at least, present. The significant point is that there is a progression through these early novels; Mr. Cozzens' attitude toward his characters is changing, and the early novels show a steady maturing of author and characters.

The extent of the author's steady change in attitude toward the personality types of his characters is most apparent in his next book, The Son of Perdition,13 in which the aggressive hero has metamorphosed into the Man of Authority, Mr. Joel Stellow, Chief of Cuban Operations and Administrator General of the United Sugar Company. The rebel


is present, to be sure, but his identity has been changed; he is the "son of perdition," Oliver Findley.

Stellow is a father-image of sorts; he represents and wields the enormous power of the sugar company with fairness and omniscience. It would be fair, I think, to say that he is the ancestor of the father-mentor as he appears in *The Just and the Unjust* (Judge Coates), in *Guard of Honor* (Col. Ross), and in *By Love Possessed* (Arthur Winner, Sr.). However, Stellow is unreasonably unbending in his authority, more akin in this sense to Captain Clendening in *S. S. San Pedro* than to Judge Coates or Col. Ross.

Findley is Satan's representative in *The Son of Perdition*, and as such, he, too, has a number of descendants in the other novels, such as Warren Winner, and the criminals in *The Just and the Unjust*. He represents Man ruled by his passions, eternally at odds with authority and the forces of right. He is Stellow's arch-enemy, and at the end of the book, Stellow, a symbol of God as head of the huge sugar company, banishes Findley from the island. When Findley boards the freighter that is to carry him from the island, the ship's officer comments coldly, "There is a place prepared for you." Like Judas, Findley goes to take it.  

14 *SCP*, p. 304.
generation of the sons of perdition. In the social landscape of theocracy, to which Christianity adapts itself, the better society is possible only if the people are righteous. In that sense, it seems that society can exist.

But the structure of society, as seen in the case of Judaism, makes it clear that society can exist on its own, without the cooperation of the Jewish community. The existence of such characters, in whom the existence of such characters, is commented on:

Carrey's Parker Decter. Professor Becker has
for the existence of such enigmatic characters as Warren.

For the man of reason, there is no possible answer.

Certainly another such maturation figure.

Man of reason, Parker Decter in My Love Possessed to
perdition, is in evidence to the further, darker unknown, the
feelings of others, Warren Whiteman, as such a son of
who is a law unto himself, who has a total disregard for
something inexplicable to the man of reason—the immediate
by love possessed are such descendents. They represent
benny carrey in guest of honor and warren whiteman in
desendants. Such mysterious characters as colonel
as a guest of whom figure, finally he several

17
However, one must observe, in reference to Mr. Bracher's comment, that the typical son of perdition, as he appears on the pages of the novels, differs from the other characters chiefly in degree. It would seem, on examining some of the actions of the other characters, that everyone has the seed of such perdition within him. The man of reason himself can be, at times, notably without regard for others. For example, possessed by love, Arthur Winner succeeds not only in desecrating the memory of his dead first wife but also in putting horns on his best friend, Julius Penrose, and all because he is entranced by the "oestral rage" of his partner in adultery, Marjorie, Julius' wife.

Similarly, General Beal, in Guard of Honor, during a time of extreme stress, leaves matters in the hands of his mentor, "Judge" Ross, and runs off to engage in mock air combat with Benny Carricker. Carricker, in the opening pages of the novel, saves the General's neck when Beal freezes on the controls of his plane in the face of an impending air collision while landing at Ocanara Air Base: the incident that gives impetus to the entire novel. The son of perdition as personified by Carricker can, at certain crucial times, take up the responsibility discarded by the man of reason in moments of extreme stress, when reason fails.
The point of my observation is that the man of reason
is, under certain circumstances, his own worst opposition.
Thus, the battle for reason can be an interior battle (it
is, perhaps a battle best depicted in *Castaway*), a battle
with oneself as well as a battle with forces outside oneself
which tends to go against right reason. This self-division
is part of the cause of the chaos which the man of reason
must continually face up to in his environment. To para-
phrase Mr. Bracher's observation, certain "immovable objects
in the social landscape" are, for the man of reason, his own
ability to err, to be unreasonable, to let his passions
momentarily outstrip his reason.

The two Cuban novels, *Cock Pit* and *The Son of Perdition*,
in summary, not only introduce the masculine, aggressive
hero who finds his culmination as male in George Bull, and
as female in Clarissa Winner, but also provide the reader
with three variations of such a personality, each of which
is more fully developed and exploited in later novels: the
aggressor as rebel for a good cause (Cerise d'Atree--Michael
Scarlett), the aggressor as great man (Joel Stellow), and
the aggressive rebel as man of evil (Findley).

The Cuban novels introduce another theme, as Mr. Bracher
has pointed out,\(^\text{16}\) which will become increasingly important

\(^{16}\text{Bracher, p. 32.}\)
to the man of reason as it is developed through the succeeding novels: the theme of the importance of a man's work.

Lancy Micks fights the company, to be sure, but he is careful not to sabotage his integrity as an engineer. In a sense, the lives of the major characters in Cock Pit (and in a more diffuse sense, The Son of Perdition) are attuned to the growth and ultimate harvest of the sugar crops upon which the very existence of the huge sugar corporation depends. As Mr. Bracher points out, "The expert, set apart from the masses by his competence, has a self-imposed but imperative obligation not to do shoddy work; getting the job done supersedes all other values." 17

The importance of a man's work would seem to override all other possibilities of his rebelliousness, if he is a fairly mature and seasoned character like Joel Stellow. Indeed, one might speculate about the possibility that the likes of Lancy Micks, if given a few years of age plus the bulk of added responsibility represented by the directorate of United Sugar Corporation, would turn to the sort of unbending and conservative judgment we find in Joel Stellow, in order to bear up under the weight of his responsibilities.

The crushing pressure of a man's responsibility to his job not only can dehumanize him, but also can eventually

17Ibid., p. 33.
cripple him to the point where, confronted by a seemingly insurmountable problem, he is completely incapable of taking action, good or bad. The reader sees him examined and found wanting as Captain Clendening in the author's next book, *S. S. San Pedro*, and also sees another type of character introduced: an individual, ostensibly under the tutorship of the Captain, who watches his downfall and presumably learns some important lessons about the fallibility of such a tired-father-image: Anthony Bradell.

In the following section, I wish to examine Mr. Cozzens' next novel, with an eye to pointing up the book's illustration of what might be called "the unreason of too much reason," that is, the folly of being too unbending in carrying out one's responsibilities.
S. S. SAN PEDRO

"Officers will carry out their orders to the best of their ability."

——Captain Clendening
These fragments I have shored against my ruin.
——"The Waste Land"

In the first ten pages of Mr. Cossen's next novel, S. S. San Pedro, all of the major characters are introduced, and the reader is provided with a general forecast of the rough going to be faced by the characters before the book and their voyage is finished. In length and economy a novella, S. S. San Pedro is written in a spare prose which is admirably suited to the steady passage of action in the book and to the ship's inexorable progress toward doom.

It opens with a description of the San Pedro herself, a twin-screw turbine liner of seventeen thousand tons, bearing a million dollars in gold for the Argentine banks, automobiles for Montevideo, two thousand tons of cash registers and tinned baking powder, cotton shirts, bathtubs, children's toys, machine guns for Paraguay, coal to make the voyage, and

---

18James Gould Cossens, S. S. San Pedro (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1931). The novel was later reprinted, along with Castaway, in a Modern Library paperback edition. Page numbers cited refer to this edition, abbreviated MSSP.
one hundred and seventy-two passengers. The San Pedro is a microcosm of sorts, but it would be difficult to say that Cozzens was primarily interested in allegorizing throughout the book. His use of symbols borders at times on manipulation (Doctor Percival is a much too heavily drawn death-figure, for example; Miro's watch is set with a large jewel, etc.), but a point-for-point allegory is not the author's main purpose.

The book opens with a description of loading operations, which also serves to introduce some of the major characters. Mr. Bradell, the senior second officer, is observing the loading. Miro, first quartermaster, a coffee-colored Brazilian, is in direct charge of the deck operations. He watches over Packy, a big Jamaican Negro at the winch who, although he is dead drunk, handles the winch with mechanical precision:

"He and the winch met at an abysmal level of brainless strength. Like the boom on its gooseneck, Packy pivoted blindly on the small hard point of habit. Like the boom, he described invariably the same controlled semicircles." 19

The three men, Mr. Bradell, Miro, and Packy, represent a chain of command which functions smoothly in the opening pages, a chain so well established that its low man, Packy,

19SSSP, p. 4.
Sounded in the opening pages.

Implications. The theme of the importance of a man's work is

examined. The workings of such dictations, as well as the

San Pedro's logic, the author has some sort of his

are an extraordinary process, and the director of the

professionals that there are few professionals whose dictations

matter of concern. Of course, in a matter of the highest

work responds in a crucial way in 8.6. San Pedro. The

Mr. Mccormick, concern with the importance of a man's

breath down. It will all begin with Captain Chandler.

introduced to the reader, it is Captain Chandler, commander

nod. Once and over Mr. Braddock, although he has not yet been

glance to Mr. Braddock, who answered it with a slight smile

the white expanse of the after-birds... in a moment

we all right. Compartment that, micro shots the eye up to

directly behind him to order and. But packy, we are told,

call from the seat at the controls of the micro the

to assume responsibility! It's, for example. Packy should

performance the function breaks down, the next man is at hand

can function perfectly on a completely mundane level. If
It was, in Miro's idiom, a matter of *tela*. Integrated with the Spanish sense of tone, texture, woven firmness was the untranslatable value of a plan, a sustained argument underlying a mode of behavior. It was wide enough to include that beautiful gift of the white man, the disciplined cooperation, speed, and precision of people quick and certain about their duties. This abstraction was the last, perfect pleasure, epitomized by Mr. Bradell in attention alert and quiet above, but, in addition, that a man might know he was good flesh as well as blessed spirit . . . 

It should be noted that for Miro, *tela* is sufficient unto the day. He finds strength in the ordering of events, the discipline of his work, and his strength is reinforced by other systems: time, for example (during the loading, he pulls from his pocket a gold watch studded with a ruby, the magnificence of which, we are told, "testified to him again the rightness of the world") and the multiplication tables which Mr. Bradell teaches to him during his spare time. While Miro obviously relishes the *tela* in learning to multiply, he is without illusions about ever being able to finish the task.

In contrast, Mr. Bradell and others who are of higher rank can take their satisfactions from seeing the ends to which their disciplined professionalism leads them. However, even they are too deeply intrenched in *tela*, in a system of

---

21 Ibid., pp. 4-5.
discipline for its own sake. For the Captain especially, this entrenchment in tela becomes a fatal flaw; Clendening's tela, which might have served him well in health, betrays him in his sickness because the officers beneath him have been so disciplined under the system that they cannot take action without his command. The only person capable of taking command, Bradell, is struck by the boon which appeared in the opening pages as a symbol of blindly mechanical strength disciplined by tela, and so is rendered helpless at the moment when he could take action and save the ship.

Captain Clendening appears in the opening pages as a man with an outward, visible sign of his own impending downfall:

His old blue eyes, always marred by a droop on the left, were unnaturally listless. . . . His right brow arched up round and steep; the left lay flat. The left corner of the mouth sank in a lump outstanding toward the stubborn chin.  

These misshapen features are the result of an injury by a thrown marlinspike; they symbolize and parallel a sort of fatal flaw in the ship itself, a slight list to port while she sits at the dock, a list which grows worse as the voyage continues.

22esse, p. 6.
Captain Clendening, in the opening pages of the book, is being observed (there's the sinister possibility that he has been "treated") by one Doctor Percival, who is the author's much-too-obvious death symbol in S. S. San Pedro. The doctor is overloaded with a rather preposterous set of funereal features and garments:

Doctor Percival's tight face was fleshless, and almost gray. His lips sank in, rounded over his teeth. They were lips so scanty that you could see the line of the teeth meeting. His eyes, red-rimmed, lay limp in their sockets, appearing to have no color at all. Doctor Percival's intense pale gaze came out of holes covered with soft, semitransparent lenses.

The doctor is further tricked out with a sort of petit mal which turns his face at times into something really revolting, and he wears gray gloves, a rumpled black hat, and talks in hoarse whispers, even in the roar of the engine room. He is the first to point out to Bradell that the ship does not float quite level, and he asks further disconcerting questions ("No danger of tipping over?"). And he has some foreboding things to say about Clendening: "The captain . . . is an old man, Mr. Bradell. . . . People grow old . . . they break down, they wear out."

Soon, the ship begins her voyage to South America. Mr. MacGillivray, the chief engineer, has tried the engines, which

23 *SSSP*, p. 7.
seem to be working smoothly. Doctor Percival has finally debarked, and Captain Clendening busies himself with writing out the night orders, speculating all the while on how many more voyages he would be good for, "and what would be left then but death, so slow, so horribly swift." The novel is literally full of such veiled hints at his, and his ship's, impending doom.

Mr. Bradell, as senior second officer and a socially acceptable if not entirely handsome individual, has inherited a duty from the first officer which involves spending some of his evenings in a clean uniform, acting as host at the passengers' dance. While such duty is distinctly unworthy of an officer in Bradell's eyes, it gives the reader a chance to see that Bradell, too, has a rather single-minded attitude toward tela. He is the Captain's favorite, and his assignment at the dances is the occasion for a good deal of crude ribbing on the Captain's part; what is significant, however, is that Bradell's appearances at the dances are part of an assignment. As an officer, he sees the assignment as nothing but a duty, and a rather onerous one at that. The possibility of his considering it as an opportunity for the sort of dalliance the Captain has warned him about is a slim one.

At one of the dances he meets a young lady who tries to seduce him, and the reader becomes aware that, surely,
Mr. Bradell must take even his Captain's bawdy admonitions to stay chaste as the word of the law. When, shortly, the ship enters the bad weather that will eventually sink her, it is the girl who makes the strongest appeal to Bradell to be a bit human in his attitude toward the comfort of the passengers:

"Sorry," repeated Anthony. "Don't worry. Everything is all right." All the woodwork creaked and cried out with the roll. She put a hand on his arm and said: "Good Lord, is it as bad as that?" She seemed obscurely to cling to him, impeding his thought as well as his progress. He felt too tired to shake her off, so he said: "No danger at all. Everything is all right."24

Later, the girl, concerned, asks him if "that doctor man" went ashore. She, too, has sensed the awful import of Doctor Percival's presence on the ship.

The San Pedro's list begins to worsen; coupled with the rough weather, it causes a breaking loose of cargo, and the ship gradually begins to deteriorate. Batches are jammed open, portholes are smashed, valves won't close, and the ship begins to take water alarmingly. Although both Clendening and Bradell are aware of impending disaster, they seem unable, through their professional discipline, to do anything effectively. The Captain gets sicker; he fails to hear requests for action, his face becomes pale and puffy.

24 SSSP, p. 39.
and he spends much of his time staring blankly at nothing. Bradell, in contrast, takes action, but it is undirected. He seems angry much of the time, evidently at the breakdown of the structure of command, so angry, indeed, that he "sees red." His reason is clouded, and his emotions often get the best of him.

Finally, amid vain attempts to get the lifeboats away before the ship goes down, Bradell attempts to use a boom—like the one used at the opening of the story—to ditch some of the automobiles which have broken loose. In doing so, he overrides the Captain's command, but the instant he takes action into his own hands, he is struck down:

Black faces turned. Out of the concealment of the deck-house under them came Mr. Bradell now, and he, too, turned. The boom hovered in a broken semicircle, balanced dizzily, went into a drunken side movement. "Look alive, sir!" screamed Miro. The boom, released, came too fast. With a blind, inert precision it swung further left; the iron-sheathed timber struck like a well-directed club out of the anonymous skies. It knocked Mr. Bradell's poised figure ten feet into the scuppers.25

It is only after he learns that Mr. Bradell, the only man capable of succeeding him in command, has been injured that the Captain gives the order to abandon ship. By then, it is too late; a lifeboat-load of Negroes, including the

25 SEP, p. 69.
injured Mr. Bradell, and one full of women and children
get away from the ship. The San Pedro, with her doomed
captain and most of the crew and male passengers, goes down,
and "overhead, the vast sky, pale and white; all around the
infinite and empty ocean."

There are two important themes at work in the pages of
S. S. San Pedro. The first of them is the importance of a
man's work. The second major theme has to do with Man's
impermanence and the ultimate necessity of his deterioration.
We see such deterioration in Captain Clendening, and it
becomes, in effect, a lesson to be learned by the younger
Mr. Bradell.

Doctor Percival points out the necessity of a man's
wearing out to Bradell, and later, Bradell hears the Captain
himself reiterate the lesson:

When your insides go back on you it shakes
you all up. Just little things. They all
get together and you—all of a sudden you
see you aren't going to live forever. . . .
You don't like going out, boy. Sort of
cold. Sort of lonely. Well, we all got
to do it.26

Bradell can see the significance of the Captain's
words. He speculates about them to the dance music coming
from the Captain's radio, music which is as tenuous as life
itself:

26ASSF, p. 30.
reason in the San Pedro affair.

able causes here, has learned about the importance of
character which will later develop into the typical reason-
to preserve that breed, as a representative of the type of
mortal blow? It is less, however, I think that it is safe
breed in the littoral. The blow from the board could be a
Pedro destrucci; he is yet with a picture of the strongest
reader to not total that breed survives the San

such a loss can be destructive.

them, and if they are in a position of great responsibility,
responsibility? Responsibility begins to weigh heavily upon
advancing age like the captain lose the time edge of youth's
since they are not so well made for thrilling, men of

institutions, wear out as well.

Ironically, the machine of the San Pedro, the San's
made for La Tijana. 27

men, it seemed to authority, were not so well
the ceased watch above was always sleepless.
great turpentine burning could never grow tired
only, the San Pedro was built for success, she
above of winds, in the caresses of black water.
parted, the San Pedro drew away, and then it
came straightly into earshot, and then it
covered it to silence. It drew that again,
covered, dropped down, and the mighty ocean
through, dropped down, and there entered
stronger atmosphere, it hardened like a long
place of dance-end music, fluttered, keeping the
now, at this thread moment, the drum connected
In the broadest symbolic terms, the microcosm of the San Pedro depicts mankind pitted against the blind unreasonableness of Nature. The reader isn't told what is the cause of the ship's list to port, nor is he told why the ship does not sail out of the rough weather. The San Pedro's only link with the world at large is her radio, and Captain Clendening is intent, throughout the novel, on keeping radio contact with other ships and ground stations. It is ironic, however, that the one ship close enough to come to the aid of the stricken San Pedro, a sugar tramp from Cuba, is not equipped with radio gear.

And the equipment aboard the San Pedro which is designed to meet such emergencies as bad weather and a list to port does not function well. The pumps, for example, cannot remove the shipped sea fast enough, and many of the lifeboats are rendered inoperable by the tilted decks. In certain fateful circumstances, neither Man's most reasonable efforts nor his carefully designed equipment can save him.

The mortality of man is a final, inexplicable fact of life; an awareness of it is crucial to the man of reason's ability to put life's other events into their proper order. The irony of Man's ultimate demise is sounded in S. S. San
Pedro, and it appears that the man of reason, if he is
typified by Mr. Bradell, has far to go in coping with
life's ironies. But he learns to do so in forthcoming
novels.
CASTAWAY

Although Castaway does not follow S. S. San Pedro in Mr. Cossens' canon, it is treated here because of its generic kinship with the work previously discussed and because of its importance to subsequent discussion of The Last Adam. Both Castaway and S. S. San Pedro may be called novella rather than full-length novels; for this reason, they have been published together by the Modern Library.

In Castaway, as in S. S. San Pedro, we see the author practicing extreme economy and compression. But whereas San Pedro is perhaps flawed by heavy-handedness in development of such characters as Dr. Percival, Castaway is a small masterpiece both in terms of character and development.

That the work is atypical has been pointed out; at least Cossens did not follow the surrealist technique exhibited here. But Castaway is important in a consideration of the theme of Passion vs. Reason, for it serves to facilitate an understanding of this theme in the other books. Further, it illustrates the impersonality of the world of all the Cossens characters.

---

The castaway, Mr. Lecky, who can scarcely be called a hero, has been trapped in a huge department store. The book's epigraph points up an ironic contrast between Mr. Lecky and an earlier counterpart, Robinson Crusoe; whereas Crusoe was able to provide for himself and enrich himself spiritually on his desert island, Mr. Lecky not only cannot take care of things but also destroys himself. By such devices as this constantly implied contrast, Mr. Cozzens points up two major and inter-related themes, both of which are important in their bearing on the theme of Passion vs. Reason.

The first of these themes concerns the modern individual's deterioration when he is forced to become self-sufficient. As a second theme, the book vividly illustrates those factors of the emotions which are outside of, and tend to subvert, Man's reason. In this sense, Castaway illustrates a self-division and subsequent reversion of an individual to a primitive and basically asocial behavior.

Mr. Lecky is cut adrift from society; he is depicted in a situation which demands that he subsist by means of his reason and ingenuity, two qualities with which his society has not equipped him. The department store offers him any material he may need to survive, and it is significant that,
Further incoherence to action. 22

without a well-ordered mind, and he was without
very long since. In any event, my latest was
ever seen men are united and few heretics are
discorded one probably serves much better; for
though a well-stocked mind is said to答题, a

dispense with the comforts of human companions-
to replace the stimulation of crowds and to

bewildering multitude in which he finds himself.

goods available for the use, or to cope with the equa-

ty to bring order to the bewildering multitude of mater-

ty to maintain order. The mind is not equipped other

he is the sort of individual who depends on others to

and carry out the ordering of their environment.

their lineage and elevated social status, are charmed with

complied with the heroes of the latter novels, who, because of

almost completely intellectually. He can be unreasonably

or taking, we explicitly implored to the point of being

appear to be an individual who, because of the middle-class

emphatic representation of the failure of materialism. He

complied upon by his. Broderick, who sees his degeneration as

in. Leech's middle-class orations have been noted and

are evidently the only threat to him which exists.

from the terror generated by the can imagination. These

generally, this fact, he does not succeed in preserving himself
He has long nurtured a p模仿 of being purchased

they have enacted in him for the major part of his life.

from the moment the novel begins, and it is apparent that
victims of his own tears and phantasies they come to haunt him
the nature which he cultivates is counterfeit. He is the
farce, and outright with its master, and it is this scene of
in the instruction, Mr. Lecky is confronted by all that

carries in a region and to the cause of this self-extermination

that the destroyer that is inherent in the“passion”which piques
lying just below the surface of men’s“cultivation.” It is

the master in the entire course can be the radical destroyer
the novel gives us the exact sounding of a theme which is

Genuinely presents a second important related theme.

free to occupy himself.

has been removed from society’s overarching influence, he is

sorts of entertainments and joy appearances with which, because he
he is a sentiment with a rich imagination poked by all
a taste for rich foods; ham, sausages, and alcohol, and
deployed of furniture and housewares. He is a quotation, with
cases of entertainment, and the scope’s most stately-dressed
town. He is greedy, with a penchant for new clothing, whose

background which work to hasten his destruction.

coarse would have us believe so along with a thoroughly

the most other unfortunate characters take which
Slowly accepting this as evidence that no such things existed, Mr. Lecky found terror deeper, and to him more plausible, to fill the unoccupied place—the simple sense of himself alone, and, not unassociated with it, the conception of a homicidal maniac quietly pursuing him. 30

Having fortified himself in the store against an unknown pursuer, Mr. Lecky has time to meditate on his isolation. Shortly, his imagination gives flesh to his phobia: coming to the grocery section for food, he surprises a sub-human being feeding there. Mr. Lecky, becoming his own maniac, relentlessly pursues this creature through the store and destroys him.

But the real terror which Mr. Lecky has been facing continues to be within himself. This terror is symbolized when, after having cut the "idiot's" throat and having dragged the body to the basement, he is wounded while heating a can of vegetables for his meal. His wound is in the same location as the one he inflicts on the idiot. With the passage of time, he increasingly comes to resemble his victim:

... he looked worse than he would have thought, more sinister and unkempt. The mirror, too, attacked his reality, reduced him to a thin image, living, but somehow hardly human, dangerously gross and big in his ill-fitting new suit. ... Shadows

---

falling forward on Mr. Lecky's face made his eyes look empty and senseless; his face, already soiled with the beard he had begun, was etiolated, exhausted of blood.\textsuperscript{31}

Late in the pages of the novel, a bell located on a pillar in the basement directly over the body of the victim begins to ring, repeatedly reminding Mr. Lecky of his crime. Under the persistent ringing of the bell, summoning him to a symbolic Judgment Day, Mr. Lecky finally descends to the basement from whence he came for a reckoning with his doppelganger:

Unwillingly, he took the idiot by the shoulder... His hand on the head, studying the uninjured side, Mr. Lecky beheld its familiar strangeness—not like a stranger's face, yet it was no friend's face, nor the face of anyone he had ever met... Mr. Lecky knew why he had never seen a man with this face. He knew who had been pursued and cruelly killed, who was now dead and would never climb more stairs. He knew why Mr. Lecky could never have for his own the stock of this great store.\textsuperscript{32}

Harry Mooney has summarized the importance of \textit{Castaway} in the body of Mr. Cossens' work:

Uncharacteristic though \textit{Castaway} may be in the mainstream of Cossens' development, it nevertheless represents a fruitful pause. Here,

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., p. 174.

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., p. 182.
Cozzens seems to be saying, is the primitive element in every man, and especially in the uneducated one. Here is the destructive horror against which only the forms and codes of civility can protect us. And having once explored this dark human corridor, Cozzens returned to his major concern: the role of man in modern society.33

*Castaway* is a rich field for a number of interpretations, but for the purpose of this paper, it provides significant delineation of Mr. Cozzens' attitude toward certain dangers in the modern world, and toward a typical member of the lower-middle or lower social class, a man with no breeding, no dignity, no scruples, slight intelligence, and very little hope. We are told little about Mr. Lecky's lineage, aside from the fact that, as a child, he was haunted by unreasonable fears. Further, and significantly, he seems to have no occupation; none is mentioned in the novel.

He takes no dignity from his profession, like Judge Ross; or from a well-stocked mind, like Julius Penrose; or from an aristocratic lineage, like Dr. George Bull. He will be met again in a more realistic light in the later novels, but he will receive little sympathy from his author, or from his fellow characters.

---

THE LAST ADAM

Doctor George Bull, the hero of *The Last Adam*, is the last of a series of men of action which began with Michael Scarlett, and the first of a series of characters who will appear in all of the later novels, and whom Mr. Cozzens seems unreservedly to admire. Bull is the symbol of a fundamental series of prejudices on the part of the author which have been present in his novels since *Confusion*. These favor long and distinguished blood lines and a basically conservative outlook.

Doctor Bull is the public health officer of a small New England town, New Winton. The novel concerns events during a period from February 17 to March 17, during which a typhoid epidemic breaks out in the town, several townspeople die, and Dr. Bull is accused and tried by the community for being derelict in his public health duties. The society of New Winton, it shortly becomes clear, is as materialistic in its outlook as the society that produced Mr. Lecky in *Castaway*.

The novel’s major theme is concerned with a study of man’s mortality and the indifference of his environment.

---

As a bulwark against this impartiality (symbolized by the capricious weather in the novel, a "false spring" which thaws the land and brings on the typhoid epidemic), the people of New Winton have erected a tightly-knit social structure, symbolized by the telephone network which appears and reappears throughout the novel, and by the web of power lines and roadways which connect New Winton with the world.

In this landscape looms Dr. Bull, a protean figure with a power akin to that which hums along the high-tension towers of the town. He represents an element outside, and not really capable of being influenced by, the social restrictions of the community. The novel examines the question of such a man's responsibility to a set of social, ethical, and moral standards which restrict and truncate precisely the sort of roaring force which possesses him. Further, it examines the possibility of such a man's survival in such a largely hostile environment as the New England landscape in winter. These examinations create resonances not only in Connens' previous novels, but also in the four major novels which follow The Last Adam.

Doctor Bull seems to be more a part of the book's largely impersonal natural environment than he is of the New Winton social milieu. The son of a preacher who moved from New England to the Michigan woods and back again,
George Bull, who returned to New Winton on Memorial Day, 1893, brought some of the roughness and more or less total lack of sentiment of the frontier with him.

But his lack of sentiment and roughness are deeper than acquired surface textures would be. He can lay claim to a kinship with New England which is deeper and more permanent than that of such arrivistes as the Bannings or most of the other New Winton residents. Although he owns one of the four New Winton houses which can claim any sort of antiquity, he is not interested in the social implications of such a fact; neither is his mistress, Janet Cardmaker, who has stripped her father's house, one of the oldest in the community, of most of its important furnishings.

Doctor Bull is also indifferent to the dangers of his precarious stance between the New Winton social hierarchy and that larger environment comprising the natural landscape, with its corresponding indifferences toward him. Midway in the novel, the doctor leaves his responsibilities with the typhoid epidemic and goes off with friends to hunt rattlesnakes. The episode describes Bull's driving physical power, as well as his indifference to the dangers of such a sport:

The thick end of his oak bludgeon rang dull on the stone; he struck again. . . . Wheeling, he brought it down with all his force on a thick sliding coil. . . . "Hell and damnation!"
...such incidence as these, as well as others in the last adage...

...young patient...be could be held responsible by society for the death of a

indifference...accept explanation...he accepts the fact that

he seems to accept the evidence with the same

the next few days with pain, but no other perceptible effects.

In spite of the wound, the doctor makes the rounds during

..."...I never see cooling..."...in...three-foot body...there's one son of a gun...

...and Admiral Fitz..."...he dropped the steer, his attention last...

...George bull cooed, in what was both pain and
a "society" doctor who ministers to New Minton's upper social classes, and who has made his practice a fashionable one.

Dr. Bull, in contrast, is a hedonist, a fatalist, and a realist. He is the first of a lengthening line of Cozzens characters who, always admirably, look at sentiment, spaciousness, and emotionalism with the cold appraising eyes of the disillusioned.

Bull is not deceived as others are about man's place in the world. On returning home from a visit to Janet Cardmaker's house, he hears intimations of his own mortality in the hoarse breathing of a dying cow:

Leadenly, he was aware of himself alive, and so, heavy hearted, of death—of when he would no longer be what he now wearily was. The evil destinies of man and the immense triumphs of death, seen so clearly at this bad hour, loaded him down. Discouragement, to feel death's certainty; exasperation, to know the fatuousness of resisting such an adversary—what was the use of temporary evasions or difficult little remedies when death simply came back and came back until it won?37

This type of experience, a hushed pause in the forward movement of a novel, happens with increasing frequency to the Cozzens heroes. The awareness of death seems to be constantly before these individuals; one feels that perhaps

37. ib., pp. 87-88.
it is this awareness which enables them to remain so reason-
able amid so much unreasonableness.

To say, however, that Dr. Bull is a "Man of Reason"

in the same sense that the term can be applied to later
characters would hardly be fair. Bull copes with the dangers
of existence largely by ignoring them. But he has certain
qualities which are important to the development of the
later heroes. He is aware that many of life's events, both
good and bad, are influenced at least in part by factors over
which Man has little control:

Probably eighty out of a hundred typhoid
cases will get well without any treatment
or cold baths or nonsense. At least fifteen
will die anyway. That means you might have
defive to fool with. If you don't happen to
kill them, perhaps you'll cure them. . . .
An old horse doctor like me looks at them
and all he can see is that medical science
is perfectly useless in ninety-five out of
every hundred cases. When Verney sees them,
he thinks the other five show how wonderful
whatever tricks happen to be in style are. 38

This sort of unsentimentality is applied by the doctor
to practically every social convention dear to the hearts of
the townsfolk; it is especially and significantly apparent
in his attitude toward religion and his father's sagacity as
a religious man, a consideration which foreshadows Men and
Brethren:

38 Ibid., p. 262.
The Reverend Ephriam Bull used [the stars] too. Standing in the darkness of a Michigan road, he found strange testimony to the truth of scripture in teaching little George to recognize the eternal stars recommended to Job; and to the awfulness of God's creation, when the light of this Arcturus, moving a hundred and eighty-six thousand miles a second, took forty years to arrive.

"And so what?" said George Bull, heavily; for he could see well enough what bad sense and worse logic the old man had once terrified him into considering wisdom.

Bull's disillusion is apparent in his consideration of the truth behind most of Man's sentiments, including love. He clarifies these while examining one of New Winton's youngsters for venereal disease:

"When do you think you got infected?"
"I don't know."
"You don't know? Been fooling with Betty Peters?"
"No, I never--"
"You going to tell me you must have got it off a towel? Have to be a minister to manage that. Where did you get it?"
Finally he said, "I guess it must have been Charlotte Slade, Doc. . . ."
"You better think about marrying Charlotte. She can give you all there is, and it might save you plenty of trouble and expense." 40

This thorough lack of sentimentality, coupled with Dr. Bull's ability to see "the way things are" and his carpe diem philosophy, enable him to survive not only the

40 Ibid., pp. 172-173.
typhoid epidemic, but the community's attempt to destroy
him as a professional man.

Furthermore, The Last Man presents a theme which
will become a basic one in the later novels, and which has
been adumbrated in S. S. San Pedro and Castaway: that of
the presence of death in the midst of life. This theme is
sounded at the beginning of the novel by the weather; an
unseasonable spring thaw brings buds to the trees and the
typhoid epidemic to New Winton. By the end of the novel,
winter and a killing cold have returned, thus rounding out
the life-in-death cycle. Similarly, typhoid, which brings
death to several of the townspeople, also brings salvation
to the crippled Joe Topping, who is mysteriously enabled to
use his limbs again, evidently by the action of the typhoid
fever.

Doctor Bull is basically concerned through his
profession with the fact of death, and its relationship
with life. The relationship is part of his work, but it is
something neither he nor Mr. Conzens sentimentalizes. Mid-
way in the book, Dr. Bull is called upon to minister to
Sal Peters, a patient suffering from eclampsia during
advanced pregnancy. She dies in spite of his treatment.
The person most upset about it seemed to be Betty Peters. . . . Overcome by the bloody, painful nastiness of life . . . she proceeded to have hysterics. . . . Pa danced around in a senile ecstasy of alarm, squealing. The best way out seemed to be to give both Pa and Jeff sleeping tablets. A fractional shot of the unrequired morphine did for Betty. Thus, by half-past seven, George Bull could leave them; three variously drugged, one dead; the house shut up, bleak and gray under the cold blue morning sky. Crossing the bridge into New Winton, he could hear the bells of St. Matthias's ringing briefly for Holy Communion.

Such bloody and unforeseen events will be part of the lives of all of the forthcoming Cozzens heroes.

While The Last Adam does not present the development of a "typical" Man of Reason in the Cozzens canon (Dr. Bull can hardly be said to be bifurcated by passion vs. reason), it does present a fairly clear picture of some of the qualities of the later heroes: disillusionment and a realist's outlook. Perhaps the largest lesson being learned by the Cozzens hero in this novel is that, in the midst of modern life, with its commitment to speciousness and sentimentality, disasters which demand a cold eye and realistic judgment still occur (the death of Sal Peters is an example). The realist's outlook, from this book on, becomes the best way for the Cozzens hero to make his way through life.

41 LA, pp. 245-246.
MEN AND BRETHREN

Men and brethren, what shall we do?

--Acts 2:36, 37

. . . we shall play a game of chess.
Pressing lidless eyes, and waiting
for a knock upon the door.

--"The Waste Land"

Mr. Cossens' novel of the ministry, Men and Brethren,
is probably the most loosely organized of his novels. It
consists of a string of episodes, each involving some aspect
of the religious life (but not necessarily the religious
beliefs) of the book's hero, Ernest Cudlipp, and each
witnessed through his eyes. Cudlipp is the Man of Reason as
Episcopal minister, and he is concerned with the making of a
definitive and concrete contribution to society and of acting
well within the perimeter of his limitations and weaknesses.

While the same sort of action is characteristic of
most of the Cossens heroes who follow Ernest Cudlipp, it was
hardly characteristic of Doctor George Bull. Although both
men are arrogant and self-sufficient, Dr. Bull's arrogance
was great enough to isolate him more or less completely from
his society. Ernest Cudlipp, arrogance notwithstanding, is
often the center around which the interactions of society
take place. This shift in commitment to society is of major
importance in the development of the Man of Reason.
as possible to dispose the contrivances which they present.

Exempt rudges, locates himself, as a minister, at the
understanding and help.

Interpretations which call for Exempt rudges ever
represent studies of man's interpretation, those
excellent of exempt's practical advice to
excellent of equestrian's practical advice to

I beggar'd, blister'd, and patience impatient,

\[2\text{nd line of text is unclear due to quality of image.}\]

Each of the characters, each of which interpretation,

\[3\text{nd line of text is unclear due to quality of image.}\]

\[4\text{nd line of text is unclear due to quality of image.}\]

Each of the characters, each of which interpretation,

\[5\text{nd line of text is unclear due to quality of image.}\]

catchy, a recourse, often detestable, in

position and to defend it.

out, in which catchy use the recourse to assert his

in Germany. If but a world, an enemy money has polluted

and it is a world as materialistic as the world of art. Lack

catchy is an element in the essence of that of cause but,

little contrived, and compound'd irony. The world of frequent

vitiation, interpretations turn of events over which man has

the last adam, and causally are extraordinary, their concern suggested

The nature of the social events in men and resistance.
partnered, and therefore, into the common life.

To bring order and meaning into the lives of the
people within the institutions of those foundations, to attempt
epidemic portrait of a man with thorough human weaknesses.

Men and ministers answer the question by presenting an

question from Acts, 2:46, 47.

The novel answers a question stated in the epigraph, a

to the welfare of their society

through their professions to counteract by reasonable action

professionals who, for the most part, are committed

is characteristic of all of the later countless heroes, all

character of the novel.

strange against the action and reaction of the other

is been testing the own social, religious, and moral order

and examination the use of reason and subsequent action. He

and ministers, men and ministers determine his position

be stands midway between two extremes, those of reasonableness

Like many of the other major characters of the later novels,
In his seminary days, Cudlipp's life was not as orderly as it is presented in the action of the novel. At one time, he was a cultist of sorts, who studied for a time under the notorious Father Ogilvie, a distinctly "liberal" individual. From these studies, Cudlipp derived a set of attitudes which are seen, in vestigial form, in his lingering fondness for cigarettes and cold beer. Even his parish, which includes the residents of a group of "artily remodeled flats" near St. Ambrose's vicarage, houses a group of people who are distinctly liberal.

In the midst of this liberal group, Cudlipp is depicted learning some important lessons about compromise and flexibility. His tutor in these lessons is Dr. Lamb, Cudlipp's superior, a man of reason who realizes the value of moderation, especially to a minister. While his appearance is aristocratic, it has "no special foundation"; Dr. Lamb is the son of a locomotive engineer. His great gift, the reader is informed, is "smoothing things over";

Doctor Lamb could be mulish when provoked, but, ironically, to provoke him it took nothing less than the rude and obstinate refusal to compromise. He had no patience with people who demanded extreme measures or drastic stands. The making of concessions he regarded as a part of charity and a proof of good faith and will. . . . As one gentleman to another, he was confident of mutual understanding with his Creator about the
nature and means of forwarding, God in His
great way, Doctor Lamb in his little one, the
work to which they were both sincerely
devoted.43

In one episode, Dr. Lamb comes to Ernest to offer him
advice about a series of sermons to be presented by ministers
from other faiths in the St. Ambrose Chapel. Lamb points out
that one of the scheduled speakers, Rabbi Slesinger, may
offend the Episcopal bishop. While Dr. Lamb feels that the
bishop is a "snobbish, obnoxious, mean-spirited little
bigot," he also feels that Cudlipp may jeopardize the
bishop's opinion of him by allowing the Rabbi to present
his sermon. His plea to Cudlipp to reschedule the series
is made during what is probably the first of a series of
thunderstorms throughout the later Cossens novels, which
usually symbolize impending difficulty for the hero.

Cudlipp's other encounters with Dr. Lamb are didactic
encounters; they involve, again and again, the aged mentor
influencing the man of reason. It is too early in the
Cossens canon for the sort of out-and-out equation of
conservativism with reasonableness found in the later novels;
yet, as early as 1936, Mr. Cossens was beginning to favor
the conservative way as the way of salvation for the heroes

43James Gould Cossens, Men and Brethren (New York:
Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1936), p. 93. Hereafter abbrevi-
vated MB.
emotions, taken as evidence of the case, were in every action, every attitude, every gesture. His
manifested a tendency toward excess of emotion as apparent

simple success. As reorienting the environment, a lawyer
number of the county seat and a
didn't have the right to tears, quito a
before he had thrashed, many of the old
was sweet, zildrid, uncomprehendingly chrestian.
the Holy Office for the reason of the

be almost over-stated.

homosexual involvement. His position as a man of

from a Catholic order after a scandal involving possible

witnesses. He comes to Catholic after having been exposed

Dr. Lamb's opposite, in men and brethren, in cart

of the subsequent moves.
The subsidiary characters of the novel are, like Willever, more or less committed to basically emotional responses, which cause most of Man's difficulties.

Alice and Lee Breen face a crisis caused by Lee's indecision about becoming a Roman Catholic, and Cudlipp's other parishioners face some type of emotional involvement or emotion-caused difficulty. Geraldine Binney, pregnant with a child which is not her husband's, tries to take her life with an overdose of veronal. Lulu Merrick, despondent widow and ex-proprietress of the Button Box Restaurant, comes to Ernest Cudlipp suffering from exhaustion and extreme malnutrition, and commits suicide before the book ends. Mary Hawley, dying of acute hepatitis, requests to be given the last sacrament by a Roman Catholic priest, before Cudlipp can arrange for her wish. Mary's drunken husband intervenes and tries to prevent it from being carried out.

John Wade, a young poet living with Cudlipp, refuses to heed his advice about not wasting his time with women, all the while charging his escapades to Ernest's accounts. Cudlipp himself, in his dealings with Doctor Lamb, resists Lamb's pleas to be moderate in his views about his place as the minister of St. Ambrose's. All of these characterizations do, indeed, represent studies of Man's limitations.
They also represent Man's perpetual compulsion to let emotions override reason.

To answer the question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" the novel offers the example of Ernest Cudlipp, who, within the bounds of reason, takes action, doing what he can with the materials and time he has to work with. It is especially important to note that while Cudlipp is a Man of Reason, he is also a man of action. He takes Carl Willever and Lulu Merrick to the vicarage for rest and nourishment. He advises Lee and Alice Breen and John Wade as best he can, although they seem unaffected by his advice. And, most unministerially, he arranges an abortion for Geraldine Binney, a woman whose values, he sees, are worth more than the resultant disillusion an unwanted child would bring to her.

It is to Geraldine Binney that Cudlipp most clearly outlines his position as a minister and as a Man of Reason. In the closing pages of the novel, she asks him if he believes that God meant him to be a minister:

"Just as He means everything to be, that is." She looked at him, troubled. She hesitated a moment and said, "Even this--I mean about--". . . . Ernest thought: "As sure as night. When it is shown me, I see. And how little mean of her I am!"
No said, "This is the answer. A great obligation has been laid on me to do or be whatever good thing I have learned I ought to be, or know I can do. . . . One likes it is laid on you. You know your obligation, Geraldine. It has always been to go home and do what your life has prepared you to do. It is all right. Now you can. Take your talent and employ it. . . ."46

The world of Ernest Cudlipp is perilous, as filled with demons as that of Mr. Lecky, and with snakes, as that of George Bull. But for the first time, a Cozzens hero acts under the control of reason, moderation, and compromise to bring his troubles and those of his brethren under control.

46 MP, p. 281.
ASK ME TOMORROW

L'esprit est toujours la dupe
de tout. —La Rochefoucauld

No serious critic grants importance to Ask Me Tomorrow. The book's ineffectual hero, Francis Ellery, is twenty-three years old, a twice-published novelist, and the guardian of a twelve-year-old asthmatic, Walter Cunningham. Ask Me Tomorrow follows Francis, Walter, Walter's mother, and several women whom Francis wishes to seduce, on a tour of Europe. The book is, at best, a failed study of pride. It is valuable for the purpose of this paper only in its illustration of the author's prejudice against the over-emotionalism of love, and its ability to blind the young. Harry Mooney has pointed out that while Francis' moody, derisive reaction to many of his experiences might be seen as being out of joint with his character, it does provide insights into some of the novelist's own attitudes.

"Harry Mooney cites the novel's preoccupation with triviality, and points out that the book's priggish hero is "a singularly uninteresting man" (op. cit., p. 63). Frederic Bracher discusses the novel's "curiously negative" quality (op. cit., p. 25). Jonathan Daniels, writing in the Saturday Review (June 29, 1940), calls Ellery "the American Ineffectual." And Edith Walton, in the New York Herald Tribune Books section (June 16, 1940), states, "Cleverly as it is handled . . . one wonders why Mr. Cozens bothered to write it."

48 Bracher, p. 281.
and reactions, especially his attitude toward romantic
love.

"It's like a picture in Le Rire..." Le Rire's advertisers spoke to you of
love: What about the pied-a-terre grand
luxe always open and the articles d'hygiène
en cachette? What about something for
les soins intimes (que des larmes évitez!); and if that did not work, the sage-peace 16th
class discretion absolute? . . . . You
couldn't say they hadn't told you! 49

Yet Francis persists in making himself his heart's home,
especially in his relations with Lorna Single. His stated
position on the subjects of love and sentiment is at odds
with his actions and reactions.

Youth, in the Cozens canoe, is an illness from
which some men never recover. Young Eliot in, furthermore,
a sensualist in spite of the fact that he continually quoths
absurdities of sensuality and sentiment. At least, his
actions belie a commitment to the senses, and it is by a
man's actions that he is judged in the Cozens novels.

Eliot is duped by his own experiences and his
reactions to them; it is Mr. Cozens' reaction to the
c character and his experiences that is important, for it
foreshadows his condemnation of love's irrationality

49Mooney, p. 70.

in his latest novel, *By Love Possessed*.

The commitment to reason is given to Lorna's friend, Gwen Davis, who senses the essential valuelessness of Francis Ellery, and his unsuitability as Lorna's future husband. She realizes that Ellery has really very little to offer a woman, that he is a source of "man-made disorder. . . . Owen believed in love, all right--but not sentimentality, which would never be sensible; and not passion, which upset everything."51

Because its theme--the pride of a twenty-three-year-old dilettante--is minor, *Ask Me Tomorrow* remains a minor novel. It is valuable to a consideration of the theme of Passion vs. Reason mainly in its delineation of the author's own attitudes and in its foreshadowing of *By Love Possessed.*

51 *AMT*, p. 40.
"I'm glad I spent my life in the law. . . . It's the strong-hold of what reason men ever get around to using."

—Judge Coates

In his next novel, The Just and the Unjust, Mr. Cossens takes up a theme which occupies him in his three latest novels: the efforts of the Man of Reason to maintain a stable society, using that great instrument of reason, the law. The novel is an account of three days (less ten hours) in the life of Abner Coates, a young district attorney who is participating in a trial for murder. While the trial is the major thematic event of the novel, there are two other minor themes which illuminate the theme of Passion and Reason, Self-Division’s Cause. The first of these involves Abner’s indecision about accepting an offer of help in gaining nomination as district attorney by Jesse Gearhart, Childerstown’s political director. The second involves Abner’s relationships with his fiancée and with his father.

The three-day trial for murder upon which the novel is based is a detailed examination of the operation of the

law and of the paradoxes involved in the legal system.

The *Just and the Unjust* is written on a foundation of specialized knowledge about the law and a mass of technical minutiae which give it an astonishing authenticity. During the trial, Abner, a young man of reason, learns much about the law and its limitations from Martin Bunting, a careful and rational lawyer, the district attorney, and the chief prosecutor of the murderers.

The judges at the trial are also men of reason *par excellence*, but there is a significant difference in their interpretations of the law. Judge Vredenburgh is an unsentimental realist:

Judge Vredenburgh sat calm, full-blooded, the intelligent sensible man, irascible about what struck him as wrong or unfair, astute about the failings of human beings, dealing with facts and things as they were, with no special interest in why.53

Judge Irwin, conversely, is constantly thoughtful of "why."

His approach to the law is more intellectual and fair than that of Judge Vredenburgh:

Judge Irwin's attitude was strict; but, by the simple if uncommon practice of disciplining himself just as strictly as he disciplined other people, he aroused, even in a heavily-sentenced prisoner, no special resentment. His air of virtue, instead of being hateful, had in it an austere sweetness.54

53 *JAU*, p. 117.  
The point of these differences among men, which also may be noted among the lawyers at the trial, illustrates that the intermixtures of reason with other elements of character are different among men. All men are self-divided to a certain extent by reason and the passions, even the judges.

The jury, on the other hand, is composed of individuals who must be shown the way of reason in making their decision about the guilt or innocence of the accused murderers. Their responses to the trial are, ironically enough, unthinking and emotional, even though it is their responsibility to judge the evidence. A central irony of the novel is made explicit when, in the teeth of a seemingly air-tight case by the prosecution, the jury turns in a verdict of second-degree murder. The irony is complicated by the fact that the verdict places a heavier sentence on Roy Laming, state's witness, than it does upon either of the two convicted killers.

The outcome of the trial illustrates the central point of the book's epigraph by Lord Hardwicke: "Certainty is the Mother of Repose; therefore the Law aims at Certainty." The novel emphasizes that uncertainty is characteristic of humanity. The law can only aim at it; standing in its line of sight is the obstructive fact that the law is administered by individuals who falter in their reasoning.
The characters of The Just and the Unjust represent the machinery by which the law operates; and if they are often awkward, hesitant, or uncertain, then the administration of the law . . . will reveal these same qualities. 55

The jury is symbolic, in The Just and the Unjust, of the limitations inherent within the legal system; the law is a near-perfect tool wielded by imperfect minds. As Mooney has further pointed out:

If the jury’s decision indicates a defeat for those who, like Abner Coates, hope for at least relative certainties, . . . this, too, is no more than Cozens’ dramatic way of showing the extent to which man is compelled to rely on his own reason and insight. 56

Crime itself is a product of self-division’s cause. Abner speculates about the inexplicable but obvious fact that people most often act without the slightest consideration of the consequences of their actions:

Night and day, people (and often old familiar ones) were busy with projects considered or unconsidered, which would suddenly collide with the law and become public. In advance you could count on case after case . . . of operating a motor vehicle while under the influence of intoxicating liquor. Boys were swiping things because they had no money. . . . There would be forcible entries here and

55Mooney, p. 77.

56Ibid., pp. 94–95.
felonious assaults there. Somebody would wantonly point a firearm; and somebody else would sell malt beverages on premises without license. . . . Forged instruments would be uttered, fraudulent conversions attempted; and, in passion or liquor, somebody might seek to kill a man or rape a woman. 57

The trial itself is only one of several scenes in which the man of reason confronts the unreason of his fellow man. During the trial, a high school teacher, Sam Field, an otherwise reasonable and intelligent man, is indicted for making indecent photographs of his female students, and Abner must examine him and the girls involved.

In another subsidiary incident, Abner takes a call from Earl Foulke, an aging Childerstown justice of the peace. Foulke, overstepping his own authority, has fined a husband for having beaten his wife, afterward dismissing the case. Abner quickly points out to Foulke that his action represents misprision of a felony; overstepping his own powers as assistant district attorney, he advises Foulke to refund the fine he has collected from Williams and to inform him that he is still on bail. Thus, with notable unreason, Abner himself becomes an accomplice to Foulke's misdemeanor.

57 JAY, p. 198.
While the world of Abner Coates is endangered by unreason, it is also endangered by chance occurrences over which man has no control. The later novels are full of such events of blind chance, which make the world even more perilous. Returning from a barge party sponsored by the Calumet Club, Abner receives a phone call from Pete Wiener:

"Look, Ab; there's just been a honey of an accident on route sixteen. One driver killed, and the other one I have here, charged with manslaughter. I don't really think it was so much his fault. . . ."

"But the other fellow's dead?"

"Cut his head right clean off," Wiener said. "You never saw such a mess. Now, what I want to know is, I have to hold my man for the coroner, don't I?"

Such grisly and unforeseen events have been noted before in Cossens' novels. They provide a muted but constant reminder of man's mortality, and they place an ironic perspective on the man of reason's attempts to bring order into his environment. More significantly, they show the man of reason his responsibility: he must take what action he can, armed with reason, to bring order to a dangerous world of chance, made even more dangerous by man's unreason.

Earlier, in Men and Brethren, Mr. Cossens broached the subject of a social structure as man's major means of stabilizing his environment. In a second theme in The Just and the
Unjust, Abner Coates is examined as he makes the decision to accept the mature man's share of responsibility for the working of society. In Abner's case, this involves accepting help from Jesse Gearhart in gaining a political nomination.

Gearhart's importance in Childerstown's politics is established early in the novel. Abner is assistant district attorney, and, since Martin Bunting is about to leave his office and move to a higher position, it seems obvious that Abner will succeed to the job. Gearhart controls who Bunting's successor will be. Further, it is obvious that he will offer Abner the political nomination for the vacant position. Abner, however, has a personal dislike for Gearhart, and a measure of the unreasonableness of this dislike is also a measure of Abner's immaturity. Gearhart's habit of frequently congratulating him has made Abner angry more than once:

It seemed an odd thing to dislike a man for; but Abner knew that was how and when he had begun to dislike Jesse. . . . When Jesse told him he was wonderful, Abner did not know what to reply. If Jesse really thought so, Jesse was a fool; if Jesse did not really think so, he must imagine Abner was a fool. Furthermore, Abner did not like Jesse's—well, the word was presumption, in acting as though Abner worked for Jesse, when, in fact, Abner did what he did because Marty asked him to. . . .

59 JAH, pp. 86-87.
The author hints that Abner is aware that this reaction is too open and, therefore, invalid: "Abner made every effort to conceal his feelings." However, as the conflict between Abner and Gearhart develops, so does Abner's maturity, so that by the novel's end, Abner has come to reasonable terms with his feelings. In following the changes in Abner's attitudes toward Gearhart and Gearhart's importance, the reader is enabled to see the development of Abner's maturity and awareness of his responsibility to society.

Early in the novel, Abner's reason is obstructed by his emotions:

If a man felt hostility and aversion, but saw that he had poor or no grounds for his feelings, the remedy was to look for good or at least better grounds—a search his predisposing thoughts would help him in. Abner could say he did not like politics; nor Jesse's function in them, a function clearly at variance with avowed principles. In theory, the people could . . . enounce [sic] the nominations at the primaries; but in practice what they did at the primaries was to accept the men Jesse designated.61

Later in the novel, in a passage which Harry Mooney cites for its delineation of "the central dilemma and the characteristic tone of Cossens' later work," Abner is able to see

60JAU, pp. 86-87.

61Ibid.
the reasons for his feelings more clearly:

Though Abner had taken care never to show that he expected the job . . . it would be idle to pretend to himself that he did not expect the nomination. . . . He tried to control, and he hoped, succeeded in concealing, that moderate yet essentially jealous ambition, that egotism of confidence in one's ability and one's resulting right, which can never be shown safely, since it intrenches on every other man's ego. . . . In fact, Abner could see that his dislike of Jesse was not so frivolous . . . as he might want to believe; but, short and simple, resentment at a power, without regular authority or justification in law, that allowed Jesse to interpose between Abner and Abner's long standing aims. . . .62

Finally, in the closing pages of the novel, Abner is able to come to fully rational terms with Jesse Gearhart:

Judge Coates said, "Well, we all have our pride. It does a good deal to make us fit for human company. But I don't know how far the world at large, or Jesse in particular, is in duty bound to minister to yours. You made your decision. Don't go on arguing it over."

"Well," said Abner, "today I guess I unmade it. Jesse asked me again, and I told him I'd run."

"You did?" Judge Coates said. "Why did you do that?"

"Because it was what I really wanted to do," Abner said somewhat defiantly. "At least, I suppose that's why. . . . I'd like to think there was more to it than just my own advantage. I wish I weren't so sure of that part of it. If it cost me something instead of paying me something--"

62 JAU, pp. 139-140.
"It seems to me it costs you a good deal," Judge Coates said. "What do you get out of it? It puts you on edge, all right; I can tell you that."

"I get my salary out of it," Abner said. "Why shouldn't I run myself ragged? It's my job."63

It is at this point in the novel that Abner fully assumes his responsibility to society, as well as his maturity.

Through its examination of the theme of Abner's reluctance to accept the nomination for district attorney, The Just and the Unjust delineates the coming-of-age of the man of reason. As Mr. Mooney has pointed out:

Coonsen makes clear his own view that the difficulty in Abner's early position has arisen mainly from Abner's belief that a man can retain a measure of freedom large enough to enable him to look upon the world merely as a critical outsider, whereas reality demands that man surrender much of himself to the social body and assume some of the blame for its errors and misdirections.64

One other minor theme deserves mention in reference to the development of Abner's responsibility and self-awareness: his personal relations with Bonnie Drummond and with his father, Judge Coates. Abner's courtship of Bonnie also indicates his lack of commitment to the responsibilities of society. The courtship has been a long-term

63JAU, pp. 433-434.

64Mooney, p. 87.
affair, so long that Bonnie has lost interest in it, and it has become a community joke. During the development of the novel, Abner becomes aware, partly through his own developing maturity, and partly through discussions with his father, that marriage, like the law and a man's commitment to reasonable actions, is a responsibility that comes with maturity. And it is a symbol of the reasonable harnessing of man's passions for a specific purpose: strengthening society.

Abner's relations with his father are noteworthy because they further develop a major device of Cozzens' work: that of the mature man of reason, usually a father-figure, serving as a mentor for the younger hero. In The Just and the Unjust, Abner's mentor is his father. Judge Coates has suffered a stroke in one of those fateful and inexplicable events which happen with increasing frequency in the later novels.

It is to his father that Abner repeatedly turns for advice and good counsel. Like his aging brethren, Captain Clendening, Colonel Ross, and Arthur Winner, Sr., Judge Coates has finally attained man's true measure of wisdom:

"My life's about over," he said. "I don't know whether I really grasp that when I say it, or not; whether it's a thing you ever
can really grasp. . . . So I can say that I'm glad I spent my life in the law. . . . It's the stronghold of what reason men ever get around to using. You ought to be proud to hold it. A man can defend himself there. It gives you a groundwork of good sense. . . .

It is from such mature and reasonable men that Abner learns the most basic—and often, bitterly ironic—truths about existence. After Abner has announced that he has finally made a decision to accept the nomination for Childerstown's vacant district attorney's post, Judge Coates outlines what will be expected of Abner in the future. In doing so, he also adumbrates the world of the forthcoming Cozzens heroes in *Guard of Honor* and *By Love Possessed*:

A cynic is a man who found out when he was about ten that there wasn't any Santa Claus, and he's still upset. Yes, there'll be more war; and soon, I don't doubt. There always has been. There'll be deaths and disappointments and failures. When they come, you meet them. Nobody promises you a good time or an easy time. I don't know who it was who said when we think of the past we regret and when we think of the future we fear. And with reason. But no bets are off. There is the present to think of, and as long as you live there will always be. In the present, every day is a miracle. The world gets up in the morning and is fed and goes to work, and in the evening it comes home and is fed again and perhaps has a little amusement and goes to sleep. To make that possible, so much has to be done by so many people that on the face

---

65yau, p. 109.
of it, it is impossible. Well, every day we do it; and every day, come hell, come high water, we're going to have to go on doing it as well as we can."

"So it seems," said Abner.

"Yes, so it seems," said Judge Coates, "and so it is, and so it will be! And that's where you come in. That's all we want of you."

Abner said, "What do you want of me?"

"We just want you to do the impossible," Judge Coates said.66
Guard of Honor was written in 1948 after Mr. Cozzens' experiences in the Army Air Force during World War II. In 1949, it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, and it has since been lauded by many readers as the finest novel written about World War II. It is also central in the author's development of the theme of passion and reason, self-division's cause.

The novel recounts a forty-eight-hour crisis in the life of Major General Ira N. "Bus" Beal, the forty-one-year-old commander of Ocanara Air Base in Florida, the director of the Army Air Force Operations and Requirements Analysis Division (AFORAD), and the youngest two-star general in the Air Force.

At the opening of the book, General Beal, along with several military passengers, is piloting a "requisitioned" AT-7 navigational training plane to Ocanara. His co-pilot is Lt. Col. Benny Carricker, a fighter pilot who is the General's flying companion and personal friend. Also on board is Col. Norman "Judge" Ross, the General's aging...

---

Inspection General and informal advisor, a father-mentor figure who is trained in the law. Several other subsidiary characters comprise the plane's complement of passengers.

The General's new plane is a microcosm symbolizing the service chain of command, with the General in the pilot's position; Lt. Col. Carricker his second-in-command; "Judge" Ross, significantly, behind them in one of the navigators' positions; and the other passengers behind Ross. Further, it is during the flight back that the book's major characters and action are established, and during which the incident which precipitates the General's crisis occurs. Shortly before landing at Ocanara, the plane enters a storm, and in the darkness and turmoil, the Ocanara tower operator clears traffic for the General's plane. Shortly before he lands, however, a B-26 medium bomber, piloted and crewed by a group of Negroes coming to Ocanara for special training, who have evidently not received the tower's priority instructions, prepares to land beneath the General's plane. Beal freezes on the controls, and Carricker, taking command away from him, skillfully averts an accident.

On landing, Beal places Carricker in arrest, and shortly afterward, as the storm breaks over the landing field, Carricker strikes the Negro pilot of the B-26 in
blind passion. It is this incident which sets in motion the events which comprise the harrying of General Seal.

The General is a man of action who has been temporarily placed in a "desk job" which may clear his way to the top of the Army hierarchy of command later in the war. It is established early in the novel that the Air Chiefs will decide on Seal's competency by watching how he handles the Ocanara AFGRAD command. It is also established fairly early that Seal has gotten where he is primarily on his skill as a fighter pilot:

General Seal, behind his half a skyful of fighters, his gun hatches open and his magazines shot empty; his hair thick with the African dirt and his eyes dark with it in a face the sun had burned scarlet, must have felt like singing . . . that war is hell. He would flash around . . . coming fast . . . to put down like an angel on three perfect points. 68

It is this personal dash which relates the General with Carricker, and which obviously explains the affection between them. Carricker is the man of passion in Guard of Honor, and it is General Seal's desire to retain his self-image by emulating Carricker that causes his self-division. It is significant that Mr. Connens has given this self-divided leader of warriors the highest rank in the book, but perhaps

68 ibid., p. 23.
more important to note that through one of those ironic
facts of life in the service, Beal's rank is only temporary
(his permanent rank is that of captain). Perhaps the point
which Mr. Cozzens wishes to make is that, in war's turmoil,
leadership does not necessarily go to those who have the
most sense (men like Colonel Ross), but to those endowed
with bravery and who also have youth, a measure of intelli-
gence, and the bearing of a hero.

General Beal has attained leadership through action,
but his command at Ocanara represents a test devised by
the Air Force Chiefs to determine if he has the reason and
intelligence expected of one who is to climb to the highest
echelons of command. But Ocanara is something that the
General has never confronted before, and his inability to
take action during the near-accident on landing the AT-7 at
Ocanara symbolizes his self-division, which will continue
to trouble him as he faces the greater crises of the two
following days.

The self-division is apparent in many ways. Although
he should have more regard for the bearing expected of his
rank, the General dresses informally and sloppily: a hat
with a 90-mission crush, a wrinkled shirt with rolled sleeves,
and worn cowboy boots. During periods in the action which
Throughout the novel, General Bell stands between two

the environment.

By the book's end, he has assumed control of the novel and

been accomplished the country, and, then, a country-to-age.

exposing sense of responsibility, and partly by chance, general

through the majority of colonel roose, partly through the can

speak, that he can make himself fit for command. Partly

tion of maturity, and it is only by remaining himself, so to

his east-drawing stands in the way of general bell's assump-

and the assumption of the reasonable approach of maturity

the latter; the casting-off of the emotional tension of youth

the guard of honor examines the hero at a major turning point in

part by the east-drawing, like the other later novels,

mature individual, and the lack of stature is caused in large

he gains the full stature as a commanding officer and as a

in print to a base 40,000 feet, and which later he uses to

charge deniers him, and native to the fighter plane, which he

depressed for some sodium water (which the physition in

are noted by extreme stress, he turns away once to the base
After serving during World War I and returning to California
an veteran by 1901, Ross had taken part in dairy in Mexico.
Unsatisfied with dairy career, and traumatized in California,
Ross decided to help him in the track of shaping general beat: a long (or
best he's age, comet Ross has two attributes to
beside pressure upward.

The burden of the responsible citizenry drives the
becoming aware of the can ultimate destruction as he watches
mortal and self-centered that come with age, and loyalty
extinction of the aging image of chili. Full of the other
mement, the epitome of the man of reason, Ross is a tolerant
as is essential that concern has made Ross an head
potential threat which exist in the new command of concern.

It’s extravagant that concern be recognized by anyone except
responsible lie never fully recognized by anyone except
of course of error, for he is responsible (at an age)
In an important sense, comet Ross has in the here
the man-in-the-middle, general beat.

and passion, and to show, it possible, that influence on
examine Ross and character as representative men of reason
beat's own personality. In the following pages, I wish to
of man's nature and, in a sense, they are extensions of
In which room is shown "looking out for bus", and that from

Guard of honor presents to the reader with several instances

consecuences, as here, of our consequence.

Tommed the guard, usually of the third
in this matter sound him venturing, he then
in the case, Ross? He watched the general.

It was most obscure, what matters had be
interested him, and where, just as naturally,
interested to men where, naturally. It was most
interest in men where, naturally. It was most
in two things, he could not give, under the warden's and
be ready, should ever, under the warden's and
to him himself, that he, committed Ross, should
consider, it may be no better than
and he must be able of those people (for
somebody was forced to look out for bus,

General and the general's interaction

comparatively with that which enables him to understand the

general's problem. Commaol, Ross has established an easy
decision, an appreciation which helps him solve the
appreciation for the quantities of the matrix system of
years of experience in the system I've given him on

men of law.

And reasonable evaluation can finds in the other concerns
from Judie Schlichter, Ross has retained the logical thinking

out in even minutes every expertly-add non-essential. 69
Judie Schlichter, a man of great learning who "would strip
representing the General at a meeting of the Negro bomb
group to soothing a secretary after she has spilled a soft
drink on the General's trousers. Ross's tone in these
matters is characteristically and frankly didactic: the
General asks his advice and he gives it freely but always
with respect. Sometimes, however, he can be scolding:

General Beal said: "Can we be sure it will
work, Judge? If I follow the Air Chiefs'
suggestion exactly and don't get out of it,
that's bad, all right. But if I don't follow
it exactly, and don't get out of it, that's
worse."

Colonel Ross said, "You have it the wrong
way. Do you want to be perfectly sure you
have trouble? Follow their suggestion
exactly. You'll have it. The other way you
might not."

While Colonel Ross often chides his commander, he is
obviously aware not only of Beal's rank, but also of his
potential abilities. In fact, their relationship resembles
that between Abner Coates and his father. Like Abner, General
Beal is casting off the emotional reactions of youth, and
assuming the reasonableness of maturity. Like Abner, too,
General Beal suffers from youth's infirmity; his ineffectiveness
in that respect is sharply highlighted by being seen,
always, in close proximity to Colonel Ross's effectiveness,
even though Ross is an older and more experienced man.

\[71\text{CH, p. 223.}\]
Colonel Ross, the aging man of reason, like Dr. Bull and Judge Coates before him, has intimations of his own mortality. And the Colonel's impending downfall creates the central irony of Guard of Honor: by the time a man gains enough wisdom to be a good commander, he is already far along on the way to death. The very age that gives him wisdom also dooms him; the insights that come with age enable him to perceive his own destruction. Late in the novel, Ross becomes aware of the irony of his position:

To the valuable knowledge of how much could be done with other men, and how much could be done with circumstance, he might have to add the knowledge of how much could be done with himself. He was likely to find it less than he thought. . . . The drops of water wore the stone.72

Later, speculating about the necessity of finding a pattern in life's apparently patternless round, Ross acknowledges that "the best minds of sixty centuries" have sought a pattern and have found a whole selection of them. The thought cheers him, and he concludes, "Once you knew you needed something to keep you operative, playing the man, you could be of good heart. Your need would find it for you. . . ."73

72Ibid., pp. 533-534.

73Ibid.
Throughout *Guard of Honor*, he strives to show Beal the pattern of reasonable discipline he has found.

However, in the midst of the taking-of-heart, Colonel Ross witnesses an incident that reiterates a major point made in the later Coensens novels: man's natural environment is charged with unforeseen dangers. The Colonel and others are witnessing a parade and fly-by to celebrate General Beal's birthday, and a group of paratroops, a part of the demonstration, falls by mistake into a reservoir near the concrete ramp where the ceremonies are taking place. Several of them drown. By chance, the crash boat which could rescue them is out of order. The incident points up the fact that man's unreason is not the only danger facing him; he must survive, too, in a world of natural forces which are arrayed against him. The nature of this world can be deceptive; the violence of the paratroops' drowning takes place during a quiet summer late afternoon:

> The hot sun, nearer the horizon, poured a dazzling gold light across the great reach of the air field. Under a pure and tender wide sky, empty now of all its planes, the flat light bathed everything; all the men, who appeared for an instant motionless; the lumber pile; the low lake shore; the wide, calm ripple of waters. The swimmers, who must have been ordered from the lake, were in the act of coming out. They emerged with shining limbs, their muscular black bodies brightly dripping.74

---

74 *SH*, pp. 547-548.
The inexplicable forces which cause the violence of the paratroops' death are akin to those which bring the destruction of age to Colonel Ross. Ironically, they are also akin to the chance developments which help to bring about a solution to the problems which face General Beal. An example of such forces is seen when, by chance, the Negro pilot whom Carricker has struck is awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross by Air Force Headquarters. The award helps to avert unfavorable publicity of Willis' wounding by Carricker. The book abounds with such incidents; most of them are ironic, like the fact that General Nichols, whose arrival evidently announces the downfall of General Beal, comes instead to award Beal a medal on his birthday.

Guard of Honor is, among other things, a study of war and war's dislocations, and it is evidently because of such dislocation that the command of men has been given to youth in the novel. War is, after all, an experience of youth, and the aged Colonel Ross represents an individual caught up in spite of himself in the titanic struggle. In the struggle, he directs himself to instructing those in command. The fighting itself is left to war-lovers like Carricker, who,

---

This dislocation is a major theme in Guard of Honor, developed through a study of the relationship between Captain Nathaniel Hicks and Lt. Amanda Turck.
because of their unreason and emotional approach to life, are ideally suited to win a fight.

If Colonel Ross stands upon the side of reason, and ministers to that side of Beal's self-division, then Carricker, "that far-from-paragon, that difficult, erratic brat," stands on the side of passion, the other half of Beal's self-division. Carricker is one of several characters in Guard of Honor who offer the reader a clear and vivid picture of the man of passion (Lt. Edsell, the passionately liberal writer who nearly upsets Ross's plans for patching up the trouble with the Negro bomb group is another), as well as an opportunity to perceive Mr. Cossens' attitude toward such blindly reckless individuals. Carricker's personality is essentially criminal, an asocial personality which is sanctioned by society to destroy in warfare. His lineage may be traced back through other Cossens men of violence; he is kin to Carl Willever, George Bull, Mr. Lacky, Lancy Micks, and Michael Scarlett. But the shift in Cossens' attitude toward these characters is apparent in the decreasing sympathy they receive; it is indicative of his steady maturity as a novelist.

The author grants Carricker tremendous professional competence (in this sense, Carricker, like Captain Clendening and others, furthers the theme of the importance of a man's
work, but he grants him little else.

In situations of stress, Carricker is an efficient, unthinking machine:

Reaching sideways... Carricker’s hand with the glazed skin and little knotted nail buttons covered both throttle knobs and shoved them forward to the stops. The hand went accurately on and hit the landing gear switch. Clean-fingered and quick, it snatched and jerked the cowl flap controls. It came nimbly over, and, with calm care, began to milk the wing flaps up.76

Ironically, it is this unthinking competency that saves the AT-7 from a crash. And, although General Beal is affronted when Carricker overrides his command to save the plane, he later admires Carricker’s professional competency:

“...A man who's just a big-mouthed show-off, you bend his ears right quick; but you have to give a man like Benny a little latitude. Don't think Benny's just another pilot, Judge. He's a wonderful group commander. Best you ever saw. Brereton will say that, too. That's why we decided to send him home. We didn't want to risk getting him killed; and we figured, when he got burned, his luck was about out. He had over a hundred combat missions.”77

During one of his hundred combat missions, Carricker participated in a raid on an Italian motor park with several

76 Ibid., pp. 83–84.

77 Ibid., p. 159.
other fighter planes and, in strafing a German mobile anti-aircraft defense of the park, he displayed heroism of the highest quality:

General Beal sat up, his cheeks tingling with color. "... Benny just moved them down; set some trucks on fire, smashed some of the guns, must have drilled thirty, forty Krauts. Then he pulled around as hard as he could, and came back down the gully... Benny had it right. Not one of the pieces was able to fire; so he drilled another batch. Those he didn't get were into the ditch."

General Beal's attitude toward this sort of thing is one of open adulation: "Oh, Judge! ... That boy is a honey! You can believe me. Because we have a few more like him, we're going to win the war." His admiration for Carricker's competency as a fighter is apparent, but in other respects, the General is dismayed by Carricker's actions.

It is Carricker's emotional reaction to the Negro pilot's blunder in the opening of the novel, after all, that causes a precipitation of the segregation problem at Ocanara—one of the General's biggest problems. For his impulsiveness, Carricker is grounded, but he hardly takes

---


79 ibid.
a symbolic extension of one part of General Beal's personality. He is a representative of man's passions, and it is significant that the General must overwhelm not only Benny, but also, with Colonel Ross's help, those elements of Benny within his own personality, before he is fit to assume the full responsibility of his command. Paradoxically, however, Beal regains his self-control, not through a reasonable coming-to-terms with Colonel Ross, but through the emotion-laden game of aerial tag with Carricker. This is perhaps the final paradox in Guard of Honor: in some instances, the efforts of the aging man of reason to show his fellow men the path to reason are sometimes fruitless. Sometimes, only the passage of time can bring about the maturity of men.

Such a paradox points the way to the dilemma of the hero of Mr. Connors' latest novel, Arthur Winner, Jr., who is a man self-divided by passion and reason. Both Beal and Winner must depend on the aged men of reason like Colonel Ross and Arthur Winner, Sr. to guide them to the mature acceptance of their responsibilities.
BY LOVE POSSESSED

A lot of men we put up statues
to might not look so good if we
knew what they really did; or
why they did it.

--Mr. Woolf, By Love
Possessed

The most recent Crossen novel, By Love Possessed, 82
concerns itself with the theme of passion and reason, self-
division's cause, more thoroughly and more explicitly than
any of the earlier novels. It recounts a forty-nine-hour
period in the life of a middle-aged lawyer, Arthur Winder,
Jr., and reiterates most of the major themes of the later
novels.

Throughout By Love Possessed, love's irrationalities
are counterposed against the rational discipline of the
legal profession, as are most of man's other passions.
The novel carries forward the novelist's examination of
the middle-aged professional man of responsibility during
a time when he must make certain crucial decisions in order
to attain maturity. Characteristically, this individual is
self-divided by passion and reason, and he is delineated at
that time of his life when he loses his illusions about
reality.

82 James Gould Crossen, By Love Possessed (New York:
Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1957). Subsequent notes refer to
a paperback edition reprinted by Fawcett Publications in
1959, and abbreviated BLP.
Indeed, before the
emergence as a man of responsibility, White is the hero in certain short stories.

White, the protagonist, indeed, before the
emergence as a man of responsibility. White is the hero in certain short stories.

role of son, husband, father, law partner, adlurer, and
partner in the action of the novel, he is depicted in the

year-old lawyer practicing in the small community of Proctor.

Winner, the protagonist of the novel, is a thirty-four-

year-old lawyer practicing in the small community of Proctor.

Winner, the protagonist of the novel, is a thirty-four-

character who, in their excitement and passion, also

character who, in their excitement and passion, also

exhilarated by love possesses numerous subtleties

ment.

ment.

with the gradual awareness of the reality of the emotion-
tions about his own life and those of his fellow men, coupled

coming to age is the result of a series of devastating reval-
eventual displacement, in large part, the mentor, Colonel Rose, number,

between them; White, real's attainment of maturity to

and reason. There is, however, this important difference

in contrast, some time into the self-destruction caused by passion

beard, indeed, Arthur Winner's stripping both are ignored

beard, indeed, Arthur Winner's stripping. Both are ignored

just as the pinnacles and in general, beard in guard of honor.

such an induction appeared as where coats in the

39
novel ends, he realizes the awesome size and subtle dangers of the responsibilities he is required, as a man of reason, to assume. He also realizes, before the novel's end, that the events of time present are direct outgrowths of events in time past; by the end of the novel, his own past has come cascading down around him, and he finds himself faced with new knowledge as well as new—and sinister—responsibilities.

During Winner's visit to his mother at the beginning of *By Love Possessed*, one of the central ironies of the novel is established. His mother is one of many people in his life who are convinced of Winner's integrity: "Oh, Arthur... nobody could be more scrupulous than you are! I've seen that time and again... It's absurd to suggest that you, or Julius Penrose either, would ever touch anything dishonorable."\(^{83}\) She makes a similar statement about Noah Tuttle; yet, the truth emerges that Winner, Penrose, and Tuttle all have secrets about their character it would be better to conceal. Winner has committed adultery with his best friend's wife, Marjorie Penrose; has desecrated his first wife's memory; and is at least partially responsible for Helen Detweiler's suicide. Tuttle has tampered with funds placed in his care by Helen Detweiler. And Penrose shares the

---

\(^{83}\) BLF, p. 17.
knowledge of Tuttle's guilt, along with Arthur Winner. Winner's maturity comes about largely through a gradually developing awareness that he is responsible for the events of his past which, up until the time of the novel, he has been unwilling or unable to face. This awareness is born in the midst of a vast coming-together of seemingly disparate events and revelations which, he realizes at the novel's end, have been gestating for a long time, in some cases, for years.

The first of these events involves Winner's secretary, Helen Detweiler, and her younger brother, Ralph, who has become involved in a sordid affair with a promiscuous high school girl. Winner is engaged to defend Ralph against the girl's charge of rape. One extended scene in the novel is devoted to Winner's careful questioning of Ralph before the hearing; the contrast between the lawyer's reasonable questions and the boy's inaccurate and emotional responses is carefully drawn. Later, Winner himself is questioned by a church representative, Mrs. Pratt, about his equally sordid and blindly passionate affair with Marjorie Penrose. While his responses are more reasonable than Ralph's, the irony of his earlier position as Ralph's inquisitor becomes apparent.
Later, Ralph jumps bail and leaves town, thus precipitating another part of Winner's crisis. Helen Detweiler, stricken with grief by the accumulated events involving her brother, commits suicide by drinking cleaning fluid.

After Helen's death, Winner examines her will, and in doing so, learns that Noah Tuttle, the town's most revered and trusted citizen, has been tampering with accounts, including those of Christ Church. This revelation compounds Winner's crisis by making him responsible for his knowledge of Tuttle's crime.

Two aspects of his affair with Marjorie Penrose are important, for they contribute to his developing sense of responsibility. The first of these centers on the fact that his affair with Marjorie actually began on the day of the death of Hope, Winner's first wife, on Hope's own bed. This desecration is recalled by Winner as another aspect of his harrowing. It compounds his guilt in the affair with Marjorie Penrose, and it illustrates his own susceptibility to passion.

The second aspect of the affair involves the revelation to Winner that Marjorie's husband, Julius Penrose, who is Winner's best friend and law partner, has realized the

---

\[84\] \textit{MWP}, pp. 517-518.
truth about Winner and his wife, but has kept his realization
from Winner in the years following the liaison. Winner
becomes aware of Julius' knowledge during a conversation
with him, from which Julius emerges as the paragon of the
man of reason. Penrose's knowledge of Noah's guilt, and his
silence about it, illustrate for Winner the burden of
responsibility—and shared guilt—that is the inheritance
of the man of reason.

The sudden accretion of revelations and self-awareness
causes Winner great anguish, but it also makes him more fully
able to accept the truth about himself and his environment.
As a basically reasonable man, he is obliged to take up
responsibility for his own acts and for the acts of other
members of his society: for his adulterous affair with
Marjorie, for Noah Tuttle's crime, and even for Helen's
unreasonable death. His new-found responsibility isolates
him:

Arthur Winner stood in his continued chill,
in a stunned sense of solitariness, as though
the early Sunday afternoon world around him
had, more than merely stopped, come to a halt,
to an end, had dissolved, had withdrawn in
space, leaving him on a point of rock, the
last living man. He said aloud: "I am a
man alone." 85

85ELP, p. 518.
Although isolated, he is still morally obliged, as are the other Commins men of reason, to take action against the forces of unreason which tend to subvert his fellow men and which tend to destroy the structure of society.

*By Love Possessed,* while it tells the story of Winner's attainment of maturity, also delineates these forces of unreason, many of which are manifested as man's passions. It scrutinizes every variety of love: the love of parents for children (Winner and his daughter Ann), the love between siblings (Helen and Ralph Detweiler), the love of man and wife (Winner and his wives, Hope and Clarissa), the love of adulterers (Winner and Marjorie Penrose), the love of adolescents (Ralph Detweiler and Veronica Kovacs), homosexuality (Elmer Abbott), even autoeroticism (Mrs. Pratt). And it identifies a broad spectrum of passions and unreasonable acts: nymphomania, satyriasis, sadism, rape, suicide, political manipulation, and misprision of funds.

The subsidiary characters of *By Love Possessed* are, for the most part, self-divided by passion, and most of them are somewhat unreasonable. Three of them are especially noteworthy, since they play a direct part in Winner's coming of age. They illustrate the theme of passion vs. reason: Helen and Ralph Detweiler; Warren Winner, Arthur Winner's son; and Marjorie Penrose.
Helen Detweiler is a sensitive young woman who has been shocked into an over-protective relationship with her brother by the death of her parents in a boating accident. As Winner's secretary, she is a paragon of efficiency, but in the matter of her brother's sexual exploits, she is unable to overcome her basically emotional and unreasonable reactions. In the end, they drive her to suicide by poisoning, an event which stands as a climactic act of unreason in *By Love Possessed*.

Her brother, Ralph, has appeared before in the Cosssens novels; he is related to Lieutenant Edsall, to Francis Ellery, and to the earlier characters who were afflicted by the infirmity of youth. Ralph is thoroughly weak and despicable, yet, he is entitled under law to the responsible attention and assistance of the man of reason, Arthur Winner, who undertakes the task of representing him legally. Ralph is primarily responsible for his sister's death and, through her death, indirectly responsible for the revelation of Noah Tuttle's crime to Winner. Thus, ironically, he plays an important part in Winner's self-revelation at the novel's end.

Arthur Winner's son, Warren, also suffers from the infirmity of youth; he, too, is possessed by passion, but
in a much more sinister way than Ralph. Like Lt. Col. Carricker, Warren is a born warrior, an individual who stands outside of society:

... what, in Warren, climbed into a cockpit, was in its potential no more nor less than the true heathen berserker of the skins and tusks.... He was indifferent to iron and fire. For others and for himself he was uncaring. He was outside all law. He counted no costs. He brooked no equal, and admitted no superior. 86

Arthur Winner recalls Warren's misspent life and the absurdity of his death. As a pilot, Warren had undertaken to "buzz" an experimental bomber:

Possibly Warren's estimate of the closing rate was at fault. Possibly ... the pilot of the bomber, incensed and nervous, made at that same minute the error ... of trying to evade. Butcher Boy did not pass under. At full throttle, Warren met the B-29 head on. He lit the day with flame. He went down, and nine men (two aeronautical engineers of no little importance) with him, in a commingled mass of metal junk. ... 87

The manner of Warren's death illustrates for Winner the danger of man's periodically irrational behavior.

Like Warren, Marjorie Penrose represents the individual - very given over to passion and unreason. Her husband, Julius, makes an accurate estimate of her in a conversation with Winner:

86 [Alp, p. 325.]
87 [Ibid., pp. 326-327.]
"We could call this, I think, the principle of passion. At first sight, the idea that such a principle would reside in someone like Marjorie must seem ridiculous. It resides in her notwithstanding. This principle neither trifles, nor is to be trifled with. When its time comes, it simply takes over. The little girl's away for awhile. Into her place steals, I think, something like a maenad. On a small scale, Marjorie has actually become that Fatal Woman of story and history. What, one asks oneself, is the secret of such disastrous power? The stories neglect to say. They only relate the thing accomplished. One sees Circe; one sees swine. What was in that cup?"

It is ironic that such a passion-ridden creature should be married to the book's paragon of reason, Julius Penrose.

And it is significant that Penrose, through the power of his reasoning, is able to generalize about Winner's own liaison with Marjorie, although, ostensibly, he knows nothing of the affair:

"Her feelings sufficiently penetrated, the principle of passion, the interior rage—without its hostess' intention, maybe, without even her knowledge—is made to stir. The stir is electrifying. The unsuspecting, very probably astounded, male, in sudden erotic rapport with her, is beside himself. . . . I venture to assert that when this gadfly's sting is fairly driven in, when this indefeasible urge of the flesh presses them, few men of normal potency prove able to refrain their foot from that path."

Perhaps more than anyone else in the novel, Marjorie is capable of overthrowing man's reason. Her life has been

88 RLP, p. 228. 89 Ibid., pp. 228-229.
a series of emotional and passionate engagements and
frustrations, each of them causing her an increase of
suffering, until she is finally driven to seek solace
through the Catholic Church.

Such emotional individuals as Helen, Ralph, Warren,
and Marjorie Penrose play significant parts in Winner's
crisis, but an equally significant part is played by the
occurrence of inexplicable events over which he has no
control. Some of these are the result of the working of
the forces of nature; some are pure products of chance.
Taken together, they pose a tangible threat to the man of
reason.

Two of these events are especially noteworthy. The
first involves the death of Winner's first wife, Hope, in
childbirth. Although not physically strong, Hope success-
fully bore Winner's two sons, Lawrence and Warren. During
a third birth, her doctor has trouble tying off a
hemorrhaging blood vessel; after a seemingly successful
suture, she dies when the hemorrhage resumes. Indirectly,
she is killed by Winner's love for her; at any rate, the
seemingly successful birth ends in tragedy.

Likewise, Winner's father, an otherwise healthy man,
is inexplicably stricken by intestinal cancer after a false
recovery. These untoward events illustrate that death is
the ultimate unreasonable force, one which blindly and inexorably overcomes man. Such events occur at random throughout the novel: the Ponemah oak (a symbol of Winner's youthful innocence) is struck by lightning; Winner, in an ironic reversal, kills an opossum caught in his headlights; and at the novel's end, Helen is discovered dead on a calm and sunny Sunday morning.

As in the earlier novels, man's reason is held up as his only means of bringing a semblance of order to his environment. But By Love Possessed is, among other things, a study of disorder, against which reason is of little avail. That little avail, the novel indicates, is all men have. Cozzens is deeply pessimistic in By Love Possessed, although he advocates responsibility for the man of reason.

There are several men of reason in By Love Possessed, and all of them offer Winner good counsel: Arthur Winner, Sr., Judge Fred Dealy, and Julius Penrose.

Arthur Winner, Sr. is the first Cozzens character to be formally identified as "The Man of Reason," a fact which illustrates, perhaps, the importance he plays in the novelist's work. It is from his father that Winner has learned about the importance of reason, not only in his father's life, but also in the law.
Remembering such accomplishments of his father's, so impressive in their variety, Arthur Winner could, of course, now see that they were not the separate or unrelated wonder-workings at which the child or boy once looked open-mouthed. The youth, the young man, might dimly feel their inter-relation . . . yet . . . could not be equipped to know the thing he felt . . . Arthur Winner, Jr. brought fresh from law school . . . would need years of being himself a practicing lawyer to appreciate his father as a lawyer. To appreciate his father as a person, he would clearly have to wait until the time made him wholly adult, gave him the full status—was it given to anyone under forty?—of a grownup. 90

Yet, Winner is not unaware that his father's reason could not stay death's claim upon him:

"The Man of Reason, from his inward, nearly unbroken solitude, looked out. He regarded the world of men, mostly, in respect to reason, unlike him. Rarely mistaken, he saw them as they were. With hope no higher than became the lonely student of mankind, Arthur Winner Senior, in earth now rotten, speaking to whom it might concern, addressed those surviving him through these things [i.e., his possessions] once his. Somehow, sometime, 91 his messages might or might not reach someone.

His father makes a deathbed statement which, at the end of the novel, Winner recalls with new understanding:

"I've been among the luckiest of men. Maybe one in a thousand has had it happen to him. Close calls, sometimes; sometimes, I saw that in a minute I might not be able to help myself; but I don't remember ever once having to do

90 BLF, p. 12.  
91 Ibid., p. 13.
what I would not have preferred to do. . . ."92 Such good luck has not come to Arthur Winner, Jr.

Fred Dealy is another of Winner's mentors. Early in the novel, he summarizes his understanding of the restrictions which are placed on free men by responsibility:

"Freedom is the knowledge of necessity"93—a statement like that made by Arthur Winner, Sr., which Winner recalls with new understanding at the end of the novel.

In addition to his understanding of the forces which restrict man's freedom, Fred Dealy is aware of the ability of man's emotions to outweigh his reason:

He found angry fault with the intractability of circumstances, the random brute works of mischance, the callous uncaring of whatever superintendent force might be supposed to rule the world. Let whoever arranged it, go to hell! Let whatever originated it, take this creation and shove it—the vitriolic passion of outrage quickly reaching the level where Fred's sharp mind must detect and reject its excess of unreason, Fred . . . stopped short. His eye veiled with embarrassment, with the chagrin of having to agree that this was a damned silly way to talk—or, to think! Now what a fool, simultaneously suffering and insufferable, had allowed feeling once again to make a fool of him?94

Like Arthur Winner, Jr., Fred has become aware, along with his attainment of maturity, of his own mortality. Winner

---

For all of the major concepts, the dialogue which provides the reader with a thematic center, reasonable men's wisdom, the door is in a long passage of the text. Nothing enters to alter the substance of the

importance of reason. In the middle of Arthur Whinn's most clearly express the author's own argument about the

the core theme, the stands out as the introductory who

the man of reason: more than any other such character in the novel, the role of reason, self-determination, canes. He is the epitome of

formula which guides human, great, unlimited, observation, passion

he makes only two direct appearances in the novel. It is the

that man of reason, the secret hero of By Love Possessed.

Arthur Whinn's, the partner and the novel's

Furthman, Whinn's, the partner and the novel's

He dramatized them as Ganzeno.

had done than what I read would presently do.

from amusement already. He could not tell. He

more they or hunting, of patterns? Were they

seemed to be sound, more they from behavior?

the scheme of things? Stated in which there

of catchings and inventions in the smooth run of

which time they could state present, to

cause... whatever

the reader as that the could see read now

that he was there that he could see read now.

at your age, fourteen years ago, Arthur

Retrospection!

when he was read a age, but which he could see only in

recognize her own inventions of mortality which had occurred

106
Like Fred Dealy, Penrose is strongly opposed to excesses of feeling:

“We're in an age pre-eminently of capital F Feeling—a century of the gulp, the lump in the throat, the good cry. We can't be said to have invented sentimentality; but in other ages sentimentality seems to have been mostly peripheral, a despised pleasure of the underwitted. We've made sentimentality of the respected essence. If I believe my eyes and ears, and I do, sentimentality is now nearly everyone's at least private indulgence. The grave and learned are no whit behind the cheap and stupid in their love for it. Snuffling after every trace, eagerly rooting everywhere, the newspapers stop their presses, the broadcasters interrupt their broadcasts, so it may be more immediately available. In professional entertainment, in plays and motion pictures, it is the whole mode. In much of what I'm told is our most seriously regarded contemporary literature, I find it, scarcely disguised, standing in puddles. The houses of congress, the state halls of legislature, drop everything to make and provide it whenever they can. There are judges who even try in their courts to fit the law to it—”

Harry Mooney has pointed out that "such a passage as this constitutes a massive and open attack upon all the values of contemporary American society, an attack of a kind which does not appear in Cossens' earlier novels; and it is spoken by a genuine conservative, one who believes that the past and the established present have greater possibilities than change for man's conducting himself reasonably. . . ."
Such an attack as Penrose's, coming from the lips of a paralytic, could be misconstrued as the product of an unreasonable bitterness; yet, Julius is at heart a sensitive man who, like Arthur Winner at the end of the novel, is aware of his own limitations and weaknesses. Frederick Bracher makes a relevant point about his paralysis:

But, as Arthur Winner notes, the defensive pride that sustains Julius in his perpetual struggle with pain and immobility serves also to conceal from possibly pitying eyes a sincere humility which he shares with the other Cozens heroes. This humility does not involve total surrender or blind self-abasement; it is intelligent and discriminating—an informed, realistic estimate of one's limited capacities and relatively minor place in the scheme of things.\(^{98}\)

Midway in his conversation with Arthur Winner, Penrose admits that he has known of Noah Tuttle's guilt for years, and Winner realizes that, henceforth, he as well as Julius will have to carry the highly dangerous responsibility that comes with knowledge of Noah's guilt. The realization causes him a momentary loss of heart. Penrose offers him good counsel that echoes Judge Coates' comment to his son about doing the impossible: "The paradox is that once fact's assented to, accepted, and we stop directing our effort where effort is wasted, we usually can do quite

---

\(^{98}\)Bracher, p. 274.
a number of things, to a faint heart, impossible."99

Winner leaves his office loaded down under the burden of his new responsibility and concerned about the courage and stoutheartedness required to bear it (emotions, ironically) but able at last to see himself and his environment somewhat more clearly:

"I'm tired," Arthur Winner said aloud. . . . He travailed, he was heavy laden. This weight was terrible; yet there was no way to put it off. And so, not knowing how far it would have to be carried, no knowing how long, burdened so, he must daily, hourly, affect to be unburdened. Yes, Julius wasn't wrong. This took courage, this took prudence, this took stoutheartedness.100

99 *ELP*, p. 531.
100 *ibid.*, p. 543.
CONCLUSION: A NOTE ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE
CONSENTS: MEN OF REASON

In summary, the man of reason does not make a formal appearance in the Consent's canon until *Men and Brethren*, a novel which appeared about midway in the course of Mr. Consent's career (1936). However, an important element of the man of reason's character can be perceived as early as *S. S. San Pedro* (Captain Clendening as the father-mentor). Other significant character elements are apparent in *The Last Adam* (George Bell as the professional man and man of action), and *Two and Brethren* (Ernest Cudlipp as the man who does his best with what there is at hand).

The theme of passion and reason, self-division's cause, appears fully sounded for the first time in *Ask Me Tomorrow*, but elements of the theme are apparent as early in the Consent's canon as *Men and Brethren*, and all of the Consent's characters may be said to be motivated either by a passionate nature or a reasonable one.

The full-blown theme is carried through and embellished fully in the latest Consent novel, *By Love Possessed*, a novel almost entirely devoted to an explication of the theme. Likewise, it is in this latest novel that the man of reason appears most fully developed.
novallet. He is also a profoundly moral one. Brecher has
created, if, as Brecher puts it, a "society
taking an ethical stand on law and on politics, about lawyers and politicians without the necessity of
as Brecher observes, conscious is able to write competently
permanent. It as though the gradations were exact and
society for granted, and writes about it
defensible. Consciousness necessarily does take
can today accept the luxury may be
head by James Navin, who enjoys the
that the differentiation ideology
consistent framework of organized ahead
However, the analyst of society—whether

quality of the conscious novel:
Fredrick Brecher has commented upon the "un-political"

of it, although conscious is no apostate.
philosophy of consciousness and, at least, given a criticism
cannot be called "political", they nevertheless reflect a
generally recognized by other critics, although his novels
both of the conscious heroes and of their author, has been
Rose (as a "genuine consciousness." This consciousness,
Harry Money sees the man of reason (as Jutius Pen—
further observed that

He has no illusions about the permanence of such happiness as man occasionally achieves. . . . [The Cozzens world] may sometimes be controlled by the exercise of reason, but we are continually reminded of two potential, ever-present sources of disorder. One is the inescapable tangled network of cause and effect. . . . The other source is psychological: passions spin the plot and we are betrayed by what is false within. All men are in some sense possessed by love; accordingly, to certain mortality and always potential external disaster must be added the disorders that follow when passion and reason become self-division's cause. But these disorders and disasters do not lead to tragedy; the feeling underlying the novels is moral urgency rather than tragic catharsis.102

The Cozzens heroes are deeply involved in the morality of the age; their emphasis on reason and responsibility as a means of surviving in a basically amoral environment sets them apart from the other heroes of American literature, who tend to be motivated by feeling.

It is perhaps because of his conservatism and his upholding of reasonable responsibility as his characters' most admirable quality that Cozzens stands apart from the mainstream of American fiction. But for the reader who is willing to grant him his atypical position, Cozzens offers a detached, intellectual, but highly perceptive view of

American society as it exists at mid-century. And at a
time when the heroes of our fiction tend to be small and
unheroic, he offers, in the Man of Reason, a hero—or even
anti-hero—of considerable stature.
A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


