

Ghost Stories: Commodification of the self in H. James and F.S. Fitzgerald

UGO RUBELO

Sapienza Università di Roma

Abstract

*Described as removed from social and economic matters, US writers Henry James and Francis Scott Fitzgerald show increasing concern for an economy dominated by financial and industrial interests. In *The American Scene* (1907), James comments upon the consequences of the American all-pervading gospel of profit, while in his vaguely autobiographical "The Jolly Corner" (1909), he hides behind his American fictional ghost to explore the economic potentialities he has renounced. In turn, in 1936, Scott Fitzgerald dramatizes his own economic and artistic failure in "The Crack-Up", a three-part article he sells for sustenance to the editors of *Esquire*, bypassing his agent. In their works, both James and Fitzgerald show an awareness of the commercial value of their private lives, commodifying dramatic episodes of their own experience.*

Keywords: Henry James; Francis Scott Fitzgerald; economic discourse; private lives; commodification of self.