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

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THE NOVELS OF JAMES GOULD COZZENS

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

by

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Approved by:

[Signatures]

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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,¹ 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 Perdiction (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. Cossens' 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. Cossens 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" Cossens 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 Cossens 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 Cossens 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 consequences 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

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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. Cossens 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. Cossens' 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 novel, "By Love Possessed," explores themes such as love and mentorship. The protagonist, Arthur Whittaker, serves as a mentor to many of the younger men in his company. He takes them in as if they were his own children, and he is known for his wisdom and guidance.

One of the key figures in the novel is Judge Rose, a mentor to Arthur. Judge Rose is known for his wisdom and his ability to guide others. He is a respected figure in the community and is known for his mentorship.

The novel explores the complex relationships between mentors and mentees, and the impact that these relationships can have on the lives of those involved.

The secret hero of "By Love Possessed," however, is Colonel...

The...
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,
somewhat 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

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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

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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.  

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, a "roaring cloak-and-dagger romance of Elisabethan England." Michael, the future Lord Dunbury, is the epitome of Elisabethan 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

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of fact, he was graduated before the span
some years after the armada when, in point
presence at Cambridge as an undergraduate,
An appropriate, too, is Marlowe’s
intermediate Elizabethan Elizabethan attitude
pawn taken in London, perhaps a sort of
golden age in the company of the
Monarchical novelties, and the company of the
Nicholas Cambridge career and the composition
where is a certain familiarity between

Keveredge, for the New York Times said:

It also offers the certain consideration. As an anonymous

while Keveredge scanted offers the reader a good time,

wonderful and bloody fight.

In an attempt to protect the interests, and is credited in a
the climax of the book, Nicholas desaris the queen’s orders
interesse loyalty to the consequences at the golden age.

in obligation to serve the lady as a servant, the man in
supporting the forces of law and order as a lover, the man
in a subject, Nicholas has a duty to serve the queen in

the law integrated with the author’s cover.

further it is interesting to observe that reason, duty, and
see the germane theme so early in the course can, and

duty and love, and reason and feeling. It is interesting to

loyalties represent a conflict between law and justice,

representations to them all, which is to say, the spirit

donne, he is bracketed through the book by the various
at the golden ages. Marlowe, Nash, Ben Jonson, and John

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defeat, and by Shakespeare's production of "A Winter's Tale" some fifteen years before the event.\(^\text{10}\)

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*\(^\text{11}\) 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 onomatopoeetically identify their personality types—to paraphrase the characters' names: "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."  

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*, 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

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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.

\[\text{SOP, p. 304.}\]
Carlyle, or rather Bentham, President Bacer has commented significantly on these characters:

For the existence of such enigmatical characters as Warren, there is no possible answer.

Certainly another such maternal figure.

When a man of reason, rather Bentham in sympathy, English Whig, the perdition, is an enigma to the father, Arthur Whig, the feelings of others, Warren Whig, 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 inarticulate

By love possessed are such descendants. They represent
descendants, such maternal characters as Colonel

as a sentry or judge figure, manifestly has several
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 paraphrase 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,¹⁶ which will become increasingly important

¹⁶Bracher, 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 over­
ride 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.
In the first ten pages of Mr. Cozzens'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

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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,

\(^{19}\)SSSP, p. 4.
I turn to the opening pages...

The theme of the importance of a man’s work... San Pedro gives the author a certain stand in which to examine the workings of such dictatorship, as well as the... are an extraordinary variety of, and the character of the professionals, there are few professionals whose characters... matter of seminatural, 8, of course, a matter of the highest... The work reappears in a crucial way in 8. O. San Pedro, the... 8, concerns, concern with the importance of a man’s... breaks down. It will all begin with Captain Commander... introduced to the reader, is Captain Commander, commander... not. 80 and over 88. Bradell, although he has not yet been... glance to 88. Bradell, who answered it with a slight mute... the white excretion of the after-ridges... etc... in staghorn... was all right. Contrary to this, the micro shots hit the eye up to... directly behind him to order and, but Peaky, we are told... fall from the seat at the controls of the which, micro to... to assume responsibility? It’s for example, Peaky should... performance the function breaks down, the next man is at hand... can function perfectly on a completely mundane level. It...
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

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discipline for its own sake. For the Captain especially, this intrenchment 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.22 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.

22SSSP, 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.23

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 assign-
ment 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 possi-
bility 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 lawdy 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 the 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

\(^{25}\) _SSP_, 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:

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

The characters who will later develop into the typical Western type of mortal hero, as in the novel, however, I think that the story could be a

Fedro's deathless; he is yet a picture of the

The reader is not told that Fedro survives the Spanish

such a loss can be destructive.

They, and if they are in a position of great responsibility,

responsibilities! Responsibility brings to weight heavily upon

advancing age like the carpenter, lose the fine edge of youth, a

since they are not so well made for living, men of

institutions, wear out as well.

Ironically, the machinery of the San Pedro, the Kerne's

made for living. If

men, if seemed to anyone, were not as well.

the channel was above was usually depressed.

great turbinia turning could never grow tired.

only the San Pedro was built for success, the

abreast of winds, in the channel of black water.

came lethargically into existence, and then it

covered it in silence. It drew that again,

threw, dropped down, and the mighty ocean

stronger atmosphere. It snatched life a long

place of chance, made it enclosed, keeping the

now, at this break moment, the dam connected
In the broadest symbolic terms, the microcosm of the San Pedro depicts mankind pitted against the blind unreason- ability 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 incentives to action, without a well-proportioned mind, and he was without very long since. In any event, my theory was very same men are humane and few heretics are dressed, and one probably serves much better, for and in a well-proportioned mind is said to serve. In dependence with the comforts of human companionship. To replace the situation of crowds and to.

Removing politics in which he finds himself.

Goods available for the use, or to cope with the quantity by putting order to the politicking. The mind is not equipped otherwise in the sort of industry who depends on others in and carry out the ordering of their environment.

Their leisure and elevated social status, are charged with complete intellectual. 

Almost completely intellectual, he can be unrecognized by the point of being orthodox. He practically impoverished to the point of being appear to be an industry, who, because of the middle-class. He is employed as representative of the failure of materialism. He cannot be taken by Mr. Brecher, who sees this degeneration as he, lacking middle-class orthodox have been noted and are essentially the only threat to the which exists.

These central traits, he does not succeed in expressing himself
He has long nurtured a piquant, pungent, piercing sense of justice. They have exerted in him for the major part of the life, from the moment the novel begins, and it is apparent that victory of the own cause and philosophy they come to haunt him is fate, not that the nature which he cultivates in Cassellery. He is the base and outward within himself, and if to the side of

In the restoration, Mr. Lecky is confronted by all that
cases have, reason and is the cause of the self-incitement
the doctrine that is inherent in the "passion" which plaster.
lying just below the surface of Mr.'s "cultivation." In the

maser in the outside coarse could one the radical doctrine
the novel gives us the rest sounding of a theme which is

certainly presents a second important related theme.

free to occupy himself.

have been removed from society's, moderating influences, he is
sorts of entertainments and low appetites with which, because he
be is a sensuous with a rich imagination pedaled by all
race for rich foods, ham, sarcines, and alcohol. And

charters of entertainment and houses of.

cases of entertainment and the score's most strongly-deterred

ton. He is greedy, with a penchant for new clothing, whole

background and which work to hasten the restoration.

Cosmopolitan would have us believe so along with a thoroughly

He has other unfortunate character traits 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.  

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

\[30\textit{Ibid.}, p. 116.\]
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.\(^{31}\)

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.\(^{32}\)

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

Uncharacteristic though Castaway may be in the
mainstream of Cossens' development, it never-
theless represents a fruitful pause. Here,

\(^{31}\)Ibid., p. 174.

\(^{32}\)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.  

_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.

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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 townsmen 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.

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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 Cozens' 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 Card-maker, 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!"
a "society" doctor who ministers to New Winton'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 La, 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
five 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

39In TA, pp. 259-260.
40Ibid., 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. Cozens sentimentalizes. Midway 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 spaciousness 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. Cozens' 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 Cozens 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 conserve the conflicts which they present.

Exhibit culpable locates himself, as a minister, at the
understanding and help.

Interactions which call to exhibit culpable for
representatives of man's interactions, those
essential of man's transactions above all
beneath the vain, artificial search for
better, the vain, artificial search for
woman the earth's plane, who should know
woman the earth, earth's plane. Into the
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partnerships and, therefore, into his own life.

To bring some order and meaning into the lives of the
people within the institutions of those weaknesses to attempt
epicidal portrait of a man with thoroughgoing human weaknesses.

Men and Brethren answered the question by presenting an

What shall we do?
the rest of the apostles, men and brethren,
in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to
when they heard this, they were perplexed.
when they have cleansed, both body and heart.
assuredly that God hath made the same Jesus.

Wherefore let all the house of Israel know

The novel answers a question stated in the

ideology to the welfare of their society
through their professions to contrasted by reasonable action
professors who, for the most part, are committed
characteristic of all of the later comic heroes, all
characteristic of the novel.

The peculiar position of the hero of men and brethren

stone against the actions and reactions of the other
he been testing the own self, regimented, and moral adjuga-
and examine the use of reason and subsequent actions. He

The 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 Cozzens 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
Cozzens canon for the sort of out-and-out equation of
conservativism with reasonableness found in the later novels;
yet, as early as 1936, Mr. Cozzens was beginning to favor
the conservative way as the way of salvation for the heroes

emotion to be expected by sudden loss of control.

In every action, every attitude, every gesture, the willower's tendency toward excess of emotion is apparent.

Simple success...

...resulting in a greater or lesser degree of satisfaction. It was the result of a combination of factors: the number of the casualties, the date and whether the witness was present or not, from the location of the vote. The Holy Declaration was made.

The worst damage... partners will never agree...

The amount of information. His position as a man or position from a Catholic order after a scandal involving possible willower. He came to.ud the after having been excused... as part of the subsequent novelty.
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, descendant 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!"
So 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 like 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.
L'esprit est toujours la dupe
du coeur. —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."

48Bracher, 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
demeure always open and the articles d'hygiène
en cachette? What about something for
les soins intimes (que des larmes évites!); and if that did not work, the sage-France 18th
class discretion absolute? . . . . You
couldn't say they hadn't told you."

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

Youth, in the Cozzen novel, is an infirmity from
which some men never recover. Young Elery is, furthermore,
a sensualist in spite of the fact that he continues month
absences 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 Cozzen novels.

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

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49Mooney, p. 70.

50James Gould Cozzen, Ask Me Tomorrow (New York:
Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1940), pp. 74-75. Hereafter
abbreviated AMT.
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*.

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^51 ASC, p. 40.
THE JUST AND THE UNJUST

"I'm glad I spent my life in the law. . . . It's the stronghold 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 per 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. 54 Ibid.
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 Cossens' 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

55 Mooney, p. 77.

56 Ibid., 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 JAU, 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 Cozens' 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. Cozens 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

58 JAE, p. 104.
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. . . .

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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

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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--"
"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:

Cozenz 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

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63 *JAU*, pp. 433-434.
64 *Mooney*, 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 Cozens's 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
Coszens 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 disappoint­
ments 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

65*474, 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 Oceana 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 Oceana. 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

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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 AFORAD command. It is also established fairly early that Seal has gotten where he is primarily on his elan 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. Connors has given this self-divided leader of warriors the highest rank in the book, but perhaps

68 ML, 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 intelligence, 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 Peel stands between two

the environment.

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

been accomplished by the army and, thus, a country-wide.

a growing sense of responsibility, and partly by chance, general

through the mutiny of Colonel Rose, partly through the army

speaks, that he can make himself felt for command. Partly

tion of mutiny, and it is only by restraining him, partly

his self-defense stands in the way of General Peel's assumed-

and the assumption of the responsibility of the government.

the latter, the casting-off of the emotional reaction of youth

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

part by the self-defense. Like the other later novels,

mature understand, and his lack of stature is caused in large

the gaining the full stature as a commanding officer and as a

in want of honors, it is not until very late in the novel that

In a sense, the General is the most interesting character.

extraneous into existing maps, cartography.

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

charge denser him, and takes to the fighter plane, which he

dependent for some sodium metal (which the physicist in

are noted by extreme stress, the same way once to the base
It is the studied law in the office of another man's clerkship, and France during World War II. After returning to Ottawa

a veteran by 1901, Ross had taken part in duty in Mexico

unventrue (not) to the career, and entrance to constitutional law.

help him in the task of shaping General Beal; a long (it)

besides his age, Colored Ross has two assets that

blood pressure upward.

the burden of the responsible statesmen's duty. It

become aware of the consequences of destruction as we watched

wisdom and self-control, that come with age, and stability

extension of the aging judge, that of the gentle

mentor, that of the man of reason. Ross is a long

It is significant that consciousness has made him, as boast

potential trap to which exists in the new command at Canandaigua.

must prepare for quick thinking the General through the mass of

responsibility to be. Even they are recognized by anyone except

In an important sense, Colored Ross has in the hero

the man-in-the-middle, General Beal.

and passion, and to show, if possible, that influence can

examine Ross and Carter as representative men of reason

beat 'em personality. In the following pages, I wish to

of man's nature and, in a sense, they are extensions of
In which roses are shown, "looking out for bus," coming from

Guard of Honor provides the reader with several instances

counterexample, as here, of no consequences.

determined the contrary, usually of the third
in this matter sound him wanting. He then
I.e., call, boss? We watched the general;
it was most obscure. What motive had he
intersection, then, and where, just as naturally,
intersection in men more natural. It was
most motive in men where, naturally, it was most
real, touched the various speculation about
from these other, another, and from but this
connection of the joke, be agree to save but
appreciation of the joke, do no better than
and it must, be one of these people [like
somebody would have to look out for bus,

General and the General's Interchange

counterexample with beer which enables him to understand the

General's problems. Comical rose has established an easy
decryption, an appreciation which helps him solve the
appreciation for the qualities of the military system of
years of experience in the service he has given him an

men of law.

and reasonable evaluation one finds in the other course
from Judge Schlicter, rose has retained the logical thinking

out in ten minutes every expertly-handed non-essential. 69
Judge Schlicter, a man of great learning who would strip

69
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.

71GH, 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 Cowens 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 GH, 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,

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75 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 Hicks, 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 Seal sat up, his cheeks tingeing
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 Seal'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
Ocamara—one of the General's biggest problems. For his
impulsiveness, Carricker is grounded, but he hardly takes


79 Ibid.
It can't be done, Judge."

"Well, I have you don't have to be."

"Well, by any chance, are you?"

"You aren't both of you caracters, are you?"

"Well, please. I want to go home."

"Then be silent, do, and show your respect."

"And don't dare to touch me."

"I moved in on here a letter and he handed me the punishment sentence. Spreading the time in bed with a
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. Connens' 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 Cozzens novel, *By Love Possessed*, 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 Winner, 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.

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be emerged as a man of responsibility, indeed, before the
political manufacature, while he has certain shortcomings.

role of son, husband, father, law partner, enterer, and

Durng the action of the novel, he as depicted in the multipa
year-old lawyer practicing in the small community of Proction

winner, the protagonist of the novel, in a thirty-fort-

of another winner, for

theme: those who participate most directly in the paro
reason in the novel, I wish to examine only a section of

participate in the development of the theme of passion ve
characteristic who, in their exploitation of men's passions, theo

whole by love possessed presents numerous subtext

ment

with the gradual awareness of the reality of the action-
town about the own title and those of the elderly men, coupled
coming of age to the result of a series of devastating events
enured to large part to the mentor, colonel Rose, whom
between those whom dealt's attainment of maturity to

and reason. There is, however, the important difference
in cases somewhat analogous a self-determination caused by passion
real, indeed, Arthur winner's esteeming. Both are ignored

true and the youthful, and in general real in grand of homor

such as hypothetical appeared as never coarse in the

93
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

\(^{83}\) *BLP*, 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 realises 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

\[84\] ELP, 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

85 ELZ. P. 518.
Although isolated, he is still morally obliged, as are the
other Common 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), homo-
sexuality (Elmer Abbott), even autoeroticism (Mrs. Pratt).
And it identifies a broad spectrum of passions and unreason-
able 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 Cozzen 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.

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. ...

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

Like Warren, Marjorie Penrose represents the individual,...
"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 BLT, 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 successfully 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 Pomesah oak (a symbol of Winner's youthful innocence) is struck by lightning; Winner, in an ironic reversal, kills an oppossum 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. Connens 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 Connens 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 interrelation... 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, his messages might or might not reach someone.91

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

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90 ibid., 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

92 ibid., pp. 531-532.
93 ibid., p. 116.
94 ibid., p. 427.
for all of the majorCourse of action.

dialogue which provides the reader with a thematic center
reasonable men’s wisdom? the does so in a long passage of
get... until sentences to offer that the substance of the
importance of reason. in the midst of another, whether
most clearly expresses the author’s own viewpoint about the
the course’s conclusion, the stands out as the introductory who
the man of reason; more than any other such character in
and reason, self-destruction’s cause. he is the apotheosis of
Ponrose, who carries Rule-Greatful observation, “Passion
he makes only two direct appearances in the novel. It is the
which Ponrose, whether, Jay partner and the novel’s

Ponrose, Ponrose, Whether, Jay partner and the novel’s

He discussed them as follows.
had done than what read would presently do.
from mannered speech? he could not fail. he
move they of hunting, of pantomime, move they
seemed to be sounds. move they from beginning?
the scheme of things? existence in which there
speech and intonations in the smooth run of
catchings and intonations, the voice, the
which the voice could actually pronounce, exactly
which he was far better able, that he could see read now
that is one way that he could see read now

Recall the one’s fourteen years ago. Arthur
Recall the one’s fourteen years ago. Arthur

Recall the one’s fourteen years ago. Arthur
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.

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 asssented to, accepted, and we stop directing our effort where effort is wasted, we usually can do quite

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98Bracher, 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 BL 146, p. 531.

100 ibid., p. 543.
CONCLUSION: A NOTE ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 
COSZENS: MEN OF REASON

In summary, the man of reason does not make a formal
appearance in the Coszen's canon until Men and Brethren,
a novel which appeared about midway in the course of Mr.
Coszen'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
Lost Adam (George Bell as the professional man and man of
action), and Men and Brethren (Arnest 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 soundest for the first time in Ask Me
Tomorrow, but elements of the theme are apparent as early
in the Coszen's canon as Men and Brethren, and all of the
Coszen'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 Coszen novel, By Love Possessed,
a book 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.
narrative, he is also a profoundly moral one. Preacher has

expected, he is as preacher points out, a "society

taking an ideological stand on law and on politics.

about lawyers and politicians without the necessity of

As preacher observes, comes is able to write comfortably

permanent. 101

as though the gradations were strict, and

society for granted, and writes about it
dependable. Consciousness nevertheless does take
can hardly accord the luxury may be
doctrine that determinates ideological
coherent framework of organicated absolute
inference or fallacy—not based on the

Moreover, the analytik of society—history

quality of the consensual novel:

preacher preacher has commented upon the "un-politicant"

of it, although consense is no apostate.

philosophy of consensualism and, at least, even a criticism

cannot be called "politicant," they nevertheless reflect a
genetically recognized by other critics. Although this notion

both of the consensual heroes and of the author, has been

rose (as a "genuinely consensualism.

Harry Money sees the man of reason (as Julian 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

102 Bracher, pp. 19-20.
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


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