

Chapter 5<sup>th</sup>  
**SOCIAL REFLECTION**

## *This Side of Paradise*

Fitzgerald's first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, has much evoked divergent responses. While it has been given due credit for its authenticity, many critics have tended to regard this authenticity as one stemming from the author's idiosyncratic experience. The implicit assumption or rather accusation is that the novel is merely a thinly disguised version of the young author himself, instinct, correspondingly, with youthful dreams and fantasies.

Therefore, one of the indispensable preliminaries for placing *This Side of Paradise* in the development of Fitzgerald's art and technique is to analyse the implications of the pervasively historical tone of the novel.

This pervasive tone suggests two significant aspects of the novel. The authenticity stems from felt experience each evident in the novel. This is also reminiscent of the corresponding quality found in all those significant first novels in which the novelist is concerned were, so to say making their debut. The creative impulse behind *This Side of Paradise* is in kind similar to that found in that of Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

In these terms Fitzgerald's first novel is regarded, as the creative response of youth to the panorama of futility impinging on its nascent consciousness. Its pervasive perspective of youth accounts for

the pang of recognition with which it continues to thrill adolescent readers everywhere. Most of the critics have recognized the youthful element in *This Side of Paradise*. The kind of precocious intelligence it evidenced and the implicit aesthetic preoccupation it sought to reflect have largely remained undetected. In retrospect, that Fitzgerald's aesthetic problem in the novel was more or less the same as that of James Joyce in *A Portrait*: to transcend a strong almost stifling, scene of personality through the mode of artistic recreation. The basic tension in *This Side of Paradise* is between the two modes of strongly felt personal experience and of the aesthetic transcendence of it through imagination. As Joyce puts it, "the personality of the artist, at first a cry, or a cadence or a mood and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalizes itself, so to speak."

This refinement was for Fitzgerald and he had yet to learn that the artist should be beyond his creation. In these terms, nevertheless *This Side of Paradise* should be regarded as the first step in the direction. If the accent is on life, rather than art, to that extent the novel is the portrait not of an artist as a young man but of a young man trying to discover his vocation as an artist. In short, *This Side of Paradise* is more than what can emerge from the motif of the youth's coming of age.

The importance of Fitzgerald's first novel is not one of mere chronology. Its instant phenomenal success was due to its contemporary risqué quality, particularly to its exposure of the immoralities of the younger generation in their revolt. But this

historical relevance does not exhaust its significance. For, *This Side of Paradise* abounds in perceptions which foreshadow the pattern of dream and disenchantment made explicit in the later fiction. It is in a rudimentary form, almost all the factors which condition the eventual decline of the Fitzgerald hero.

“Think of romantic egotist,” Fitzgerald wrote in a letter to Shane Leslie, “writing about himself in a cold barrack on Sunday afternoons....Yet that is the way this novel has been scattered into shape—for it has no form to speak of.” Romantic egotist’ is a phrase which neatly sums up Amory Blaine, the protagonist of the novel. He is a scarcely disguised variation of the youthful aspirations and disillusionment. But Fitzgerald not only made Amory Blaine a representative figure of the youth of his generation also tried to pinpoint the decadent attitude of the generation which found itself robbed of all ideals. It is the growing up of a romantic egotist to maturity and to realize the loss of youth and the consequent sense of dissipation which is depicted in the career of young Amory.

However, it is necessary to mention the rationale behind the atmosphere of decadence in which Amory finds his lot cast. It is against the backdrop of the post war ethos. The thematic implication of the novel emerges clearly. Amory’s outlook is coloured by a sense of disillusionment which he hardly understands himself. Fitzgerald models Amory’s attitude towards the values he has inherited on the ‘decadent’ tradition. In and through this literary source, Fitzgerald had a ready-made philosophy - a vantage point - from which he could assess Amory’s growth, or the lack of it.

Fitzgerald was indebted for the twin ideas of the glory of youth with the consequent dread of its loss. The supreme importance of beauty and its realization is considerable. The pursuit of beauty presupposes a life of comfort and leisure. Therefore, it is kind of contempt for work.

Amory's decadent attitude with its literary antecedents is just a decorative framework lacking organic connection with the novel. This is only partly true. For Amory's overall attitude needs to be examined in terms of the post war crisis in values which robbed Fitzgerald's generation of certain ideals and made it 'romantic' in a more significant way. It is only for imaginative recreation, in the form of a novel. His personal experience was indebted marked him as the decadent tradition. The phenomenon of disillusionment received traditions was Fitzgerald's generation had ample experience.

Amory's long peroration about the old creeds is not a mere literary artifice. It gives the novel a spurious thematic importance. It is the earliest assertion of the individual self against the loss of the identity. Amory's built-in sense of waste and dissipation is given an edge by the prevailing atmosphere. Examined within the structure of the novel, it grows naturally out of his innate desire to mould life in accordance with his imagination. If Amory finds the result utterly ridiculous it is not because his ideals are inconsequential but because they are robbed of their significance which are diluted and distorted by a general breakdown of values. In the specific context of the Twenties, 'disillusionment' had a peculiar connotation and it never

meant neutralizing of one's aspiration. On the other hand, it reinforced an enlarged conception of the self.

The post-war milieu was characterized by a restlessness and nausea which form a fitting background to Amory's sense of purposeless drifting. The war was an opportunity for exercising one's youthful energy and enthusiasm.

It is this background of overflowing enthusiasm that Amory's craving for some sort of distinction arises. He himself doubts whether the war itself had any great effect on his generation. But it has ruined the old backgrounds, sort of killed individualism out of our generation. In fact, Amory's disillusionment is concerned mainly with social structure not with his belief as a uniquely gifted being. And when he strove to fulfill the ambitions of a youthful nature, he was trying to exhibit the prevalent commitment to a more glamorous conception of life. It only shows to what extent his dreams are disfigured. Amory's aspirations are ultimately the inconsequential aspirations of an average American adolescent – success, winning the glamorous woman, amassing money.

This disillusionment with social creeds, with religious fads and political shibboleths does not blunt Amory's aspiration to achieve something glorious. Therefore when one says that Amory was disillusioned it does not mean that the very capacity for aspiring is atrophied. He has still his own crop of compensating mechanisms stemming from his incurable romanticism.

Amory's disillusionment not only embraces social structure with its class distinctions but also economic systems with the sharp division between the poor and the rich. His disapproval of contemporary social system stems from his own horror of poverty. There is correspondingly a glorification of the power of money. His mother tells him, the lack of money as "to do the things one wants to makes one quite prosy and domestic." The horror of city life without money presents itself to Amory in a kaleidoscopic procession of different snapshots as he goes through the streets of the city. According to her lack of economic security may turn out even love dressed as seduction. The glamour of moneyed life makes Amory conclude that it is essentially cleaner to be corrupt and rich than it is to be innocent and poor. Because of this horror of poverty it is only inevitable that Amory should show some sort of disapproval of the capitalist system which perpetuates this poverty. This also leads him to a sort of socialism. But this socialism is more individual and idiosyncratic than rational. He longs for socialism not because it is a panacea for all ills but because it will put an end to the injustice of a rich but undeserving man winning the hand of a beautiful girl. Amory says that he is a socialist because economic insecurity comes in the way of his marrying a girl who values money more than romantic gush. Thus, Amory's socialism is built not on the solid rock of sound doctrine but on the shifting sands of rationalizing one's own economic instability. But it is not their validity or the reverse that makes these notions interesting. While it is part of the general restlessness of the times, it is primarily a component of his decadent attitude towards experience that Amory's socialism is interesting.

Amory does not seem to have any pronounced religious views. But from the very fact that he it is clear the confidence in Monsignor Darcy. It is clear that deep down his consciousness there was a streak of religious questioning. It infrequently erupts to the surface that gives up his religious background. Amory too is haunted by the problem of evil – essentially a religious one. Monsignor Darcy detects the tinge of cynicism behind Amory’s youthful frivolity. Darcy’s analysis of Amory’s attitude towards experience is fundamentally true. “You are unsentimental,” he tells him, “almost incapable of affection, astute without being proud.” M. Darcy knows that beneath Amory’s superficial scepticism was a real craving for faith. He cautions him that whatever his mother proves to be he would be much safer anchored to the church.

Amory’s religious views are thus difficult to fix with certainty. But, there is an incident of Dick Humbird’s death which is suggestive of his general attitude towards good and evil. Rudely awakened by Humbird’s brutal death and the problem of reconciling evil with an all-powerful Amory, is benevolently questioning all traditional religious belief. His friend’s death is symbolic, for Amory, of the tenuousness that surrounds all grace and charm. His vision of Humbird’s ghost still further intensifies the problem of evil. It was an experience to which he never succeeded in giving an appropriate value, but which continues to haunt him. The eternal problem of good and evil rises in his consciousness by the grotesque vision of his friend. Cut short at the prime of his life, it shakes Amory so violently that he begins to wonder whether there were “any good people left in

the world.” that Dick Humbird’s presence haunts him for a long time is significant and it unsettles him so much that he refuses to go through the street in which Dick Humbird met his death; it reminds him of filth and evil.

It is an indication of the deeper disturbances in Amory’s adolescent vision of Paradise. Dick is the perfect model of an aristocrat that Amory himself aspires to become. However, when he comes to know that Dick was in reality the son of a grocery owner it vitiates his vision of the aristocrat. Dick also symbolized something else which Amory himself longed for: the ability to lead, gracefully, a life of ease and irresponsibility, in short, to deteriorate pleasantly. Dick could dissipate without going to pieces and even his most bohemian adventures never seemed ‘running it out’. For Amory, Dick was the very image of ‘a personage.’ It is just like “a bar on which a thousand things had been hung”, and his violent death was to fill his fiction, the most tragic being Gatsby’s – jerks Amory into an awareness of the limitations to one’s aspirations and ambitions. It raises for him the problem of reconciling grace and charm with ugliness and brutality. If so much of this charm and grace lead inevitably to death, it is futile to believe in a benevolent being. It is much better to live for the pleasant jazzy thrill of the moment which confers deliverance from, “right and wrong and from the bound of heaven and from every God ... delivered from success and hope and poverty into that long chute of indulgence which led, after all, only to the artificial lake of death.”

If death itself is artificial and the final end of all human aspiration, then formal religion has no goods to deliver. The idea of a benevolent God is postulated by religion is a figment of the imagination. No wonder that, the mystical reveries of saints that had once filled him with awe in the still house of night, now vaguely repelled him. The loss of Amory's religious faith is absolute and irrevocable. The very intellectuals whom Amory respected contributed not a little to this loss of faith. Monsignor Darcy himself – Amory's religious alter ego – seems to him a bundle of religious contradictions. He had “moments of strange and horrible insecurity which are inexplicable in a religion that explained even disbelief in terms of its own faith.” Amory knows that Darcy frequented the houses of solid philistines. He read popular fiction all with the aim of escaping from the inconsistencies which beset his faith. In this atmosphere where religious people themselves are victims of conflicting tensions and torments, it is no wonder that Amory gives up faith in formal religion. He finds himself as a part of a generation which has “grown up to find all God's dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken ... This loss of faith is not to be construed as a loss of imagination. For as Darcy puts it, Amory's Celtic imagination is not wholly exempt from religious faith. If Amory is far away from use of heaven as a continual referendum” for his ideas he will “find earth a continual recall” to his ambitions.

Therefore, the main centre of interest in the novel is the growing up of Amory from the stature of a narcissistic adolescent to that of a subdued young man. It is his quest for identity or a sense of

self fulfillment that is of significance in the novel. Fitzgerald has made it clear that Amory would have started all his enquiries with himself; for he was his own best example – “a human creature of sex and pride.”

Sex and pride are the keynotes of Amory’s self. It is with a primary sense of egotism that he approaches everything. A sense that they are apart from their fellowmen haunts Fitzgerald’s heroes. Amory has more than his share of such kind of belief. He struggles to conceal from the other guys at school how particularly superior he felt himself to be, and wonders how people could fail to notice that he was a boy marked for glory. Even while playing football at St. Regis, Amory feels in a fit of romantic fancy that he was “the eternal hero, Moreover, in a precocious teenager “walking on air-cushions that lie on the asphalts of fourteen,” the egotism has also a certain freshness and charm of its own. This egotism does not provide any propulsion for a striving after fulfillment which is emerging from adolescent fantasies. Therefore, it is condemned to sterility.

However, the predominant stance perceptible is similar in kind to that found in later heroes. Amory has yet to draw a distinction between the ego and the self – the latter a state of being and the former a state of becoming conditioned by goals which a society deems desirable. it is significant that in later Fitzgerald heroes, the basic egotistic stance assumes enlarged dimensions. In short, it acquires the Icarian motif of illimitable aspiration and, is implicit with self-destruction. For instance, Gatsby is “a Platonic conception” of himself and Dick Diver impelled by a similar, all-consuming egotism,

dreads the prospect of anonymity and wonders “God, am I like the rest?”

Amory’s largely adolescent illusions about himself have several sources. Chief in this regard is being his own over-solicitous, possessive mother. She feeds his penchant for dreamy sentimentalism and his assumption of himself, as “a fortunate youth, capable of infinite expansion for good or evil.”

It is, however, significant that Amory’s overall attitude towards women and sex undergoes a dramatic transformation. His girls induce contradictory responses in him like fascination coupled with unmistakable but muted revulsion. The series of shocks of self-recognition administered by these girls, Isabelle, Clara, Rosalind, bruise his ego. Amory’s education is inconceivable without their implicit criticism. Their comments offer the necessary correctives for Amory’s hazy, adolescent views.

Isabelle’s pitiless analysis, for instance, disenchants Amory. Along with the impact of his alter ego M. Darcy and these girls succeed in making Amory shed a great amount of vanity and a lot of emotional “baggage” about being “the superman and all”.

However, in spite of their criticism at least some of these flappers seem to realize Amory’s basic weakness and his facile, fantasizing mind. When Amory exultantly claims, “... I’m a slave to my emotions, to my likes, to my hatred of boredom, to most of my desires”. Clara, another egotist herself, retorts: “you are not! ... You

are a slave, a bound helpless slave to one thing in the world, your imagination!”

This draws attention to the difference of the Fitzgerald's hero. The innate desire of his heroes to mould life according to imagination is evident and therefore this is romantic conception of the ego. Fitzgerald's vision of life and ego lacks correlated pervasive disturbance in this regard with the problem of sex. If the corresponding implications are analysed two significant features stand out most permanently.

These two features be described as, first, the recurring image of the femme fatale, the beautiful lady without mercy who lures the protagonist on by her fatal beauty towards self-destruction. The second, Fitzgerald's perception of the horrors lurking behind the Paradise brought into being by a sense of romantic wonder. These horrors crystallizing around sensuous often sexual disenchantment suggest revulsion towards reality. It is surprising that for a narcissistic, full-blooded young man like Amory, obviously looking for fulfillment of adolescent erotic desires, the possibility of actual experience in this regard should come with a sense of repulsion. Even the slightest physical contact is enough to fill him with real but inexplicable revulsion.

This disillusionment with the immediacy of experience opposed to the dreamy inflation of it. It is in reverie a quality which marks all of Fitzgerald's heroes. In later protagonist it become pronounced and underlies their incurable romanticism While this is at yet nascent in

Amory,. Gatsby's initial response on his reunion with Daisy after a long time is more or less similar. The intrinsic emotion in is more complex than what is apparent in the relation between Amory and Myra in *This Side of Paradise*; Gatsby's reaction to Daisy's physical presence is the same: "This is a terrible mistake," he says, "a terrible, terrible mistake."

This disenchantment is an effect which is indication that even in the apparently jazzy world of adolescent dreams, there are disturbances which vitiate these dreams. And the invariable instrument in this regard is the woman. In Fitzgerald's fiction, she is not only a symbol of glamour and romance but also an instrument of disaster. Enshrining beauty, she also embodies the principle of 'evil' which leads the male to destruction.

Revulsion to the actual amorous experience – as in Amory here – is, therefore, not completely explicable in terms of the implicit dread of reality of a fantasizing sensibility. This is too simplistic a reading of Fitzgerald's acute but as yet nascent perception that beauty is a kind of truth which only the continuing ability to retain romantic wonder will be able to sustain.

With this awareness of the other side to his romantic yearning Amory begins to transcend "the long-cherished image of Narcissus" and becomes aware of a reality other than his own self and its fantasies.

In these terms Amory Blaine's disillusionment begins with his perception of the loss of individual identity as a result of the war. The

mass hysteria of the collective mind induces in Amory apathy and indifference. The political milieu for instance seems to him to be ridden with a tissue of lies.

He finds the literary situation also equally deadening with its lack of contemporarily and authenticity. Amory thus reaches a dead end and begins to wonder about the very possibility of a meaningful ordering of experience.

It is obvious that the several pillars on which Amory tried to base his romantic edifice as success, love, being an author of incomparable gifts collapse around him. The 'ego' realizes the perils beset on the path of becoming a 'self.' While Rosalind's formal engagement disenchants him. Monsignor Darcy's death comes as a decisive snap with the past. Through all this, he is aware constantly of his own sense of loneliness in the crowded streets of New York. In this regard Fitzgerald's evocation of New York City is symbolic of both the anonymity of Amory's life as well as the squalor and dirt resulting from urbanization. What is significant in this evocation is that Amory's disgust is rooted in his awareness of not only the economic distress but also of the collapse of faith itself – of all sorts – in the urban milieu. With clinical detachment he visualizes the sordid life of the urban dweller.

Therefore, New York is a fitting backdrop for Amory's drifting. While his hatred of poverty and all that it entails is unambiguous. He feels that it's essentially cleaner to be corrupt and rich than it is to be innocent and poor. The core of the individual's dilemma in

contemporary life is unblinkingly perceived by as like the loss of faith, and the consequent seduction to any compensating mechanism to fill in the vacuum. Amory realizes that this had been the problem which plagued all thinkers and artists.

Amory's predicament is, therefore, explicable in terms of a quest for a positive value which will contain the contemporary situation. As Amory's significant analysis of his own situation in retrospect shows, his impasse is that of being alone.

From this analysis one can note that Amory's escape from the 'enclosure' to the 'labyrinth' as the associative ideas make it clear in effect an attempt to regain his self through commitment to a positive value in life.

This attempt to attach a positive value of life approximates to 'positive romanticism'. This attempt also provides the clue to the corresponding disenchantment. Consequently, Amory's predicament takes a peculiar turn. As Fitzgerald has pointed out: "a man can crack in many ways...can crack in the head – in which the case the power of decision is taken from you by others! Or in the body, when one can submit to the white hospital ward...."

It is this loss of the will that Amory exhibits. This incapacity to choose is what is meant by deterioration when applied to Amory. He is cut out with certain faculties but he lacks the power to choose. He thinks that 'deterioration' itself is a way of life. As a representative of a restless, uprooted generation Amory thinks that it is pleasant to deteriorate than to decide.

However, this is different from the decadent attitude exhibited by Anthony Patch for whom the problem is not one of choice since choice itself is ruled out by the belief that there is nothing that's worth doing. Similarly, Gatsby has both the ability to achieve 'the will to believe'. The means to achieve makes the wrong choice for romantic affirmation and consequently collapses when dream fails. Therefore, Amory's 'deterioration' has as its component the loss of will and consequent incapacity for action which is different from the fate meted out by Fitzgerald to his other heroes. But it is vital to note that while Amory and Anthony are victims of the loss of will, Gatsby and Dick are victims of wrong choice of the objects which function as correlatives to their dreams. The will is blunted in case of Amory. But Gatsby's will is pristine and powerful. The choice that he makes the way in which to channelize this tremendous power of the will is tragically misdirected. He allows his pristine imagination to serve a gaudy, corrupt society.

Amory's development from complacent aestheticism to disillusioned agnosticism takes him to the verge of the abyss which surrounds all romanticism. Amory's fate is not devastating the stakes for which he played were also not high. The ambitions which stir him have not yet come out from the cocoon of adolescence and his deterioration is still a theoretical possibility and not a tortuous actuality. It is also in case of Anthony Patch, the hero of Fitzgerald's second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*.

## *The Beautiful and Damned*

*The Beautiful and Damned* is Fitzgerald's second novel published in the year 1922. It tells the story of Anthony Patch, the relationship with his wife Gloria, his service in the army and alcoholism. The novel provides an excellent portrait of the Eastern elite as the Jazz Age begins its ascent.

*The Beautiful and Damned* is a gripping morality tale. It is a rueful meditation on love, money and decadence. It can be considered as an acute social document. There exists a rare balance between Anthony's poetic commentary and immediate circumstance. The sheer breadth of depravity is exposed in the novel. It concerns the lurches of a lethargic society, trying desperately to find a cause for progress. It is significant that the only diligent reformer is Anthony's grandfather who belongs to the previous generation. But he has been replaced by the present directionless on a more personal level. The novel is about the ephemerality of life. It concerns characters and disproportionate appreciation of their past. The book is largely based on Fitzgerald's relationship and marriage with Zelda Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* remains as one of his one of the most famous books. Jackson R. Bryer refers to it as 'this strangely sprawling and bitter novel. Even, more so than in the case of *This Side of Paradise*, such a judgement of comparison is inappropriate to *The Beautiful and Damned*. Fitzgerald's second novel

is an extraordinary piece of work, an advance on *This Side of Paradise* in terms of structural unity, characterization and control of tone. Yet something of its power undoubtedly derives from the existence of *This side of Paradise*. It is a book very much about the loss of paradise. When he was writing *The Beautiful and Damned*, Fitzgerald clearly had already recognized that whatever paradise Amory Blaine had yearned for was already beyond recall: Anthony Patch's experience in the second novel is the experience only of paradise lost.

Perhaps it is only with the benefit of hindsight that the source of the sense of pain and bitterness, present in *The Beautiful and Damned*, can be so readily identified in Fitzgerald's own life with Zelda. And at the same time Scott and Zelda seemed only like beautiful people perhaps that help to explain why the early critics were so eager to see the novel as no more than Fitzgerald's response to his reading of Norris, Dreiser, Harold Frederic and the rest. On the other hand, to explain the novel in such terms is only possible on the assumption that Fitzgerald was a kind of tabula rasa of a writer, responding almost automatically to what he had been reading—not an artist in his own right. Fitzgerald's portrayal of Anthony Patch's slow decline owes nothing to literary sources. Only that it is to see the entire portrayal of the lives of Anthony and Gloria, from the early brilliance to the despairing end, as no more than a kind of pastiche of American literary naturalism.

*The Beautiful and Damned* has obvious thematic links with *Tender is the Night*. Both novels are concerned with the disintegration

of a man's life. Both of them can be seen how early promise is slowly overtaken by failure and defeat. The commonest critical charge made against both books is that Fitzgerald fails to clarify the causes of decline as though the explanation of failure is more significant than the experience of it. Certainly, in *The Beautiful and Damned*, Fitzgerald has not offered a single explanation for Anthony Patch's collapse. There is a variety of factors some of them perhaps contradictory seem to be involved. At some stages, Anthony is portrayed as temperamentally weak, morally irresponsible, retreating from an unpleasant reality into a life of non-stop partying and drinking. At others, Anthony appears to be the victim of a corrupt and money-dominated world which has rejected the values of the past but found nothing with which to replace them. Sometimes it seems to be his addiction to Gloria, even more than his addiction to alcohol that is the problem. It is ultimately the nature of reality itself that is in question—the slow but inevitable process of life's running down or wearing away.

In 1922, in a letter to Edmund Wilson, Fitzgerald insisted that he intended Anthony and Gloria to be representative figures. According to Fitzgerald they are two of the great army of the rootless who float around New York. To read the novel in the light of this remark is to approach it as a novel of manners or social comment. *The Beautiful and Damned* then becomes a work meant to expose the careless and useless lives of the essentially hollow characters that make up Jazz Age society. There is the reality that lies beneath the superficial glamour and charm. *The Beautiful and Damned* is

Fitzgerald's '*Waste Land*' novel evoking the sterility and loss of values of the post-war world. In the essay called '*Early Success*', written in 1937, Fitzgerald describes how, even before they began writing *The Beautiful and Damned*, he had developed a sense of the undercurrent of violence and danger in the booming America of the 1920s. 'All the stories that came into my head had a touch of disaster in them...' he goes on to say that he was 'pretty sure living wasn't the reckless, careless business these people thought—this generation just younger than me'. *The Beautiful and Damned* gives considerable substance to these comments. Its text and sub-text articulate a general sense of a society lacking direction or purpose, morally confused and potentially violent. Nevertheless, the novel's personal dimension gives its true force. The wider social observation and comment derived from a deeply felt individual context; the consciousness that is responded and recorded experience remained of his characters but Fitzgerald's own. Inevitably, his own concerns and preoccupations constantly emerged into the text he created.

The scorn and derision present is more than enough to discomfort Anthony. Inevitably, however, one suspects that the power of the scene derives from its origins in Fitzgerald's own experience just as elsewhere. In *The Beautiful and Damned*, he gives expression to other aspects of his own problems as a writer. Clearly in the figure of Richard Caramel, who writes a good best-seller and then allows financial considerations to destroy his artistic integrity, Fitzgerald delineates a possible future for himself. But it is through the picture of Anthony Patch—as the passage Fitzgerald gives fullest expression to

his own doubts and uncertainties. Anthony is endowed with beauty, charm and wealth. His life initially seems full of promise—paradise seems eminently attainable. With his marriage to Gloria, he seems to have made it. However, Gatsby senses after his reunion with Daisy that the famous green light ceases to be an enchanted object. So Anthony discovers that paradise and reality are incompatible.

However, for Anthony as for Dick Diver in *Tender is the Night*, ‘the manner remains intact for some time after the morale cracks.’ Indeed Anthony can usefully be seen as an early version of Dick Diver. Only in the later novel Fitzgerald has got the sub-text problem into clearer focus—almost as clear as in the direct personal analysis of *The Crack-Up*. Diver is the doctor-scientist who breaks the cardinal rule of his profession. Instead of remaining the detached observer, treating his ‘cases’ he becomes identified with the objects of his compassion. Endowed with a ‘fatal pleasingness’, he fails to resist total involvement with those around him. His marriage to Nicole is his inevitable final commitment to ‘life’ rather than to the science or medicine which Fitzgerald intends to be analogous to art. Diver is too much a man to be a successful artist. In *The beautiful and Damned* the picture is less clear, but the outline is already present. Anthony Patch, the artist manqué, finds himself so committed to a style of living that he can never extricate himself from it. The vague philosophizing in which he intermittently indulges provides him with no firm alternative resource. With Gloria he gives himself up to living—a commitment which is not compatible with his survival as a writer. *The Beautiful and Damned* did little to enhance Fitzgerald’s contemporary

reputation. Most critics had presumably anticipated a more straightforward follow-up to *This Side of Paradise*. H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan praised the novel, but Fitzgerald's Princeton friends John Peale Bishop and Edmund Wilson mingled praise with blame and decisively established by their comments the disparaging critical tradition that Fitzgerald has suffered from ever since.

## *The Great Gatsby*

In a letter to Maxwell Perkins written in April of 1924, Fitzgerald said: “I feel I have an enormous power in me now, more than I’ve ever had in a way...” He had just begun work on his third novel. “This book”, he told Perkins, “will be a consciously artistic achievement and must depend on that as the first books did not.” Some four and a half months later, when he had nearly completed a first draft, Fitzgerald wrote Perkins again: “I think my novel is about the best American novel ever written,” he said. The only thing he was really unsure of was a title, but by the time the book appeared in April, 1925, Fitzgerald had decided to call it *The Great Gatsby*.

*Gatsby* has since become the Fitzgerald novel everyone agrees. It is a book that assures Fitzgerald his place in the first rank. It is the novel that in 1925 T. S. Eliot called “the first step that American fiction has taken since Henry James.” In fact, *Gatsby* is so good that critics tend to confront it with a hint of grateful incredulity. It is as if Fitzgerald simply couldn’t have gone that far in the five years that separate *Gatsby* from *This Side of Paradise*.

There is also a strong consensus that *The Great Gatsby* must be understood as a meditation on American history. As early as 1937, John Peale Bishop recognized in Jay Gatsby “the Emersonian man brought to completion and eventually to failure.” In an influential essay written less than a decade later, Lionel Trilling maintained that “Gatsby, divided between power and dream, comes inevitably to stand

for America itself.” Trilling insisted that Jay Gatsby is described first as springing “from his Platonic conception of himself”. Then as a son of God whose business is “the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty,” Fitzgerald’s clear intention is that our mind should turn to the thought of the nation that has sprung from its ‘Platonic conception’ of itself.” A few years later Edwin Fussell based a strongly persuasive interpretation of the novel on the “connection between Gatsby’s individual tragedy and the tragedy of American civilization.” Fussell claimed that “Roughly speaking Fitzgerald’s basic plot is the history of the New World ... more precisely, of the human imagination in the New World.” Fitzgerald’s subject in *The Great Gatsby*, Fussell insisted, is not only the Jazz Age or the Lost Generation, “but the whole of American civilization as it culminated in his own time.” This sort of historical approach to the novel has since become more or less standard. In 1954 Marius Bewley praised Gatsby as “an evocative and an exact description” of the violation of American “aspiration and vision” by “the conditions of American history.” Three years later, James E. Miller, Jr., talked about “the gradual expansion of the significance of Gatsby’s dream”. It is an expansion which Miller saw as finally encompassing “the dream of those who discovered and settled the American continent.” In 1958 another Fitzgerald scholar, John R. Kuehl, described *The Great Gatsby* as “a sort of cultural-historical allegory.” Still more recently, Richard Lehan has claimed that in *The Great Gatsby* “We move from a personal sphere to a historical level. It is a story of unrequited love. The hope and idealism of the frontier democracy is in conflict with a rapacious and destructive materialism. Finally, Robert Sklar maintains

that “the whole of American experience takes on the character of Gatsby’s romantic quest and tragic failure. The history of a continent finds expression in the transcendent images of felicity man made from the beauty of its mocking nature. But despite its critical agreement on the profound importance of the historical perspective in *The Great Gatsby* articulates the way Fitzgerald has worked out his historical theme.

Fitzgerald originally conceived of Gatsby as an historical novel set in the Gilded Age: “Its locale,” he wrote Maxwell Perkins, “will be the middle west and New York of 1885 I think.” The story *Absolution* seems to derive from this first conception of the novel. Although the book that Fitzgerald finally wrote is contemporary in setting. The historical approach seems have to inform his original conception was not discarded. *The Great Gatsby* is a profoundly historical novel.

Gatsby is really an extended flashback. The events are narrated by Nick Carraway some two years after they have occurred. This technique gives the novel a formal circularity which reflects structurally a series of circular movements within the story itself. It circles of movement traced from West Egg to East Egg and back, from Long Island to Manhattan and back, from East to West and back. The image of the circle is perhaps most obviously apparent in the egg-shaped geography (hence the name) of East and West Egg. Ultimately this circularity reiterates the novel’s perspective upon American history. It is this perspective which is contained in Gatsby’s personal history. It is perhaps inevitable that in death Gatsby describe with his own life’s blood “a thin red circle” in the water of his swimming pool.

Gatsby's romantic quest for Daisy Fay is circular in essence. His sustained and single-minded thrust into the future is an attempt to recapture not merely Daisy, but that moment of wonder which she had once inspired. For Gatsby, the future has become simply an avenue leading back to the past. More specifically, it is leading back to the glittering possibilities the past once seemed to offer. It isn't enough that he have Daisy, he must have her as she was five years ago, before she married Tom Buchanan. He must recapture the romantic texture of that ecstatic instant when she suddenly embodied for him all of life's wonder and possibility. It is that moment when he exchanged forever the riotous tumult in his imagination for the vision of her white face and the enchantment of her silvery voice.

Gatsby's urge is transcendental. His vision of life acknowledges neither time nor limit. But throughout this passage an image of discarded favours and crushed flowers reminds the irrevocability of time and of the fatal materiality of the terms of Gatsby's transcendentalism. One autumn night five years before, he had "forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath". He had kissed Daisy and "At his lips' touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete". Now the crushed flowers at his feet comment ironically upon the tragic terms of Gatsby's transcendental vision. We suddenly realize why the girl who has given focus to that vision is named Daisy.

Throughout the novel a flower metaphor reveals the essential materiality at the core of Gatsby's transcendentalism. In *Winter Dreams*, a story universally recognized as a precursor to *The Great*

*Gatsby*. Fitzgerald had also worked with this theme. Dexter Green's lavish dreams are also undermined by the mutability of their material terms. The quality in Judy Jones upon which Dexter's dream of imaginative fulfillment depends is time-bound and transient. Her particular beauty is characterized by "sort of fluctuating and feverish warmth so shaded that it seemed at any moment it would recede and disappear. This colour and the mobility of her mouth gave a continual impression of flux of intense life and of passionate vitality." When time destroys Judy's fragile beauty, Dexter's dreams dissolve too. The dreams were winter dreams after all—they were tied to time from the outset, as transient as any green bud, as fugitive as any daisy. *Gatsby's* transcendentalism is not only tainted by materialism, it is revealed as disastrously circular since it seeks by embracing the future to regain and freeze that instant in the past when Daisy seemed equal to the demands of *Gatsby's* transcendental imagination. In the meantime the present is simply the ground upon which *Gatsby* stands while looking to the future where he sees the past. The present is carelessly exploited in order to feed the impassioned thrust into the future. Appropriately, *Gatsby* first appears in the novel frozen in a pose which exactly represents this circular transcendentalism. He is facing the green light at the end of Daisy's dock *Gatsby* stands with arms outstretched as if by somehow embracing that green light and possessing the "orgiastic future" it represents He could regain that time five years before when he had kissed Daisy and she had "blossomed for him like a flower."

Throughout the novel, Fitzgerald underscores the transcendental nature of Gatsby's love for Daisy. It is not just Daisy Gatsby wants but something beyond her: he wants that moment when life seemed equal to his extraordinary capacity for wonder. That moment is indissolubly wedded to Daisy herself and to materiality. When Gatsby explains to Nick that any love Daisy may have felt for her husband was "just personal." Nick realizes that Gatsby's conception of the affair possesses an intensity that can't be measured. Like Braddock Washington in *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*, Gatsby combines transcendental imagination with time-enthralled materialism. Both heroes also try to control the future by buying back the past. Like the story of Braddock Washington's family, Gatsby's story is a mirror which reflects an image of American history.

Gatsby reveals to Carraway his astonishing belief that the past can be repeated, that one can retrieve and sustain that moment when reality promised to realize the ideal. Gatsby's story, his intense idealism have evoked a resonance that goes beyond himself. By the end of the novel it becomes clear that the elusive rhythm Nick is here unable to articulate is the rhythm of American history. It is a rhythm created by man's headlong pursuit of a dream all the way across a continent and back again. Fitzgerald makes this parallel between Gatsby's history and America's history explicit on the last page of the novel.

Just as Daisy flowered for Gatsby, so the new world flowered for the Europeans who touched her shore. In both cases, for one electric moment, the material world promised to fulfill the

imagination's deepest longings. Fitzgerald goes on to link the wonder evoked by Daisy's green dock light with the wonder evoked by the green breast of the new world: "And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. By association with the green trees which have now vanished, the green light is included in the flower metaphor which Fitzgerald has used to underscore the essential transiency of the materiality which Gatsby sailors has invested with spiritual value. The parallel between the wonder evoked in Gatsby by Daisy and the wonder inspired by the new world is reinforced through Fitzgerald's use of erotic imagery to describe the Dutch sailors' response to the new land. They are arrested by the "fresh, green breast" of America and the trees pander to their insatiable dreams. The word "pandered" also suggests the essential meticulousness of the new world's spiritual and imaginative appeal. The promise embodied in Daisy is meretricious. The passage goes on to complete the link between Gatsby's pursuit of Daisy and America's historical pursuit of an ever-receding frontier.

Gatsby's dream, the dream inspired by Daisy, is here identified with the dream which pushed the frontier ever westward. The assumption contained in this identification is like Gatsby's history. The American history has been the record of a futile attempt to retrieve and sustain a moment of imaginative intensity and promise. By reaching into the future, by pushing continually up against the receding frontier, he has tried to recapture that original sense of wonder evoked when the whole continent was a frontier—that original

sense of wonder which soured because its evocation was essentially meretricious, a reading of spiritual, transcendental promise into mere materiality. So we struggle on against the current of time only to be “borne back ceaselessly into the past”. Our vain effort to seize the lost moment of promise by reaching for the future creates the fabric of our history.

This is an outline of the historical perspective which informs *The Great Gatsby*. To some extent, it is probably derived from Fitzgerald’s discovery in Conrad of a kind of hero (Mr. Kurtz) who embraces cultural contradictions. There are several other important aspects of the novel which must be explored in terms of this perspective specifically, Fitzgerald’s treatment of Tom Buchanan and the Wilsons; his portrait of Gatsby’s early mentor, Dan Cody. The significance of the “waste land” and the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg preside over it. Nick Carraway’s implicit contrast of East and West; and the role of the World War - I, casts a kind of shadow over the events of the whole novel.

The Buchanans are obviously meant to represent an American class. When, at the end of the novel, Nick Carraway says, “They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together and let other people clean up the mess they had made”. It is clear that Nick’s judgment is generic rather than individual in application. Before moving to East Egg, the Buchanans had spent a year in France for no particular reason and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo

and were rich together. The Buchanans, standing for the modern American upper class, embody a materialism which is totally cynical, undirected by idealism or transcendental hope. Tom Buchanan's chief characteristic is his harsh physicality. His orientation is intensely physical at the expense of the mental, the spiritual and the social. He is described as arrogant, aggressive and powerful: "...he seemed to fill those glistening boots until he strained the top lacing and you could see a great pack of muscle shifting when his shoulder moved under his thin coat. It was a body capable of enormous leverage—a cruel body". Even his past accomplishments are physical. He had been one of the most powerful ends ever to play football at Yale and Gatsby introduces Tom to his party guests as "the polo player". Jordan Baker, also a representative of this class, mirrors Tom's materialist orientation and consequent athleticism as well as his dishonesty. "She was incurably dishonest. She wasn't able to endure being at a disadvantage and, given this unwillingness, I suppose she had begun dealing in subterfuges when she was very young in order to keep that cool, insolent smile turned to the world and yet satisfy the demands of her hard, jaunty body". Appropriately enough, Jordan is a tournament golfer who cheats. Daisy's role is more complicated than either Jordan's or Tom's, but the imagery surrounding her is loaded with materialistic associations. She is described continually in terms of silver and gold and her magical voice is "full well as the materialism at the core of Gatsby's transcendental idealism. The class to which Daisy and Tom and Jordan Baker belong, the class represented in somewhat broader terms by East Egg itself. It has completely lost touch with the transcendental spirit which once shaped American

history and which renders Gatsby's materialism tragic rather than shallow. Although Nick deeply disapproves of Gatsby, a sense of the transcendental emotion at the bottom of Gatsby's materialism makes Nick stop, turn, and call out: "They're a rotten crowd... You're worth the whole damn bunch put together". Even Daisy senses the tragic nature of Gatsby's impossible transcendental-materialism when he displays his shirts for her, heaping them in a luxurious pile until she cries because she has "never seen such-such beautiful shirts before", moved not so much by the shirts themselves as by the intense emotion with which Gatsby has invested them.

The Buchanans and their class represent an historical dead end. In his own inarticulate way, Tom Buchanan senses this. "Civilization's going to pieces," Tom explains. "The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be—will be utterly submerged. It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved". Tom goes on: "This idea is that we're Nordics.... And we've produced all the things that go to make civilization—oh, science and art, and all that. Do you see?" Nick perceives that "Something was making [Tom] nibble at the edge of stale ideas as if his sturdy physical egotism no longer nourished his peremptory heart". Nick is right: Tom's panic over civilization's decay is symptomatic standing at the end of an historical alley; Tom feels the wall against his back. In the light of Fitzgerald's historical perspective in this novel, the dead end was inevitable from the start: as the frontier disappeared, as the possibility of making the virgin land fulfill its first intense promise passed. American materialism increasingly became just that simple, spiritless materialism, non

regenerative and omnivorous. Gatsby inevitably arrives at this dead end himself. Near the close of the novel, Gatsby waits amidst shattered hopes for Daisy's telephone call, the call that never comes and Carraway guesses that perhaps Gatsby no longer even cared.

This new world is mere materiality. It is no longer transformed by the transcendental vision which had given it its meaning and therefore its reality. Kismine Washington had felt the same sense of frightening materiality when, at the end of *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*, she could no longer think of the stars as "great big diamonds that belonged to someone."

It was the American pioneer who carried the burden of this historical progression into the twentieth century. The American pioneer was the proper heir of those Dutch sailors. He inherited their transcendental spark and the promise of the frontier kept the spark alive; but after pursuing that promise all the way to the Pacific Ocean, he discovered that it had somehow eluded him and he was left with nothing but the material which had fed the flame. He was rich but that was all: direction was gone, meaning was gone; the dream began to turn back upon itself. Gatsby is the adoptive son of such a pioneer a pioneer with the prototypal name of Dan Cody. The succession is almost apostolic but the inheritance is essentially empty. Cody has become "a gray, florid man with a hard, empty face" who continually circles the continent in his yacht, the Tuolomee, as though looking for something lost. Cody is a millionaire many times over, of every rush for metal since seventy-five". His yacht is named after the gold field of northern California—a name which manages to suggest both the

frontier's end and the avid materialism to which the frontier gave way. Jay Gatsby was born the moment James Gatz, idly searching for his destiny along the beaches of Lake Superior, saw Cody's yacht drop anchor in the dangerous waters of Little Girl Bay, a name which ironically foreshadows the direction of Gatsby's fate.

Given such a vision of American history, it is not surprising to find a theme of material and spiritual waste running through the novel. The famous description of the "valley of ashes" which opens Chapter II strongly echoes the description of the village of Fish which opens the second part of *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*. The barren little village and the valley of ashes are both rather obvious metaphors of American spiritual desiccation. The waste land between West Egg and New York, in fact, comes to resemble a microcosm of America itself. It is a vision of an America made of dust.

It is a "gray land" and "spasms of black dust ... drift endlessly over it." This description echoes a judgment Nick Carraway had made on the second page of the novel: "Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men". That dust actually becomes tangible toward the end of the novel. Wandering with Gatsby through the echoing emptiness of Gatsby's colossal mansion on the night of Myrtle Wilson's death and Daisy's defection, Nick had noticed that "There was an inexplicable amount of dust everywhere". The foul dust floats in the wake of America's dreams. It is the waste of material resources exploited in a desperate effort to sustain that

impossible and disastrously circular thrust into the future and the waste of spiritual resources exploited in “the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty”. The foul dust is the corruptive materialism. Like a worm in an apple, at the center of the transcendental dream.

In the meantime, the gigantic billboard eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg, “dimmed a little by many paintless days, under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground”. George Wilson confuses those faded eyes with the eyes of God, a confusion which, like the desolate village of Fish with its twelve ghostly inhabitants, suggests that in twentieth-century America God has become a thing of cardboard, ineffectual and passive, robbed of power by a short-sighted, materialistic displacement of spiritual values. This displacement is only underscored by the fact that spectacled eyes are in actuality an oculist’s abandoned roadside advertisement.

George Wilson and his wife are themselves closely associated with this metaphor of waste and spiritual anemia. The Wilsons live in “a small block of yellow brick” which sits on the very edge of the waste land, “a sort of compact Main Street ministering to it and contiguous to absolutely nothing”. The image suggests the exploited and wasted character of the American middle class from which the Wilsons derive. The Wilsons represent the resources of human energy and hope that are drained in order to feed the materialistic orgy which American transcendentalism has inevitably become. George Wilson is already a wasted man. He works sporadically on a “dust-covered wreck of a Ford” and first appears “wiping his hands on a piece of waste”. He is described as “a blond, spiritless man, anaemic and

faintly handsome”. His dark suit is veiled by “white ashen dust”. Wilson owns a failing garage. In the course of the novel, the automobile becomes an important symbol for the superficial and dangerous beauty of materiality—dangerous because its glitter conceals a vast destructive power. So it is appropriate that Wilson spend his energy feeding the automobile becomes an important symbol for the superficial and dangerous beauty of materiality. It is dangerous because its glitter conceals a vast, destructive power. So it is appropriate that Wilson spend his energy feeding the automobile of the wealthy of those who make the circular journey from New York to East or West Egg and back again. One of those automobiles destroys his wife. If George Wilson is a man already wasted, Myrtle Wilson still possesses a great reservoir of vitality. Nick Carraway described her as a woman whose 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 smouldering”. It is Myrtle’s vitality which attracts Tom Buchanan. The upper class, locked into its historical dead end, depends upon the energies of the aspiring middle class to sustain itself. The middle class wastes its energy in fruitless pursuit of that materialistic and meretricious beauty embodied most completely in the upper class. Myrtle is killed in a desperately foolish attempt to intercept Gatsby’s car. She is destroyed by the class and the materiality she had so fervently pursued. Finally, Myrtle’s death becomes a metaphor for human resources wasted in pursuit of and exploited by non regenerative materialism. Lying dead immediately adjacent to the valley of ashes, Myrtle mingles “her thick dark blood with the dust,” 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”. Fitzgerald had used this theme before the decay of Gloria Gilbert’s vitality in *The Beautiful and Damned* had also been identified with the middle class.

The one character in the novel that is able to understand the historical process in which they are all trapped is Nick Carraway. Carraway has been called “the historical voice of the book”. He has a sense of history which separates him from everyone else. This is not to say that Carraway has escaped the trap—he simply understands it. Like all the characters in the novel, Carraway has come from the Midwest to the East—an inversion of the earlier, westward movement. The total progression implied here is circular: beginning in the East, America pushed westward, pursuing the frontier to California, and then turned back upon itself. The ultimate dead end of that historical thrust lay not in California then but in East Egg, at the original point of departure: it is there that the circle closes. “The pilgrimage eastward of the rare poisonous flower of his race,” Fitzgerald once wrote, “was the end of the adventure which had started westward three hundred years ago...” And Fitzgerald compared this circular movement to a serpent turning back upon itself, “cramping its bowels, bursting its shining skin.” In line with this metaphor of reversed migration, of the East-as-inverted-frontier, Carraway, newly arrived in New York, thinks of himself as “a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler”. Driving across Manhattan on a warm summer afternoon, Nick finds the atmosphere so pastoral that he “wouldn’t have been surprised to see a great flock of white sheep turn the corner”.

America's migratory pilgrimage had begun to really circle back upon itself during "that delayed Teutonic migration known as the Great War". Nick confesses that he had returned from the war feeling "restless": "Instead of being the warm centre of the world, the Middle West now seemed like the ragged edge of the universe—so I decided to go East and learn the bond business". Gatsby had also been overseas during the war. In fact, Nick's first conversation with Gatsby concerns their having been in the same Division. This reverse migration, moving from the New World back to the Old World, is further suggested by Gatsby's having spent some time at Oxford after the war and by the fact that Gatsby's lavish West Egg mansion is "a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy".

If the war stands as a fulcrum in this radical shift which has brought Nick Carraway to the East, Nick's nostalgia is not for any factual Midwest, but for the pre-war world of his childhood—a world as yet untouched by the moral anarchy and inarticulate panic Nick finds in the dead end of the East. "That's my Middle West." Nick says, "not the wheat or the prairies or the lost Swede towns, but the thrilling returning trains of my youth".

The novel concludes on this note of irretrievable loss of inchoate nostalgia for a past which no longer exists. The wheel of American history has revolved full circle and the end is in the beginning. It is as if Nick and Gatsby and America itself carrying still a burden of tarnished wonder and languishing hope, had gone East in a last, tired effort to deposit the burden, to find a lodging place for the

fevered imagination, and had found instead a dead end, a wrong address.

## *Tender is The Night*

It is interesting in *Tender is the Night*, Nicole fits a profile drawn nearly forty years. After the publication of *Tender Is the Night* it is illustrate to the characteristics of women who are likely to be susceptible to romantic sexual involvement with their therapists. In 1972, book entitled *Women and Madness*, psychologist Phyllis Chesler notes that women who participate in intimate relationships with their analysts tend to be “intellectually insecure... sexually fearful and sexually compulsive... paralyzed by real and feared loneliness and self-contempt... and slow to express any anger.” In addition, Chesler observes that such women tend to “[blame] themselves for any ‘mistreatment’ by men” and to [confuse] economic and selfhood needs with romantic ‘love’. Nicole exhibits all these qualities and behaviours to some extent. Her insecurity about her intellect, is evident when she minimizes her considerable prowess in languages and the arts by dubbing her accomplishments. She also dreams rather wistfully about “look[ing] over the whole field of knowledge and pick[ing] out something” that she could “really know about” and “hang on to”. She is so “fearful” of her own sexuality on the heels of her incest experience that she often appears altogether preoccupied with sex. She is so isolated and lonely during her months at the clinic that she writes pitiful letters to a virtual stranger, Dick Diver, confessing her self-contempt—“I am completely broken and humiliated. Her sense of abandonment—“I am lonesome all the time, far away from friend and family across the Atlantic I roam all over the place in a half daze”. She yearns for the sense of hope she had “ages

ago” when boys “were in love with [her],” apparently seeing in romance a new point of departure, In short, she is a very confused and unhappy young woman whose only definition of self arises directly from whatever standards others see fit to impose on her. She is almost literally willing to sell her soul to the devil for a few crumbs of attention.

Fitzgerald’s characterization of does not provide any evidence that Dick ever fully grasps the extent of Nicole’s vulnerability to him. Although his colleagues attempt to warn him that Nicole’s “transference” may have gotten out of hand. His own interactions with her expose his inability to empathize with her. His advice to her is oversimplified. At worst, his remarks are patronizing. Knowing full well her psychiatric history, he admonishes her to “try to forget the past” and—treating her like a child—he tells her she “shouldn’t” when she says she “hate[s] Doctor Gregory” .Even in his responses to her early letters, he merely tells her, “Be a good girl and mind the doctors”. Far from drawing her out as a person or in any way assisting her in developing and strengthening a sense of her own worth, Dick’s natural inclination seems to impose his own sense of her reality on her. He denies her, her heritage by dismissing the impact of the incest and her illness with pat remarks. He denies her, feelings by pronouncing them inappropriate. Later, he attempts to deny her, her (accurate) perceptions by declaring them “delusions.” Throughout the early stages of their relationship and most of their marriage, his tone with her is authoritarian appropriate both for patriarchal traditions for exploitive therapists.

Either because she's unaware of her anger or fearful of expressing it, Nicole's response to both her father's abuse and her doctor-husband's authoritarianism is passive, almost serene, compliance. She holds her world together by avoiding overt hostilities insofar as she is able. Confrontation terrifies her, so she struggles to maintain control and decorum. Fitzgerald alludes to Nicole's outward calm repeatedly throughout the novel. She is marked by "a lovely peace, without a smile" as she watches her children at play on the beach. She is said to "[know] few words and [believe] in none and in the world... [be] rather silent". She is observed sitting "in the car, her lovely face set, controlled, her eyes brave and watchful, looking straight ahead toward nothing". To Rosemary, Nicole's characteristic serenity appears almost mystical: she has "the face of a saint, a Viking Madonna". Eventually, however, Nicole's almost perpetual "exterior harmony and charm" is identified explicitly by Fitzgerald as "the other face of her illness".

Nicole's exaggerated calm—her almost catatonic control—is a manifestation of her schizoid tendency and yet another accurate reflection of the impact is that of incest. Although Fitzgerald employs the term "schizoid" within the text, he appears to consider it synonymous with "eccentric." Dick tells Baby Warren that Nicole is "a schizoid—a permanent eccentric". However, the *Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry*, defines schizoidism as "a complex of behavioural factors that includes seclusiveness quietness, and other introversion traits indicating a separation by the person from [her] surroundings, the confining of psychic interests to [herself], and

in many cases a tendency toward schizophrenia” . With this definition in mind, it is clear the Dick’s reference to Nicole’s schizoid behaviour shortly after she disappears from the dinner table is appropriate. His equation of schizoidism with eccentricity is an obvious oversimplification. More importantly, however, Fitzgerald’s attribution of schizoid behaviour to an incest victim is entirely compatible with current assessments of incest victims’ characteristics.

According to research findings publicized by Incest Survivors Anonymous, victims “may be withdrawn and isolated,” “passive or distant,” and even “numb to the world and to their feelings”. Other research supports these findings. In fact, more recent literary representations of incest victims reflect equally serene or alternatively dissociative, behaviour. For example, Julia, an incest survivor in James Buldwin’s 1978 novel *Just above My Head*, is described as being “at once present and very far away, and with a beauty... only seen in those who have been forced to suffer into, and beyond, astonishment”. Both Nicole and Julia, like other victims, struggle with feelings of isolation emptiness, guilt and confusion in the aftermath of incest. Their outward calm and silence may mask considerable internal strife.

Although Fitzgerald clearly accepts the Freudian notion that psychological patterns and problems stem from “secrets... buried deep in childhood struggles”. Nicole’s bouts with mental illness as an adult cannot be blamed on Devereux Warren’s exploitation without some recognition of the role Dick Diver. Nicole’s psychiatrist plays in the perpetuation and exacerbation of her illness. In theory,

psychotherapy affords patients an opportunity to “work through” their internal conflicts and achieve an appropriate resolution, thereby freeing themselves from tensions that may interfere with their enjoyment of life and fulfillment of personal goals. In Nicole’s case, however, therapy is counterproductive. Ideally Nicole should experience a safe, nurturing relationship with a mature father figure determined to refrain from exploiting her at any cost. Instead, she becomes entangled in a pathological involvement with a man who re-enacts her father’s original betrayal. He is utterly absorbed in her youth and beauty: “Nothing had ever felt so young as her lips.... Her beauty climbed the rolling slope, it came into the room, rustling ghostlike through the curtains...”. Yet his professional training dictates caution with female patients, so he brushes off her tentative overtures with remarks like, “You’re a fetching kid, but I couldn’t fall in love”. Dr. Diver’s inconsistency and occasionally impulsive responses to Nicole’s intense infatuation contribute to her further victimization. Perhaps, he feels he can justify his decision to seek an overtly sexual relationship with her by proposing marriage, but he apparently does not wait until the wedding night to pursue his desire for sexual intimacy. Their premarital sexual relations are alluded to only once, near the end of the novel and in Fitzgerald’s customary discreet language. In the first flush of liberation following sexual intercourse with Tommy, Nicole “scarcely recall[s] how she ... felt when she and Dick had possessed each other in secret places around the world, during the month before they were married”. Fitzgerald’s implications are casual, yet irrefutable—and profoundly disturbing in light of Nicole’s earlier experience of incest. Her doctor, like her

father, has apparently violated her innocence and taken advantage of her vulnerability in a selfish effort to satisfy his own needs. The vision of the good young doctor traipsing around the countryside with his beautiful, wealthy, teen-aged incest-victim or patient in tow, stopping here and there in “secret places” like roadside inns to indulge his sexual fantasies, is positively chilling.

While it is unlikely that Fitzgerald had any understanding of the magnitude of Dick’s impropriety with Nicole. It is evident that in this novel Fitzgerald is conscientiously attempting to capture a moment in history and share an intimate glimpse into his perception of human suffering. As usual, he draws on his own experiences with women and perhaps inadvertently illustrates the attitudes and conditions that shape their lives. Nicole is a young woman a New Woman of great promise. But her emotional, intellectual and psychological development is thwarted by circumstances beyond her control. Although she is economically secure due to a large inheritance, she is emotionally dependent—first on her father and then on her psychiatrist. Both men act without evident malice out of a patriarchal tradition that permits them to view women as something less than fully human. At their basest level, they both see Nicole only as an object of their own sexual fantasies. At loftier moments, “under the guise of helping,” Warren and Diver dictate Nicole’s and other women’s behaviour by assuming “a dominance over women, a dominance more insidious and far-reaching because so thoroughly disguised”. For most of the novel Nicole, an incest victim, experiences herself as powerless, as Dick figuratively “rapes” her over and over again through his efforts to

“define both reality and sanity” for her. Instinctively, she responds to his abuse—as she responded to her father’s through hysteria.

And her hysteria is a clue that she embodies an embryonic New Woman, a woman who may learn to reject abuse by giving voice to her dissatisfaction with the status quo by whatever means possible. In the battle between the sexes Nicole suffers, but she does not succumb. Her compliant silence gives way to overt indignation near the close of the book, when she overcomes her fear of expressing her displeasure with Dick’s deterioration and begins to talk back. In doing so, she begins to declare her independence, parting irrevocably from the past and ensuring her survival. The marriage between Dick and Nicole cannot continue, because she is no longer willing to honour its tacit demand that she be subordinate to Dick. Clearly, she is sympathetic with other women of her era in their quest for greater respect and personal freedom.

In *The Female Malady*, Elaine Showalter detects important connections between feminism and manifestations of hysterical disorders, noting that the “women’s movement” of the 1920s “offered a potent alternative to the self destructive and self enclosed strategies of hysteria and a benign form of resistance to the patriarchal order”. From this perspective, Nicole’s illness and the related symptoms presented by in Fitzgerald’s other novels can actually be interpreted as healthy integrity. She tries to resist oppression, which literally makes her ill. She longs for a new position of equality in the world of men. As Showalter observes, “the hysterical woman” is actually “a female avant-garde struggling to redefine woman’s place in the social order”.

Feminism, in fact, provides an “alternative to hysterical silence... the determination to speak and act for women in the public world”.

Although Nicole does not overtly align herself within the text with the women’s movement of Fitzgerald’s era, she is nevertheless influenced by it. Other women in *Tender Is the Night* seize their rights with more confidence and ease. Her sister, though called “Baby,” is responsible for managing the family fortune and appears less desperate for male attention. Similarly, Rosemary Hoyt makes her own money and chooses her own lovers, in the tradition of men. But Nicole is a product of somewhat different experience, more akin to that of the young women in Fitzgerald’s earlier novels. Indoctrinated since birth, she fully believes that she cannot survive without the “help” of men. As a child, she is both emotionally and economically dependent on her father, who perhaps unwittingly exploits her dependency by initiating or at the very least encouraging incestuous contact. As a young woman in the throes of mental illness resulting from her father’s sexual abuse, and subsequent abandonment, she is emotionally and psychologically dependent on her doctor, who also uses her to meet his own needs. Through subtle and overt means, both men teach her—as her society generally dictates—that her role is to obey their will. In fact, she believes that her survival ultimately depends on compliance.

It is not surprising, then, that Nicole is astounded by Tommy Barban’s belief that she can—and should—assert her independent will. She responds to his initial suggestion that she speak out in an effort to curb Dick’s drinking with utter incredulity: “‘I!’ she exclaimed in

amazement. 'I tell Dick what he should or shouldn't do!' But gradually Tommy's influence helps her grasp what she has sometimes suspected. She is capable of, and indeed entitled to, a certain amount of self-assertion. Inevitably, her growing willingness to discard her customary passive role in her relationship with her husband results in some outright conflict. On one noteworthy occasion she "[weeps] with anger at [Dick's] abuse". When he attempts to blame his demise on her illness, she rejects his cruel reference to her as "questionable company," asserting forthrightly, "You're a coward! You've made a failure of your life, and you want to blame it on me". As Nicole learns to question the things her traditional, chauvinistic husband tries to tell her, her "case" is at last "finished," and "Doctor Diver [is] at liberty"—largely because she outgrows her unhealthy relationship with him.

Although Nicole's experience is more complicated—and more deeply disturbing—than that of Fitzgerald's New Women in his earlier novels, she displays similar underlying conflicts. Patriarchal prohibitions and exploitation inhibit her development of an autonomous sense of identity, but her innate intelligence, integrity, and curiosity prompt her to recognize the injustice inherent in the status quo. As she removes herself from the oppressive conditions of her marriage to her doctor, she demonstrates her commitment to the ideals of the New Women of her era who called for greater freedom and respect. In her surprising departure from the convention of subservience, she also paves the way for Kathleen and Cecilia, the New Women of Fitzgerald's final, unfinished novel, *The Last Tycoon*.

## *The Last Tycoon*

*The Last Tycoon* has the mark of the 30s on it as surely as the early fictions had taken the American boom as their theme: 'The subject was Hollywood as an industry and as a society, but also as an American microcosm.' But there is mercifully more to it than that. *The Last Tycoon* is an impressive and moving fragment, not just because it is a faithful portrait of the motion picture industry at a particular period of its development but because Fitzgerald convincingly uses this material to explore some of his driving interest in the creative processes and their relationship with industry and mass society. As a creative artist himself he could not fail to be interested in the compromise and negotiation which must take place between the various stages of the processes between ideas and conception, on the one hand, and production and consumption on the other.

Cecilia Brady is flying to California for a summer vacation from college. On the plane she meets Wylie White, an alcoholic screenwriter, and Schwartz, a ruined film producer. Monroe Stahr, the partner of Cecilia's father, is also aboard, though travelling as Mr. Smith. When the plane is grounded in Nashville, Tennessee, Schwartz sends a note to Stahr warning him about Pat Brady, Cecilia's father. When the plane takes off again, Schwartz stays behind and commits suicide.

Stahr had been the boy wonder of the motion-picture industry. He had been in charge of a studio in his twenties and almost dead

from overwork at thirty-five. Indeed, he is half in love with death for the sake of his dead wife, Minna Davis, a great star with who he was deeply in love. Since her death, he has worked harder than ever, often remaining in his office around the clock. In contrast to Stahr, Brady is mean and selfish. Lacking taste and understanding little of the technical end of the industry, Brady acquired his share of the studio through luck and has retained it through shrewdness.

One night, while Cecilia is visiting the studio, an earthquake occurs, rupturing a water main and flooding the back lot. Stahr, working with his trouble shooter, Robinson, to clear away the mess, sees a film-set sightseer perched on top of a huge idol, a piece of a set that has come loose and is now floating in the flood. The girl reminds him of his dead wife and he tries to discover her identity. That night, Cecilia falls in love with Stahr, but she feels that her attachment is hopeless.

A self-made man and paternalistic employer, Stahr personally manages almost every detail at the studio. Though he is not an educated man, he has raised the artistic level of motion pictures and does not hesitate to make good films that might lose money. As a result, he has incurred the distrust of the studio's stockholders who see filmmaking only as a business. Their distrust of the producer is, however, mixed with genuine respect for his many abilities.

In addition to dealing with opposition from the stockholders, Stahr is concerned because the studio's writers are the target of Communist union organizers; he works closely with his writers and

wants them to trust him. Wylie White, in particular, enjoys the producer's favour, although he resents Stahr. White is hoping to marry Cecilia for the sake of her father's influence. Typical of Stahr's interest in his employees is his investigation of the attempted suicide of a cameraman, Pete Zavras.

The setting of *The Last Tycoon* is Hollywood. One of the major preoccupations of the novel is the decline of the power of the superstar Hollywood magnates. The title, *The last Tycoon*, enunciates the principal themes of the novel. In proclaiming his protagonist, Monroe Stahr, a "tycoon," Fitzgerald goes beyond the currently accepted interpretation of "tycoon" as a powerful industrialist to its root meaning in its language of origin. In Japanese, the tycoon is the shogun, the absolute leader of the army upon whose decision depend victory or defeat.

The unrestricted power of Monroe Stahr controlled Hollywood through the first half of the 1930s. *The Last Tycoon* is set in the last halcyon period before Hollywood felt the impact of anarchic labour movements. When the novel begins, Monroe Stahr is still regarded by his men "like the Emperor and the Old Guard. There is no world so but it has its heroes, and Stahr was the hero."

Despite its rich engrossing evocation of a glittering Hollywood era, *The Last Tycoon* was not intended by Fitzgerald to be a novel about the film industry. In fact, he insisted that it was "distinctly not about Hollywood". The manuscript and the outline indicate that in a very large sense, the novel distinctly is about Hollywood. In the

earlier stages of writing, Fitzgerald obviously planned to keep the Hollywood setting subsidiary to the presentation of his protagonist, Monroe Stahr, who would have been a “tycoon”, a leader of men in any circumstances or environment.

The story of *The Last Tycoon* is presented through the perception of Cecilia Brady. She is a twenty year old college senior who is the daughter of Monroe’s partner Pat Brady. The first chapter introduces several member of the film colony—Cecilia, Monroe Stahr, Manny Schwartz, a producer who is no longer successful, and Wylie White, scriptwriter—all passengers, travelling separately on a plane en route to Hollywood.

Manny is depressed because he has been rebuffed during the flight by a mysterious Mr. Smith. The storm grounds the plane in Nashville, Tennessee, for several hours. Wylie volunteers to take Cecilia and Manny to visit the Hermitage, home of Andrew Jackson. Even though they are unable to enter the mansion because of the early hour, Manny appears to be intrigued by the hermitage. Manny suddenly decides to return to the east. Giving Wylie a note for Mr. Smith, Manny insists that Cecilia and Wylie leave him at the hermitage and return to their delayed flight. The taxi driver, who is instructed to come back for Manny in two hours, later discovers that he has committed suicide.

In the corridor of the plane Cecilia meets Monroe Stahr with whom she has been infatuated for a number of years. When Wylie asks him if he has read Manny’s note, Cecilia realizes that Monroe is

travelling as Mr. Smith. For the remainder of the flight Cecilia thinks about Monroe.

When they arrive in Hollywood, Cecilia makes no attempt to disguise her love for Monroe. He evades her, however, and falls in love with a mysterious young woman, Kathleen Moore. Monroe's first meeting with Kathleen is dramatic, even for a Hollywood scenario. During a minor earthquake the water mains burst and flood the production lot. While Monroe is inspecting the damage to the sets, he is distracted by the appearance of two women floating down the "impromptu river", perched on a huge bobbing head of the deity Siva. When the women are rescued, Monroe is startled by the appearance of them, whom he mistakes, in the moonlight, for his dead wife, the beautiful actress, Minna Davis. Stunned by the apparition, Monroe permits the woman to leave without discovering her true identity.

When he finds Kathleen after a concerted search, Monroe is intrigued as much by her elusiveness as by her resemblance to the dead Minna. During their brief romance Kathleen reveals that she has been the mistress of a deposed king who had taken refuge in England. She has been "rescued" from this unfulfilling liaison by an American whom she intends to marry.

At this point Monroe knows that he is a dying man. His limited physical energies are being consumed by his work in the studio. He vacillates between his obsession with work and his desire for a last chance at love. Monroe intends to wait one more day before proposing to Kathleen, who decides in favour of security with her American

“rescuer.” Monroe receives a cryptic telegram the next day announcing Kathleen’s marriage.

Realizing that he has forfeited his last opportunity for love, Monroe becomes enmeshed in studio intrigues. At Monroe’s request, Cecilia arranges for him to meet a communist party member, Brimmer for the discussion of the labour situation in the studio. Monroe deliberately becomes intoxicated and instigates a brawl with Brimmer. Grateful to Cecilia for her loyal support after his disgraceful behaviour, Monroe suggests that they spend the night together. The manuscript ends at this point with Cecilia’s short-lived involvement with Monroe: “That’s how the two weeks started that he and I went around together. It took only one of them for Louella to have us married.”

The main thrust of the story is that Monroe and his partner, Pat Brady, each plan to have the other murdered. Monroe, after one last fling with Kathleen, becomes desperately ill. Nevertheless, he makes arrangements to have Pat Brady murdered while he (Monroe) is on a trip to New York. On board the plane, he is repelled by his plan to kill his partner. He resolves to cancel the contract for the murder at the next airport. But the plane crashes before the next stop. Monroe is killed and Pat is murdered.

Monroe’s funeral was to be presented in detail as “an orgy of Hollywood and servility and hypocrisy.” Cecilia reflects that if Monroe were present at his obsequies he would dismiss the spectacle as “Trash!”

Cecilia is overcome by Monroe's death and her father's murder. She has a complete physical collapse and develops tuberculosis. According to Fitzgerald's plan, this was to be the first inkling that Cecilia was recounting the story of the rise and fall of Monroe Stahr from a sanatorium.

Monroe Stahr emerges as Fitzgerald's most perceptively conceived male person. A poor Jewish boy, Milton Stahr—Fitzgerald later changed the name to the Americanized Monroe Stahr—rises from the obscurity of a Bronx ghetto to the fabulous wealth and power of a Hollywood mogul. Monroe's formal education is minimal, "founded on nothing more than a night-school course in stenography." Yet he is endowed with those qualities—natural leadership, financial wizardry and creative insight—that makes him the boy wonder of Hollywood: "Success came to him young at twenty-three, and left certain idealism of his youth unscarred."

Although he insists upon absolute control over every facet of his studio operations, Monroe is still an old-fashioned paternalistic employer. He likes to feel that the people who work for him are contented and that he and they are on friendly terms. Monroe exerts a magnetic power over his workers. Early in the novel, when Monroe surveys the damage done by the flooding water mains, he is acclaimed by his men as they proceed to work:

In a superb sequence that Cecilia calls "A Producer's Day," he addresses himself to the complexities of Hollywood life. Monroe Stahr is vital, decisive, compassionate and ruthless. With writers,

cameramen, film stars, directors, and even the studio heads, the “money men”.

In contrast, Monroe Stahr is evasive and hesitant in his personal relationships. His terminal illness is kept secret from even his closest colleagues. Monroe is emotionally impotent, having “like many brilliant men... grown up dead cold.” Sweeping away at twelve the lies by which most people are formed, “he looked around at the barrenness that was left.” Appalled by the ruthlessness of his peers, Monroe creates a new role for himself: benevolent despot. As part of the script, he learns “tolerance, kindness, forbearance, and even affection like lessons.”

Monroe has had “everything in life except the privilege of giving herself unselfishly to another human being.” And this opportunity is offered him in the meeting with Kathleen Monroe chooses to remain in his world of properties and discarded celluloid footage where life is defined by scripts and scenarios.

Monroe is actually homeless. He is a wanderer in the Hollywood jungle. He often sleeps on a divan in his studio suite. The house he lives in is a rented one. The home he is building in Santa Monica is unfinished, roofless.

En route to the beach house, Kathleen facetiously remarks that they do not need a roof because she has heard it never rains in California. In actuality, Kathleen associates a roof with stability, commitment, and family life. Kathleen’s dream of fulfillment lies in motherhood. Reading Spengler with her former lover, the king, she

tells Monroe, was “just in place of babies.” After Monroe makes love to her, she thinks that the child they may have would be “such a bright indefatigable baby.” “But you can’t have children,” she comments, “when there’s no roof to the house.” The house that Monroe is building in which they experience their first love-making—has no roof.

Kathleen’s supposition about the California climate is disproved when she and Monroe are caught in a sudden rainstorm. Monroe lifts the canvas top of his convertible remarking: “We’ve got a roof.” His casual statement suggests that he prefers the makeshift, the make-believe, to the completed structure Kathleen longs for.

In his original plan for *The Last Tycoon*, Monroe Stahr’s love, Kathleen, was conceived as Thalia Taylor, a twenty-six-year-old widow with whom Monroe has “an immediate, dynamic, unusual physical love affair”. In the manuscript Thalia is transformed into the elusive, beautiful Kathleen Moore. Kathleen manages to be presented at the Court of England. Her exiled king-lover indulges his “passion for educating” Kathleen by tutoring her in the liberal arts and social graces. Through this relationship Kathleen acquires a subtle polish that Cecilia describes as “a style that made you look back twice to see if it were something she had on.”

The dynamic love affair that Fitzgerald had planned for Monroe and Thalia is not developed in Monroe’s five encounters with Kathleen. They have one sexual interlude that emphasizes the distance between them. When it is over, Kathleen realizes that they are just any

“two people again”. “Don’t you always think–hope”, she asks, “that you’ll be one person, and then find you’re still two?”

Kathleen has struggled up from poverty by giving her body. “A laughing wanton,” she teases Monroe, exciting him by her evasiveness. When Monroe hesitates before taking her sexually, she speaks to him “coarsely and provocatively” to stimulate his desire. “I am rather a trollop,” she confesses. But Kathleen is a mother by instinct, a trollop by necessity, a trollop who begs to be made respectable. She covers her nakedness with a “little apron” she finds in Monroe’s closet, and then caresses him maternally. But Monroe cautions her not to “be a mother.” “Be a trollop,” he thinks as he removes the apron. Trollops cannot demand houses with roofs nor binding commitments.

Kathleen is presented mainly through Monroe’s perception of her—a perception that is unreliable because of his own ambivalent desires. At their last meeting, when Kathleen tells him that she has decided to marry her American friend, Monroe decides that she is simply testing him.

Monroe resists her unspoken appeal, promising only that they will be together again tomorrow. Kathleen responds to her own great need for security by marrying the American who returns to Hollywood unexpectedly the next day. The telegram that announces her decision to Monroe reads: “*I was married at noon today. Goodbye.*”

Kathleen is a sophisticated, worldly woman, who never loses sight of her lowly origins, her early scramble of survival.

Cecilia Brady is described in Fitzgerald's outlines as a "petty, modern girl, neither good nor bad tremendously human". Cecilia has been sent by her father, a self-made man, to an eastern college to acquire the polish worthy of a Hollywood princess. Cecilia cynically thinks of herself as a "veritable flower of the fine old cost-and-gross aristocracy."

When she returns to California in the summer of 1935, she resumes her futile pursuit of Monroe Stahr. It is difficult to assess Cecilia's character from her few appearances. Fitzgerald's plans for Cecilia were much more ambitious than the minor role allocated to her in the completed chapters.

Cecilia serves a dual function as narrator-character. As character, Cecilia is one of the most appealing persons in *The Last Tycoon*. She is witty and charming. The episodes in which she appears are presented with compelling immediacy. Cecilia also acts as foil for Kathleen in a larger sense than just the obvious love situation in which she pursues the inaccessible Monroe who, in turn, pursues the elusive Kathleen.

Pat Brady, Cecilia's father, is "a monopolist at his worst," and "a scoundrel of the lowest variety." He regards film-making as a business venture, not an art form. His interest in the studio is confined to how its success "will benefit his bank account." Even Cecilia naturally sees her father in a more sympathetic light.

In *The Last Tycoon* Fitzgerald planned to use the same narrative device that had worked so well in *The Great Gatsby*. Cecilia is selected as narrator – character. He wrote because, “I think I know exactly how such a person would react to my story. She is of the movies but not in them.”

Fitzgerald is inept in his presentation of Cecilia as narrator. Those passages in which Cecilia are directly involved convey the nuances of Hollywood life with the authority of personal experience. But, in most of the manuscript, the narrative perspective is erratic. Cecilia is absent from the action for extensive periods, and, then, suddenly reappears with jarring remarks such as: “This is Cecilia taking up the narrative in person”.

*The Last Tycoon* – even in its unfinished state—has a rich thematic substructure. The multiplicity of allusions enhances the narrative, elevating the mundane involvements of its characters to a grander level of participation in a universal scheme. The principal themes of the novel are enunciated in Fitzgerald’s choice of name—Monroe Stahr—and title—*The Last Tycoon*.

The name Stahr suggests his destiny. The sound proclaims his role—STAR of an unparalleled era in an industry in which the phenomenal, the spectacular, is the norm. The spelling of Stahr retains the suggestion of foreignness, of alienation, of otherworldliness, perhaps. Is he, as Cecilia adoringly describes him, a luminous being who has chosen to be for a while a superstar among the other lesser stars of Hollywood?

The other great solar figures that were able to sustain the brazen glory of the sun: Apollo, the lord of the light of the world; Daedalus, the greatest of mythic artists who fashioned wings to soar above the labyrinth and fly from the menacing Cretan king.

It is noteworthy that Fitzgerald originally intended to call his heroine “Thalia” – an unusual name that recalls the myth of the love of Apollo for the muse Thalia. The muse of bucolic poetry and comedy (literature of pastoral settings and felicitous endings) Thalia is also the muse of nature. Her name is synonymous with abundance and blossoming. Like her sister muses, Thalia dispenses the elixir of unending life, of creative and physical energies. Stahr senses this mystical power in Kathleen and Thalia.

Kathleen or Thalia becomes for Stahr his personal muse, offering him new life. But Stahr, with a “perversion of the life force”, relinquishes his last chance for renewed life and happiness: “Many thousands of people depended on his balanced judgment – you can suddenly blunt a quality you have lived by for twenty years.”

One of the most fascinating themes in the novel, inspired by another mythological tradition, is introduced with the appearance of Kathleen riding on the head of Siva. Illusion, mistaken identity and transformation are the keynotes of this episode, reinforced by Fitzgerald’s inaccuracy in describing the male deity Siva as a “goddess”.

Siva, or Shiva, is one of the most ancient gods in Hindu mythology, venerated even in modern India as the incarnation of titanic strength. Siva is associated with the antithetical cosmic forces:

mystical stillness (yoga) and cosmic rhythm (dance); with universal destruction and recreation and fertility; with terrible wrath and gentle benevolence. In one of his many hands, Siva carries the drum of creation, in another the fire of destruction. Shiva's antithetical movements proclaim that in the Hindu cosmos there is constant flux. In an ever-evolving universe of changing forms, it is difficult to distinguish illusion from reality. It is Siva who is the destroyer of illusions.

Reality is antithetical to Hollywood, a world that thrives on artifice, illusion, deceit. In the episode of Kathleen on the head of Siva, illusion reigns. In the moonlight Monroe mistakes Kathleen for Minna Davis.

Nothing is what it seems to be. Kathleen is not Minna. She is not wearing a silver belt "with stars cut out of it", as Monroe believes; Siva is not a goddess. In fact, the image of the idol is simply a property to be used for a Cecil B. De Mille spectacular.

The world of reality recedes once again when Monroe later confronts Kathleen. When he unexpectedly sees her at the screen-writer's ball, it seems that all the people in the room shrink "back against the wall until they were only murals; the white table lengthened and become alter where the priestess sat alone". Kathleen is "momentarily unreal". She is "not Minna and yet Minna."

The illusion of Kathleen as Minna is Monroe's projection of his unconscious wish to be joined through love with death. In Monroe, the will to self-destruction is stronger than the will to self-realization. Monroe had not loved Minna until just before she died. Confronted

with the reality of death, “his tenderness had burst forth and surged forward and he had been in love with her. In love with Minna and death together....”

Kathleen will divert Monroe from death and urge him into conscious living with her magnetism. Monroe resists Kathleen because she represents not the death in love he desires, but the love in life he cannot bring himself to accept: “Her eyes invited him to a romantic communion of unbelievable intensity.”

The actual Kathleen is vital, practical and earthy. “You’ve got me in your dreams,” she cautions. Her eyes, she tells him, are “just eyes to see with, and I’m just as ordinary as I can be”. Her physical proximity begins to dispel the illusion for Monroe: “A vague background spread behind her, something more tangible than the head of Siva in the moonlight.”

As Kathleen gradually becomes a living person for Monroe, he, characteristically, judges her “as he would a shot in a picture. She was not trash. She was not confused but clear—in his special meaning of the word, which implied balance, delicacy and proportion, she was ‘nice’.” Monroe offsets the intrusion of reality by relegating Kathleen to the world of pictures. For the producer functions most comfortably through the artifice of life on film – through imitations of life captured in celluloid squares.

*The Last Tycoon* deserves serious consideration in the Fitzgerald canon. Despite its brevity, the fragment has attracted favourable critical attention.

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