

# PARADOXICAL DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

Don McKay

Trying to achieve the almost impossible Doctor Zhivago becomes a paradox. It is a combination of a romantic tragedy with a spectacular account of the Russian Revolution and its aftermath. The result is fascinating.

The movie is the flashback biography of Zhivago—a doctor-poet living during the revolution. The doctor loves his wife, Tanya—an aristocrat—and abhors the results of the revolution. The poet loves Lara—the abandoned wife of a revolutionary leader—and admires the ideals of the revolution. The movie is the study of the character conflicts of Zhivago.

The characters are presented with a challenge. They must create believable characterizations that are strong enough not to be overpowered by the spectacular scenery and action. Yet each character must show delicate nuances of personality so that the audience can identify with them as real people.

Julie Christie as Lara and Geraldine Chaplin as Tanya are both successful. Each actress creates an individual woman that Zhivago could easily love, but each woman has a personality all her own. Omar Sharif as Zhivago tends to be wooden in his portrayal in the first half of the movie. In supporting roles, Alec Guinness, as Zhivago's brother and Rita Tushingham as Zhivago's bastard daughter are excellent. The general quality of the acting is high.

David Lean, the director, achieves the impossible. He produces a spectacular account of the political passion of the revolution in Russia. Then within this framework he centres the audience's attention on the story of Zhivago, his love, and his many conflicts.

Lean uses the camera to include the audience in the action. This is especially notable when he uses the camera so that the audience experiences true fear and disgust as the Czar's guards attacked and slaughtered the revolutionaries. Lean dubbed in Maurice Jarre's haunting and beautiful music with subtlety and skill.

By concentrating on Zhivago's biography rather than on the revolution he has excelled his previous efforts; e.g. *The Bridge on the River Kwai*.

CUS cont'd

far to CUS structure and leadership has come from McGill, the only large Quebec university still in the union, and Alberta. Dubbed the "terrible two" in Halifax, McGill and Alberta were so closely aligned on some issues they could have taken turns representing the right point of view. (In one instance, when the means students should use to express political opinion was being discussed, Edmonton council president Branny Schepanovich had to discard a carefully prepared speech merely because his McGill counterpart, Jim McCoubrey, had been placed first on the speakers list.)

McGill's position in CUS is unique. The only value of that university to CUS at present is the membership fees its more than 10,000 students will be paying. There is little doubt the two McGill strong men, McCoubrey and his vice-president Arnie Aberman, are sympathetic to Alberta's stand. However, in addition to the left-right confrontation at McGill, the campus is split on whether it should be a member of a national union or

F. Scott Fitzgerald; A Critical Portrait By Henry Dan Piper, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966, \$10.95

Fitzgerald is currently suffering a revival. Books by and about him are in demand throughout North America—which is fine, except that such interest attracts swarms of critics who have no special understanding of the subject but feel obliged to comment learnedly.

This could happen to any author. The problem is worse in this case, though, because so many academics feel a mythic kinship with the man. Such feelings are generally specious, based on memories of (or longings for) the Roaring 20's, an obvious desire to be thought of as secretly romantic, or a degree conferred more than 25 years ago from Fitzgerald's university, Princeton.

Most such critics are certain to miss the point in attempting serious re-evaluation of Fitzgerald's work. They fail for the same reasons Fitzgerald fails to express reality to minds drilled under the Shadow of World War Two. Such critics want to talk about him in terms of good and evil, but he talks only of right and wrong. The former are universal categories; his are merely personal.

Failure to make this distinction leads one, for example, to decide as Piper has that *The Great Gatsby* is a search for a moral absolute and that in *Tender is the Night* Dick married Nicole for her money. Where there is no sin Piper feels it is necessary to invent one.

Piper carries this conviction that the world is bi-polar at good and evil into his attitude to Fitzgerald.

No clear understanding of Fitzgerald as a person emerges, but only a representation of Fitzgerald as the object of various forces—Zelda, liquor, his desire for money, the standard writer's passion to transform experience into art, etc. Some discussion of these matters is essential, of course. But the examination must be more profound than Piper has undertaken if we are to understand the mind that was trying to speak about the world in terms of these experiences.

Putting it bluntly, Piper lacks the insight and imagination that Arthur Mizener displayed in *The Far Side of Paradise* in 1951.

of the predominantly French, provincial organization, UGEQ. McCoubrey and Aberman would dearly love to compromise all points of view by arranging for voluntary membership in both unions for McGill's students. The two leaders can be expected to continue promotion of the student right concept, but also to avoid a showdown because of their tenable and complicated mandate.

Despite the fact the universities that have left CUS in recent years (other than those who left to join UGEQ) have not openly complained of CUS political involvement, it would be wrong to suggest they do not share the Alberta-McGill point of view. What Alberta and McGill have really done is provide the discontents with a philosophy. Alberta's specific complaints were not unlike those of other withdrawing campuses. CUS was not, Alberta said both prior to and during the congress, concentrating on improving and expanding services of direct concern to students.

Rex Murphy, council president of Newfoundland's Memorial University, took considerable pain to

Mizener anticipated and surpassed virtually everything Piper tries here.

Their respective treatments of the Fitzgeralds' move to St. Paul is a case in point.

Piper claims Fitzgerald "felt a compulsion to return and make his peace with Summit Avenue." He cites no authority for the remark and none of the published letters or other materials bear him out. Of *Zelda*, he remarks briefly: "The city's staid respectability irritated her and she was soon restless for New York."

Mizener provides 5 1/2 lively pages and proves *Zelda's* feeling by quoting her letter to Ludlow Fowler: "We are simply mad to get back to New York . . . This damned place is 18 below zero and I go around thanking God that, anatomically and proverbially speaking, I am safe from the awful fate of the monkey".

Such vigorous scholarship is not demonstrated by Mr. Piper.

On the contrary, his best moments come when he is close to pedantry. One of the best parts of the book is a discussion of Willa Cather's influence on Fitzgerald.

And Piper's account of the composition of *The Great Gatsby* on the basis of the several extant drafts is excellent: it is also most certainly modelled on Matthew J. Bruccoli's *The Composition of Tender is the Night: a Study of the Manuscripts* (1963). Mr. Piper though he undertakes a three-chapter discussion of *Tender is the Night* in its various stages, never mentions Bruccoli or his work.

The prize for blind misunderstanding must go to his plaintive cry on page 93 as he scores Fitzgerald for slipshod work:

" . . . (The Beautiful and Damned) . . . never received the final polishing it should have had. For example, at one point Gloria tells Anthony that she is pregnant . . . but we never hear anything more about this interesting development. Whatever happened to her baby?"

In the novel, Anthony goes to his grandfather for advice or money or something to face the prospect of this onrushing baby. When he returns Gloria clearly wants to speak to him but impatiently waits till a servant has gone:

"When the Oriental had been squelched and dismissed to the kitchen, Anthony turned questioningly to Gloria:

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"Communications will be the Big thing at York within a few years," says Al Kaplan, Vanier Chairman, and his enthusiasm is catching. Al hopes that Radio York will become a students' forum which any student, group of students, or club can use to air its view.

The Debating Club has already taped *The Great Sex Debate*, and it will be heard on CJRT tomorrow. (Dr. Cohen: "Don't worry, I'm sure the university will interpret your remarks as progressive speculation.")

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In future years, the library of taped programs will provide students with a verbal history of the University's activities. What will you say when your children listen, and ask "What did YOU do on Radio York, Daddy?"

"It's all right," she announced, smiling broadly. "And it surprised me more than it does you."

"There's no doubt?"

"None! Couldn't be!"

They rejoiced happily, gay again with reborn irresponsibility.

Either careless reading or an astounding ignorance of life would be required to miss that one.

No, it's not worth it. There is room for a lot of good work on Fitzgerald but most of the ground covered here has been covered before—and better.

condemn CUS administration and services in a long and fiery speech at Halifax. He succeeded in having himself labelled as "childish", and criticized for failing to recognize that efficiency takes time.

The same reaction greeted Schepanovich, McCoubrey and Aberman as they laboured to direct CUS away from political involvement. Time and again they were snowed under by philosophies of student action and youth involvement in society that have swept over the North American continent since the turn of the decade. What was often misinterpreted by student leaders in Halifax, and even since the Alberta withdrawal, is that Alberta and McGill are not as disenchanted about past CUS services as they are about the organization's new objectives and its recent refusal to expand promotion of common student interests.

The new leaders of the right have taken a long look at the evolving structures of CUS, and perhaps understand their significance better than many CUS supporters. As now structured, CUS is much more than an or-

ganization dedicated to the student. Universal accessibility is much more than CUS education objectives of two years ago which were defined as underlining "that every individual has the right to receive the education that will assure his fullest personal development, and that it is the responsibility of society to guarantee this right of education to the individual, regardless of race, creed and geographic or economic circumstances, since the development of the individual is essential to the development of society."

Of course, universal accessibility need not in itself be interpreted as political. Few, if any, student leaders, and certainly none of the current right, would suggest that it should not be an aim of CUS. However, the interpretation given to universal accessibility by left leaders goes far beyond ensuring that no post-secondary education. The concept of universal student loans comes much closer to realizing this objective than most CUS leaders would like to admit.

# Radio York on the Air

Gary Gayda

Lawrence Miller

# Book Review