Chapter 3rd

REFLECTION OF THE JAZZ AGE
Reflection of The Jazz Age

This Side of Paradise

F. Scott Fitzgerald’s first novel *This Side of Paradise* portrays the story of a young man whose situation is reminiscent to the author’s own. Much of the novel was drawn from Fitzgerald’s experiences, including his romantic life and the time he spent at Princeton University. Through the publication of *Paradise*, Fitzgerald was afforded his first taste of literary and financial success. This propelled him into fame and caused him to be expelled from Princeton. In addition to detailing his own experience, the novel, importantly, demonstrates Fitzgerald’s skill as an author in terms of its prose and unique literary style. Perhaps more essential than its artistic merit and aesthetic description and even its overall message there are references in the novel to money and society. It supports the value American society places on success, wealth, and social status. These references emerge as the novel progresses and change shape as the main character, Amory, matures and has to face hardship. Through the influence of a brilliant education and an eccentric, indulgent mother, Amory forms opinions about the importance of wealth and society. However, he goes through similar experiences to Fitzgerald’s, losing his love and his financial stability. These losses dispel his youthful egoism, but in the novel’s resolution, he holds fast to the faint remnants of his dreams and his former idealism.
Fitzgerald began writing the manuscript for *The Romantic Egoist*, in 1917 at the age of twenty-one, which was later to become *Paradise*. As James L. West explains, Fitzgerald wrote the first manuscript when he was a student at Princeton, during weekends which he spent at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, waiting to be called to serve. To his regret, he did not go overseas to war, but he did meet, fall in love with and become separated from Zelda Sayre during this time. An alcohol binge and the fear of losing Zelda prompted several revisions of his novel. Fitzgerald thought of *Paradise* as an opportunity to earn him “two all-important things—success and love”. Success did not happen right away, however, as Fitzgerald had to take a job in New York City as a copywriter while he was desperately waiting for his novel to be published. At this time, Scribner’s was bothered by the novel’s lack of a definable goal. Eventually, Fitzgerald made several revisions until the editors at Scribner’s were pleased and *Paradise* was published.

After Fitzgerald changed it sending to the final revision, the plot of the novel could be considered an American *Bildungsroman* with Amory Blaine as the *Bildungsroman* hero. A *Bildungsroman* describes “youth in the process of maturing.” According to Jack Hendriksen, *Paradise* fits the definition because it follows certain common *Bildung* patterns such as “the presence of a weak or absent father and a domineering mother [which] creates strong psychological motivations for the hero’s actions,” “the presentation of the hero as representative of his own generation,” and an “ending [which] places the hero on the verge of adulthood through a revelation or insight”.

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The novel fits the pattern by detailing the life of Amory, from his youth, as he attends a preparatory school and Princeton and to his young adulthood, when he struggles with the loss of his love and his family money. Specifically, the plot begins with Amory as a spoiled upper-middle class child, travelling with his eccentric mother. The novel then describes Amory’s life and thoughts as he receives a privileged education. It ends at his young adulthood, with Amory broke and contemplating on the “impoverished class.” Wealth and socioeconomics factor heavily impacts on Amory’s emerging perception of himself and his place in society. In particular, his concerns about money, with the exception of his intended marriage to Rosalind, are somewhat selfish and short sighted, but he accepts his state of poverty in the end, suggesting that Amory has grown up.

Far before he gets to this understanding, however, Amory is brought up under the influence of his wealthy mother, Beatrice, who craves attention, acts dramatically, and behaves somewhat impulsively. Her main concerns are entertaining herself with holiday diversions and by discussing her “nervous breakdowns” and other questionable health concerns with strangers and with Amory:

“I am feeling very old today, Amory,” she would sigh, her face a rare cameo of pathos.... “My nerves are on edge—on edge.”

Beatrice’s friends include mainly new acquaintances to whom she can talk about her nervous breakdowns and her interests without boring them. Beatrice is both a hypochondriac and she repeatedly falls in and out of her faith in an effort to gain more attention from
priests—she claims that next to doctors, priests are her “favourite sport.” What drives Beatrice to her attention seeking behaviour is not fully established in the novel, but it is hinted that she is a bored member of the privileged class. She is certainly bored by Amory’s father who she married in one of her “less important moments” because she was feeling “a little bit weary” and “a little bit sad”. Perhaps Beatrice had greater expectations for her life because she received such a superior education provided by her family’s wealth:

Beatrice... absorbed the sort of education that will be quite impossible ever again; a tutelage measured by the number of things and people one could be contemptuous of and charming about; a culture rich in all arts and traditions, barren of all ideas, in the last of those days when the great gardener clipped the inferior roses to produce one perfect bud.²

Through this type of extravagant but superfluous schooling, Beatrice may have developed her behaviour. It seems to lend her an attitude of entitlement. At the same time, she is an interesting, humorous and intelligent character who both influences Amory to be creative and exposes him to the arts.

Beatrice influences Amory so greatly in his childhood that he deems this time in his life “Amory plus Beatrice.” She partly shapes his character, but he also perceives her shortcomings as a child and is not entirely moulded by her influence: “[e]ven at [his] age he had no illusions about her”. They travel alone together: “doing” the country and she teaches him eccentric values. For instance, she suggests
Amory never rise early. She tells him that his breakfast needs to always be brought up to him so that he may eat in bed and be idle:

Dear, don’t think of getting out of bed yet. I’ve always suspected that early rising in early life makes one nervous.³

As a result, Amory tends to be lazy even as he grows older, and expects that he will not have to work hard to win favour with people or to do well academically. Her presence may have also promoted his preference for superficial forms of attention and his occasionally vapid behaviour. These instances can be traced throughout the novel. However, she also educates him at a young age and helps him uncover the better parts of culture: “[s]he fed him sections of the “Fetes Galantes” before he was ten; at eleven he could talk glibly, if rather reminiscently, of Brahms and Mozart and Beethoven”. Overall, her influence may be that which makes Amory crave attention, but her money and sway afford him an advantaged upbringing and allow him to attend St. Regis and Princeton.

Once at St. Regis and later at Princeton, Beatrice’s influence on Amory remains the foundation of his character. Like his mother, Amory has some genuinely positive qualities. He is intelligent and committed to his education, but also by her example, he has grown to be self-absorbed and rather entitled in his youth. These qualities form Amory’s identity as a self-professed egoist which is reflected when he is a young student at St. Regis who is wondering how people can “fail to notice that he [is] a boy marked for glory”. Amory additionally feels that he is physically, socially and mentally superior. He even
creates his own code of aristocratic egoism:

*Physically.*—Amory thought that he was exceedingly handsome.... *Socially*.... He granted himself personality, charm, magnetism, [and] poise....

*Mentally.*—Complete, unquestioned superiority.\(^4\)

Following his own code, he perceives that he is destined for greatness. At Princeton, Amory’s egoism carries on; he strives to be popular, a football star, and a member of the campus elite. At the same time, through Beatrice’s influence, it is likely that Amory developed his creativity and his capacity to dream. He is very much a dreamer, often preferring his fantasy world to reality. In the same way Beatrice preferred ruminating on her false illnesses to focusing on her real life: “before [Amory] fell asleep he would dream of his favourite waking dreams, the one about becoming a great halfback, or the one about the Japanese invasion, when he was rewarded by being made the youngest general in the world. It was always the becoming he dreamed of, never the being”. When he gets older, he continues to dream. He maps out the appealing things he will do as an adult: “[h]e was going to live in New York and be known at every restaurant and cafe, wearing a dress suit from early evening to early morning, sleeping away the dull hours of the forenoon”. He fails to realize his dreams through the course of the novel. His creativity leads him to an authentic interest in literature and writing and helps to develop his intellect and empathy.

At Princeton, Amory has shed much of Beatrice’s influence and
takes part in the University’s unique culture. Princeton serves as a microcosm in the novel mirroring rules from the larger, surrounding society. Here, Amory grows into a young man, gains his education and endeavours to fully engage in what intellectual life has to offer. He attempts to win his place as the best, most popular student in this “society.” As the title suggests, Princeton represents for Amory some of the aspects of a near paradise environment. It is hugely important to Amory—as other characters cannot help but notice, such as Isabelle, Amory’s girlfriend during preparatory school: “Oh, you and Princeton! You’d think that was the world, the way you talk!” Through-out the rest of the novel and as critics have mentioned, he maintains a sort of nostalgic affection for it, holding it as an ideal as Fitzgerald did:

Fitzgerald presented the institution as far more than a setting; indeed it became his center of the universe. Princeton must be analyzed as a modernist’s paradise temporarily gained, inevitably lost, never forgotten. Readmission remains Amory’s secret hope.\(^5\)

Amory often deciphers his environment in terms of ideals. As an egoist and romantic—he has very high expectations for himself and for the world. Princeton is a rather controlled environment, and, with some exceptions, the students in the novel who attend it are not depicted to have great disparities in the income levels of their families. It represents a utopia for Fitzgerald. In his mind, the young men who go there are among the very best, which is why he initially wanted to attend. Princeton, similarly, is the institution that Amory
chooses, if not for entirely academic reasons, because of what it represents compared to other schools of its calibre:

Amory had decided definitely on Princeton, even though he would be the only boy entering that year from St. Regis’. Yale had a romance and glamour..., but Princeton drew him most, with its atmosphere of bright colors and its alluring reputation as the pleasantest country club in America.6

It is Princeton as a form, an “ideal” institution and ideal “place,” rather than its function as a University, a place of education, which impresses him. For instance, he says that in “spite of going to college”—a ten thousand dollar education as he mentions earlier in the novel—he received a good education, and he was one of the few men who did receive a good education at college. In other words, Amory’s education is also a product of the unique circumstances of his upbringing. The books he chose to read outside of his classes and the overall experiences of his life.

At Princeton, Amory meets Dick Humbird who he looks up to because he represents money and because Amory appreciates his deft mannerisms and his approach to Princeton and its surrounding society:

Humbird had, ever since fresh man year, seemed to Amory a perfect type of aristocrat.... Everything he said sounded intangibly appropriate. He possessed infinite courage, an averagely good mind, and a sense of honor with a clear charm and noblesse oblige that varied it from righteousness.... He
seemed the eternal example of what the upper class tries to be.  

Amory is somewhat disappointed when he discovers that Dick’s moneyed traits are not the result of a wealthy background—Dick is the son of a grocery clerk who gained a fortune in real estate. However, when Dick is killed abruptly in an automobile accident towards the end of the book, his death adds to the hardship that Amory has been facing. He finds his death to be very upsetting and undignified, and it magnifies his sense of tragedy:

[N]ow he was this heavy white mass. All that remained of the charm and personality of the Dick Humbird he had known—oh, it was all so horrible and unaristocratic and close to the earth. All tragedy has that strain of the grotesque and squalid.  

Here, his sense of tragedy hints at his understanding of poverty which comes later in the novel as base and abhorrent. His “ideal” of sorts has died marking the death of another ideal—like the death of his love affair with Rosalind and the end of his ideal time at Princeton. He feels impoverished for want of hope and direction.

He is all the more uncertain when he finds that he will inherit less money than he has been promised. Financial concerns figure significantly into the life and maturation of Amory. Particularly, considering of his wealth diminishes from that of having a significant allowance to having nothing through the course of the plot.

Amory is not so much concerned with his family’s money or
the appearance of it as he is with its absence. Amory’s childhood is one of some extravagance and privilege, as he travels with his mother. It is only when he attends Princeton that his funds decrease. When his father dies he finds that their family money was ill-tended and he has less than he expected. This, strikingly, is the only real concern he demonstrates at his father’s funeral. He expresses no outward sorrow for the loss of his father. Of course, they are not depicted as being particularly close, but the narrator comments on Amory’s focus on the finances as well as his lack of grief:

What interested him much more than the final departure of his father from things mundane was a tricornered conversation among Beatrice, Mr. Barton, of Barton and Krogman, their lawyers, and himself, that took place several days after the funeral. For the first time he came into actual cognizance of the family finances, and realized what a tidy fortune had once been under his father’s management.... In the volume for 1912 Amory was shocked to discover the decrease in the number of bond holdings and the great drop in the income.9

Beatrice’s death brings about a similar reaction in Amory. He is discouraged to discover that she left a great deal of the family money to her church and he is left with very little. Because the narrator points out the coldness with which Amory refers to the deaths of his parents, it is clear that Amory is somewhat detached and overly concerned with money. Oddly, he expresses and arguably feels so little emotion for the loss of Beatrice when the loss of his money has him in a panic and considering that he was close to his mother.
The fact is that Amory responds with little emotion to Beatrice’s death. She enhances Amory’s egoism and affects him greatly like other female characters in the novel. They seem to understand Amory better than he. They serve to explain Amory’s behaviour in the plot. Both the “popular daughter” Isabelle and the poverty-stricken, but lovely, Clara, who has no romantic interest in Amory, perceive that his egoism masks certain insecurities. Clara explains her view about Amory to him during one of the times he visits her:

[T]he reason you have so little real self-confidence, even though you gravely announce to the occasional philistine that you think you’re a genius, is that you’ve attributed all sorts of atrocious faults to yourself and are trying to live up to them.10

The female characters also affect him by factoring heavily into his financial considerations in addition to developing Amory’s view of himself. His relationship with Rosalind, a beautiful young woman who is accustomed to luxury to the extent that she rarely does “her own hair,” causes him to worry about his depleted finances. Amory wants to marry Rosalind, but she has several suitors with better means to support her. However, she too loves Amory and they spend all of their free time together. Reminiscent of Fitzgerald’s own life, Amory even takes a job as a copy editor which he despises to earn a suitable income. For a while, this arrangement works. Amory lives in a state of distracted bliss, focusing almost entirely on another person and the experience of being in love. Like Daisy in Gatsby, Rosalind then
changes her mind and decides to marry for the security and comforts which accompany wealth and Amory is devastated. Their breakup is depicted as a tragic play with their conversation broken into lines, as if to highlight the histrionics of the scene:

AMORY: And you love me.

ROSALIND: That’s just why it has to end. Drifting hurts too much. We can’t have any more scenes like this.

(She draws his ring from her finger and hands it to him. Their eyes blind again with tears.)

Fitzgerald emphasizes the impact that Rosalind has on Amory: “AMORY: (Wildly) I don’t care! You’re spoiling our lives!”. Unlike Jay Gatsby, once Rosalind’s engagement is announced in a newspaper, he holds out no hope that they will be reunited and she is, in essence, dead to him. The loss of Rosalind affects Amory deeply. He goes on a drinking binge, mourning the loss of his youth and love in the chapter titled “Still Alcoholic”.

As his depression deepens, he continues to behave recklessly, taking the fall for a friend who spent the night in a hotel with a woman who was not his wife. This event highlights the novel’s depiction of the value that certain individuals are perceived to have. Notably, these seemingly more important individuals are wealthier. In the above example, Amory “sacrifices” himself so that his friend will not have his reputation ruined. In this case, there is little financial difference between the two. Amory seems to act this generously because he already feels so bad about himself that he does not think
an additional blow will matter. The young woman who accompanies his friend asks him whether he is more important than Amory. Amory responds mysteriously that “it remains to be seen,” suggesting that their futures, in essence their future accomplishments, will reveal how important they are.

He knows that Tom will grow to resent him because he will be in debt to Amory or he will have to make something out of himself in payment to Amory’s gesture. A great deal of the energy that Amory spends is devoted to affirming to himself that he is one of the important people. His selfless act suggests Amory’s emerging character as an adult who is less concerned with how others judge him and more concerned with what he may accomplish. With the loss of the ideals that mattered to him, Amory doubts that he is important. He no longer has Rosalind and their “ideal” love, and he has also lost the paradise or “ideal,” institution and environment, which he found at Princeton.

As Amory’s depression increases, the beauty of the environment described at the University becomes rainy. The mired and disenchanted city of New York, symbolizes his growing dejection:

The rain gave Amory a feeling of detachment, and the numerous unpleasant aspects of city life without money occurred to him in threatening procession. There was the ghastly, stinking crush of the subway—the car cards thrusting themselves at one, leering out like dull bores who grab your arm with another story.\textsuperscript{12}
In addition to losing his love and ideals, Amory fears living in the city without the comforts afforded by the money of his former class. The city’s subway car cards act like a group of overly effusive bores. Similarly, the people who have to ride these cars are depicted as base, worn out individuals with little energy or benevolence left to give:

[A] man deciding not to give his seat to a woman, hating her for it; the woman hating him for not doing it; at worst a squalid phantasmagoria of breath, and old cloth on human bodies and the smells of the food men ate—at best just people—too hot or too cold, tired, worried.¹³

For instance, they are reminiscent of the lower-middle class described in *Gatsby*, with characters such as Myrtle who are poignantly depicted as less moral or amoral and basely physical. The environment which contains them is old and depressing and human life seems shameful and purposeless which is a direct contrast to life at Princeton:

He pictured the rooms where these people lived—where the patterns of the blistered wall-papers were heavy reiterated sunflowers on green and yellow backgrounds, where there were tin bathtubs and gloomy hallways and verduresless, unnamable spaces.... And always there was the economical stuffiness of indoor winter, the long summers, nightmares of perspiration between sticky enveloping walls... dirty restaurants where careless, tired people helped themselves to sugar with their own used coffee-spoons, leaving hard
brown deposits in the bowl.14

The grime dirt and ugliness are a far cry from the spires and gothic romanticism of Princeton. In Amory’s imagination, the places where poor people must live are cramped and physically uncomfortable. Amory hates this environment and he hates the people who have to live in it, not for their own fault but because they are poor:

“I detest poor people,” thought Amory.... Poverty may have been beautiful once, but it’s rotten now. It’s the ugliest thing in the world. It’s essentially cleaner to be corrupt and rich than it is to be innocent and poor.15

In essence, he despises poverty and the poor because they represent life that is both physically filthy and devoid of intellectual life. For Amory, becoming a part of this group means that he has to relinquish the high standards he had for himself as a child and as a young man at Princeton.

Amory despises poverty because it is the opposite of everything he loves and wishes to become. For instance, the women he loved, his mother, Beatrice, Isabelle and Rosalind, all have family money. There is one exception in Clara who manages to avoid the negative connotations of being poor, perhaps to point out Amory’s unfair stereotypes. For instance, they represent money to him; Rosalind knew that she would not be the woman he loved if they were to marry without money. The women who represent money have a certain allure and beauty for Amory. In the same way that Princeton, “the
sunny land of spires,” has an environment of alluring architecture and history. This is described in one passage in terms of symbols—spires and gargoyles of gothic architecture. Amory has “a deep and reverent devotion to the gray walls and Gothic peaks and all they symbolized as warehouses of dead ages.” He likes knowing that the architecture of Princeton “with its upward trend.... [t]he silent stretches of green, the quiet halls with an occasional late-burning scholastic light held his imagination in a strong grasp, and the chastity of the spire became a symbol of this perception”. Then when Amory leaves the university, he describes the campus in further poetic terms and though this is not a symbol of wealth, perchance, it is that of higher education what money affords.

Amory continues to be preoccupied with money and class as the novel progresses. But his opinions change abruptly at the novel’s dénouement. His attitude about poor people becomes more humane and his theories on socioeconomics become rather socialist. Amory discusses wealth and potential social reforms with a man who offers him a ride in his car. He suggests to the man that “[m]oney isn’t the only stimulus that brings out the best that’s in a man, even in America”.

The man and Amory disagree, and Amory argues that men will work and furthermore compete with each other not for money, as men have done in the past, but for symbolic honour, “blue ribbons,” and the simple notion of being the best. He also suggests that all children ought to be given the same opportunities, marking a significant detour from Amory’s earlier professed idioms:
Every child.... should have an equal start. If his father can endow him with a good physique and his mother with some common sense in his early education, that should be his heritage. If the father can’t give him a good physique, if the mother has spent in chasing men the years in which she should have been preparing herself to educate her children, so much the worse for the child. He shouldn’t be artificially bolstered up with money, sent to these horrible tutoring schools, dragged through college... Every boy ought to have an equal start.¹⁶

This statement is potentially hypocritical on Amory’s part, considering the viewpoint of the elite atmosphere from which he makes his assertions. On the other hand Amory’s flirtation with socialism, his perception of faults in a society which excludes impoverished individuals from the ideal environment he experienced at Princeton. Although, his views on education and class-relations may be superficially developed, they importantly show his reflection on issues outside of himself. Here, he is no longer a true egoist, solely concerned with himself and his own predicament and through his hardship he is able to identify with humanity on a broader scale.

The end of the novel results in continued expansion on Amory’s part in which his youthful, shallow egoism becomes a brief expression of solipsism and finally an assertion that he will carry on. He hears the sound of the bells at Princeton and reflects on the change that has come over him. Amory is no longer the young idealistic student that he was at the University. He is “sorry for” the new group of students that will perpetuate the myths of the past:
[T]he chosen youth from muddled, unchastened world, still fed romantically on the mistakes and half-forgotten dreams of dead statesmen and poets. Here was the new generation... a new generation dedicated more than the last to the fear of poverty and the worship of success.\(^\text{17}\)

Amory believed in these dreams fully and wanted to be successful on Princeton’s terms. His former egoism changes to an expression of solipsism, Amory admits that he knows himself, “but that is all”. When these lines are paired with the following passage, Amory’s appreciation of his own limitations and his continued belief in the unseen motivations of the past combined with a faint but present anticipation for what will come:

> There was no God in his heart, he knew; his ideas were still in riot; there was the pain of memory; the regret for his lost youth—yet the waters of disillusion had left a deposit on his soul, responsibility and a love of life, the faint stirring of old ambitions and unrealized dreams.\(^\text{18}\)

Amory cannot entirely articulate why the struggle of life is still worthwhile in the end. That motivates Amory to carry on even when his life has not turned out the way he imagined. It is difficult for him to define, but it is linked to the artistic and literary pursuits he enjoyed in college. However, these are not the superficial endeavours which he pursued to appear to be clever but those which were separate from his ego and his sense of class and financial superiority. He finds at the end that these motivations are almost ethereal as, “the faint stirring of old ambitions and unrealized dreams,” and very distinct from worldly
financial considerations. It is as if Fitzgerald wants Amory, as grounded as he was in materialistic, competitive tastes, to triumph over them in the end. Amory is confused but knows he will go on without the “worship of success” but with a stirring of his old dreams.
In an extremely perceptive essay on Fitzgerald, the distinguished novelist Wright Morris has pointed out:

Some time before the World War II made it fashionable, Fitzgerald had discovered the philosophy. Different from the philosophers themselves, he lived and died of it. He had come, alone and prematurely, on a fact that was not yet fashionable: he had come on the experience rather than the cliché. 19

These remarks illumine Fitzgerald’s overall creative stance and the implicit craft in several significant ways. They draw attention, to the fact that in his enduring fiction, Fitzgerald tried to articulate the kind of experience for which traditional narrative and structural patterns are inadequate. In other words, this experience was undoubtedly Fitzgerald’s own. He lacked the disciplined detachment to work out correlatives, formal and structural, for its objectification. Fitzgerald was undoubtedly evoking the core of the ‘history’ as experience. He lacked a corresponding formal sophistication so that felt experience can be transmuted into art.

Therefore, one has to be cautious, in using the concept of the ‘muse of the Jazz Age’ for Fitzgerald. Particularly in view of the scepticism many noted critics have in regard to its relevance in this case. Moreover, he contents of the actual or potential experience dissociated from formalistic objectivity. It is taken as a critical
criterion one is likely to identify the actual practice of the novelist with the appropriate one. This is indeed a clever but untenable critical strategy. It involves confusion between content and that ‘achieved content’. It is against this background that one has to place, Fitzgerald’s second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*. And this background is necessary because, it is the evocation of “an entropic world in which communication is impossible and illusion preferred to reality.”

This entropy the perception of an irreversible tendency in the universe towards disorder is in Fitzgerald’s case reflected in the theme of futility and meaninglessness which he tried to express in *The Beautiful and Damned*. This theme corresponds coextensive emerging disenchantment with the Paradise ideal . . .”

From this perspective, it is true that *The Beautiful and Damned* belongs to what Leslie A. Fiedler has described as Fitzgerald’s “insufferable early books.” One has to note that it evidences a growth in the development of his art. This growth is implicit in the increasing perception of the deep-seated discords which are lurking behind the vision of a romantic wonderland insulted from reality with the twin illusions of perpetual youth and unfading beauty.

The pervasive desultorily developed the theme of ‘the meaninglessness of life’ in this novel. Therefore, it is completely explicated in terms of derivative elements extant in the contemporary literary situation. It is true as James E. Miller, Jr. has conveniently shown, that Fitzgerald responded with great gusto to the credo
formulated, among others. H. L. Mencken states that ‘character in decay’ is the proper thematic terrain for emerging creative talent.

Mencken’s overall attitude to literature was obviously and pre-eminently ethical. With its insistence that “superior fiction” should dramatize the conflict between a uniquely gifted individual and “a harsh and meaningless destiny.” This perspective undoubtedly struck a sympathetic chord in Fitzgerald’s sensibility. Moreover, the corresponding conception of the protagonist was also eminently congenial for Fitzgerald. Mencken maintained that the interesting hero is “not one who yields and wins, but one who resists and fails.” In effect, in “all first-rate novels the hero is defeated. In perhaps a majority he is completely destroyed.”

Fitzgerald’s pronounced penchant to deal with ‘flawed characters’ was coeval with, but not completely derived from, extant literary milieu. Moreover, it is interesting that *The Beautiful and Damned* was written after Fitzgerald’s marriage with Zelda Sayre. This was a period which ought to be marked with the placidity of fulfillment. And if a one-to-one relationship between art and experience is to be assumed, the corresponding emotional satisfaction should presumably have resulted in a novel instinct with the celebration of romantic love. In spite of initial failure, it is eventual fulfillment. On the contrary, *The Beautiful and Damned*, is a nightmarish picture of the aftermath of romantic love.

Fitzgerald’s second novel, therefore, is an important step in depicting the theme of romantic quest and seduction. The accent is not
so much on the ‘education’ — the initiation, in a sense—of the here as on his ‘deterioration’. Education is synonymous with the end of innocence with the end comes disillusionment and a sense of failure. And in many of the stories written during this period, — notably *Head and Shoulders* and *Dalyrimple Goes Wrong*, the thematic motif of the character in decay prominently makes its appearance. It is the theme of the ‘transference of vitality,’ as in *Head and Shoulders* or the vision of a moneyed ‘paradise’ in which “the materials if not the inspiration of happiness, could be bought with money,” or the descent — into the bog of dissipation. As Sergio Perosa has pointed out:

> In these stories Fitzgerald already shows a clear inclination to represent weak or flawed characters, undermined by illusion, unequal to the struggle for existence. His flappers and philosophers reveal the fragility of their capacity for living, the precariousness of their careless and challenging attitudes. The flaw of evil is also present in the golden world of youthful in-difference.  

This evil is subdued in *This Side of Paradise* in which the dominant atmosphere is one of blasé sophistication coupled with adolescent fantasies. There are perceptible disturbances in Amory Blaine’s sensibility but these have yet to assume the dimensions of an actual breakdown. The fissures of the crack-up are not as yet self-evident. He still retains a narcissistic haze through which he visualizes ‘deterioration’ as a pleasant prospect corresponding to an aesthetic idyll:

> There were so many places where one might deteriorate pleasantly: Port Said, Shanghai, parts
of Turkestan, Constantinople, the South Seas — all lands of sad, haunting music and many odours, where lust could be a mode and expression of life, where the shades of night skies and sun sets would seem to reflect only moods of passion: the colours of lips and poppies.  

Obviously, Amory has not yet transcended the adolescent preoccupations and even his mock-serious refrain “I know myself but that is all”, does not seem to have an authentic ring. His education is not yet complete for he still believes in his own uniqueness and indispensability. He wants not to be admired, as he had feared not to be loved as he had made himself believe; but to be necessary to people, to be indispensable… Thus, he has still his illusions and the sense of decay which he feels is more in the nature of a tentative dislocation than anything which causes permanent injury to his psyche. But the sense of failure and frustration is built-in in his consciousness through he scarcely understands its nature and origin. Amory’s dread of responsibility, his craving for a life of ease and comfort without sweating for it, his assumption of superiority, his aspiration to be a touchstone of power and popularity are all adolescent and therefore pardonable weaknesses. These are linked to a fundamentally romantic conception of the self disillusionment. In these terms, disillusionment remains a mere prospect in This Side of Paradise become almost an actuality in The Beautiful and Damned. Here disaster is no longer a dreamy possibility dreaded but not as yet known intuited rather than felt. Anthony Patch and by implication, the Fitzgerald here has now the opportunity to verify whether or not it
would be pleasant to deteriorate. Regarding the earlier draft of the novel entitled *The Flight of the Rocket*, Fitzgerald wrote:

My new novel, called *The Flight of the Rocket*, concerns the life of one Anthony Patch between his 25th and 33rd year (1913-1921). He is one of those many with the tastes and weaknesses of an artist but with no actual creative inspiration. How he and his beautiful young wife are wrecked on the shoals of dissipation is told in the story.\(^{22}\)

Anthony Patch is apparently another disguised version of Amory Blaine. As John Aldridge has noted:

Through the entire first third of the book Anthony is merely a slightly older version of Amory. There are even signs that he might have come to nothing more than Amory’s rather pompous realization of himself, the suffering, betrayed but somehow purer young man who, at the end of *This Side of Paradise*, went forth to meet the world, crying, “I know myself, but that is all.”\(^{23}\)

Anthony Patch like Amory is brilliant, magnetic, the heir of many years and many men, thinks of himself as rather an exceptional young man who are thoroughly sophisticated, well adjusted to their environment and somewhat more significant than anyone else he knows. Amory at least felt that people failed to note his uniqueness and thereby implied the necessity of external recognition. Anthony rules this out, entirely. He is unique and if the world does not accord proper recognition so much the worse for it. Basic to this conception of self sufficiency is his scepticism towards work, towards effort of
any kind. “I do nothing,” he says, “for there’s nothing I can do that’s worth doing” and extending his own disinclination further, he says:

‘…I want to know why it’s impossible for an American to be gracefully idle …. I don’t understand why people think that every young man ought to go down-town and work ten hours a day for the best twenty years of his life at dull, unimaginative work, certainly not altruistic work.’

This questioning of the rationale of work in Anthony is paralleled by that of Gloira and it is anticipated in This Side of Paradise itself in which Amory Blaine has a similar antipathy who pointedly asks: ‘I don’t see why’ people should do anything; ‘in fact it always astonishes me when anybody does anything’.

These remarks are instinct with far greater significance than what is readily apparent. In this context they reflect the understandable lethargy of adolescence – a lethargy sought to be enlivened with desultory chatter. At a deeper level they reflect a recurrent pattern of American experience. This pattern is, indeed paradoxical. For while the specific American outlook is basically pragmatic based on what William James has called ‘the will to believe’. It has at the level of imagination an irrepressible longing for freedom from all work from all activity. In effect, there is a basic dichotomy between a realistic – almost pathological commitment to work and an imaginative withdrawal from all activity.

It is this “escape dream” – an escape which involves not only a lounging for freedom from activity but also from the very conception
of limit. Here Fitzgerald seems to reflect in Anthony’s antipathy for excretion. In this regard, Fitzgerald is intuitively recording one of the components of the American variation of ‘the absurd’. For as Kenneth S. Lynn, commenting on this motif in American life and thought has pointed out:

To a people publicly committed to the frantic hustle of the American Way of Life, the idea of quitting work, of simply walking out suddenly and without explanation, on all responsibilities, has been a haunting one; in American literature, the idea can be traced from “Rip Van Winkle” to Walden, from Walt Whitman to Sherwood Anderson.\(^{25}\)

These remarks suggest a perspective for evaluating Anthony’s dislike for work in a more meaningful way. Therefore, if there is naïveté in the conception of the character, there is nothing naïve in Fitzgerald’s basic – invariably intuitive – insight into the American character.

This motif is not a mere façade is obvious from the significant way in which it is linked with related qualities. Anthony has a built-in longing for drifting. There is also an inexplicable but felt dread of loneliness. While he loves the busy life of New York, he also experiences a constantly lurking fear of loneliness in the midst of the crowd and the presence of the crowd when alone. In effect, if city as a motif can be regarded as symbolic of the dissention between intellect and emotion, New York has for Anthony – as for Nick Carraway in The Great Gatsby, later – both fascination and repulsion. It acts as a
constant tug at his aspirations – and also as an escape mechanism for a sense of loneliness:

The soft rush of taxis by him, and laughter, laughter hoarse as a crow’s, incessant and loud, with the rumble of the subways underneath, - and over all, the revolutions of light, the growing and receding of light – light dividing like pearls – forming and reforming in glittering bars and circles and monstrous grotesque figures cut amazingly on the sky. 26

If this evokes visions of fantasy, Anthony has also an awareness of the underlying rhythm of loneliness reinforced by his own:

For the first time in over a year he found himself thoroughly enjoying New York. There was a rare pungency in it, a quality almost Southern. A lonesome town, though. He who had grown up alone had lately learned to avoid solitude. During the past several months he had been careful when he had no engagement for the evening, to hurry to one of his clubs and find someone. Oh, there was a loneliness here. 27

Anthony’s dread of loneliness is so acute that in preference he dined often with men he detested. Even his grandiose project of writing a history of the Middle Ages appears as a witness to the fact of his defection.”

The problem of loneliness in Anthony Patch, however, cannot be simplistically equated with incapacity to face oneself in the depths of contemplative vision. For Fitzgerald unmistakably, though rather obtrusively suggests the rationale behind this fear of isolation. The
basic components of this outlook may be formulated in terms of two pervasive tendencies. An agonizing awareness of the passage of time with a corresponding desire to make it permanent and an instinctive insight into the eventual disenchantment or romanticizing.

The latter quality is suggested – in a rather innocuously naïve way. When Anthony Patch is emerging from the bath he sees a girl “drying her hair by the still hot sun of late afternoon” on the roof of a house farther down the alley. His initial response is one of romantic absorption bordering on adoration:

Something was stirred in him, something not accounted for by the warm smell of the afternoon or the triumphant vividness of red. He felt persistently that the girl was beautiful – then, of a sudden be understood : it was her distance, not a rare and precious distance of soul but still distance, if only in terrestrial yards. The autumn air was between them, and the roofs and the blurred voices. Yet for a not altogether explained second, posing perversely in time, his emotion had been nearer to adoration than in the deepest kiss he had ever known.28

However, this romantic absorption bordering on almost a religious feeling of mystery is tenuous and brief. A closer view dissolves the illusory absorption and the image which evoked such an intense emotion now reveals itself to be that of a woman fat, full thirty five and utterly undistinguished.

It is possible to regard incidents such as these as trivial and invariably stemming from Fitzgerald’s alleged genteel romanticism.
The elaborate description, similarly, may be considered diffuse and shallow, lacking any glint of suggestion. In effect, one is tempted to disregard the incident as a predictable and pointless exercise in fantasy.

Such a criticism has surficial validity but it is also likely to trap the critic into an unawareness of the fact that what is apparently revive is not the phenomenon or the corresponding insight, but its evocation. If this is kept in mind the incident and the subsequent disenchantment when Anthony realizes that ‘desire’,

just cheats you. It’s like a sunbeam skipping here and there about a room. It stops and gilds an inconsequential object, and we poor fools try to grasp it – but when we do the sunbeam moves on to something else, and you’ve got the inconsequential part, but the glitter that made you want it is gone…,

There are parts of a recurring, predominant thematic motif in the tradition of American fiction. This motif is, in effect, rooted in “the final ascendancy of romance” as a congenial fictional form for the imaginative ordering of American experience. While this explains the exploration of romantic absolutes in modern American fiction, it is also significant that the romantic temper is invariably accompanied by awareness that the corresponding sensibility should be subjected to a moral critique. In effect in and through Anthony Patch and his other protagonists their fantasizing sensibility and the realization of consequent disillusion. Fitzgerald was in his own way responding to that blend of romance and realism which is the identifying feature of
the tradition of American fiction itself. As George Perkins has pointed out:

One of the reasons that the romance has possessed such power in the hands of American writers is that they have gone to considerable length to give their phantasms the air of reality (as mere romanticists or sentimentalists have not). When Charles Brockden Brown wrote like a romancer and theorized like a realist he suggested a technique that the best American romancers from Hawthorne and Melville to Fitzgerald and Faulkner have followed; the background of the story is carefully built up of the most meticulously arranged details of observed reality. 30

It is in terms of this “double vision” of identification with and yet ironic detachment from disillusion – that one has to analyse even the apparently naïve predicament of Anthony Patch. Basic to this predicament is the fatal fascination Gloria initially has for him. This fascination, in a sense, reflects Fitzgerald’s own ‘infatuation’ for Zelda Sayre. In this regard as Arthur Mizener has noted, “part of what Fitzgerald loved very much in Zelda was the integrity of her belief in her rights as a beauty to have pretty things and let others take the responsibility.

Gloria, in Fitzgerald’s evocation, transcends this egotism and becomes a “practicing Nietzschean.” With her innate belief in herself is an extraordinary being with “all things of life” available “for her to choose from and apportion. She were continually picking out presents for herself from an inexhaustible counter.” The resulting
imperiousness of attitude and “the almost hostile intimation of her beauty” preclude all criticism and contradiction. In short, Gloria is a perfect amalgam of almost all the qualities which are embodied disparately in the girls in *This Side of Paradise*. She has the sophistication of Isabelle, the craving, of Rosalind, for a life of languorous ease and irresponsibility and above all, the fierce independence and assertion of Eleanor Savage.

The conception of Gloria’s characters represents a definite advance in Fitzgerald’s progressive realization of the profanity of sex. Gloria, however, is not a mere egotistic, largely innocuous flapper. In the words of Sergio Perosa, she is “a new, more dangerous incarnation of the ‘debutante’ or flapper, both careless and fascinating.”

The implicit danger to which Perosa draws attention stems from Antony Patch’s vain. This is almost tragic and an attempt to realize in Gloria a blending of the fascinating hauteur of a ‘flapper’ with the docile submission of a solicitous wife. In effect, what Antony desired was “the flapper’s transformation into a wife”. It was a desire foredoomed to failure. Therefore, when Anthony marries Gloria, he is impelled by desires or eternal love. It smothered recognition of the fact that in this regard he was merely “following in the footsteps of dusty generations”. What he assumes as a triumph of love turns out to be merely all “tremendous sacrifice to convention.

Apart from assuming marriage to be a culmination of eternal love, Anthony also seems to regard the marital state as a definite antidote to his felt sense of loneliness and his intense dread of it;
There was one of his loneliness’s coming, one of those times when he walked the streets or sat aimless and depressed,… It was a self absorption with no comfort, a demand for expression with no outlet, a sense of time rushing by, ceaselessly and wastefully – assuaged only by that conviction that there was nothing to waste, because all efforts and attainments were equally valueless.\(^{31}\)

Similarly, Anthony regards Gloria as a live repudiation of futility of facile generalizations regarding beauty. For him her “radiant fire and freshness was the living material of which the dead beauty of books was made.” In effect, Anthony proceeds to enter the marital state which he dreaded earlier with the assumption – a priori not examined – that Gloria represents all the qualities stemming from his fantasies. As such it is no wondering that:

Gloria had lulled Anthony’s mind to sleep. She who seemed of all women the wisest and the finest, hung like a brilliant curtain across his doorways, shutting out the light of the sun… what he believed bore invariably the stamp of Gloria; he saw the sun always through the pattern of the curtain.\(^{32}\)

Gloria on her part assumes that Anthony would prove to be a different kind of husband. He is neither the humdrum, domestic one who works for a salary nor the servile one who willingly and spinelessly sacrifices his individuality at the alter of the wife’s ego. She assumes that Anthony would have the wisdom to realize the tentative nature of all passion, a temporarily passionate “lover with wisdom enough to realize when it has flown and that it must fly.” And
she expects Anthony to regard her as “a permanent mistress” which she feels “is so much more tangible and desirable” than the status of a wife.

Based on these assumptions, it is only inevitable that the marriage should prove to be a chimera. As in the case of Amory Blaine, Anthony experiences a strange undercurrent of disturbance on the eve of marriage. This disturbance crystallizes itself around the motif of sea and a ‘disgusting’ evil as a reality of physical communication which is revolting and ugly. This is particularly so in the crowded habitations of the city and the sounds of people bustling ‘about in fulfilment. For Anthony, nauseating physical appetite:

In Harlem, the Bronx, Gramercy Park, and along the water fronts, in little parlours or on pebble-strewn, moon-flooded roofs, a thousand lovers were making this sound, crying little fragments of it in the air.\(^{33}\)

This sound is also linked with the promise of eternal happiness, promise, one should note, not fulfilment:

All the city was playing with this sound out there in the blue summer dark, throwing it up and calling it back promising that, in a little while, life would be beautiful as a story, promising happiness – and by that promise giving it. It gave love hope in its own survival. It could do no more.\(^{34}\)

This promise is, however, satisfied by the actual physical reality. A ‘new note’ detaches itself from this initial promise and it begins.
low, incessant and whining – some servant – some servant-maid with her fellow

and

try as he might to strangle his reaction, some animal quality in that unrestrained laughter had grasped at his imagination and for the first time in four months aroused his old aversion and horror toward all the business of life.35

In the face of this reality Anthony – like all Fitzgerald heroes – has only one retreat, and the mechanism of survival is the same: “to be out in some cool and bitter breeze, miles above the cities and to live serene and detached back in the corners of his mind.”

In these terms, Anthony’s predicament is explicable in terms of idiosyncratic marital experience on one level. By implication, Fitzgerald’s growing scepticism about romantic love as a valid mechanism of a meaningful ordering of experience, on the other. In the words of John Aldridge, “the crumbling structure is not only a marriage. It is Fitzgerald’s vision of Paradise as well, going in the dissolution of an age.”

The corresponding sense of the meaninglessness is rooted in the simultaneity of realization of both Anthony and Gloria. They had “inherited only the vast tradition of human failure – that, and the sense of death.” And they seem to be on the brink of realizing the truly that they had “been futile in longing to drift and dream,” for “no one drifted except to maelstroms, no one dreamed without his dreams becoming fantastic nightmares of indecision and regret.”
The resulting sense of waste and – the most dreadful thing for the Fitzgerald hero – growing old without aim or purpose it has a greater impact on Gloria’s sensibility. She, who by her dominating presence “had lulled Anthony’s mind to sleep”, begins to be haunted by vision of nightmarish proportions crystallizing around her unbearable dread of the loss of youth. It is this dread – rooted in the gradual awareness that she is no longer the same ‘radiant being’ of irresistible charm to the male. It apparently explains the incident in which she is impelled by an inexplicable hallucination she, in a near-complete moment of insanity tries to kill herself at the rail-road station. And at the back of her psyche is the same fear which the grey bed-room walls seem to whisper:

Ah, my beautiful young lady, yours is not the first daintiness and delicacy that has faded here under the summer suns … generations of unloved women have adorned themselves by that glass for rustic lovers who paid no heed …. Youth has come into this room in palest blue and left it in the grey cerements of despair, and through long nights many girls have lain awake where that bed stands pouring out waves of misery into the darkness. 36

It is, however, in keeping with Gloria’s self-deception that, drawing pathetic inspiration from childhood fantasies. She smears her face with a “new unguent which she hoped illogically would give back the glow and complexion to her vanishing beauty.” This attains its legitimate and absurd culmination in her choice of that apotheosis of all illusion – the film – as an inevitable mode to preserve eternal beauty.
Similar is the last ray of hope to which Gloria and Anthony cling that of inheriting all the wealth of old Adam Patch. And through wealth they seek to find “a means of escaping the horror of life.” Even this proves illusory when the old man in a fit of anger at Anthony’s drunkenness disinherits him. And even after the decision is reversed, it is obvious that Anthony feels a sense of failure which can hardly be camouflaged by his assertion: “I showed them, … It was a hard fight, but I didn’t give up and I came through!”

It is obvious that in this analytical and expository way, *The Beautiful and Damned* acquires a more meaningful frame of reference. In effect, it becomes an exploratory gesture in the direction of grappling detachedly with the basic postulates of romantic conceptions of self without the necessary correctives.

In this regard, at least two recurring features can be isolated in this novel, the earliest to record Fitzgerald’s comprehension of the ‘history’. First, the awareness that man’s essential predicament is rooted in time, in history. Second, that the attempt to transcend the corresponding limitations is fraught with tragic consequences. In short, Fitzgerald was now poised to explore further the validity of the truth that Gloria realized that “you can’t ever quite repeat anything …. This is precisely what Fitzgerald makes Gatsby, the protagonist of admittedly his finest novel, to attempt to repeat a radiant moment of time.
The Great Gatsby

The Great Gatsby is considered as one of the most vital descriptions of wealth in the 1920s. Fitzgerald revealed the ambivalence he felt towards the wealthy class and the desire for wealth through it. In much of his writing, Fitzgerald, for instance, depicts wealth as a venue of glamour, but he also criticizes the extravagance or excessiveness that spurn from an overabundance of money. His criticism is found in the harsh edge that he had lent to Tom Buchanan, the depictions of wealthy women, and the callousness of the characters that surround Gatsby in order to be “wealthy” by association.

On the other hand, Fitzgerald’s ambivalence, his depiction of Jay Gatsby, He is often appealing to the narrator and to other characters in the novel. In spite of this, Gatsby’s strong focus on the pursuit of wealth makes him seem insincere. He uses affection and deception in order to fabricate the appearance of coming from “old money,” he is nonetheless an often sympathetic, if reckless, character because of his unflappable and contagious idealism and the steadfast pursuit he has for his dream.

By portraying Gatsby as an exaggeration of the 1920s attitudes about money, Fitzgerald has exposed wealth’s critical influence on human being. At the same time, he suggests, Gatsby’s strong idealism that wealth was not only nor the most important motivating factor during this time.
Fitzgerald’s criticism of the pursuit of wealth and happiness Gatsby, is seen as a promotion of the essentiality of money. Fitzgerald’s criticisms are to some extent hidden. The characters from the novel have been immersed fully in the fantasy and glamour without considering the ramifications of its message:

Critics of Scott Fitzgerald tend to agree that *The Great Gatsby* is somehow a commentary on that elusive phrase, the American dream. The assumption seems to be that Fitzgerald approved. On the contrary, is can be shown that *The Great Gatsby* offers some of the severest and closest criticism of the American dream that our literature affords.

Read in this way, Fitzgerald’s masterpiece ceases to be a pastoral documentary of the Jazz Age.  

This total immersion with the glamorous vision of the novel reflects Gatsby. On the surface he seems to buy into the American dream and epitomize the desire for money. He discusses money and material objects and he tries to present himself through the glamorous vale of his wealth. However, it is not possible for Gatsby to obtain lasting happiness through his wealth, even though he realizes his financial dreams in their entirety.

Fitzgerald, in this way, uses the character of Gatsby to serve as a caveat against the dangers of wealth and buying in fully to the desire for wealth. Gatsby as an idealist signifies an extension of the author himself. He is similarly driven to acquire his goal. Gatsby as firstly described, as is having “an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic
readiness such as [the narrator has] never found in any other person.”

At the denouement of the novel, it is through his romantic idealism that the other characters remember him. This degree of romanticism lends Gatsby his great appeal. It makes the narrator perceive him to be “great.” The narrator describes his benevolent, abundant smile:

He smiled understandingly—much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced—or seemed to face—the whole external world for an instant, and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself, and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. 38

This description serves to establish Gatsby’s compelling characteristics, in this case his physical traits. Here, Gatsby is the figure of charm, and the smile itself seems genuine. However, some of his charm seems affected on Gatsby’s part. He is said to carefully selecting his words. He uses the affected term “old sport” to refer to his friends, and his speech is at times elaborately formal. It is his desire to appear to be a part of the wealthy class, which results in an artificiality in Gatsby’s mannerism. Toward the same aim, Gatsby pushes himself to self-improvement. He ceases to enjoy his behaviour. As a child, Gatsby was a driven individual, keeping a precise date book and creating “resolves” for himself to accomplish, such as “[r]ead one improving book or magazine per week”. As he grew up, his high need for wealth caused him to create high demands for
himself for years, which drove him beyond realistic expectations.

When Gatsby gains new-found wealth, he employs it to help construct an identity for himself. He presents his money often ostentatiously and blunderingly. Like the necessity he feels in his youth to push himself so he develops his wealthy persona because he is uncomfortable with his actual background telling the narrator that he was “educated at Oxford” while giving him the impression that he is lying. He then spends the bulk of his energy acquiring wealth and appearing wealthy. Even to the point of ostentation, but in his case, acquiring money itself is a means to gaining Daisy’s love. With his showiness about money, Gatsby is first described as the representation of everything for which the narrator has an “unaffected scorn.” He readily admits that in spite of this he truly likes Gatsby because of his other, more idealistic qualities. His tastes associated with money are overt to the point of being garish. He lives in a huge mansion, holds lavish parties. He wears pink suits and silver shirts, and prefers his big automobiles to be a showy cream colour. Because of this, older-money types like Tom Buchanan do not trust Gatsby. He does not fit in with the Buchanans and their lot. Gatsby’s strong affectation and shield of money juxtapose when he seems both naïve and pitiful. His pitiable side appears, for instance, after Tom suggests to Daisy in front of Gatsby the criminal method in which Gatsby has made his money. Gatsby tries desperately to defend himself and reassure her, but his actions are to no avail:

[W]ith every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up, and only
the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was longer tangible.

After Daisy chooses Tom over Gatsby, he is left grasping at the remnants of his dream, which remains tenacious in spite of palpable evidence of its end.

In order to better demonstrate the depth of Gatsby’s idealism and the strength of his dream, Fitzgerald describes Gatsby and presents the novel’s plot through the thoughts and statements of the narrator Nick Carraway. Nick recalls, how his father has told him “[w]henever you feel like criticizing any one... just remember that all the people in this world haven’t had the advantages that you’ve had”. Theirs is a family of three generations of “well-to-do people”. Money and the perception of one’s status give Nick and his father their perceived advantages over members of other classes. It is also what prompts Nick to reserve judgment of characters that have newly come upon money such as Jay Gatsby himself. The reader first encounters the identity of Nick through his narration of *Gatsby*. He remains the standard in the novel by which other characters are viewed and judged.

He always attempts to set aside his first impressions. If does not stop from making quick evaluations about other characters. His centrality makes of the differences between the characters. Fitzgerald depicts wealthy society as it clashes with middle-class norms and norms among all classes. This is intentional, and as Robert Long suggests, it is one of the essential aspects of Fitzgerald’s character development in *Gatsby*.
Society is revealed most deeply in Fitzgerald’s depiction of his characters.... It is through the eyes of Nick Carraway, the narrator, that the other characters are observed, and as a marginal participant they are also measured by him. He is, in particular, a character double of Gatsby, having in his own life many parallels with Gatsby’s experience.... By the end of the summer Carraway’s illusions are shattered, along with Gatsby’s greater ones. Sane and moderate, Carraway is a continuing reminder of Gatsby’s aberrancy, but in his modest stature—his inhibitions and lack of boldness—he is also a reminder of Gatsby’s heroic size.40

Nick is the scale, in relation to his impact on society in the novel. He observes the other characters and describes them in the form of his thoughts rather than discussions. His narration is his thoughts and because Nick is averse to judging. He can be complacent, standing by as the observer even when his observations produce a strong reaction. This occurs in the scene in which Nick follows Daisy’s philandering husband Tom Buchanan to the apartment of Myrtle Wilson, his mistress, Nick is not a member of the privileged class like the other characters. The chapter ends with an intoxicated Tom breaking the nose of an intoxicated Myrtle because she has repeatedly stated Daisy’s name:

The little dog was sitting on the table looking with blind eyes through the smoke, and from time to time groaning faintly. People disappeared, reappeared, made plans to go somewhere, and then lost each other, searched for each other, found each other a few feet away. Some time
toward midnight Tom Buchanan and Mrs. Wilson stood face to face, discussing in impassioned voices whether Mrs. Wilson had any right to mention Daisy’s name.\textsuperscript{41}

This scene is typical of Nick as he watches the little, neglected dog. He remains unnoticed by others and the drunken altercation as it progresses. Before this description he is compelled to remove a bit of dried lather which “worried [him] all the afternoon” from the face of Mr. McKee, another random guest at the Wilson’s. Like the dog, Nick also looks blindly through the smoke, trying to make sense of the somewhat surreal, inebriated scene. The second sentence serves as a distillation of the basic plot of the novel and as Nick’s role as an effective narrator, from which he simply describes the plot and the actions of the characters.

Nick’s function as a character in the story, on the other hand, suggests that unlike Gatsby he does not strive for his dreams. Juxtaposed with Gatsby, participant in the course of his life, Nick has passions but does not seem to strive for anything in particular. He is struck by the events that occur in the novel enough to serve as a narrator, but in the plot itself he lacks decisiveness. At one point, he is dating Jordan, Daisy’s cousin, but their relationship fizzles out in the end. He still cares about her, without the effort that Gatsby and Daisy. In the last line regarding Jordan, Nick feels angry, very sorry, and is still “half in love with her.” He does nothing and instead simply turns away. Similarly, in the scene in which all of the key characters are drinking at the hotel and Gatsby loses Daisy back to Tom, Nick suddenly remembers that it is his birthday and that he is thirty which
highlights the disconnect he has with his own life he sees the new decade of his life as “portentous” and “menacing”. Arguably, he is caught up in Gatsby’s story because of the strength of his idealism. It is strong enough to be felt by characters surrounding him.

Beyond his role as a character, one of Nick’s purposes as a narrator is to depict Daisy possessing an irrepressible charm for Gatsby with her beauty and social position. Daisy, as Nick describes her, is sure of her position with her friends and in society. She appears both captivating and intoxicated by her own circumstances:

Daisy made an attempt to rise—she leaned slightly forward with a conscientious expression—then she laughed, an absurd, charming little laugh, I laughed too and came forward into the room.

“I’m paralyzed with happiness.”

In this passage, Daisy appears to be almost listless, but hers is a listlessness that is satisfied and charming. Nick perceives her as affecting the stance that she is so pleased to meet him she cannot move. As he further develops her description of her immense charm:

She laughed again.... looking up into my face, promising that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see. That was a way she had.... I’ve heard it said that Daisy’s murmur was only to make people lean toward her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming.

Though Nick does not find it particularly important at the time, Daisy’s behaviour suggests that she feels confident that others will move to hear her and for her. Her idleness comes about from taking
others’ actions for granted. While Daisy is delighted to see her friends, the expectation is that they are there to see her. That she is to be, in a sense, waited on in all aspects of her life.

Daisy represents the physical appeal of wealth, evoking a combination of eroticism and established money. Her behaviour is moneyed—for Gatsby, Daisy’s very voice is “full of money”. His desire for money is actuality, a desire for Daisy. Likewise the reverse is true—in that by association with Daisy he is in close proximity to wealth. She represents his socioeconomic ideal, which he formed when he was young. Although the sentiments and feelings he has for her are real. He expresses them and understands them in monetary terms. Roger Lewis, a critic who writes about money and romance in Fitzgerald’s novels, suggests that the expression of Gatsby’s love for Daisy is uniquely that of a consumer society—of post war America:

[T]he means by which Gatsby expresses his feelings for Daisy—even though those feelings are sincere—is by showing off his possessions. Urging Daisy and Nick to explore his house, he tells them: “It took me just three years to earn the money that bought it”. The very language in which Nick describes Gatsby’s love for Daisy is commercial: “I think he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew for her well-loved eyes”.44

Gatsby views Daisy as a static, material object, he does not allow his impression of her to change or to grow with the years. As a result, his romanticized understanding of her is two-dimensional, and the real Daisy cannot live up to his lofty expectations:
There must have been moments that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything.\textsuperscript{45}

Daisy represents the culmination of all of Gatsby’s efforts. His relationship with her is built largely on his own fantasy.

Some critics suggested that Daisy’s character is degenerated. She represents the femme fatale of the novel. Her character causes her to be mostly concerned with herself. On the other hand, Gatsby’s quest for Daisy’s love is also misguided because she is very obviously incapable of the affection he wants, largely because of her attitudes about money and social status. Her actions and feelings towards Gatsby are, at least, in part a reflection of her background. Many critics have mentioned she seems to care for a while for Gatsby; her true affection is for the kind of luxury allowed by her status as a wealthy socialite. Daisy appears to be more aware of luxury than of any one person, including her own child. Daisy remains caught up in her own problems throughout the plot. For instance, when her daughter is born, she wishes her to be “a beautiful little fool,” which she says is “the best thing a girl can be in this world”. Daisy’s desire for her daughter to remain in a state of blissful ignorance reflects her own dissatisfaction with her marriage and consciousness of her husband’s philandering. Daisy is without many of the characteristics which Gatsby attributes to her, but it is also wrong to suggest, that she is a wholly immoral or unsympathetic character. As Leland Person mentions, view of her is that she is entirely flawed or viciously
indifferent toward others:

Few critics write about The Great Gatsby without discussing Daisy Fay Buchanan; and few, it seems, write about Daisy without entering the unofficial competition of maligning her character.... A striking similarity in these negative views of Daisy is their attribution to her of tremendous power over Gatsby and his fate.... Such an easy polarization of characters into Good Boy/Bad Girl, however, arises from a kind of critical double standard and simply belittles the complexity of the novel. 46

Their perception of Daisy is that she is a morally flawed character, one who ignores some of the standards of her society, because of her wealth, in an effort to better herself or to improve her situation. However, in many ways, she adheres to upper-class norms of behaviour, choosing a wealthy husband and the sanctuary of money over her first love. Overall Daisy as a product of her affluent, coddled environment with her blasé is a lazy even-tempered character. Her character represents some of the problems of the wealthy persons which are perceived through Nick narration, in one of his and Daisy’s first discussions:

“You see I think everything’s terrible anyhow,” she went on in a convinced way.... Her eyes flashed around her in a defiant way, rather like Tom’s, and she laughed with a thrilling scorn.

“Sophisticated—God, I’m sophisticated!”.... [S]he looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face, as if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tombelonged.47
These lines, in combination with Nick’s surprise that Daisy does not simply take her daughter and leave her husband, suggest that she feels inexorably stuck in her situation. She has grown accustomed to money and security to the extent that she is willing to substitute these qualities of more authentic happiness. However, Daisy is inescapably trapped in her situation, she is a victim of her circumstance or whether she is simply comfortable in her situation is debatable.

The opposite of Daisy is Myrtle, a course woman who is not used to privilege. Myrtle has little expectation to be “waited on,” and only in her relationship with Tom, with whom she is having an affair, does she experience some financial stability. Even in her physical appearance, she reflects the opposite of Daisy and her moneyed looks:

Myrtle emulates West Egg with the same vibrant passion that the *nouveaux riches* aim at East Egg, continuing down to the full length of the social ladder the emulous discontentment of American life. In her energy she “carried her surplus flesh sensuously as some women can. Her face... contained no facet or gleam of beauty, but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smoldering...” She wet her lips... and spoke... in a soft coarse voice”

When she is killed she lies in the road with her mouth “wide open and ripped at the corners, as though she had choked a little in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long”.

Whereas Daisy is listless as a result of the solidity of her money, Myrtle is the figure of vitality, reflecting the American
tradition of mobility. Myrtle must be vital and healthy because her physical person symbolizes she still has to climb to the top. Daisy, on the other hand, has no need for vitality in a sense; she already has financial stability.

Myrtle is not completely guileless when it comes to wanting to improve her situation and benefiting from her relationship with Tom. She views herself and the men in her life, including her husband, in terms of material value. Specifically, Myrtle wants material items and the wealth she associates with Tom. This is wealth which is missing in what her husband can provide her. She states wanting a dog, and Tom buys her one; she makes a list of things she has “got to get,” with the expectation that Tom with get them for her. The second chapter of *Gatsby* “details the panoply of consumer items Myrtle gathers around her to convince herself she leads a glamorous and exciting life. In fewer than five pages this lowly mechanic’s wife changes clothes three times, switching from crepe de chine to muslin to chiffon”. Also in this chapter, she mentions that her husband cannot afford his own suit for their wedding:

> He borrowed somebody’s best suit to get married in, and never told me about it, and the man came after it one day when he was out.... I gave it to him and then lay down and cried to beat the band all afternoon.49

Her sister Catherine mentions that Myrtle and her husband have been living over a garage for eleven years. This is a major factor in the dissatisfaction she has with her marriage. Myrtle misguidedly believes that Tom will solve her financial troubles and that he will
eventually support her completely. However, Tom appears to be taking advantage of her. He tells her it is Daisy who does not “believe in divorce,” and Nick mentions being “a little shocked at the elaborateness of [this] lie”. Myrtle’s naivety represents the impossibility of her becoming a convincing part of the Buchanan’s world.

Similarly, not all characters are entirely convinced of Gatsby’s entry into the upper echelon of society. They are willing to play along with his grandeur if it be hooves them. Some characters view him as is a brilliant illusionist, crafting a vision of wealth. For instance, Nick meets a man with owl-eyed glasses, referred to by Nick as Owl-eyes, who seems rather impressed by Gatsby’s fabrication of his persona. This is true even with regards to the completeness of the contents of Gatsby’s mansion as they relate to the character of Gatsby. In one instance, the man observes with astonishment that the books in Gatsby’s library are actual books rather than fakes:

“See!” he cried triumphantly. “It’s a bona-fide piece of printed matter. It fooled me. This fella’s a regular Belasco. It’s a triumph. What thoroughness! What realism! Knew when to stop, too—didn’t cut the pages.50

The man who wears “enormous owl-eyed spectacles” appears to possess a more perceptive vision of Gatsby. He shows that books are part of his detailed illusion. Certainly, this view of Gatsby is not held by all or even most of the characters who comment on his behaviour and Nick mostly of the comments in the novel. However, the man with the owl-eyed glasses, along with Nick and his father Mr. Gatz, is
the only other person who shows up at Gatsby’s funeral or even acknowledges his death. Daisy was supposedly the closest person to Gatsby. As Nick notes “without resentment,” fails to send even her condolences. Perhaps, he cannot resent her apparent lack of concern because it is the prevalent attitude towards Gatsby—both Gatsby and the owl-eyed man are somewhat astonished by the lack of attendance at the funeral:

Owl-eyes spoke to me by the gate.

“I couldn’t get to the house,” he remarked.
“Neither could anybody else.”

“Go on!” He started. “Why, my God! they used to go there by the hundreds.”

This speaks to both how great of an illusion Gatsby was to the people who attended his parties and how much he was personally of value to them. Apparently, no one thought of Gatsby as someone who had died. Being larger than life, he “human” to them, and no one, beside Daisy and Nick, knew him personally. At the same time, those that knew him and attended his funeral, in this case only his father, Nick, and the owl-eyed man, felt sorry for him, knowing that he was used, arguably, he might had unintentionally invited his followers to use him with his showy generosity. At the scene of the funeral it is raining and Nick hears someone murmur, “Blessed are the dead that the rain falls on.” The rain continues during Nick and the owl-eyed man’s conversation suggesting that Gatsby is blessed and yet the owl-eyed man wipes the rain off of his glasses, perhaps so that he can “see” the situation more clearly and pronounces him a “poor son-of-a-bitch”.
Ultimately, the crowd, here a symbol of opportunism and avarice, surrounds Gatsby because he provides them with free entertainment and the possibility of gaining wealth. The crowd of partygoers is able to associate itself with that wealth. These partygoers make him out to be mysterious Gatsby, seeing him as someone from whom they can benefit as a supplier of wealth and an object of wealth himself. Similarly, few people who show up to Gatsby’s famous parties know him well. Many people even met him for that matter, but that does not stop them from attending and indulging in all the party has to offer. Strikingly, when Nick attends his first of Gatsby’s parties, he mentions that he is “one of the few guests who [have] actually been invited”. However, Nick perceives that, everyone who can play by the rules allotted by Gatsby is invited to attend. The only requirement is having the appearance of buying into Gatsby’s illusion:

People were not invited—they went there. They got into automobiles which bore them out to Long Island, and somehow they ended up at Gatsby’s door. Once there they were introduced to somebody who knew Gatsby, and after that they conducted themselves according to the rules and behavior associated with amusement parks. Sometimes they came and went without having met Gatsby at all, came for the party with a simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission.\(^{52}\)

The parties are part of the grander illusion of Gatsby himself. Here, Fitzgerald suggests that there are aspects of a theme-park to them. Having “simplicity of heart,” an open heart or mind, is the state
required to experience a Gatsby event. This “simplicity” is a form of childlike innocence or perhaps childlike greed, with partygoers simply looking for diversion. At the same time, as Nick observes, they are like greedy adults who are looking to gain something from Gatsby:

[They were] all looking a little hungry.... I was sure that they were selling something: bonds or insurance or automobiles. They were at least agonizingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity and convinced that it was theirs for a few words in the right key.\(^5^3\)

Clearly, the attitude of those who surround Gatsby is avaricious; however, Gatsby’s own permissive behaviour enables their avarice. He presumably wants acknowledgement of his wealth and seems to welcome being taken advantage of so long as it facilitates this acknowledgement. Gatsby does not appear to be entirely comfortable with his wealth or status with his ostentatious behaviour. We can imagine if he were, he would not find it necessary to throw such extravagant parties to “friends” who aren’t really friends. Likewise, Gatsby is unfamiliar with real, lasting wealth. When he acquires money he cannot quite believe in its reality, does not know what to do with it, and converts it immediately into the material of romance, which furnished his imagination earlier. His behaviour is in terms of contradictions—as a proud assertion of his wealth. Fitzgerald’s larger insinuation is of the faults of pursuing the Dream. Whether Gatsby is a success according to the middle-class criteria is debatable. He never fully enters the well-to-do niche nor does he entirely understand the moneyed class’s ways.
The novel ends after Gatsby’s funeral, with Gatsby gone and with Nick trying to avoid the nostalgia he feels for Gatsby’s parties: “I spent my Saturday nights in New York because those gleaming, dazzling parties of his were with me so vividly that I could still hear the music and the laughter”. In the end, Nick intensely associates Gatsby with the material world, specifically with his parties, but Nick also goes on to speculate on Gatsby’s dream beyond that of his material influence:

I thought of Gatsby’s wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy’s dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.54

Other than Nick’s speculations and his insights, Gatsby is a wealthy businessman, renowned for his over-the-top entertaining. However, Nick’s insights reveal Gatsby’s sensitivities and motivations for the overall story. In this case there is both a tragic flaw and that makes Gatsby endearing and remarkable—specifically his not knowing or not accepting that his dream cannot be reached. He is having continual belief in “the green light” even when it is no longer plausible. Gatsby was hopeful and that his legacy went beyond the money. The parties and the infamous reputation he get the buy such lavish parties. This is the very degree to which Gatsby believed in his dream—his variation on the American dream. From Nick’s final speculation, it is clear that Gatsby wishes for something more than his money was able to provide. Thus, the limitations of his great wealth as
well as the limitlessness of the human ability to dream are presented by Fitzgerald.
More than in any of his other novels, in *Tender Is the Night*, Fitzgerald captures the nature of the impact conventional male chauvinism could have on a woman of his era. While the principal female characters in all of his other novels struggle with comparatively subtle forms of patriarchal oppression, Nicole Warren Diver too victimized by overt sexual exploitation perpetuated both by her father and by her psychiatrist-husband. The dynamics of her illness and her interactions with men in general are startlingly appropriate for an incest victim. Moreover, her vulnerability to “rape” by her father and subsequent exploitation by her father surrogate a psychiatrist with whom she has transference. It can be perceived symbolically as a reflection of the New Woman’s tenuous social position in the face of patriarchal traditions. It is therefore important to examine Nicole’s confusion about her experiences and roles in considerable detail.

Although Fitzgerald’s critics comment more extensively on *Tender Is the Night* than on any of his other novels except *The Great Gatsby*. Few critics have analyzed Nicole in any detail except insofar as she reflects Zelda. Scott’s ongoing power struggle with her is also presented here. Nancy Milford points out that Fitzgerald has “mercilessly exposed Zelda in his characterization of Nicole Diver”. According to Judith Fetterley, “Zelda’s madness is his material”. And Matthew Bruccoli notes that Zelda’s illness “was the catalytic agent in
[his] new approach to the novel” following years of false starts on the project. Bruccoli adds that “Zelda Fitzgerald’s tragedy… provided the emotional focus” of *Tender Is the Night*.

Such widespread observations serve as a link between Zelda’s life story and Fitzgerald’s creation of the character Nicole. It seems noteworthy that at least three of the Fitzgeralds’ biographers make a deliberate—and somewhat questionable—attempt to distinguish between Scott Fitzgerald’s use of autobiographical material and his “pure invention” of supporting detail in *Tender Is the Night*. In *The Composition of “Tender Is the Night”* Bruccoli presents Fitzgerald’s notes depicting parallels between Zelda’s and Nicole’s histories as mental patients as if they are important to understanding the novel, and then points out:

The details of Nicole Diver’s case were based on Zelda Fitzgerald’s illness, as shown in the table comparing the two cases. The incest factor in Nicole’s case was, however, pure invention.55

Similarly, Milford remarks that certain aspects “of Nicole’s background are pure invention,” despite the obvious “degree to which Scott used Zelda in a fictional counterpart.” Like Bruccoli, Milford goes on to assert that “Zelda was not raped by her father”. Sara Mayfield makes the same proclamation in *Exiles from Paradise*: “Zelda was certainly never raped by her father”.

The incest that triggers Nicole Warren’s earliest symptoms of mental illness in *Tender Is the Night* might are “pure invention” on
Fitzgerald’s part. However, the cloak of secrecy generally surrounds cases of incest. It is the fact that incest memories are often repressed. The widespread tendency—even among mental health care professionals is to dismiss reports of incestuous abuse as “fantasies.” It is somewhat naïve for so educated a group of critics to suggest that any woman, with a deeply troubled psyche like Zelda Fitzgerald’s—could not possibly have been an incest victim. However, it seems improbable that any scholar would have definitive knowledge on so personal a point. The incest victims themselves are often unaware of what lies at the root of psychological problems they experience later in their life.

Fitzgerald has used in creation of Nicole; his evident grasp of the vulnerabilities of an incest victim is irrefutable. His literary portrait of Nicole—her sometimes irrational behaviour; her unwarranted faith in Dick; her poor self-esteem; her dependency; her longings for health, work and respect—reads like a case study of a hysterical (not a schizophrenic) whose illness was precipitated by incest. Nicole’s “madness,” which is often exaggerated and seen as the root of all Dick’s problems, can be explained very readily with the help of late twentieth-century psychological research on incest victims and women who become sexually involved with their therapists.

In fact Fitzgerald’ intuitive understanding of the ramifications of incest and Nicole’s tragedy is somewhat easier to comprehend—in a psychological and sociological context the novel is generally treated as Dick Diver’s story. Bruccoli, questions the significance of Nicole and her experience of incest as he asserts:
Interesting as the comments on the social and incestuous aspects of *Tender Is the Night* are—and the former is indubitably a valid approach to the novel—the book is principally concerned with Dick Diver’s tragedy.\textsuperscript{56}

Fetterley drastically oversimplified Nicole’s incest history and role in the novel when she observes that, “The enemy in the text is the American woman and the text does a job on her”. Even McCay is of the view that Fitzgerald tends to be “harder” on his women than “he is on his men”. He glosses over the real significance of Nicole and of her experience:

The cause of [Dick Diver’s] decline is, in Fitzgerald’s eyes, Nicole—beautiful, rich, sick Nicole—whose illness becomes a challenge to the young psychiatrist who would make the beautiful shattered girl whole again…. Nicole herself has been destroyed by… wealth and by her own beauty, a beauty that tempted her own father to ravish her.\textsuperscript{57}

The essential flaw of Nicole’s role is superficiality presented in the novel. This is in relation with Nicole herself and with regard to Dick. Moreover, such superficial interpretations of the characters involved in this tragedy pave the way for blind disregard for the wider implications of the cross-gender relations within the novel. Obviously, Nicole’s presence in the story contributes substantially to Dick Diver’s demise. It is not just because her wealth enables him to turn his back on his chosen profession. Her confused and unhappy alliance with him clearly illustrates his fundamental unsuitability to be
practicing psychiatry in the first place. Dick’s tragic flaw is not so much that he allows himself to be “bought” as that he simply “cannot maintain emotional detachment from entangling human alliances” it is a characteristic that prevents him from dealing “responsibly” with his patients’ emotions. His failure as a psychiatrist arises not from any evil or temptation that Nicole herself embodies but from his own primary weakness. The self-centeredness allows him to put his own needs ahead of those of his patient. In this case, a young, beautiful, and impressionable incest victim, who—predictably—finds herself enamored with him.

D. S. Savage hinted that Dick is largely responsible for his own fate while focusing on Dick’s failure to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries during his treatment of Nicole:

It is Dick’s culpable folly in agreeing to marry his own patient which is the initial fault that sets in motion the entire process of involvement and degeneration; and it is interesting to note that… he is shown in the outcome as powerless to resist, not the inducements of Nicole’s bank-balance but the sheer overwhelming vital force of her sexual attraction. 58

For Dick Diver women exist primarily to pay him homage and give him pleasure. He does not see women as full and equal human beings with rights and dreams of their own but only as objects of his desire. Indeed, he is cruel to women who aspire to independence. Nicole’s experience of incest is important in the novel it shapes her character and evokes her illness, and makes her profoundly vulnerable
to Dick’s objectification of her. She is twice victimized—first by incest and then by psychiatric malpractice. Both manifestations of exploitation stem directly from patriarchal traditions that accord women second-class citizenship. The incest in *Tender Is the Night* serves metaphorically as a reminder of women’s powerlessness in traditional patriarchal societies. The family where a father “rapes” a daughter, like the “therapeutic” relationship that allows men to define women’s reality, is a microcosm of a larger society that condones and perpetuates myriad means of exploiting and subjugating women. Nicole’s relentless efforts to rise above her dual victimization are the efforts of a New Woman envisioning equality and autonomy. Like Fitzgerald’s confused and talented wife Zelda, his character Nicole is a “strange, valuable girl” destined “to endure unnecessary rebuffs and discouragements” largely attributable to her birth into a society dominated by men.

Fitzgerald decided to incorporate his understanding of Zelda’s mental illness into his fourth novel. So he wrote himself guidelines for developing the character who was to become Nicole. In his notes he warned himself to be “careful not to reveal basic ignorance of psychiatric and medical training”. He planned to “red books” on psychiatry and then to draw on a variety of sources of “Material on Sickness,” including consultations with clinician who had treated Zelda. His painstaking research undoubtedly assisted him in presenting psychiatry as it was then being practiced. In a masculine tradition was thriving on Freud’s own efforts “to demonstrate his power to bring a woman to reason, and to bring reason to the
mysteries of woman.” Indeed, it is noteworthy about Fitzgerald’s presentation of psychiatric material in *Tender Is the Night* is his evident failure to comprehend the importance of “self-discovery and psychological insight. In this context, it is no surprise that Dick Diver is most pleased with his patient-wife when she invests her entire identity in him.

As an incest victim, Nicole has learned from her father, long before her first meeting with Dick Diver, that: “she is important because of her sexuality, that men want sex from girls, and that… she can use her sexuality as a way to get the attention and affection she genuinely needs, that sex is a tool”. She is struggling desperately with the aftermath of incest, with the painful, forced recognition of herself as a sexual object to men. She had no choice but to trust and depend upon, when she encounters Dick one evening on the clinic’s grounds. As he gazes at her, aware as he later tells Franz that she is “about the pretties thing [he] ever saw”. She too is acutely conscious of her sexual attractiveness to him. She refers to this chance encounter as follows:

> “You thought I was pretty too but I’ve had that before and a long time I’ve stood it. If you come here again with that attitude base and criminal and not even faintly what I had been taught to associate with the role of gentleman then heaven help you.”

59

Like many young women who have experienced incestuous abuse, Nicole is extremely sensitive to men’s sexual interest in her. Following her own father’s impulsive sexual advances, she has been
placed in Dr. Dohmler’s clinic largely on account of a generalized fear of men and the threat they appear to pose to her both physically and psychologically. Before her hospitalization, she has accused her father’s trusted valet of “making up to her” and said things that “got crazier and crazier… almost always about men going to attack her, men she knew or men on the street–anybody–”. The characters in the novel regard her preoccupation with men’s potential or genuine sexual objectification of her as pathological. It is important to note that at least in Dick’s case her perception of his personal, sexual interest in her is entirely accurate. He is extremely attracted to her when he initially encounters her. He subsequently chooses to respond to her letters in part because “She was such a pretty thing” and “she enclosed a lot of snapshots of herself”. His motivation is therefore suspect from the very start. He is far from sacrificing his own interests. In an effort “to make the beautiful shattered girl whole again,” he is selfishly absorbed in her beauty as well as utterly intrigued by her fragility–the fragility of a “beautiful shell” and her growing infatuation with him.

Nicole is understandably apprehensive about Dick’s obvious fascination with her physical beauty. She nonetheless finds it easier to establish a long-distance “transference” relationship with him through the mail than to work directly with the doctors on site at the clinic. This is entirely logical in the context of incest. Psychiatrists represent male authority figures to the adolescent victim. And the primary male authority figure in her life–her father–has betrayed and abandoned her. Rather than risk further emotional and sexual abuse by allowing herself to trust and confide in the doctors at the clinic, Nicole affects a
certain degree of detachment—and safety—by communicating most openly with a doctor who poses less threat, simply by virtue of his distance from her.

When Dick returns to the clinic, Franz tells him that the “change” in the letters Nicole was sending him signalled that she “had become [Dick’s] case”. Dick, however, has yet to learn the full background of Nicole’s illness and scarcely seems to view her as a professional responsibility at all.

There is a lengthy conversation between Franz and Dick, before Dick is allowed to see Nicole in person. He exposes Nicole’s earlier incestuous encounter with her father. Franz relates Nicole’s presenting symptoms and her diagnosis as a schizophrenic with a fear of men that is “not at all constitutional”. Then he explains how Dr. Dohmler has prompted Devereux Warren to confess to having committed incest with his young daughter. The incest had occurred when Warren had cultivated an increasingly intimate, exclusive relationship with his adolescent daughter, who was equally needy emotionally and psychologically. In his confession to Dohmler, father and daughter had gradually developed a habit of focusing all their attention on each other, holding hands and vowing to for a while. The neighbours have also commented on the “wonderful” relationship between father and daughter. And Nicole was allowed to seek comfort in her father’s bed, until “all at once” they “were lovers”.

Fitzgerald’s original intention, judging by his notes for the novel, was to depict a young girl who had been “raped” by her father.
“under unusual circumstances”. However, there is no indication in the finished novel that Warren was guilty of forcible rape. In fact, references to the actual sexual activities of father and daughter are somewhat veiled, leading at least one critic to assume that Nicole had “consented” to intercourse. Fitzgerald leaves no doubt whatsoever that intercourse has occurred. When Dr. Dohmler asks Warren if “this thing” continued following the occasion when father and daughter became “lovers,” he is obviously concerned about the nature and extent of the sexual exploitation. When he asks whether there were “consequences,” he is wondering—as Warren recognizes—whether Nicole became pregnant. As a psychiatrist he is naturally probing for information that may help him treat the young patient. This information is easier to obtain from the theoretically sane adult who victimized her than from the frightened, confused patient herself.

Franz sums up the clinic’s assessment of the link between Nicole’s experience of incest and the illness for which she was hospitalized, explaining to Dick that Nicole “felt complicity” yet “from sheer self-protection... developed the idea that she had no complicity.” Franz believes that Nicole responded to the incest by slipping “into a phantom world where all men,” no matter how well “liked” and “trusted,” appeared to pose sexual threats.

Despite his purported eagerness to become a great psychiatrist, Dick displays little interest in the clinical assessment of Nicole that Franz offers. Instead, he wants to know more about the incestuous encounter itself. Dick’s impatience prompts him to interrupt Franz in an effort to force the conversation’s focus back onto the incest itself:
“Did she ever go into the–horror directly?” Later in the novel, his morbid fascination with Nicole’s experience of taboo sexuality surfaces again ever after his colleagues warn him to beware of Nicole’s apparent attachment to him; in her presence at a social gathering his thoughts dart uncontrollably to “the dishonour, the secret”.

Dick’s almost voyeuristic curiosity about Nicole’s incest history is one of the earliest clues that he, like Devereux Warren, is capable of indulging his own fantasies and impulses through objectification of her.

According to current psychological theory, one of the most confounding elements of incestuous abuse is that it is “relationally-based” and “takes place within the context that is supposed to nurture, protect and care for the child, where she should be able to get a reasonable interpretation of reality and relational life, and upon which she is utterly dependent”. Clearly, Fitzgerald establishes the relational basis of Nicole’s vulnerability to her father’s sexual advances through Mr. Warren’s own account of their seemingly ideal familial bond before the incest occurred. By depicting Dick’s nonclinical fascination with Nicole’s incest history, however, Fitzgerald perhaps unwittingly–demonstrates that Nicole’s fears are at least somewhat justified: men whom she has every right to expect to be trustworthy do indeed see her first and foremost as a sexual object. The fact that her father used her sexually is titillating to her doctor. It ultimately contributes to her revictimization. In both her family and her therapy herself is violated by men who usurp her autonomy and view her as a sex object.
By demonstrating Dick Diver’s selfish delight in Nicole’s beauty, personal history, and infatuation with him, Fitzgerald hints prophetically at psychological and sociological phenomena documented in professional journals and texts approximately fifty years later. In *The Secret Trauma* (1986), a comprehensive study of incest, sociologist Diana Russell notes that:

Some people apparently find the information that a child has participated in a taboo sexual relationship exciting and provocative, regardless of the involuntary nature of the child’s victimization. Incest victims, for example, appear to be particularly at risk of revictimization by male therapists and psychiatrists.  

Dick Diver’s preoccupation with Nicole’s beauty and sexuality even while she’s a patient in his care is highly credible. Moreover, Nicole’s vulnerability to Dick’s attention is explained in part by Pope and Bouhoutsos, who report that “there appears to be an inordinately large number of patients… who report incestuous experiences and subsequent multiple victimization” by therapists. Pope and Bouhoutsos also draw clear parallels between incest and therapist-patient involvement:

The same vulnerability exists in the patient as in the child: the loving, trusting, belief that the parent (or parent-figure) is also loving and caring and would not hurt. There is the same feeling of powerlessness of the part of the child-patient: the fear that one cannot exist without the parent’s or the therapist’s protection and love.
In *Tender Is the Night*, there are just such similarities between Nicole’s “loving, trusting” involvement with her father. His subsequent betrayal of her—and her exaggerated attachment to her father is quite different. Though Dick Diver, who recognizes that his role as psychiatrist makes him a “stuffed figure” in her life, but courts her nonetheless.

Nicole herself, the child and patient, is not responsible for either her father’s or her doctor’s behaviour towards her. She is not on an equal footing with either of these men. She is needy, dependent, and vulnerable. They are her caretakers at least in theory. Among the many predictable consequences of incest is an impaired ability to discern whom to trust. Dick Diver, like Devereux Warren, is also in a position to do her tremendous harm. And she is not even equipped to recognize it as it befalls her, for, as Pope and Bouhoutsos explain:

> The abused child learns to accommodate to a continuing outrageous sexual relationship, outrageous whether or not it is gentle, whether or not it is purported to be loving. The same is true of the relationship with the therapist. Sexualizing the therapy is a betrayal of a trusting relationship that requires an altruism, an unselfish involvement that the parent or therapist must have with a child or client in a subordinate or needy position to leave them whole.  

Nicole cannot be helped by Dick Diver’s treatment because he is not capable of “unselfish involvement” with an attractive young woman. His earliest and most compelling thoughts of Nicole are of her beauty. Dick’s original decision to become a psychiatrist was
anything but altruistic because he “got to be a psychiatrist because there was a girl at St. Hilda’s in Oxford that went to the same lectures”. Consequently, it comes as no surprise that his own deep-rooted drive “to be loved” and blinds him to his appealing young patient’s conflicting need to develop a sense of self uncomplicated by sexual gamesmanship. When his colleagues at the clinic begin to question him about whether he has a treatment plan for Nicole, then his light-hearted response demonstrates both his selfish contemplation of the possibility of having sexual contact with her and his utter insensitivity to the dynamics of the therapeutic relationship. When Franz points out Nicole’s growing infatuation with Dick, Dick insensitively jokes about “tak[ing] her up in the edelweiss”.

Recognizing the danger of Dick’s apparent “sentimental involvement” with his own patient, both Franz and Dr. Dohmler, the clinic’s director, attempt to set him straight. As an experienced psychiatrist and chief administrator of the clinic, Dr. Dohmler reminds Dr. Diver of the necessity of acting professionally in Nicole’s best interests, despite of any temptation she might pose to Dick:

“I have nothing to do with your personal reactions,” said Dohmler. “But I have much to do with the fact that this so-called ‘transference,’” he darted a short ironic look at Franz which the latter returned in kind, “must be terminated. Miss Nicole does well indeed, but she is in no condition to survive what she might interpret as a tragedy.”

Just as Dohmler automatically distances himself from the patient by using a polite title, he expects Dick Diver to be cautious
enough to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries. It is particularly with a patient whose personal boundaries—physical as well as psychological—have already been carelessly shattered by another man, her father. Increasingly concerned about Dick’s degree of personal involvement with Nicole, Dohmler considers the possibility of separating the pair. Dick concedes that Nicole’s infatuation with him constitutes “a situation” only to be reminded vehemently again by Dohmler that “it is a professional situation”. Before the doctors agree that Dick must gently sever his relationship with Nicole, Dick speculates over the possibility of marrying her. Franz is so dismayed by this fantasy that he cannot curb an uncharacteristic outburst in which he declares that it would be “better never to see her again”.

It is interesting to note that Fitzgerald’s identification of Nicole as a patient who can pose a curious blend of threat and temptation. To her, Dick doctor is compatible with current research into therapist-patient intimacy and the phenomenon known as “countertransference.” Just as a psychiatric patient may experience a “transference,” which the Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry defines as “the projection or displacement upon the analyst of unconscious feelings and wishes originally directed toward important individuals, such as parents, in the patient’s childhood”. A clinical practitioner may experience a “countertransference.” Like transference, a countertransference often involves the projection or displacement of unconscious feelings and wishes, only in this case the focus is on the analyst’s, not the patient’s, perceptions within the therapeutic relationship. In Tender Is the Night, Dick Diver’s
interactions with Nicole are motivated in part by her unconscious activation of his countertransference; his “professional” behaviour with her grows more and more inappropriate as she inadvertently triggers his drive to meet his own love and power needs.

The breakdown of their therapeutic relationship begins very early in their acquaintance. Dick appears at all times to be acting out of his own unconscious feelings and desires without serious regard for her psychological needs. Indeed, it is questionable whether they ever establish a bonafide, viable therapeutic relationship. Although Nicole sees Dick as doctor and authority figure, Dick fails to acknowledge his responsibility toward her in her role as patient.

Despite Fitzgerald’s awareness that he was ignorant of the precepts and proper practice of psychiatry, he somehow managed to capture Dick’s countertransferent thought patterns, that lead directly to his personal involvement with Nicole and ultimately to the destruction of his career. When Dick first meets Nicole in the clinic garden, he does not see “the girl” as a “patient,” but only as “about the prettiest thing [he] ever saw”. Significantly, this reference to her connotes an object rather than a person. While he’s away at the War, he receives “about fifty letters from her written over a period of eight months” and comes “to wait eagerly” for their arrival. Thus, he is already involved with Nicole— from a purely personal standpoint, despite her acknowledgment that she has been told he’s a doctor— long before he returns to the clinic and is entrusted with her treatment. He probably ought never to have been designated her doctor in the first place, for he appears unable or unwilling to reject his own fantasies of
her as girlfriend in order to be an effective agent of therapeutic cure. The doctor is capable of sufficient detachment to allow a patient to develop her own sense of self apart from his projected notions of what she could—or ought to—be in his life.

Dick’s behaviour with Nicole is motivated largely by his own needs. However, he does not provide clear and accurate assessments on Diver’s part of what would constitute proper care for her as a patient. His relationship with her is egocentric; his expertise as a psychiatrist, highly questionable. Fitzgerald even goes so far as to suggest that Dick is himself in the midst of a personal identity crisis—trying to decide “whether or not to die for what [he] no longer believes”—when he arrives at the clinic and assumes responsibility for Nicole’s care. As he questions his shifting values, he also takes personal inventory of his desires: “He used to think that he wanted to be good. He wanted to be kind; he wanted to be brave and wise. But it was all pretty difficult. He wanted to be loved, too, if he could fit it in”.

Although Dick recognizes that it is difficult actually to be good, kind, brave, and wise, he clearly fancies himself in this traditional image akin to that of a masculine protector. Since he wants, above all, “to be loved,” it is not surprising that he grows narcissistically involved with Nicole’s sexualized transference. This prompts her to flirt with him and—more crucial for her situation as patient—to worship him. Dick becomes more and more dependent on Nicole’s attention—and “less and less certain of his relation to her”. She makes “a profound promise of herself for so little, for the beat of a response, the
assurance of a complementary vibration in him. It brings “everything to his feet, gifts of sacrificial ambrosia, of worshipping myrtle”. He is dimly aware of his obligation “to divorce her from any obsession that he [has] stitched her together”. She is so infatuated with him that she habitually “[brings] out her accomplishments for his approval.” Upon the advice of his colleagues, he makes a half-hearted attempt to withdraw from her emotionally, yet he finds himself leisurely strolling with her in the rain-drenched garden, “wanting only to drink the rain that toughed her cheek”.

Evidently Dick does suffer some conflict over his attachment to his beautiful young patient. On a rational basis—and with the input of his esteemed colleagues—he perhaps perceives that his interest in Nicole is decidedly personal and therefore selfish and unprofessional. On another, more emotional, level, however, he finds it virtually impossible to resist the temptation Nicole’s youth, beauty, and admiration pose. Because he wants so much “to be loved,” he finds his own image in Nicole’s eyes as she worships him profoundly appealing. It is his inability to resolve his internal confusion about Nicole that leads him to increase his involvement with her. He encourages her attention and enters a relationship with her unwisely. This relation is on the unsound basis of her transference vulnerability and affection for–him. By allowing himself to reciprocate Nicole’s exaggerated interest, Dick commits a violation of his profession’s ethics and actually sets up the ensuing marriage for failure. Because it originates in a therapeutic relationship, their romance is founded on a hopelessly unequal—and precarious—basis. Dick’s unsuccessful, and
perhaps even insincere, effort to discourage Nicole’s infatuation while she is his patient has a lasting and deleterious impact on her. On the whole, she appears to be in better mental health during his absence from the clinic than she does during most of her subsequent marriage to him.

Before Dick’s return to the clinic following the War, the other doctors fostered Nicole’s development of a sense of self. Her faith in herself as an individual is capable of making her own decisions, assuming responsibility, contributing to her community. She is also cultivating her own intellect and special talents. She needs just this kind of unselfish encouragement to grow well. She needs to learn to trust herself—for she felt “complicity” following the incest—and to learn how to discern others who are worthy of trust. She needs to begin to value herself for who she is, regardless of whether others treat her with respect. She needs, in short, to become the center of her own universe, not a satellite of someone else’s.

Unfortunately for Nicole, Dick Diver is ill-equipped psychologically to provide the unthreatening, nurturing environment she needs following her father’s sexual exploitation. Almost as soon as Dick arrives on the scene, Nicole’ transference triggers her unconscious efforts. Soon she has a firm “hold on him,” and he in “thankful to have an existence at all, if only as a reflection in her eyes”. In effect, their roles reverse. Dick, who, as a psychiatrist, has a professional obligation to maintain appropriate detachment. He becomes dependent on his patient for his own affirmation. His growing involvement with his patient on a purely personal basis
forestalls her developing sense of autonomy, eventually depriving her. This setback in her psychological development lasts for years, but ultimately she recognizes that she can—and “must”—“be something in addition, not just an image on his mind”.

Due to his own conflicting need to be worshipped, however, Dick has little tolerance for Nicole’s occasional, cautious quest for a greater degree of autonomy. His countertransference derives from their initial therapeutic relationship and shapes their life together. Significantly, the close of the novel illuminates the role of countertransference in Dick’s deteriorating relationship with Nicole. His pervasive, almost overwhelming need “to be loved,” which suggests an inferiority complex which apparently stems from his faint recognition that he is “the last hope of a dying clan”. His compelling drive to win approval, “to be loved,” fuels his almost irresistible charm, which, ironically, is his tragic flaw. He chooses “sweet poison” to win affection, and his mask of selfless caring for others thinly disguises his real motivation. This is to make himself indispensable to them. Shortly before his separation from Nicole, he is called to assist some friends in distress, and he realizes: “He would have to go and face this thing that he didn’t care a damn about, because it had early become a habit to be loved…” The recognition of the tragedy inherent in his desire to curry favour surfaces as the passage continues:

On an almost parallel occasion, back in Dohmler’s clinic on the Lurischsee, realizing this power, he had made a choice, chosen Ophelia, chosen the sweet poison and drunk it. Wanting
above all to be brave and kind, he had wanted even more than that, to be loved. So it had been. So it would ever be….64

Dick’s compelling needs to see himself as “brave and kind” and “to be loved” lie at the heart of his tragedy in *Tender Is the Night*. He is responsible for his own downfall, and by the end of the novel, he knows it. Aware of the potential ramifications of intimate involvement with “a mental patient”, he nevertheless acts out of his urgent need “to be loved,” choosing “Ophelia,” and thereby sealing his fate. Nicole herself is not his problem; his unprofessional involvement with her is.

It is difficult to comprehend how Fitzgerald managed to delineate so clearly the effects of transference and countertransference in the relationship between Nicole and Dick. The author himself had no formal training in psychiatry and, in fact, appears to have “shared in the myth of the psychiatrist as a modern magician, a miracle worker dwelling in the psychic landscape of life”. However, Fitzgerald’s fundamental ignorance of psychology is evident in other aspects of the novel—most notably, as he attempts, through his characters, to offer a diagnosis for Nicole’s illness. His description of the Divers’ marriage is magnificent. There is no question that Fitzgerald drew on his experience with Zelda. Like Zelda, Nicole is diagnosed as being schizophrenic. In Nicole’s case, however, the official diagnosis appears somewhat unjustifiable.

Fitzgerald’s implication the incest directly precipitated Nicole’s schizophrenia. He observes that Nicole “hardly appears schizophrenic at all.” He goes on to note that, “The few symptoms
[Nicole] manifests suggest hysteria and obsession compulsion”. Clinical definitions of “schizophrenia” and “hysteria,” coupled with an analysis of Nicole’s symptoms, support Berman’s view. Moreover, Fitzgerald’s unduly severe diagnosis of Nicole’s illness is remarkably appropriate in the context of incest. This is current psychological research has revealed that incest victims with “disguised presentations”—those who manifest confusion and other symptoms. But the persons who do not talk openly of their incestuous encounters (like Nicole)—are frequently misdiagnosed. One of the most common misdiagnoses for such patients is schizophrenia.

The Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry defines “schizophrenic disorders” as,

a group of mental disturbances essentially characterized by (a) one or more psychotic features during the active phase, including bizarre or absurd delusions (such as being controlled or thought-broadcasting), (b) somatic, grandiose, religious, or nihilistic delusions, (c) delusions of persecution or jealousy with hallucinations, (d) incoherence with marked loosening of associations, illogical thought, or poverty of speech together with either blunted, flat, or inappropriate affect, (f) delusions or hallucinations, or (g) grossly disorganized behavior, such as catatonia. Other common characteristics are deterioration from a previous level of job, social, or self-care functioning, and onset before age 45, with a duration of at least six months. A common term for schizophrenic disorder is schizophrenia. 65
The symptoms outlined above are clearly more severe than the symptoms Nicole exhibits. Despite her confusion about some men’s possible ulterior (sexual) motives in their dealings with her, Nicole is for the most part able to function normally among other people. Before Dick’s return to the clinic, following the War, Nicole is even entrusted with the supervision of other, “less stable” patients on excursions to town. Later, within her family and social circle, she is capable of assuming responsibility for others as well. At one poignant moment, in fact, she quietly asserts her sense that womanhood carries with it an inherent obligation to engage in the “business” of “holding things together”. Although Dick finds it convenient to label as “delusions” those things which she sees that he does not want her to see. She utterly fails to display any “bizarre or absurd delusions” within the novel. Her few irrational outbursts are invariably triggered by circumstances that are linked psychologically with her incest experience. Hence, her behaviour is not so much delusional as hysterical.

The Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry defines hysteria as

a neurotic disorder characterized by suggestibility, emotional outbursts, histrionic behavior, repressed anxiety, and transformation of unconscious conflicts into physical symptoms such as paralysis, blindness, and loss of sensation. These symptoms serve to screen out anxiety (primary gains) and at the same time to elicit attention and sympathy (secondary gains). Freud interpreted such symptoms as defenses against guilty sexual
impulses…. He also included dissociative conditions in his concept of hysteria…. 66

The symptoms attributable to hysteria encompass virtually all of Nicole’s manifestations of mental illness. Her original manifestations of illness, as presented in her letter to Dick Diver, reflect her anxiety and unconscious conflicts about sexuality. She reveals that she “has gotten only to like boys who are rather sissies” and that she is frequently apprehensive about men’s glances: “They tried it again in the candy store again and I almost hit the man with the weight”. Moreover, her emotional outbursts and histrionic behaviour take place in situations that remind her—at least on a subconscious level—of her father’s betrayal. She leaves the room for some unstated reason during a dinner party when her husband and Rosemary, a girl young enough to be his daughter, are engaging in a flirtation; later allusions to a scene in the bathroom suggest histrionics. Nicole also suffers breakdown—“everything got dark again” – immediately after the birth of her second child, a little girl. And she revolts against her husband, wrecking the family car and nearly killing the family. She is following word from one of the clinic’s former patients regarding Dick’s sexual advances toward her daughter. In one of her most severe emotional outbursts of the novel, she retreats to a bathroom while Dick tries to get rid of a dead man’s body discovered in Rosemary’s hotel room. This incident, too, suggests an activation of subconscious associations with an earlier crisis, her incestuous encounter with her father. Nicole’s reaction when Dick appears at the bathroom door suggests many elements of incest, including invasion,
blood, shame, betrayal, coercion, power, powerlessness, and stigmatization:

Nicole knelt beside the bed swaying sidewise and sidewise. “It’s you!” she cried, “–it’s you come to intrude on the only privacy I have in the world–with your spread with red blood on it. I’ll wear it for you–I’m not ashamed, though it was such a pity. On All Fools Day we had a party on the Zurichsee, and all the fools were there, and I wanted to come dressed in a spread but they wouldn’t let me–”

“Control yourself!”

“–so I sat in the bathroom and they brought me a domino and said wear that. I did. What else could I do?”

“Control yourself, Nicole!”

“I never expected you to love me–it was too late–only don’t come in the bathroom, the only place I can go for privacy, dragging spreads with red blood on them and asking me to fix them.” 67

Although the spread in this instance has been bloodied by a dead man’s body, and handled by her husband. For Nicole the blood symbolizes her loss of virginity in her father’s bed. Her abhorrence of the possibility of being asked “to fix” the spread might well represent her resentment over being expected “to fix” her relationship with her father following their intercourse: her efforts to reassure her father that it didn’t “matter”. Her stubborn silence about the incest during her months as a patient at Dohmler’s clinic. Even her desperate plea
for privacy reflects her lingering fear of invasion and violation as well as a deep longing for respect. In any event, however, her most blatantly “irrational” behaviour occurs as a direct result of a severely stressful situation—the discovery of a body—that might very well upset people with considerably more stable mental histories.

Further evidence that Nicole’s illness can be assessed more accurately as hysteria than as schizophrenia is found in *Psychotherapeutic Interventions in Hysterical Disorders* (1986). Several characteristics and behaviours that Mueller and Aniskiewicz attribute to hysteria are exemplified by Nicole in *Tender Is the Night*. Fitzgerald notes that “Whenever a hysteric becomes hysterical, it is a sign that something in the therapeutic relationship needs attention”. In the novel, Nicole’s hysterical outbursts signal Dick’s failure to address stressful incidents in her life as well as his propensity to incite her jealousy by flirting with other women. Interestingly, the authors of *Psychotherapeutic Interventions* outline in considerable detail the likelihood that hysterical patients might evoke countertransference difficulties in their therapists, largely because hysterics tend to be extremely perceptive and articulate:

> The hysterical client is intensely aware of how she is being received. In particular, the hysteric is hypersensitive to the therapist’s feelings about her, constantly alert to nuances in his behaviour that reflect his subliminal attitudes about her. 68

As has already been demonstrated, Nicole is keenly aware of Dick’s initial attraction to her. Later, she perceives his attachment to her and refuses to believe his denial of interest: “It’s my hard luck, all
right—but don’t pretend I don’t know—I know everything about you and me”. She is right; Dick is thoroughly intrigued by her—and by his own image in her eyes. More importantly, however, as Mueller and Aniskiewicz explain, hysterics often feel that they “have no inner core”. As a result, they are “vulnerable to being swept along by another person. This aspect of hysteria manifests itself in Nicole’s extreme dependency on Dr. Diver, from their first meeting through most of the novel. Nicole experiences herself as virtually worthless—except through her association with Dick. When he tries to break off their relationship, “there is no home left to her, save emptiness and pain”. When they marry, she feels “lonely” but sees “no place to go except close”. During her pregnancy, she feels “like a broken roly-poly that can’t stand up straight”. Indeed, in the early days of her therapy and marriage she feels literally that she has no identity apart from Dick: “When I talk I say to myself that I am probably Dick”.

Even Nicole’s initial infatuation with Dick is attributable to hysteria. According to Mueller and Aniskiewicz, a patient with hysteria and confusion about her relationships with men might well be expected to become infatuated with her doctor and even behave seductively with him. The danger lies not in the patient’s attachment to her doctor but in his response to it. If he allows himself to reciprocate her interest, he “perpetuates and exacerbates the client’s Oedipal conflicts, inducing guilt, reinforcing passive defences and delaying movement during therapy”. Apparently, in fact, intimate involvement with the therapist is one of the very worst things that can happen to a patient with hysteria:
If the hysterical client has elicited collusion in a male therapist, she has symbolically gained an excluding and exclusive relationship with the father, and her second state is worse than the first…. The male therapist has come to represent the Oedipal father, and although she sought exclusiveness, what should have remained at the wish-fulfilling fantasy level has become “real.”

For Nicole, the Oedipal “fantasy” becomes all too “real” not just once, but twice. Having endured an exclusive, incestuous liaison with her father, she then has the misfortune to enter therapy with a man who disregards her history and vulnerability as he selfishly cultivates his own fantasy of an exclusive relationship with her. Under the circumstances, it is quite remarkable that she ultimately manages to reject her unhealthy alliance with Dick and develop a somewhat autonomous sense of self. But achieving a sense of her own worth is no easy task for her. The romantic involvement with Dick severely inhibits her progress along the way.

Nicole is prone to becoming involved with her therapist for a variety of reasons besides unresolved oedipal conflicts. She appeals to Dick for what she is–beautiful, bright, young, talented, vulnerable–just as she appealed to his colleagues who “made rather a pet of her” at the clinic while Dick was away at the War. Unlike his colleagues, however, Dick cannot distinguish between Nicole’s needs and his own. His professional judgment is clouded by his own drive “to be loved,” and he winds up behaving “as if” he met her in some other context quite apart from a theoretically therapeutic relationship in the novel.
The Last Tycoon

The Last Tycoon is a brilliant fragment of the book Fitzgerald was writing when he died. There is the figure of the tycoon himself, Monroe Stahr. Stahr, the last Frontiers man, is the embodiment of Fitzgerald’s search for values beyond all frontiers. He has come to rest at last in Hollywood, where the frontier has become a thing of cardboard and tinsel and the American Dream a corporation dedicated to the purveyance of dreams. In Hollywood, Stahr’s empire is as magnificent and powerful as the one Gatsby envisioned but it is also corrupt. But corruption has now become an acceptable part of the social order. Infact, it is inevitable in a nation “that for a decade had wanted only to be entertained.” Yet because Stahr is wholly committed to his dream of power, he is like Gatsby, basically incorruptible.

To be incorruptible in Fitzgerald’s world is to be destroyed by a larger corruptive force. Men like Gatsby and Stahr who subordinate everything to their ambition have only one fear—the collapse of the system on which their ambition is based. As the novel develops, it becomes clear that some such collapse is occurring around Stahr. There is the ruined producer Manny Schwartz, whose suicide introduces the tragic theme in the opening section. Mr. Marcus who is the industrial magnate, has lost his powers. The actors and actresses are all haunting the scene of their last triumphs. Even Cecilia, in all her innocence and youth, is somehow tainted. Then there are the
debilitating effects on Stahr himself of the struggle which made him a king–his fanatical disregard of his failing health, his morbid preoccupation with his dead wife, his almost deliberate. “Perversion of the life force”, as if he were consciously intent on death. He embodies all the strengths and weaknesses of a dynasty.

“Is this all?” asks Brimmer, the Communist organizer, as Stahr loses his control. “This frail half sick person is holding up the whole thing?” And Fitzgerald himself might well have asked the same question; for Stahr comes as a pathetic climax to his lifelong search for paradise. However, looking back over the novels, the pattern of this search resolves itself in Stahr. Indeed, how there can be no other possible resolution. Amory Blaine’s infatuation with wealth set the key for Anthony Patch’s corruption by wealth. In Gatsby, Fitzgerald sounded the futility of his dream. So Stahr prepares for the final destruction, that ultimate collapse of self which comes after all dreams have died.

There is an inescapable process of disenchantment Fitzgerald arrived at Hollywood and his own crack-up. There have been his wanderings east from the “barbarian” St. Paul to the Princeton of This Side of Paradise, the East Egg society of The Great Gatsby. Each place is left behind and the possibilities of place are diminished. The horrors accumulate until finally there is only enough will be left for one last act of self-immolation—the return to the supreme life of Monroe Stahr’s world.
In completing the cycle of his life and art, Fitzgerald reproduced the design of an entire literary movement. But Fitzgerald was more than merely typical of that movement. He was its most sensitive and tormented talent and the prophet of its doom. With a sense of the destructive impulses of his time that can only be compared with Hemingway’s, he yet lacked Hemingway’s stabilizing gift the ability to get rid of bad times by writing of them. Fitzgerald never got rid of anything; the ghosts of his adolescence, the failures of his youth, and the doubts of his maturity plagued him to the end. He was supremely a part of the world he described, so much a part that he made himself its king. When he saw it begin to crumble, he crumbled with it and led it to death.

But the thing that destroyed him also gave him his special distinction. His vision of Paradise served him as a medium of artistic understanding. Through it he penetrated to the heart of some of the great illusions of his time, discovering their falsity as if he were discovering his own. If that vision—like Hemingway’s correlative of loss which it so much resembles—was limited, it was atleast adequate to Fitzgerald’s purpose. It was a means of his contact between his art and the experience of his time.

*The Last Tycoon* has much in common with *The Great Gatsby* and yet it represents a notable turning point in Fitzgerald’s fiction. Like Gatsby it is a tightly knit and well constructed novel—even in its unfinished state. It is based on the skillful juxtaposition of “dramatic scenes” filtered through the eyes of a narrator involved in the story. It is true that the story concerns a “superman in possibilities”, almost an
artist and a creator, who finds his defeat in a psychological and emotional *epuisement*. At the same time he is crushed by adverse circumstances. But in comparison with Gatsby the protagonist of *The Last Tycoon* is more extensively defined, both on the psychological and on the social and ethical level of his conflict. Moreover, the adventure of Monroe Stahr is presented in a fairly realistic way. Fitzgerald was availing himself of a quite different type of diction—a diction which came as close as possible to the ideal of immediacy. That is why *The Last Tycoon* is an original achievement which shows the degree of renewal Fitzgerald could reach without denying himself or his past.

The incompleteness of the novel does not allow any excessive speculation on the entity. Fitzgerald was also betrayed by his luck. He was betrayed by his weakened physical condition. It prevented him from gathering the reward of his assiduous effort under adverse conditions. Fitzgerald was able to complete only five chapters out of nine. Nevertheless, *The Last Tycoon* belongs to the canon of Fitzgerald’s fiction and it must be considered as an important part of it. Dos Passos cannot suspected of any tenderness toward Fitzgerald. It represents “one of those literary fragments that from time to time appear in the stream of a culture and profoundly influence the course of future events.”

The first idea of a new novel was conceived by the writer three or four years before his sudden death. “This has been in my mind for three years”, he wrote in a note. His first idea was to write a love story set in Hollywood. The protagonist was to be a brilliant producer,
possessing many of the qualities and limitations of the producer Irving Thalberg whom Fitzgerald had met as far back as 1927. From the very short he committed himself to an objective rendering, since for this character he could not use his own traits and personal experiences. He had to embody them in a character seen from the outside who would lead his own independent life. According to a first outline of the plot, the brilliant producer would have to be ruined by his love for a woman whose resemblance to his wife would stir him to a longing for a new home, a new affection and a new form of life. Realizing that in this way he would break the prospect of a happy marriage for the woman, the produce was to have left her, only to find himself alone in his daily struggle for survival and prominence in the movie world. Physically worn out, emotionally disappointed and persecuted for his attempt to continue his relations with the woman after her marriage, he was to breakdown. An accident in an aeroplane during his “flight” would have sealed his ruin. Stahr’s tragic flaw appears to be mainly his need for love, while it is his blind dedication to the woman that determines more than anything else his epuisement and his collapse.

At this point, there is no indication, of how Fitzgerald was intended to handle the difficult problem of the point of view. In other notes he faced the problem and ended by making the narrator a girl, Cecilia, daughter of Stahr’s fellow-producer and rival. Cecilia’s unrequited love for Stahr was to have coloured the whole story with an intense participation. In two detailed plans the story is then delineated and divided into eight chapters, subdivided into thirty one episodes. In these plans the story was still described as a love story,
but it was already determined and conditioned by more realistic elements. The story of Stahr’s love for Thalia made up the largest parts of the episodes. It was followed for a rather long span of time. It was not marked by the breathless rapidity that characterizes in the novel. There was also to be a conflict of interests between Stahr and Bradogue (Cecilia’s father). This conflict would push the former, after a hard struggle, to eventual defeat in a frame work of conflicting social and economical forces. Stahr did not give in or fly as in the first outline, and even the plane crash was to happen when his defeat had been already determined. However, the two themes were separately developed and the inner and outer conflicts remained independent of one another, without really coinciding or being structurally combined.

Fitzgerald’s difficulty in freeing himself from the limitations of a pathetic love story and dealing consistently with the theme of a more realistic conflict is evident in the second outline of the plot. Unexpectedly, the tragic end is here represented as an ironical twist of fate, since Stahr was to die when he had not only regained the love of Thalia, but was flying to New York to clinch his victory over his rival. There is no link of cause and effect among the various elements, between their development and their conclusion. There is no other man in Thalia’s life and nothing would prevent her from staying with Stahr. All the difficulties are in him: in his dream of an emotional as well as social superiority. Stahr is unable to accept such a girl as Thalia. She has a poor background and humble appearance. It is he who alienates Thalia without realizing that she is much more important to him then he thinks that she is infact necessary to him.
The motivation that Fitzgerald had envisaged is quite revealing. “Previously his (Stahr’s) name had been associated with this or that well-known actress or society personality and Thalia is poor, unfortunate and tagged with a middle-class exterior which doesn’t fit in with the grandeur Stahr demand of life.” Everything seems to be the result of an excessive squeamishness on the part of Stahr. His hamartia is really a form of pathetic weakness—an incapacity to accept reality, a little like the early Dick or Gatsby himself.

In the third diagram, the story is divided into ten chapters and twenty-three episodes. The love affair is still the dominant theme of the book. A good four chapters (II, III, IV and VII) are devoted to the meetings of Stahr and Thalia. The seduction is accomplished in chapter VII and the conflict of interests with Bradogue begins to take shape only in the eighth chapter. From this moment the story seems to be centered on this conflict and the love affair seems to be almost forgotten. It is Stahr again who seems to refuse the possibility of marrying Thalia. Stahr saves her from the flood in the set and in this immediate contact the girl loses every mysterious fascination.

Fortunately, the story was reshaped in a fourth diagram. The story was developed in a tightened structure of episodes in which the elements found their proper place in the close relationship and interdependence of the two informing ideas. Stahr’s love story preserves its necessary importance and its dramatic quality. But it is unfolded in close connection with the conflict that opposes Stahr to Bradogue for the control of the movie company and the writers union, over which he wants to maintain his paternalistic predominance. The
epuisement of the impossible relation with Thalia undermines Stahr’s chances of affirming himself in the double struggle. It offers to both enemies the occasion for a frontal attack, while the straits of his material interests prevent him from finding in his love the evasion from or the solution to his problems.

Like *The Great Gatsby*, *The Last Tycoon* opens with a careful characterization of the narrator and then introduces some of the secondary characters whose function is to bring near the protagonist. Stahr is already caught sight of toward the end of the first chapter, but he is still detached. Like Nick Carraway, Cecilia is given all the qualities of a perfect narrator, including the ability to imagine certain episodes at which she was not present or which could not be related to her. Inteligent and observant, she is involved in the action and is a product of social environment, but with a certain measure of disenchanted cynicism. She presents herself directly at the beginning like Nick. Cecilia can be perturbed by the movie world, but she does not question it. She takes it for granted. To understand it she suggests that it is sufficient “to understand one of those men”. She is flying back to this world from the East, but the hunting atmosphere of Hollywood is already present on the plane and a clear warning is given to its possible destructive effects when the plane lands in Nashville during a thunderstorm. When she goes to the Hermitage of Andrew Jackson in the night, Cecilia can neither enter nor properly contemplate the sanctuary of the uncorrupted American faith in progress and democracy. And on its threshold Schwartz, a Hollywood cast-off whom Cecilia has met on the plane, commits suicide.
He has killed himself because Stahr has turned against him. He has warned Stahr of a mysterious danger that threatens him. Wylle, the script writer who is a friend of Cecilia and works for Stahr, also vaguely hints at a possible danger to the producer, even if he predicts his victory over his rival. When Stahr is traveling incognito on the plane, first chats with Cecilia and then holds a brief soliloquy in the pilot’s cabin. His charm and his energy are still dominant. Cecilia discovers that she is childishly falling in love with him and she sees only strength and amiable manhood in his personality. As Stahr sits in the pilot’s cabin to contemplate Los Angeles from the sky, all the writer’s abilities are brought into play to give a sense of enlightened grandeur. Fitzgerald attached an important symbolic significance to this episode. By sitting with the pilot, Stahr comes to identify himself with him: like the pilot he is a “leader” of men who is aware of his responsibilities, quick and resolute in his decisions, somewhat isolated from the rest of the people and relying only on his intuition when it becomes a question of life or death. He too operates “on a high level” – far from the ground – master of his own destiny and of all who are with him. And when in the course of the story he is compelled to “come down to earth” and to measure himself with others on their own level, he will be bound to face his ruin. Even the plane’s landing acquires a symbolic meaning. It is significant that Stahr sees in the approaching lights of Los Angeles a sign of his passion for activity. He returns to the city with the pleasure of an empire builder, of an artistic creator who is interested in it not because he possesses it, but because he has created it. Yet, his going down “into the warm darkness” will soon turn into a crash against a hostile ground. The
lights go out and his activity will languish, blighted by its own worm and wrecked by contrasting tensions. Even his descent might be taken as a thematic forewarning of his fatal destiny, when he will crash in another plane into the snowy mountains.

In Hollywood the action moves when Brady makes his first appearance on the scene and during an earthquake. It is both functional and symbolic in the story. Stahr sees for the first time an unknown and mysterious woman who closely resembles his dead wife. Unable to forget Stahr, Cecilia tells about his working day by reconstructing a broken series of episodes which is a sequel of dramatic scenes. It gives an idea of his character and his nature while also illustrating the Hollywood background. To believe that Stahr is “a marker in industry like Edison and Lumiere and Griffith and Chaplin”, it is necessary to see him at work to appreciate his qualities as a man and a leader. He can show his humanity toward a cameraman who has attempted suicide and thus restore him to his humanity toward a cameraman who has attempted suicide and thus restore him to his work and happiness. He can teach a presumptuous English writer what amount of imaginative power is needed to make a film. He can solve the personal crisis of an actor. He is stubborn and dictatorial at the rushes. He is always with competence and success. And when he joins the other producers at the commissary, he is willing to sustain the production of a quality picture even if it means losing money. Brady is already opposed to this idea, but Stahr turns a deaf ear to any opposition, without ceremony. His only reward after a
long, tiring day is his attempt to find the unknown girl he has seen on the set after the earthquake.

When the setting has been established and the nature of the various characters has been illustrated, the action begins to take shape. Cecilia tries to interest the tycoon who is deeply involved in his dream of repeating the past with Kathleen. Allusions at this point indicate that his health is not of the best. Stahr attaches himself to Kathleen as a way out of his isolation and overwork. To meet her on a sad, long Sunday he neglects his work for the first time. This might be the beginning of a new life for him but his affair with Kathleen worsens his inner conflict. Kathleen recounts her past to Stahr. She tells him of her impoverished childhood and of her humiliations, culminating in an impossible and weary relationship with a king. Her background is as artificial and incomplete as the house on the beach where the tycoon takes the girl on their first day together. The skeletal house symbolizes a movie set and somehow constituting a symbol of the desolation of Stahr’s unstable life. It is here their bodies are united. It is a breathless union almost in the open, without any shelter—that will never turn into a harmonious life.

Four times Stahr drives with Kathleen on the road that joins Hollywood with Malibu. Each time the tone and the atmosphere vary, in keeping with the state of mind of the two characters. The first trip is full of expectancy and uncertainty. The second is sad and marked with dissatisfaction. The third is lively with expectancy and impatience—after a dreary dinner. In a drugstore Stahr and Kathleen have decided to go back to the house, under the pressure of their emotions and the
urgency of their senses. The act of the love is accomplished in the unfinished house. For a time the atmosphere becomes idyllic, in the twilight of the beach, where they meet an old Negro awaiting the arrival of the grunion. During their fourth trip back to Hollywood the enchantment seems broken and Stahr has a feeling that nothing has been achieved. The final blow comes when he learns that Kathleen is going to be married and only the pile of film scripts will be waiting for him at home.

Such a cruel disappointment needs silence, and in the meantime the other motive of the book is developed with the reappearance of Brady in the foreground—as he is surprised by his daughter with a nude secretary hidden in a closet. This is the vulgar and cheap counterpart of the previous love scene between Stahr and Kathleen. It is easy to see that between these two opposing poles of behaviour and sensitivity there will not be a lasting truce. Stahr has still a chance of dissuading Kathleen from getting married, but his disappointment is too deep and he can no longer deal with her with his customary decision. Kathleen is attracted by him and a word from him at this time would have been perhaps sufficient to win her back. But Stahr is unable to utter it, since his pride and his boundless egotism have been hurt. Like Gatsby, he is unable to accept a compromise or to bargain for the thing he wants. Being unable to accept Kathleen as she is, he is almost guilty himself of losing her. Disturbed to the point of getting drunk by the idea of Kathleen’s marrying another, Stahr for the first time lets himself be taken “off guard” when he has the greatest need
for all his strength. He is overcome in a discussion with the leftist union leader Brimmer and even physically hurt.

However, the turning point has been reached and it is fairly clear from the scattered notes and the diagram he left how he intended to end the story. Stahr’s health was to decline rapidly and he was to visit Washington in the summer, without being able in the empty city to make any contact with the traditional values of America. Crossed by Brady, who has imposed a wage cut during his absence, Stahr opposes the union. Heedless of everything Stahr leaves Cecilia, whom he has accepted as a substitute for Kathleen. Cecilia tells her father of Stahr’s secret love for Kathleen, thus furnishing Brady with the possibility of blackmailing Stahr. Stahr blackmails Brady in his turn. Argues with Wylie and his affair with Kathleen becomes instrumental in his ruin. According to Fitzgerald’s first conception, he was to murder the producer; Stahr was to be saved by Peter Zavras, the cameraman whom he himself had saved at the beginning of the story. Under the pressure of all these tensions Stahr is on the verge of collapse. Suspecting that Brady wants to murder him he resorts to Brady’s own means and hires gangsters to kill Brady. The murder is to be accomplished while Stahr is flying to New York. On the flight he is disgusted with himself for having stooped to Brady’s methods and determines to stop the gangsters as soon as the plane lands. But the aeroplane crashes and Brady is murdered. Stahr’s funeral has ended the book with a bitter and ironic touch. The future of the movie industry was to be foreshadowed in the grim figure of Fleishacker, the unscrupulous and opportunistic company lawyer. Finally, having
separated from her husband, Kathleen comes back to gaze from the outside on the studios in which she has never set foot. Cecilia is overwhelmed by the events. She has a nervous breakdown after she has given herself for spite to a man she does not love. She relates the story from the hospital where she has been confined.

Monroe Stahr is basically an artist. He lives and works in Hollywood because it is an empire that he has created, not because he wants to make money, as Brady does. All his energies are directed to raising the movie industry to an artistic level. The passion and competence with which he works qualify him for the role of leader. He is able to direct the energies of his script writers and to sustain them in the effort until he gets the best out of them. He has a gift of seeing “below the surface into reality”. After him, the movie industry will gradually decline. As an artist he has the typical awareness of his limitations and his character is made credible and mature. Like Gatsby, his greatness is only partial and he carries within himself the germ of destruction.

Like Gatsby, who did not cut the pages of the books in his library, Stahr has no time to read and his culture is superficial. He reads synopses—whether of the Bible or the Communist Manifesto. He values literature from a utilitarian point of view. His potential artistic nature finds an outlet in his efficient organization and bows to the slightly presumptuous ideal of the tycoon. Egotistical and self–centered, Stahr carries all his qualities to an excess. With his domineering character, he tends to become a despot. An enlightened tyrant, he mistakes himself for an oracle. An efficient leader, he ends
by relying only on his strength and ideas. He underrates his enemies and does not grasp the natural evolution of the times. He has good cause to stand up against Brady, but he shows as much hostility to the writers’ union.

Brady is the natural opponent of Stahr—the typical, mean merchant. He is interested only in making money. Brady neither respects Stahr nor understands his enlightened motives. On the other hand, the union leaders do respect of Stahr’s efficiency and understand his fair play and his sense of responsibility to his men. But they are bound to oppose his methods and his despotic individualism. Stahr opposes the union not so much out of personal interest as out of principle, fearing in a way that in a Hollywood where the social structure is changed his pre-eminence would no longer be possible. He cannot ally himself with Brady, or compromise with the union. As a result he is torn between these two forces when they join to attack him on his vulnerable home front.

In the present novel, the psychological and social conflict was basically between two moral attitudes and two universal aspects of human nature. Here the social and moral conflict is rooted in a local framework of contrasting attitudes and activities which are typical of a precise and well known social milieu. Hollywood is an equivocal milieu, where the artistic impulse is blighted and frustrated by an industrial organization. Fitzgerald gave a picture of that world in all its minutes details, in its mechanics and in its essence, representing it, in a particular period of development—the social crisis of 1935, when the writers’ union was infact constituted. It was a particular movement
in which the consequences of depression were still badly felt. It is significant that Stahr’s defeat was to have had all these social as well as economical connotations in its unfolding.

Within this symbolical frame of reference, the “artist” finds his own creation has turned against him and that the “test” of society has forced him to a moral compromise and eventually to defeat. It has brought to the surface the less noble aspects of his characters and has directed its attack against the tycoon in a suitable way—by making him instrumental in his own ruin. *The Last Tycoon* has all the premises and many of the qualities of a highly dramatic story, complex in motivation, realistic in context and statement, rapid, immediate and intense in diction.
REFERENCES


22. Letters, p. 239.


25. Fitzgerald F. Scott, *The Beautiful and Damned*, p. 27.


67. *Tender is Night*, p. 112.


