Three Comrades – Gatsby, Diver, Stahr and F. Scott Fitzgerald's Re-invention of Failure

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Introduction – 'For Valor Extraordinary' - The death and re-birth of the American Hero.

F. Scott Fitzgerald saw life in heroic terms and wrote of the American experience as part of that vision. It is nonetheless testament to the longevity and special relevance of that vision, that the heroes of Fitzgerald's fiction should reflect a more nuanced psychology capable of questioning a model American hero defined purely in terms of success. Two months before his death in a letter to his daughter Scottie in October 1940, Fitzgerald observed, "Life is essentially a cheat and its conditions are those of defeat; the redeeming things are not happiness and pleasure but the deeper satisfactions that come out of struggle" (Fitzgerald, *Letters* 465).[1] Fitzgerald's words to his daughter carry an emotive combination of both pessimism and optimism that testify to his own reinvention as a writer. Moreover, as readers continue to discover and relate to Fitzgerald's work today, it is increasingly apparent that from *The Great Gatsby* onwards, Fitzgerald documents a paradigm shift in both thinking and feeling about the "heroic" narrative underpinning the language of American national identity.[2] The chief aim of this study is to address how Fitzgerald breaks new ground as a novelist, by acknowledging the death and rebirth of a post-war American protagonist for whom failure serves counter-intuitively as the basis for self-invention. It will further illustrate how Fitzgerald revitalizes and re-establishes artistic meaning and integrity through his work, indicative of his own heroic struggle to achieve both mental and emotional recovery following his well documented 'crack-up' during the 1930s.

Trends in Fitzgerald scholarship since the turn of the millennium have largely continued to follow the critical paradigm of looking to branch away from narrowly

focusing on *The Great Gatsby* in seeking to pay more attention to his other novels and short stories (Bryer). Contemporary concerns regarding how American culture responds to and seeks to maintain an open discourse of diversity and inclusion, in an era increasingly dominated by questions of identity in both the public and private sphere, will no doubt continue to shift critical debate regarding how Fitzgerald continues to be read. This added to the wider implications of how literary texts are increasingly presented and filtered through the lens of digital and social media further highlight how the modernist conception of high versus low culture and the concept of the Great American novel are by now regarded if not entirely obsolete, then largely redundant. As Robert Beuka notes, "[T]wenty-first century readings of *Gatsby*, . . . have tended toward socially-inflected interpretations, . . . examining issues of race, gender, and sexuality in the novel".[3] Moreover, given that Fitzgerald famously described the Jazz Age as having no interest in politics whatsoever, there remain both benefits and pitfalls to reading Fitzgerald as a writer who remains relevant to the political commentary of contemporary American society. Yet in relation to how Gatsby reads as a heroic figure, Beuka also questions the validity of Fitzgerald's use of the heroic model[4] as, "key to understanding American identity of his time or ours – except perhaps insofar as such identities, then and particularly now, are manufactured and relational, malleable products of ironic times". Nevertheless, this last point is crucial in recognizing heroic identity as not only a construct, but also potentially indicative of a wider social process of decay and renewal.

Gatsby's character[5] conventionally reads as derivative of Fitzgerald's ironic view of the American dream, the quintessential product of Western modernity.[6] However, this reading relies on Gatsby operating less as a romantic hero, and more as a statement on the hypocrisy and amorality of America's post-war society. This also

tends to overlook as Leo Robson points out that Fitzgerald's real interest lay with "America and money and status not as subjects in themselves but as sites of projection and magical thinking" (8). While critical scholarship on *Gatsby* rightly underlines Fitzgerald's treatment of Western heroism as discordant, it falls short of asking how *Gatsby* presents more complex questions of heroic identity, that speak to traditionally under-represented minority voices within American society.[7] Consequently, this study challenges the broad consensus that Fitzgerald's treatment of failure in *Gatsby*, *Tender*, and *Tycoon* detracts from the heroic potential of his protagonists, that on the contrary it both enhances their status as a means of embracing and engaging other alternative, marginalized narrative voices.[8]

I wish to propose that in reading Fitzgerald's work within the globalized context of the 21st century, his heroes may be better understood through a critical awareness of the Japanese philosophy of noble failure.[9] Here the concept of failure is indicative of a personal courage that Japanese society celebrates and honors as representative of an integrity and sincerity of purpose in the face of overwhelming odds:

> There is [a] type of hero in the complex Japanese tradition, a man whose career usually belongs to a period of unrest and warfare and represents the very antithesis of an ethos of accomplishment. He is the man whose single-minded sincerity will not allow him to make the manoeuvres and compromises that are so often needed for mundane success. During the early years his courage and verve may propel him rapidly upwards, but he is wedded to the losing side and will ineluctably be cast down. Flinging himself after his painful destiny, he defies the dictates of convention and common sense, until eventually he

> is worsted by his enemy, the "successful survivor," who by his ruthlessly realistic politics manages to impose a new, more stable order of the world. Faced with defeat, the hero will typically take his own life in order to avoid the indignity of capture, vindicate his honor, and make a final assertion of his sincerity. His death is no temporary setback which will be redeemed by his followers, but represents an irrevocable collapse of the cause he has championed: in practical terms the struggle has been useless and, in many instances, counter-productive. (Morris xiii)

This account of a man who demonstrates his heroism by a total commitment to a cause he knows to be already lost is particularly resonant in asking questions of how Fitzgerald is read today. Jay Gatsby, Dick Diver and Monroe Stahr are all defeated in their attempts to struggle and fight against much stronger and more cynical forces determined to destroy them.[10] The idea of noble failure not only illustrates how all three protagonists read as part of a heroic tradition that to a great extent works outside a Western perspective, but also how Fitzgerald himself recovers and reimagines himself as a writer over the course of *Gatsby*, *Tender*, and *Tycoon*. This is not an argument that presents itself without drawbacks, the most immediate and obvious one being that while there is strong textual evidence Fitzgerald is highlighting in Jay Gatsby,[11] Dick Diver and Monroe Stahr specific characteristics equated with the Japanese hero, there would appear no first hand knowledge or interest in Japanese culture demonstrably evident in any of Fitzgerald's letters or personal papers. However, what his letters do reflect is a consistency of tone and content regarding what Fitzgerald considers true courage and integrity to consist of, for example in writing to Sara Murphy in 1935, Fitzgerald notes, "I have seen you again + again at a

time of confusion take the hard course almost blindly because long after your powers of ratiocination were exhausted you clung to the idea of dauntless courage" (*Letters* 288). The principle of 'dauntless courage' in 'a time of confusion' that Fitzgerald refers to here points towards a definition of heroic behavior, that in the Japanese context of noble failure derives meaning from the very hopelessness of the situation, that the warrior no less than the artist or author is faced with, at the moment of life's crisis.[12]

Arguably one reason so little critical attention has been paid to the Japanese concept of noble failure as a distinctly non-Western trope in Fitzgerald's work, stems from the fact that *Gatsby*, *Tender*, and *Tycoon* have rarely been read together as offering a single unified narrative. Reading the novels together in this way is essential to understanding how Fitzgerald achieves not only a coherent heroic figure, but also a new discursive mode of heroism through which he ultimately reinvents his own authorial persona.[13] Critics as far back as Edmund Wilson[14] have drawn attention to the similarities between the type of novel Fitzgerald was attempting in *The Great Gatsby* and *The Love of The Last Tycoon*,[15] yet fewer have drawn attention to the importance of *Tender*[16] as forming a fundamental part of the heroic cycle Fitzgerald was exploring.[17] This is to a certain extent also attested to by Fitzgerald himself, who in a 1934 letter to John Peale Bishop following the publication of *Tender* observed:

> On receiving your first letter with its handsome tribute and generous praise I realized that I had been hasty in crediting that you would make such a criticism as 'this book is no advance on *Gatsby*.' You would be the first to feel that the intention in the two books was entirely different, that (to promote myself momentarily) *Gatsby* was shooting at something like *Henry Esmond* while this was shooting at something like

> *Vanity Fair.* The dramatic novel has canons quite different from the philosophical, now called psychological, novel. One is a kind of *tour de force* and the other a confession of faith. It would be like comparing a sonnet sequence with an epic. (Turnbull 383)

The critical distinction Fitzgerald makes here is that *Gatsby* and *Tender* were novels that by his own artistic design deployed very different forms of structure and narrative voice.[18] In *Gatsby*, Fitzgerald engages a foreshortening technique in his use of color and light in order to bring into focus a specific and self-contained American scene, while in *Tender* he employs a more elongated, extended prose.[19] Yet in both works Fitzgerald is doing more than merely experimenting with the novel form itself.[20] As protagonists Gatsby and Diver are profoundly linked as operating out of a chivalric discourse of Western heroism doomed to death or in terminal decline, as James H. Meredith observes:

> Fitzgerald seemingly never got over his romantic old-world notions of armed combat . . . Gatsby best conveys the sociological impact of the war on American culture. The United States had not been physically touched by the war, but America's wounds were spiritual and deeply psychological. The war had spawned a cultural wasteland in America . . . Chivalry, which had for centuries brought profound meaning to the value of heroic death in battle, now had no meaning in the modern context . . . Fitzgerald himself, believed in the sanctity of chivalry, and he saw its loss as powerful indicator of the spiritual and cultural depravity of the modern age that the war had created.

> The lasting effects of the war remained a major impulse in Fitzgerald's fiction throughout his career as well, particularly in his 1934 novel *Tender is the Night*. (140-141)

Both Gatsby and Diver as combatant and non-combatant survive the War, only to fall victim to a post-war society that no longer requires a heroic code.[21] Maxwell Geismar points out, "*Tender is the Night*, then, is a novel of lost causes, or lost cures, as it represents Fitzgerald's most precipitous descent into the abyss, and fulfills the pattern of disaster which has been the core of his work" (332). Geismar goes on to suggest that *Tender* moves beyond a straightforward interpretation of failure and emotional bankrupcy, "For one has the curious impression at times that the novel is really about something else altogether –and yet *Tender is the Night* is certainly at the center of Fitzgerald's recurrent aesthetic conflict and brings into focus some of the more obscure elements we have noticed in his previous work" (332-333). Geismar's point that *Tender* is not simply a narrative of moral decay hints at a more counter-intuitive response on Fitzgerald's part regarding his approach to failure. In this sense I would argue that Fitzgerald is not so much seeking the heroic in traditional white male hetero-normative tropes, as in the 'otherness' of the text's discursive space where the fate of the Japanese hero shadows Diver's deterioration both in the subtext of the novel, and its aesthetic failure to structurally cohere. Nonetheless, any reading of the Japanese concept of noble failure in relation to Fitzgerald's work should not attempt to suggest a direct purpose or creative intent on the author's part to borrow from this model. Neither should it be dismissed as a purely random, speculative interpretation of Fitzgerald's concept of heroic behavior. What the Japanese tradition of heroic noble failure offers is a re-framing of the theme of physical, emotional and mental decline in Fitzgerald's work,[22] that in reading Fitzgerald into the 21st century shifts the

critical focus away from the more generic interpretations of his art, and re-introduces him as a global canonical writer capable of being read in relation to both an Eastern and Western model of heroism.

Fitzgerald's own re-invention of himself as a writer literally and metaphorically pivots on the novel most closely associated with his own mental and emotional breakdown. As Milton R. Stern asserts, "As Fitzgerald sank deeper and deeper into the bitterness of his experience, he became increasingly certain of what the rules in his own decalogue were: hard work, discipline, responsibility, courtesy, politeness, courage, rationality, order, honesty, and integrity. Fitzgerald gave these 10 commandments to Dick Diver" (31).[23] These rules offer a telling counterpoint to what Matthew Bruccoli highlights as the symptomatic transference between Fitzgerald and Diver pointing out, "It is interesting to compare the symptoms of Fitzgerald's crack-up with those he invented for Dick" (*The Composition* 121). He goes on to quote from "The Crack-Up" where Fitzgerald refers to the fact, "I saw that for a long time I had not liked people and things, but only followed the rickety old pretense of liking . . . All in the same month I became bitter about such things as the sound of the radio, the advertisements in the magazines, the screech of tracks, the dead silence of the country – contemptuous at human softness, immediately (if secretively) quarrelsome toward hardness . . . " (qtd. in Bruccoli *The Composition* 121). Bruccoli further notes that, "Though Fitzgerald's collapse came in 1936, these symptoms had been developing since at least as early as 1930. In addition to drinking (whether as cause or effect) both his case and Dick's display the same symptoms: a weariness of people, an inability to participate in routine human relationships, irrational antipathies, and a mounting bigotry" (*The Composition* 121). Yet as this study will go on to demonstrate, Diver is not simply the expression of Fitzgerald's own misanthropic or

even alcoholic tendencies, but rather a more complex artistic response to the way in which the American hero adapts to the pressures of modernity as both antithesis and embodiment of the mythic West.

The sense of forward momentum Diver carries with him in returning to America at the end of *Tender* suggests more than a dying fall. Through the character of Dick Diver, Fitzgerald advances the heroic model he was working from in *Gatsby* by using failure as a stimulus for movement. This idea of movement needs to be understood both literally and thematically in relation to Fitzgerald's own life and most saliently in his final move to Hollywood in 1937. For Fitzgerald, the keynote sounded throughout his entire life's work is that failure denotes not so much a downward spiral, as a stimulus to moving forward however slowly or painfully. One sees this most clearly in the evolvement of Monroe Stahr and *The Love of the Last Tycoon* where even in his final incomplete manuscript Fitzgerald provides ample evidence that whether it be on the level of theme, structure or language he is attempting to not simply emulate *Gatsby* or readdress the critical failings of *Tender*, but to continue and surpass his own limitations as to what he can achieve on both a human and artistic level where, "In certain ways, everything F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote was work in progress" (Bruccoli, *TLOTLT* xc).[24] Matthew Bruccoli's insight again underlines the importance of reading *Gatsby*, *Tender*, and *Tycoon* as part of an integrated narrative sequence. This is not so much the case with Fitzgerald's first two novels, which are both stylistically and structurally out of step with each other. Moreover, while *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned* represent valid stages in Fitzgerald's early career and development, neither offer in either the character of Amory Blaine or Anthony Patch a mature synthesis of how the failure of the modern American hero

reveals an underlying conflict between the construction of Western and non-Western heroic tropes.

The single distinguishing feature of all three protagonists in *Gatsby, Tender*, and *Tycoon* is one of constant movement. All three novels are patterned by the migratory flow of either its principle characters or narrators.[25] Both the thematic and aesthetic properties of kinetic motion are key to what Fitzgerald identifies as characteristic of American identity, and essential to his own process of artistic rejuvenation. In thinking of the timeliness of reading Fitzgerald as a writer who speaks to the movements of all peoples across the globe, and the urgency of addressing questions of both American and Western identity, an increasing refugee crisis, and the racial violence and class divisions of a 21st century world seemingly unable to recognize its common bonds of narrative, I believe the port of entry for approaching Fitzgerald studies through the Japanese concept of noble failure represents a worthy challenge. Moreover, this study proposes that what Fitzgerald achieves in *Gatsby*, *Tender* and *Tycoon* is part of an ongoing narrative trend working towards not only a redefinition of heroic qualities and behavior, but the re-invigoration of the American novel as central to the cultural vitality of contemporary America as a whole.

Chapter 1 – 'The hour of a profound human change' – Time and Modern Memory in *The Great Gatsby*

To suspend time, is to make time visible. One sees this on many levels in *The Great Gatsby* where throughout the novel the dynamic of time suspended is captured in terms of speed and movement. This is particularly evident in the scene where Daisy Buchanan and Jay Gatsby are first reunited after a period of five years. Here many critics have been quick to point out the somewhat heavy-handed symbolism of "a defunct mantelpiece clock" (Fitzgerald 68), suggesting time remains frozen for Gatsby in his long separation from Daisy. Yet, if the clock stands as a clear symbolic reference, Gatsby's clumsiness in almost knocking it to the floor highlights a more telling concern with the mechanics of modern memory, where the First World War has reconfigured time in relation to space as a far more subjective and elastic concept.[26] As Sidney H. Bremer points out, "Fitzgerald explicitly identified the war as a dividing point . . . After the war, Nick feels the traditional, moral orderliness and communal cohesion of the old mid-western cities recede" (qtd. in Meredith 140).[27] Following Bremer's point one may argue it is the diminishing moral certitude of Nick Carraway's narrative voice that reflects the experience of modern time in relation to the physical dimensions of the modern city, where Fitzgerald suggests the shifting alignment and reproduction of memory within America's post-war landscape.

This chapter will examine how Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby*[28], re-configures and re-defines American masculinity in questioning the moral code of a new self-invented American Adam[29] shaped by and subject to the pressures of modernity.[30] Here it should be noted as Jeffrey Steinbrink points out that, "Regeneration and renewal are myths, or at best metaphors, rather than real possibilities of actual life . . .

Fitzgerald had experienced the Great War and its aftermath . . . He sensed, too, as David W. Noble has put it, "that the myth of the American Adam and the American Eden was bankrupt, had indeed always been morally indefensible, even though he was unable to find another faith to live by" (qtd. in Steinbrink158-159). Steinbrink's claim as to America's moral bankruptcy being key to the tone of Fitzgerald work, is fundamental to the cultural mythology around which Fitzgerald redefines a new heroic model, based not on success as much as failure. As Robert Ornstein notes, "Fitzgerald saw his romantic dream threaded by a double irony. Those who possess the necessary means lack the will, motive, or capacity to pursue a dream" (56) leading him to conclude, that "Gatsby is the victim of his own small-town notion of virtue and chivalry" (59). While Gatsby's 'small-town' heroism reads on one level as noble sacrifice in taking responsibility for Daisy Buchanan's killing of Myrtle Wilson, it is also symbolic of how Fitzgerald underlines the failed heroic qualities of "virtue and chivalry" as being both a product and radical point of resistance to the conditions of modernity.

Gatsby as an agent of modernity consolidates a new understanding of the dynamic between reader and text. Fitzgerald scholars such as Malcolm Cowley and Matthew J. Bruccoli emphasize how Fitzgerald intended the structure and form of the novel to be, "something new - something extraordinary and beautiful and simple + intricately patterned" (qtd. in Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur* 198). As part of this patterning throughout *The Great Gatsby* Daisy symbolizes a past that Gatsby seeks to reclaim and possess through managing and internalizing time.[31] Moreover, Fitzgerald structures the novel around a clear and ordered design which as Michael Nowlin observes, "supports Joseph Frank's characterization of modernist literature in terms of its "spatial form," the continual reference and cross reference of images and

symbols that must be referred to each other spatially throughout the time-act of reading" (Nowlin 187). Through Gatsby's reunion with Daisy, Fitzgerald patterns the narrative to show both the production and consumption of memory as linked to the language of capital and commodity value, through a meeting of new and old wealth facilitated by a Wall Street bondsman.

Despite the unrelenting passage of time, which removes Daisy from Gatsby, he remains in symbolic proximity to her and the "green light" at the end of her dock. Daisy conflates both Gatsby's house and Gatsby's memory as a single environment, where wealth gives coherence to language.[32] It is this same coherence that allows Nick to reflect on, "the foul dust that floated in the wake of his dreams" (*GG* 6)[33] just as Gatsby later offers him, a dubious business opportunity for agreeing to invite Daisy for tea which, "wouldn't take up much of your time and you might pick up a nice bit of money" (*GG* 65). The link between time and money becomes more acute as Gatsby in a, "white flannel suit, silver shirt and gold colored tie" waits for Daisy to arrive while scanning through, "a copy of Clay's economics" (*GG* 66) and precipitously announces, "Nobody's coming to tea. It's too late!" He looked at his watch as if there was some pressing demand on his time elsewhere. "I can't wait all day" (*GG* 67). Nick later describes Gatsby "running down like an overwound clock" (*GG* 72) as he shows Daisy around his mansion. Gatsby's "toilet set of pure gold" (*GG* 72), his shirts of "sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel"(*GG* 72), the "bathrooms with sunken baths" (*GG* 71), the "period bedrooms swathed in rose and lavender silk and vivid with new flowers" (*GG* 71) imitates the memory of Daisy's family's house in Louisville with its, "ripe mystery about it, a hint of bedrooms upstairs more beautiful and cool than other bedrooms, of gay and radiant activities taking place . . . of romances that were . . . fresh and breathing and redolent of this year's shining motor

cars and of dances whose flowers were scarcely withered" (*GG* 116).[34] Gatsby's memory as faithful to the image of Daisy seeks to arrest the flow of time, and yet remains compelled to embrace and endorse the compromise and corruption of capitalist accumulation in order to successfully achieve his aim.

The movement of time encapsulates Fitzgerald's concern with the way modernity and memory sit at the heart of American identity.[35] It is also key to judging how Gatsby represents the failure of an American hero, as providing the initial scope for a renewal and re-imagining of the heroic mode in *Tender* and *Tycoon*. Gatsby's heroic qualities manifest most directly in his steadfastness towards Daisy, and his imaginative capacity for hope, spanning time while seeking to arrest it. In Gatsby's combination of steadfastness, hope and imagination, Fitzgerald expands and contracts the physical distance between Gatsby and Daisy through the green light, as marker of time's flux and stasis. Consequently, Fitzgerald stresses Gatsby's heroism as a grand, single-minded belief that he can by sheer force of his own imagination rewrite the laws of physics that determine time and space, and which thwart his relationship with Daisy. Even at the very moment he feels he has succeeded in his ambition, the impossible reconciliation of pre-war time with post-war space curtails the magic of the green light and what it represents:

> Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one. (*GG* 73)

The dynamic tension between time and movement is increasingly prescient from the moment of Gatsby and Daisy's reunion. In almost knocking over and catching Nick's clock, Gatsby gives this movement visibility in the space between action and reaction, investing time with an inverse momentum, "We've met before," muttered Gatsby. His eyes glanced momentarily at me and his lips parted with an abortive attempt at a laugh. Luckily the clock took this moment to tilt dangerously at the pressure of his head, whereupon he turned and caught it with trembling fingers and set it back in place" (*GG* 68). The five years Gatsby has been absent from Daisy is not so much captured in the static image of the clock face, but the reversed distance between subject and object projected through his reflex movement.

Moreover, the significance of the clock highlights Gatsby's sensitivity to time as possessing an economic value of its own. On the one hand the clock serves as a commodity object whose literal value is largely worthless as Nick points out, "It's an old clock," I told them idiotically" (*GG* 68). Yet it is also the means by which time is highlighted by Fitzgerald as collapsing and restricting the space in which Daisy and Gatsby meet. As Harmut Rosa observes, " . . . the mechanical clock allowed the separation of time from space. It made it possible in principle to determine time not only independently of spatial *qualities* but also entirely independently of a concrete place of residence" (98). Rosa goes on to describe modern time as "an independent dimension of the world" which combined with the inventions of the train and automobile, "revolutionized the socially dominant space-time regime by "shrinking" the perception and relevance of space for many social and cultural processes and in the end even making it *a function of time*" (99). Applying this configuration to Gatsby and Daisy's reunion, Rosa's point is illustrated in Gatsby's physical proximity to the clock which shrinks space, and functions as the means by which through Gatsby's

reflex movement, time is captured at its most dynamic. When Daisy remarks on how long it has been since they last saw each other, Gatsby's immediate reply further underlines this movement as a self-contained verbal space in which time and memory operate:

> "We haven't met for many years," said Daisy, her voice as matter-of-fact as it could ever be.
>
> "Five years next November."
>
> The automatic quality of Gatsby's answer set us all back at least another minute. (*GG* 68)

In Gatsby's instant response to Daisy, time continues to undergo a radical transformation, where the emphasis is on speed and exact quantity, a deliverable promise of fidelity. Time is the commodity value with which Gatsby bids for Daisy's affections, preserving a memory whose alchemy turns everything to common gold. Consequently five years affirms more than Gatsby's singular dream to be reunited with Daisy; it expresses the modern view of time as an economic asset that can rise and fall in value. Just as the speculative paper fortunes of the decade will collapse with the Wall Street Crash of 1929, Gatsby's memory becomes an unsustainable expression of his devotion when transfigured in the form of a material object. In looking for an example of this recasting of time as commodity value, perhaps the most obvious scene is where Gatsby pays tribute to Daisy with his display of luxury shirts:

> "I've got a man in England who buys me clothes. He sends over a selection of things at the beginning of each season, spring and fall."

> He took out a pile of shirts and began throwing them one by one before us, shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel which lost their folds and they fell and covered the table in many-colored disarray . . . Suddenly with a strained sound Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily.
>
> "They're such beautiful shirts," she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. "It makes me sad because I've never seen such beautiful shirts before." (*GG* 72)

Fitzgerald parodies an older heroic mode and romantic chivalric attitude in the way Gatsby launches his shirts in the air suggestive of a knight presenting colors to a lady. Yet it is here that Daisy's view of time in relation to Gatsby, and her reaction to being shown around his mansion articulates a far worldlier attitude and awareness of how she reconciles the past with her current social position. For all Daisy's artificiality and affectation her persona is grounded in a much harder and cynical ennui. What initially defines Daisy's false, yet mannered response to seeing Gatsby again where Nick describes, " . . . Daisy's voice on a clear artificial note. 'I certainly am awfully glad to see you again'" (68) anticipates her calculated, empty hysteria over Gatsby's shirts. Again time takes on a measure of economic value at the heart of commodity production; just as Daisy, the epitome of idle consumerism sits at the epicenter of Gatsby's palatial grandeur and sartorial elegance. That the commodity loses its form as it falls, "in many-colored disarray" highlights how Gatsby's memory collapses into a more abstract diffusion of American materialism. Added to this, the seasonal acquisition of the shirts emphasizes how production follows a precise timetable, "spring and fall" further symbolizing the material value Gatsby ascribes to the years he has been absent from Daisy, as Nick observes, " . . . I think he revalued

everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes . . . he stared around at his possessions in a dazed way as though in her actual and astounding presence none of it was any longer real" (71). If Gatsby's feelings for Daisy may be read on one level to epitomize Marx's definition of commodity fetishism, as the illusory relation between objects replacing the social relation behind their production, they are also a feature of that same modernity which Fitzgerald paradoxically associates with the romantic chivalric code of noblesse oblige.

Gatsby's role as knight errant to Daisy offers a new ironic figure of heroic masculinity for the modern age in much the same way as John Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" a hundred years earlier.[36] Just as with Gatsby, the knight's tale represents the passing of a summer with, "the harvest done" (47). The world has withdrawn and shrunk confusing his ability to focus as he awakes from where the lady, " . . . lulled me asleep,/And there I dream'd – Ah woe betide!/The latest dream I ever dream'd/On the cold hill side" (48). Gatsby's own tragedy illustrates a similar cold awakening where Daisy's presence now transferred to the empty theatre of Gatsby's house increasingly disorientates him with the uncanny correlative image of his parties. The perception of space has again been contained and limited to where the now 'hidden' guests crouch out of sight, as Nick observes, " . . . as we wandered through Marie Antoinette music rooms and Restoration salons I felt that there were guests concealed behind every couch and table, under orders to be breathlessly silent until we had passed through . . . I could have sworn I heard the owl-eyed man break into ghostly laughter." (71). The spectral quality of Gatsby's mansion by day links to the figure of Keats's knight to suggest the way failure forms a more radical basis for self-invention. The knight following his revelatory vision speaks in a similar way to

how Fitzgerald describes Gatsby's own death, "A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air drifted fortuitously about . . . like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees" (126).[37] Yet here it is George Wilson whose "ashen fantastic figure" invokes the figure of Keats's "haggard, pale and woe-begone" knight as Gatsby's killer. Thus Keats's knight takes form in conflating, "A new world, material without being real" both as the literal failure of Wilson, and a renewal of heroic masculinity in Gatsby, which accepts chivalry as a lost cause, yet continues to use its feudal language and code as a means of resistance.

In developing Gatsby's heroic persona, Fitzgerald links memory to a wider language of capitalist production. On meeting Daisy again for the first time in five years, Gatsby shows how he chronicles his devotion in the "clippings" (*GG* 73) he collects of her from various newspapers. Time measured for Gatsby in part through the frequency of Daisy's printed image acknowledges the power of a new media increasingly based around the fetishisation of popular celebrity, and also how news media combines with radio and cinema to create an environment of 'memories' as simulation of lived experience. Moreover, the way in which Gatsby and Daisy are positioned throughout the scene highlights not only how she functions as an agent of memory, but the narrative direction of the novel as it moves towards Gatsby's death. Here it is ironically the close physical proximity of Daisy to Gatsby that articulates a subtle emotional distance between them:

> "If it wasn't for the mist we could see your home across the bay," said Gatsby. You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock."

> Daisy put her arm through his abruptly but he seemed absorbed in what he had just said . . .
>
> I began to walk about the room, examining various indefinite objects in the half darkness. (*GG* 73)

Gatsby's lack of agency in Daisy's presence as she puts her arm through his implies a revealing nervous paralysis which again hints at Keats's incapacitated knight, "in thrall" to his enchanted lady. Gatsby's immobility even extends to Nick's own less certain movements, as he struggles to distinguish "various indefinite objects" in his attempt to re-orientate himself. As Gatsby's mansion fades, Daisy's voice becomes more prominent, where the constant dimming of the light is consistent with the way Gatsby and Daisy stand close to, or apart from each other, "The rain was still falling, but the darkness had parted in the west and there was a pink and golden billow of foamy clouds above the sea. "Look at that," she whispered, and then after a moment: "I'd like to just get one of those pink clouds and put you in it and push you around" (*GG* 74). Daisy's baby-like vision of transporting Gatsby in the "pink and golden billow of foamy clouds" emasculates and displaces his own self-identification as, "a son of God . . . – and he must be about His Father's Business, the service of a vast, vulgar and meretricious beauty" (*GG* 77). The pink and golden clouds, which foreshadow Gatsby's own pink suit and yellow car that Daisy will be driving when she kills Myrtle Wilson are a further indication of a more dissonant perspective, which underwrites Gatsby and Daisy's physical closeness with an irrevocable gulf in imaginative perspective and empathy.[38]

Just before leaving them together Nick considers that, "There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams – not through

her own fault but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart" (75). Daisy's femininity infiltrates and diffuses the heroic masculine space of Gatsby's mansion where, "the colossal vitality of his illusion" hints towards the green light at the end of her dock where Daisy as she tours Gatsby's house transgresses the discursive logic gendered within its temporal and spatial parameters:[39]

> With enchanting murmurs Daisy admired this aspect or that of the feudal silhouette against the sky, admired the gardens, the sparkling odor of jonquils and the frothy odor of hawthorn and plum blossoms and the pale gold odor of kiss-me-at-the-gate.[40] It was strange to reach the marble steps and find no stir of bright dresses in and out the door and hear no sound but bird voices in the trees. (71)

That Gatsby may represent a renewal of an older heroic mode of American masculinity underpins Lionel Trilling's claim that, "Fitzgerald was perhaps the last notable writer to affirm the Romantic fantasy, descended from the Renaissance, of the personal ambition and heroism, of life committed to, or thrown away for, some ideal of self" (249). Trilling argues a direct line of continuity between the steady constancy and chivalrous heroism of a Don Quixote and the romantic individualism of Gatsby. Yet Fitzgerald's dynamic in renewing this heroic mode ironically undermines the stability of the Renaissance with the tenacious energy of Gatsby, "He was never quite still; there was always a tapping foot somewhere or the impatient opening and closing of a hand" (51). Once more it is the tension between stasis and movement, continuity and change[41] which signals a remaking of what Trilling establishes as a direct relation

between the virtues of an older, more nobler heroic mode of self-sacrificing masculinity, and Gatsby who stands for both the Quixotic idealist and the radical collapse of time as space manifested in the modern environment of America.

Consequently, the attitude towards time as it relates to modernity may also be illustrated in Gatsby on an inter-textual level. Daisy's question leading up to the climatic scene at the Plaza Hotel, "What'll we do with ourselves this afternoon, cried Daisy and the day after that, and the next thirty years?" (92) imitates the woman's voice from 'A Game of Chess' in T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land", "'What shall I do now? What shall I do?/'I shall run out as I am and walk the street/'With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?/What shall we ever do?'" (28). Some critics of Eliot's poem have observed how, "The woman is . . . the symbol of man at the present time. He is surrounded by the grandeurs of the past, but he does not participate in them; they don't sustain him" (Brooks 137). However, if in 'A Game of Chess', the female voice does indeed symbolize a diminished male "grandeur" rendered impotent and cut off from a re-invigorating past, Fitzgerald's own use of the line in Gatsby takes on a more deliberate intention in terms of what it says regarding a potential renewal of heroic masculinity.

Echoes of Eliot's use of multiple voices in "The Waste Land" reflect a direct influence on *The Great Gatsby* that should not be understated. Just as Eliot establishes the blind hermaphrodite prophet Tiresias as the visual filter for what the reader sees in "The Waste Land", Fitzgerald uses the eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg to position the characters of Gatsby, George Wilson and Daisy in a discernible commodity relation. Wilson equates the eyes of the Eckleburg advertisement to the eyes of God, just as Daisy refers to Gatsby, who self identifies in his own Platonic conception as a son of God (*GG* 77), as looking like a man in an Arrow Collars advertisement (*GG* 93).[42]

Daisy's association of Gatsby with the brand "Arrow Collars" speaks to the same myth of the Fisher King that informs Eliot's "The Waste Land". The modifying pronoun 'arrow' links Gatsby through the eyes of Dr. Eckleburg with the figure of a dead or wounded God, now defined in terms of a failed business. Fitzgerald envisages the heroic mode as both a reinvigoration of an older myth of romantic masculinity, and also an authorial means of self-reflexively addressing the hero as a subject of modernity. Daisy's comparison of Gatsby to the "man in the advertisement" diminishes the knight of Arthurian Romance in highlighting the production and consumption of American society, whether that be manifest in the hysteria of Gatsby's parties or a popular culture of mass acceleration, as instructive of the new pressures shaping post-war American masculinity.

Consequently, Fitzgerald recognizes in *Gatsby* an idea of the dissolution of 'self ' under the conditions of modernity. Yet this dissolution of 'self' is ironically the foundation for what Fitzgerald will go onto suggest as a means of reinvigorating the hero through a model of failure central to the social landscape of American society. Fitzgerald throughout *The Great Gatsby* suggests a sense of contradictory perspective particularly evident in Nick's description of New York:

> I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye. I liked to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that in a few minutes I was going to enter into their lives, and no one would ever know or disapprove . . . At the enchanted metropolitan twilight I felt a haunting loneliness sometimes, and felt it in others - poor young clerks who loitered in front of windows waiting until it was time for a solitary restaurant dinner –

> young clerks in the dusk, wasting the most poignant moments of night and life. (*GG* 47)

It is the same heroic mode of defining failure, which Nick ascribes to Gatsby's mansion, that "huge incoherent failure of a house" (*GG* 140) which after Gatsby's death lead him to spend, "Saturday nights in New York because those gleaming dazzling parties of his were with me so vividly that I could still hear the music and the laughter faint and incessant from his garden and the cars going up and down his drive" (*GG* 140). The 'racy' and 'constant flicker of men and women and machines', which informs the narrative optic of Nick's 'restless eye', juxtapose an accompanying sense of constant syncopated motion, where the 'poor young clerks . . . wasting the most poignant moments of night and life' extend the cultural formations of memory to New York's material and economic landscape, stratified along rigid class and economic lines. In doing so the same experience of modernity paradoxically illuminates and darkens the separate narrative frames that Gatsby and Daisy occupy.[43] Throughout the novel Fitzgerald projects the use of both natural and artificial light to represent memory as not only having an organic function, but also serving as a by-product of cultural folklore and tradition. The green light as one of the overarching symbols of the novel combines both time and space for Gatsby not only in relation to Daisy, but also in offering a broader vision of America as generating its own commercial and cultural memory cum mythology. Kurt Curnutt notes that, "Fitzgerald implies, if consumerism encourages individuals to view themselves as commodities, it only stands to reason that the same satisfaction to be had in using up and throwing away a marketplace good can be derived by wasting one's own assets" (122). Just as Fitzgerald plays with the dynamic of American cultural memory being manifest in the idea of commodity production, Daisy's ability

to cause Gatsby to re-evaluate and view his possessions as unreal and subsequently worthless, implies that as with any product when packaged and commercialized, memory generates its own waste material.

Nick goes on to make this relationship between waste and memory explicit in his description of Gatsby's response to Daisy's voice.[44] On leaving Gatsby and Daisy together after their initial reunion Nick observes, "As I watched him he adjusted himself a little, visibly. His hand took hold of hers and as she said something low in his ear he turned toward her with a rush of emotion. I think that voice held him most with its fluctuating, feverish warmth because it couldn't be over dreamed – that voice was a deathless song" (*GG* 75).[45] The key phrase "over-dreamed" not only acts as counterpoise to Daisy's "deathless song", but also the polysemy of Daisy's voice, which carries through Nick's narration, and the feminine sensibility informing his perspective, a sensibility that to a great extent anticipates the narrative voice of Cecelia Brady in *The Love of the Last Tycoon*. Read in the specific context of *Gatsby*, both the phrases 'over-dreamed' and 'deathless song' suggest the aesthetic synergy between dust and Daisy's voice,[46] implying an idea of illegibility in the belief that it is possible to stretch a dream too far. It is this 'over-dreamed' discourse of the city[47] which extends to the valley of ashes as a literal and metaphysical dumping ground whose; "ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens . . . and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air" (21) an image that darkly mirrors, "the city rising up across the river in white heaps and sugar lumps all built out of non-olfactory money" (*GG* 54-55). As Nick and Gatsby search through Gatsby's mansion for cigarettes the morning after Myrtle Wilson's death Nick again notes, "There was an inexplicable amount of dust everywhere and the rooms were musty as though they hadn't been aired for many

days" (*GG* 115). This association of memory as organic process, and waste as cultural product is demonstrably manifest where the valley of ashes confirms not only the conditions of decay produced by mass production, but a means of transposing the image of Daisy herself.

This transposition is particularly evident at the end of Gatsby's final party where, "Daisy began to sing with the music in a husky, rhythmic whisper bringing out a meaning in each word that it had never had before and would never have again. When the melody rose her voice broke up sweetly, following it, in a way contralto voices have, and each change tipped out a little of her warm human magic upon the air" (*GG* 84). The lady's song of Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" is once again suggested here in the "warm human magic" of Daisy's voice, albeit with the singular difference that the song is not her own. It is a song *adapted* by Daisy's voice to follow a designed structure and pattern of memory, in line with how both cultural commodity and individual nostalgia are structured and synthesized in the American psyche, revitalizing the mechanical energy of syncopated time. The charm of Daisy's "husky, rhythmic whisper" lies in its mutable combination of elements. Her voice's magnetism resides in her ability to draw people towards her as Nick affirms, " . . . her voice compelled me forward breathlessly as I listened - then the glow faded, each light deserting her with lingering regret like children leaving a pleasant street at dusk" (*GG* 15). Yet it is the accompanying sense of loss which Nick as narrator gives voice to, which highlights the way Daisy's voice cannot be localized to Daisy herself, but disseminates itself throughout his narrative,[48] particularly in the perceived compartmentalization of modern time and space which Gatsby seeks to challenge and subvert:

> Through all he said, even through his appalling sentimentality, I was reminded of something – an elusive rhythm, a fragment of lost words, that I had heard somewhere a long time ago. For a moment a phrase tried to take shape in my mouth and my lips parted like a dumb man's as though there was more struggling upon them than a wisp of startled air. But they made no sound and what I had almost remembered was uncommunicable forever. (*GG* 87)

It is in the "elusive rhythm" and "fragment of lost words" that Daisy's voice becomes most clearly resonant, "She had caught a cold and it made her voice huskier and more charming than ever and Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves, of the freshness of many clothes and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor" (*GG* 117). The reader again sees time suspended and made visible where Daisy's voice carries the momentum of Gatsby's own story of falling in love with her, "He had intended, probably to take what he could and go – but now he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail . . . She vanished into her rich house, into her rich, full life, leaving Gatsby – nothing. He felt married to her, that was all" (*GG* 117). Yet conversely time is also captured as movement where Gatsby's memory runs alongside and becomes almost one with the retreating railroad following his visit to Louisville after returning from the war:

> The track curved and now it was going away from the sun which, as it sank lower, seemed to spread itself in benediction over the vanishing city where she had drawn her breath. He stretched out his hand desperately as if to snatch only a wisp of air, to save a fragment of the spot that she had made lovely for him. But it was all going by too fast

> now for his blurred eyes and he knew that he had lost that part of it, the freshest and the best, forever. (*GG* 119)

Fitzgerald attaches a double irony to Daisy's voice in that for Gatsby it is an audible bridge linking him to the past, yet at the same time a clear dividing line between not only pre and post-war America, but the defining class system to which she belongs, "She was the first "nice" girl he had ever known. In various unrevealed capacities he had come in contact with such people but always with indiscernible barbed wire between" (*GG* 116). This "indiscernible barbed wire" operates in much the same way when Gatsby visits Daisy's house, in combining the "breathless" quality of her voice with an awareness of the temporal and spatial boundaries in which it expresses itself, "He went to her house, at first with other officers from Camp Taylor, then alone. It amazed him – he had never been in such a beautiful house before. But what gave it an air of breathless intensity was that Daisy lived there – it was as casual a thing to her as his tent out at camp was to him" (*GG* 116). It is in both this psychic and aesthetic tension between the "barbed wire" and "breathless intensity" of his new surroundings, that Gatsby's memory collapses the boundaries between his army tent, Daisy's house, and later his mansion, where he remains an outsider even at his own party.

Moreover, in evoking the attraction of a "voice full of money" Gatsby infers a form of debased mythology. It is a voice echoing the sirens of Homer's *The Odyssey* bringing death in its wake as he waits for Daisy's call, where Nick imagines:

> "He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts breathing dreams like air drifted

> fortuitously about . . . like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees." (*GG* 126)

The same breathlessness and warmth associated with Daisy's voice synthesize the music and laughter of Gatsby's parties which, "swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath . . . the sea change of faces and voices and color under the constantly changing light" (34). The underlying sound image of Daisy's voice as it ripples through the air, "alive with chatter and laughter and casual innuendo" (34) also throws into sharp relief the phonetic qualities of "unfamiliar sky", "frightening leaves", and "raw sunlight" through which Wilson "that ashen, fantastic figure" glides towards Gatsby, part ghost and part executioner. Yet while Nick intuits Gatsby's inherent, almost preternatural sense of, "a new world, material without being real" (*GG* 126) Daisy's voice is not so much a siren's song as it is a cultural vision determined by the fetishisation of wealth, undermining the heroic archetype of American masculinity through a gradual deteriorative effect. If the siren's song in *The Odyssey* represents a single passing episode, Daisy's voice extends and resonates throughout Nick's narration in offering a more radical quality of unifying coherence to Fitzgerald's novel.

What Gatsby sees rather than hears in Daisy's voice full of money eschews Nick's disintegrative lyricism, which points to the more discomforting sounds of America's industrial machine built on the legacy of slavery. Christopher Hitchens observes, "As Nick takes his penultimate leave of Gatsby, he quits him, 'standing there in the moonlight – watching over nothing'. Here is the full-out horror of torpor and morbidity and futility and waste, saturated in joyless heat and sweat" (349). What Hitchens emphasizes in the futility and morbidity of Gatsby's vigil saturated in a

"joyless heat and sweat" also permeates the racially charged language of Nick's first description of visiting Daisy and Tom where he observes:

> The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding cake of the ceiling – an then rippled over the wine-colored rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea.
>
> The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were both in white and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. I must have stood for a few moments listening to the whip and snap of the curtains and the groan of a picture on the wall. Then there was a boom as Tom Buchanan shut the rear windows and the caught wind died out about the room and the curtains and the rugs and the two young women ballooned slowly to the floor". (*GG* 10)

Tom's closure of the door immediately gives an impression of life being snuffed out and killed underlined by an overwhelming 'whiteness', which defines the room. Consequently it is not simply the "whip" "snap" and "groan" whose subtext directly equates to the legacy of slavery that America refuses to recognize at the core of its capitalist system, but the movement within the scene, which Fitzgerald again associates with the idea of suspending time in order to articulate it. The "whiteness"

which Fitzgerald stresses in the windows, ceiling and women's dresses draws a direct correlation between the social and racial economy endorsed by the Buchanan's mansion, and the idea of unlimited space. In doing so, Fitzgerald conveys the scale of America by ironically containing and capturing it through a sense of weightless movement attached to the Buchanan's material possessions. The curtains which twist up to the "frosted wedding-cake ceiling" and which "ripple" over the "wine-colored rug" and the "enormous couch" on which the women are "buoyed up" as though sat upon an "anchored balloon" direct Nick's gaze almost voyeuristically towards the hubris of white privilege. To briefly summarize, on the one hand Gatsby is the means by which modern time is captured as movement. This movement takes on the language and grammar of commodity production and the organization of mass labor whereby memory represents a material substance. On the other hand Fitzgerald at the same time recognizes the same forces of modernity as embedded in the rigid, racial, class and gender lines on which Daisy's entire existence is based. It is an attempt to articulate and reconcile memory with its means of production that forms the key contradiction of America's psyche.

Fitzgerald's insight is to recognize that in order to remember, time must be acknowledged as an essential component of the new language of mass production and modern culture; a component of modernity that is both liberating and destructive. In this sense the broken clock and the voice full of money are more than hackneyed symbols or objects of personification, but rather they serve to underline a key contradiction in Fitzgerald's approach to the centrality of memory in defining American modernity. This is again evident in Nick's irrevocable assertion to Gatsby:

> "I wouldn't ask too much of her," I ventured. "You can't repeat the past,"

> "Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why of course you can!"
>
> He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand." (*GG* 86)

Here Fitzgerald energizes not only the pace and rhythm, but also the dramatic emphasis of the scene by again having Gatsby's repetitious "automatic" response "Can't repeat the past?" demonstrate that to suspend time, one has to make time move. In other words, the modernity implied in the "automatic' nature of Gatsby's reply points to a more complex process of organization and design in how the novel approaches the function of memory, and its construction through language. This is evident not only in the structural use of narrative flashback, but also the way in which Fitzgerald uses time to reflect the encroaching influence of commodity value in defining modern memory. Just as Fitzgerald's modernist instinct is to explore how memory is organized through language, in Gatsby he acknowledges that time represents a feature of modernity similarly organized in the interests of mass production. However, this raises the further question as to how once memory is abrogated to the demands of capital, time can be made to move, and visualized in such a way as Fitzgerald intuits throughout the novel to be essential in making intelligible the social experiment of America as a whole. [49]

It is through the commitment to a lost cause or ideal of 'self' that Fitzgerald captures the psychology of the hero in *Gatsby*, *Tender*, and *Tycoon*. In his 1929 short story "The Swimmers" Fitzgerald writes, "France was a land. England was a people, but America, having about it still that quality of the idea, was harder to utter – it was the graves at Shiloh and the tired, drawn, nervous faces of its great men, and the

country boys dying in the Argonne for a phrase that was empty before their bodies withered. It was a willingness of the heart" (Fitzgerald, "The Swimmers" 191). Gatsby, Diver and Monroe Stahr all demonstrate this same 'willingness of heart' as a sincerity of purpose which manages to sustain and carry them forward even in their moment of crisis and terminal decline. This is a point I will go onto discuss in more depth in relation to *Tender* and *Tycoon*, and the Japanese concept of noble failure. While Gatsby's physiology as Fitzgerald initially envisaged him remains somewhat vague, a more defined picture begins to emerge not so much through a set of shared physical characteristics, but a clear heroic psychology evident in all three novels and traceable to those 'young boys' who died "fighting for a phrase that was empty". In an earlier draft of the novel *Trimalchio* Nick's first description of Gatsby implies a much older man than, "the elegant young-rough neck" who had "one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it" (*GG* 40) where he observes:

> He was only a little older than me – somehow I had expected a florid and corpulent person in his middle years – yet he was somehow not a young man at all. There was a stiff dignity about him, and a formality of speech that just missed being absurd, that always trembled on the verge of absurdity until you wondered why you didn't laugh. (Fitzgerald, *Trimalchio* 41)

Picturing Gatsby as carrying a "stiff dignity" and "formality of speech" almost seems a figure to satirize the 19th century novel of manners such as Henry James's Christopher Newman in *The American* or Edith Wharton's Newland Archer in *The Age of Innocence*. As an immediate model for Gatsby, the heroes of Horatio Alger and Booth Tarkington are much closer in suggesting a new concern with class and American exceptionalism that feeds into Fitzgerald's theme of a poor boy looking to

win a rich girl. Moreover, there is no evidence that Fitzgerald was intending to locate Gatsby within a wider narrative tradition of American heroes such as Natty Bumppo, Ahab or Huckleberry Finn. However, what should be noted is that each of these characters represent a transitory awareness of the passing away of an older set of values, a sense of crisis and breakdown, the aspiration to a prize that can never be won. In seeking to reinvigorate a heroic model of American masculinity, Fitzgerald suggests this same transitory awareness through Gatsby's failure to repeat the past with Daisy, as the basis of America's mythological framework of manifest destiny. [50] Again in *Trimalchio* there is deleted scene, which goes some way to supporting this idea of manifest destiny as informing Fitzgerald's overall scheme:

> His impassioned sentimentality possessed him so thoroughly that he seemed to be in some fantastic communication with space and time – and they must have given him his answer then and there in the moonlight, for he sat down suddenly and put his face in his hands an began to sob.
>
> "I beg your pardon, old sport," he said chokingly, "but it's all so sad because I can't make her understand."
>
> I began patting him idiotically on the back and presently he sat back and began to stare at his house.
>
> "She even wants to leave that," he said bitterly. "I've gotten these things for her, and now she wants to run away."

> "Take what you can get, Gatsby," I urged him. "Daisy's a person – she's not just a figure in your dream. And she probably doesn't feel that she owes you anything at all."
>
> "She does, though. Why – I'm only thirty-two. I might be a great man if I could forget that once I lost Daisy. But my career had got to be like this –" He drew a slanting line from the lawn to the stars. "It's got to keep going up. I used to think wonderful things were going to happen to me, before I met her. And I knew it was a great mistake for a man like me to fall in love – and then one night I let myself go, and it was too late –". (Fitzgerald, *Trimalchio* 90)

The reference to Gatsby's, "fantastic communication with space and time" emphasizes Fitzgerald's awareness of a new level of consciousness and discursive movement emerging under the conditions of modernity. It is a passage that significantly undermines any notion of traditional "heroic" masculinity, and presents the reader with a weakened and largely emasculated Gatsby in tears. Although cut from the final draft of the novel, it is one of the best indications that Fitzgerald intended to infer manifest destiny, through Gatsby's gesture of projecting a lost past into an imaginary future, a new heroic model of diminished masculinity, whose rhetoric is born of defeat. Moreover, in his letter to Maxwell Perkins dated Dec 24th 1924 in response to the latter's concerns about Gatsby's physical appearance, it is clear Fitzgerald sees Gatsby as having creative antecedents indicative of a more determining process of his own unconscious. In writing the novel Fitzgerald describes in almost Freudian terms a psychoanalytic interrogation of his own memory and subconscious for Gatsby's identity:

> *I myself didn't know what Gatsby looked like or was engaged in* & you felt it. If I'd known & kept it from you you'd have been *too impressed with my knowledge to protest* . . . It seems of almost mystical significance to me that you thot [sic] he was older – the man I had in mind, half unconsciously, was older (a specific individual) . . . Anyhow after careful searching of the files (of a man's mind here) for the Fuller Magee case & after having had Zelda draw pictures until her fingers ache I know Gatsby better than I know my own child. (Bryer and Kuehl 89)

Fitzgerald's reference to the "almost mystical significance" that he attaches to Perkins's interpretation of Gatsby as an older man, does not necessarily have to be read in such literal terms as age, but more the narrative connection to an idea of an older American literary hero, that Fitzgerald's own unconscious has sought to rejuvenate as a reflection of the modern age. Just as Leslie Fiedler asserts that, "the *essential* appeal of Fitzgerald is . . . astonishingly enough in his *failure* " (71) the successful renewal of a modern American hero is ironically personified in Gatsby's ability to finally recognize the circumstances of his own defeat and at the same time continue to retain as Nick observes, " . . . an extraordinary gift for hope a romantic readiness such I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again" (*GG* 6). The association of Gatsby with his author becomes even more manifest in Fitzgerald's notebooks where he asserts, "I am an only child. Gatsby my imaginary eldest brother" (Fitzgerald, *Notebooks* 158). While perhaps here there is a danger of associating Gatsby too closely with his creator, particularly where the latter claims in "The Crack-Up", " . . . – the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain

the ability to function" (Fitzgerald, *The Crack-Up* 39), it is consistent with the argument that Fitzgerald intended to draw upon a heroic model already deeply embedded and recognized as part of the wider American psyche.

As a response to, as much as a reflection of modernity *The Great Gatsby* is not only concerned with the influence of mass production on American cultural life, but the way in which the language of memory begins to directly engage and parallel the language of commodity value. In thinking of Gatsby's parties with their "blue lawns", "yellow cocktail music" and "enough colored lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden" (*GG* 39-40) Nick Carraway's tone of voice is informed by both the sepia tones of an austere present day, and a multicolor montage of an Oz like past. Consequently, Fitzgerald establishes a narrative dialectic, which gives resonance to Nick's memories of the summer of 1922 in part through a strong foregrounding of the characters he describes as the material and cultural products of consumerist fantasy. As Kurk Curnutt again notes, Fitzgerald's "consumerist fascinations are everywhere evident in his fiction, which luxuriates in the tints and textures of consumable goods . . . The prominence of such objects has for decades led Marxist critics to debate whether Fitzgerald encouraged or critiqued commodity fetishism" (89-90). However, rather than a simple critique or endorsement of the influence of commodity production, Fitzgerald makes a more sophisticated artistic judgment in using it to encapsulate the contradictory nature of American consumerism, where time controlled by a new Fordian model of labor operates to accelerate or decelerate market forces. However, if time is rendered visual by token of its new economic materialism, the 20th century preoccupation with speed as the transfer of capital also points towards a more unstable dynamic, underpinning the language of memory based on the social economy of modernity.

Gatsby's modernity as a novel acknowledges that to visualize time as movement fundamentally alters the conception of space as a means of physical and mental orientation. Here, Fitzgerald initially highlights the inherent problem of suspending time in the form of Nick's cognitive dissonance, where his friendship with Gatsby combines the ebullience of a salesman's pitch with a buyers regret. One sees this in Nick's first description of Gatsby, "Gatsby, who represented everything for which I have unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes a thousand miles away" (*GG* 2). Nick's suggestion of Gatsby as being similar to the "intricate machines" used to measure earthquakes is a profound image where Gatsby takes on no physical form, and yet is introduced with the precision of an electrified needle. The finesse of Fitzgerald's language lies in the needle's inferred animation rather than the technology itself, where in order to visualize Gatsby the needle has to move, subsequently capturing a sense of time and seismic distance.

However, the earthquake needle also combines a paradox of both strength and fragility, which also fails on one level to fully reconcile itself in Gatsby as a figure of heroic masculinity, where capitalism is not a new expression of rugged individualism but more codified as a feminine commodity. Fitzgerald emphasizes this point in the tonal dissonance behind Nick's language, where new forces of capital ground Gatsby not in the poetics of natural phenomenon, so much as the sum of his material possessions, whether they be his mansion, his motorboats, his aquaplanes or even the "machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour, if a little button was pressed tow hundred times by a butler's thumb" (*GG* 33). While each object, even Gatsby's mansion with its guests and parties may be said

to move, it is movement artificially simulated by the designed function of the commodity itself. Here Nick's memory oscillates like Gatsby's "Rolls-Royce" and "station wagon" bringing guests in from the city, between two ideas of Gatsby as both imaginative subject and commodity object. Consequently, as a modernist Fitzgerald utilizes this dynamic to imply how the unseen elemental energy of the earthquake's moving needle and Gatsby's cars co-exist within the same conditions of commercial capital, while at the same time suggesting a new separation of time from space.

There are other problems innate to the condition of modernity, whereby the 'heroic' qualities of Gatsby underline a more radical transformation of the modern perception of time. Fitzgerald goes on to show how the industrial speed and urban movement of New York provides a new awareness of the kinetic energy of the contemporary city, while at the same time framing its modernity in the tints and shades of an old world landscape. Driving through New York, Nick describes, "Fifth Avenue, so warm and soft, almost pastoral on the summer Sunday afternoon that I wouldn't have been surprised to see a great flock of white sheep turn the corner" (*GG* 28). However, here the heavily stylized use of the pastoral to suggest New York as having a romantic, even innocent quality is immediately preceded, by a very different landscape. The most obvious symbol of literal, cultural and human waste in *The Great Gatsby,* the valley of ashes represents both a modern and mythological space. Once a symbol of fertility and renewal, the pastoral now conflates death and modernity where the train stops, and passengers can "stare at the dismal scene for as long as half an hour" (*GG* 21). Moreover, when the train as a symbolic agent of modernity ceases to move, time can no longer be visualized and suspended through motion, and thus disappears, leaving only the remnants of industrial waste and decay. Consequently, Fitzgerald not only subverts the pastoral's generic topography to reflect the fugue-like

state of a post-war America coming to terms with its new superpower status, but also Nick's consciousness as he tries to orientate himself in relation to modern time. Subsequently, the pastoral does not bridge as much as render a breach in Nick's memory by introducing a painful point of static resistance to the movement and acceleration of modernity.

Fitzgerald further heightens the idea of the pastoral as contributing towards Nick's own fugue state at the hotel party that Tom Buchanan throws for his mistress Myrtle Wilson. As Nick becomes increasingly drunk, he begins to lose track of time where, "everything that happened has a dim, hazy cast over it, although until after eight o'clock the apartment was full of cheerful sun" (*GG* 29). This sense of reverie becomes explicit at the point Nick states an affinity with the anonymous, "casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life" (*GG* 35). The vital image of Nick being pulled simultaneously both towards and away from a life force which he terms "inexhaustible", echoes to some extent his own description of Gatsby as like a machine for measuring earthquakes. Although Nick's sense of being "within and without", "enchanted and repelled" lacks in its direct binary opposition the sensitivity he attaches to the idea of Gatsby's earthquake needle, the essential subtext of both images is modernity's transformative potency in visualizing time through movement. However, this notion of transformation remains problematic for Fitzgerald as he highlights the way in which the individual is subsequently unable to adjust to the way time moves in relation to the speed of commodity production. Again Nick's consciousness of time is underlined where he notes, "It was nine o'clock – almost immediately afterward I looked at my watch and found it was ten" (36). To be "within and without" both the

subject which acts, and the object which is acted upon suggests a physical and psychological shift, where Nick's narrative persona caught between cold observation, and hedonistic indulgence, may itself be framed as a tension between production and consumption.

In highlighting this tension, Fitzgerald illustrates how the American idiom of modern memory is increasingly dominated and complicated by a new Fordian model of industrial organization. Fitzgerald intuits that time regulated and controlled as a systemic function of capitalism has direct implications for the way memory constructs itself through language. Hence Nick's sense of dislocation in being both "within and without" gives voice to a perception of time that 'cracks-up' under the stress of a new collective consciousness. Throughout *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald primarily associates memory with colors and movement, often orchestrated to syncopated popular music. As Ronald Berman notes, "The book's language is famously about color and its implications . . . But color is impermanent . . . It is a reminder about surfaces, and all the metaphorical applications of the idea of surfaces." Berman goes on to further highlight Matthew J. Bruccoli's assertion that, "The novel is "time haunted" permeated with hundreds of references to the escape of memory from our lives" (Bruccoli, *New Essays on The Great Gatsby* 10-12). This is worth highlighting for two reasons. Bruccoli's phrase "time haunted" affirms that 'time', the most commonly repeated noun in the entire novel, can be felt as a tangible absence. Furthermore the phrase 'escape of memory' suggests that time itself can be suspended, contained and understood three-dimensionally. Therefore, this notion of the novel being "time haunted" may be more clearly understood as the product of memory having to react, navigate and adapt to new technologies of media, speed and movement. If *The Great Gatsby* does indeed embody the 'escape of memory' it is an

escape ironically dependent on the reorganization of time and space, which the Fordian model of mass production, and the automobile make possible. Here, coherence stems from fragmentation, where Fitzgerald uses the idea of new technologies defined by automation to inform this dynamic in challenging the narrative authority of memory.

Through Nick Carraway's own characterization as an unreliable narrator, Fitzgerald's recognition of the new relationship between memory and modernity becomes clear. Nick, a veteran of World War One who by his own admission, "came back restless" from the trenches of France to a Mid-West, which seems to him, "like the ragged edge of the universe", immediately decides to "go East and learn the bond business" (Fitzgerald 3). While it is never stated explicitly that he may be suffering from shellshock, the very fact of his war service allows for the possibility that Nick's restlessness and inability to settle down following his return from France infers a nervous tension engendered during the conflict. Here, the suggestion of Nick as convalescent, reflects a resonance frequency finely attuned to the hysteria of Gatsby's parties, and the idea of modernity as a whole. As Charles Baudelaire in "The Painter of Modern Life" notes, "The convalescent like the child, is possessed in the highest degree of the faculty of keenly interesting himself in things, be they apparently of the most trivial . . . The child sees everything in a state of newness; he is always *drunk*. Nothing more resembles what we call inspiration than the delight with which a child absorbs form and colour [sic]" (Baudelaire 8). Furthermore, what Baudelaire describes as the convalescent/child's absorption with, "form and colour" allows for a more direct interrogation of how Nick describes Gatsby's parties, through juxtaposing the language of modern memory with the Fordian conditions of commodity production.

In setting the scene for Gatsby's first party, Fitzgerald highlights and harmonizes its individual components, where Nick's voice in particular rotates and directs the reader's visual gaze with a smooth cinematic quality:

> On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors d'oeuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail was set up, and stocked with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another. (*GG* 33)

The flow of Fitzgerald's prose, suggests an apparently spontaneous, yet prolonged impression of one's eye casually drifting across the scene. Yet at the same time, the prose is resonant with the understated implication of a carefully controlled, automatic movement conveyed by the delayed alliteration, and extended assonance of 'buffet", "baked", "bewitched", "garnished", "glistening", "spiced", and "salads". Here Gatsby's "bar with a real brass rail" serves to delineate both color and form, where in capturing the sensual detail of Gatsby's banquet, Fitzgerald both literally and figuratively underlines his description, while at the same time investing it with pace and rhythm, where the splendor of the food and drink presents itself as though on a conveyor belt where delicacy follows delicacy. Even the drinks themselves, particularly the, "cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another" again highlight the juxtaposition of elements both fluid and static, that point to the way time and memory under the pressure of modernity are in many ways forced to co-join in new and highly unstable combinations.

This idea of time being key to the understanding of modernity shows Fitzgerald to be keenly attuned to an inherent contradiction of speed and stasis at the heart of American culture. As Nick proceeds further into Gatsby's mansion[51] his description of the party becomes increasingly defined in terms of a deliberate acceleration of events, which ironically captures a sense of Nick's own memory slowing in order to capture and recall the idiosyncrasy of the guests and entertainment:

> By seven o'clock the orchestra has arrived - no thin five-piece affair but a whole pit full of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos and low and high drums. The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing up-stairs; the cars from New York are parked five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colors and hair shorn in strange new ways, and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile. The bar is in full swing and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside until the air is alive with chatter and laughter and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other's names. (*GG* 33-34)

Although only three sentences long the passage juxtaposes an extended lyricism, with an almost surgical tautness of language, indicative of tension and speed. Tellingly at this point, Nick's voice adopts the present tense to relate past events, further intimating the way memory not only controls the speed of time and how it is perceived, but also the dynamic of modernity itself. Fitzgerald's intuition is that the distance between embarkation and arrival at one's destination can only be measured in recognizing acceleration and deceleration as the new units of measurement for both distance and time. Here, Fitzgerald's concern with the inherent contradiction of

American society as being embodied in the idea of simultaneous movement, both increasing and decreasing in speed, constantly advancing yet constantly in retreat is central to the understanding of Gatsby's party as a cipher of American culture as a whole. This idea of divergent movement in terms of Nick's own voice, plays out as Fitzgerald accelerates the pace of his sentences through the use of anaphora. Despite the pace of the final sentence naturally increasing with the repeated use of "and", Fitzgerald slows the action, causing the reader's eye and ear to pause and linger on the, "floating rounds of cocktails", and "casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot", which both precipitate and delay a non-memory.

In returning to his underlying theme of memory and its relation to modernity Fitzgerald continues to draw on both the material and abstract nature of Gatsby's party, in what is suggestive at times of an audible spoken rhythm. This rhythm is crucial to the way Fitzgerald evokes a subtle sense of growing anticipation through the preparation and arrival of the strangely disembodied, dreamlike guests with, "hair shorn in strange new ways", and "the last swimmers . . . dressing up-stairs", who similar to the liquor being served combine elements both fluid and static. However here, as the party gains momentum Fitzgerald's language reflects how the speed of modernity makes it increasingly difficult for memory to adapt and respond to the unconscious influence of capital:

> The lights grow brighter as the earth lurches away from the sun and now the orchestra is playing yellow cocktail music and the opera of voices pitches a key higher. Laughter is easier, minute by minute, spilled with prodigality, tipped out at a cheerful word. The groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath – already there are wanderers, confident girls who weave

> here and there among the stouter and more stable, become for a sharp, joyous moment the center of a group and then excited with triumph glide on through the sea-change of faces and voices and color under the constantly changing light. (*GG* 34)

Nick's impressions of the party become audibly and visually more intense. In doing so Fitzgerald conveys the idea of Gatsby's own self-invention to be a creative force, which allows the guests at the party to abandon their former identity. Subsequently Fitzgerald captures not only the transfiguration of inebriation, but the hybrid mix and making of America itself where, "groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath" just as Marshall Berman in *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* intimates a similar relationship between the condition of industrialized society, and what he terms a "unity of disunity" to be the essence of modernity. Berman views the dynamic of a modern social economy based on the division of labor as, "a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish. To be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx said, 'all that is solid melts into air'" (15). Where Berman defines modernity in terms of movement, Fitzgerald depicts the flow and ebb of Gatsby's party to suggest a similar paradox of unity and disunity, "perpetual disintegration and renewal", not only in its associative pairing with modernity, but also its fundamental incompatibility. Just as Daisy's voice represents the epitome of modernity's inherent contradiction, the abstract of money becomes even more impressionistic and dissoluble, the more vividly one is able to visualize and imagine it. The very pattern of Fitzgerald's language points not only to Gatsby's own fascination with that voice, but more problematically our own as readers. Moreover, if taken as emblematic of the entire rhythm and cadence of the novel, the ramifications of Daisy's voice full of

money as it speaks to the reliability of Nick's own narrative voice, delineates the problem of renewal in relation to the modern hero of American literature.

It is in questioning Nick's role as an unreliable narrator, that the central agency of Daisy's own voice creates a more unsettling dynamic, with regards to the radical social changes America is undergoing during the 1920s. If Gatsby suggests a theme of renewal that may only be achieved through failure, it is also carried in Nick's own narrative voice, where the language of time and memory is directly linked to the speed and movement of modernity. For Gatsby, time as commodity value is made manifest in the wealth and possessions he displays in order to win Daisy. Consequently, memory takes on a new form of materialism whereby Gatsby sells illegal liquor, (which itself has the power to both enhance and diminish memory's value) in order to generate the wealth with which he buys his mansion; a monument to his memory of Daisy's house in Louisville. However, it is neither Gatsby's mansion nor the extravagant hedonism of his parties that allows him access to Daisy, but rather his friendship with Nick who as a bond salesman on Wall Street represents the frenetic and increasing speed of capital exchange standing at the forefront of American modernity.

The substance of Nick's claim to narrative authority stresses his own self-invention as an objective reporter of events, as he affirms, "I am one of the few honest people I have ever known" (*GG* 48). Yet this apparent honesty so keenly aligned with his original claim to, "reserve all judgments" (*GG* 5) is immediately contradicted by his own appraisal of Gatsby as someone who, "represented everything for which I have unaffected scorn (*GG* 6). Moreover, Tom, Daisy and Jordan, are all described and judged to varying degrees as "careless" people, and Nick for all his moral proselytizing is in no way squeamish about facilitating Gatsby and Daisy's affair.

Even more tellingly, despite being in full possession of the "facts" Nick chooses not to implicate his cousin in the killing of Myrtle Wilson. As Kent Cartwright notes, "Nick is capable of being an unreliable narrator at moments that are crucial to the story's development . . . he is also sometimes a confused, misleading, or inaccurate teller of his tale" (218). While the evidence points towards Nick's handling of the truth as questionable, few critics have addressed the crux of this problem to be intrinsic to the representation of wealth in the novel as a form of social discourse.

Turning once more to Gatsby's party, Nick perceives the performative function of wealth as an endorsement of both social status and social values observing, "the number of young Englishmen dotted about; all well dressed, all looking a little hungry and all talking in low earnest voices to solid and prosperous Americans" (*GG* 35). The implication of social appearance signifies an unheard and largely impressionistic conversation, where the echolalia of England's once flourishing colonial past, "young", "hungry" and "earnest" addresses and is met by the more prosaic economic certainty of a present day America, "solid" and "prosperous". Nevertheless, it is paradoxically the Englishmen's voices in whom Nick both recognizes himself as a salesman not just of bonds, but also the narrative of which Gatsby's parties are such a prominent feature, "I was sure that they were all selling something: bonds or insurance or automobiles. They were, at least agonizingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity and convinced that it was theirs for a few words in the right key" (*GG* 35). It is the leitmotif of money as an uncertain catalyst, which both displaces and confirms meaning, and provides a latent foreground for understanding, "the cymbals' song" of Daisy's own voice. In making resonant the language of capital, "for a few words in the right key" Nick consolidates his own narrative persona as a figure, "both within and without" the lineage of America's

industrial wealth, and the newly made millionaires of a booming stock market. Hence, the social discourse of wealth establishes Nick more problematically as a narrator who in order to tell the story has to be able to *sell* himself as a voice born out of the tension between old and new money, in proximity to both, and yet belonging to neither.

Nick's description of Gatsby's party mirrors to some extent Fitzgerald's own preoccupation with the rich. As Arthur Mizener notes, "No one will ever improve on Gatsby's attempt to imitate the life of inherited wealth or his devotion to the "orgiastic[52] future" as a commentary on Fitzgerald's life" (181). Yet it is not the simple aesthetic principle of money, but more the ambiguous and potentially volatile social relations it works to both expose and obscure, which complicate how far the reader may trust Nick as a salesman of American morality or business. When Fitzgerald questioned the poor sales of the novel Maxwell Perkins his editor commented that "It does seem to me . . . that it is over the heads of more people than you would probably suppose," (Kuehl and Bryer 101) despite its critical success. This would seem to indicate a degree of awareness, at least on Perkins's part, that having Nick serve as a narrator whose attitude towards wealth remains ambivalent, hamstrung Fitzgerald's approach to wealth as a topic and subject for a commercial American literary market. In other words, Nick cannot represent a moral point of reference for an America rapidly losing its innocence in the moral hypocrisy and materialism of Prohibition, while at the same time glamourizing and romanticizing a party whose host stands for that same corruption, any more than Fitzgerald can reconcile the noble intentions of America's founding constitutional principles, with the slaveholding interests of Jefferson and Washington. This contradiction again highlights Fitzgerald's idea of failure as a defining quality of modernity, where

Gatsby and by extension America's belief in manifest destiny is reframed as moral compromise.

Time's value again becomes a key factor in determining Nick's mixed feelings towards the wealth of surroundings, and vacuous company he encounters. The speed of superficial acquaintances, where Jordan Baker has no time to reply before two girls in twin yellow dresses, "moved casually on and her remark was addressed to the premature moon produced like the supper, no doubt, out of a caterer's basket" (*GG* 36) is particularly revealing. Fitzgerald's precise juxtaposition of elements both ephemeral and candid infers that the defining mode of modern American conversation is misdirection, where the "premature moon" becomes a commodity produced with the catering to be consumed. At the same time there is a schism between the speed of social discourse, and the perception of physical movement. Action is slowed just as rumors surrounding Gatsby accelerate, where drinks "float" towards people who, "descend" and "saunter" around his garden. Time is again rendered in acute terms of value as opposed to "values", where Nick on joining Jordan's East Egg party, which "had preserved a dignified homogeneity and assumed to itself the function of representing the staid nobility of the country-side", is aware of spending " a somehow wasteful and inappropriate half hour" with them (*GG* 37). This "dignified homogeneity" is the antithesis of the way the rest of Gatsby's party arranges and organizes itself through a series of multiple perspectives contracted and filtered through Nick's increasingly inebriated awareness that, "I had taken two finger bowls of champagne and the scene had changed before my eyes into something significant, elemental and profound" (*GG* 39). Consequently, Nick's narrative function aligns itself with the self-serving illusion of his immediate surroundings by again looking to visualize time in terms of both production and consumption.

Daisy's voice as part of Nick's narration is again present in the alchemic notion of the party transforming into, "something significant, elemental and profound" which immediately precedes his first introduction to Gatsby. Fitzgerald has now shifted tense from his initial description of the party in the present, "The party has begun" (34), to the past; "There was dancing now on the canvas in the garden, old men pushing young girls backward in eternal graceless circles, superior couples holding each other tortuously, fashionably and keeping in the corners – and a great number of single girls dancing individualistically or relieving the orchestra for a moment of the burden of the banjo or the traps" (*GG* 38-39). Fitzgerald contrasts age and youth, with an emphasis on time and movement allowing the reader to re-imagine and project the past as a liminal space. Young girls are on one level controlled and fashioned by the patriarchal movements of "old men" who are "pushing backwards", in "eternal graceless circles" or held as part of a couple "tortuously, fashionably and keeping in the corners". The direct juxtaposition of "tortuously" and "fashionably" suggests a visual movement, where time is literally represented as masochistic and at the same time vogue. Yet the forces of patriarchy also find a more ironic, disturbing counterpoint in the new rhythms of modernity, where young women find themselves entirely liberated and "dancing individualistically" to the music, even taking over the orchestra's instruments. This vivid sense of chimerical metamorphosis positions women at the center of modernity's synthesis of time, speed and the commodification of cultural memory:

> By midnight the hilarity had increased. A celebrated tenor had sung in Italian and a notorious contralto had sung in jazz and between the numbers people were doing "stunts" all over the garden while happy vacuous bursts of laughter rose toward the summer sky. A

> pair of stage 'twins" – who also turned out to be the girls in yellow – did a baby act in costume and champagne was served in glasses bigger than finger bowls. The moon had risen higher, and floating in the Sound was a triangle of silver scales, trembling a little to the stiff, tinny drip of the banjos on the lawn. (*GG* 39)

In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald explores American masculinity as suggestive of a new model of heroic identity based on failure. Moreover, the failure of Gatsby's party to influence and appeal to Daisy's affections highlights a more ambivalent attitude towards the renewal of an American literary hero in the age of mass production. Fitzgerald treats modernity as a direct means of not only challenging, but also recasting the romantic virtues of honor and fidelity, through a more ironic treatment of medieval chivalry. As a result, Daisy Buchanan's "voice full of money" signals a new configuration of American masculinity in both Jay Gatsby and Nick Carraway, and allows for a more radical reconsideration of the modern male protagonist of American literature. The renewal of the American literary hero in Gatsby is integral to the way Fitzgerald uses Daisy's voice to pattern the narrative, whereby as an unreliable narrator, Nick Carraway's language collapses the distinction between time and space as indicative of how male and female bodies are gendered and organized under the acceleratory social pressures of modernity. Nevertheless, it is the underlying feminine sensibility demonstrated in Nick's narrative voice that also allows him to acknowledge and define Gatsby's 'greatness', and as will also be seen later, links to how Fitzgerald in *The Love of The Last Tycoon* uses Cecelia Brady to similarly acknowledge a set of exceptional qualities in Monroe Stahr, as a man set apart from other men.

Chapter 2 – 'Guide-Books to the Battlefield' – The End of the American Hero in *Tender is the Night*

In *Tender is the Night,* Fitzgerald advances and builds on the theme of heroic renewal, by questioning and further exploring the criteria of what an "American" and a hero represent. In taking the idea of an individual, who facing insurmountable odds and knowing all is lost accepts and submits to their fate,[53] *Tender* inverts the tragic romanticism of Jay Gatsby, where Dick Diver's moral collapse and decline into alcoholism, delineates a far more harrowing account of emotional and psychological disintegration. If Gatsby is the projection of a lost dream of American exceptionalism, Dick Diver represents how the essential trait of heroic individualism so long manifested in the figure of the American pioneer can now no longer serve as an agent of modern American masculine renewal. Here, it should be noted that one problem with viewing Gatsby as the renewal of a quintessential American protagonist lies in how such a figure is defined and read in ostensibly conventional terms of race and gender.[54] In other words, Gatsby's characterization as founded on the ideological basis of self-invention and manifest destiny conforms to a code of frontier masculinity, whose cultural hegemony remains bound to the history and mythology of the West. To similarly assert that Dick Diver offers a resurgent prototype of American masculinity, again implies that any such figure must be constructed and judged on the basis of white, heteronormative language,[55] in determining what it means to be both an American and a "hero".

To characterize Jay Gatsby or Dick Diver as products of an American culture defined by white patriarchal society, overlooks the defining flux and sensibility of modernity, and the various movements of modernism it gives rise to.[56] The figure of

the modern American protagonist that Fitzgerald develops in *Tender* links the perception of heroic renewal, with how and where such an individual is positioned both historically and socially, in terms of his immediate surroundings and environment. Fitzgerald's technique is to create a new psychological realism, not by abandoning standard literary convention for the more avant-garde experimentation found in the stream of consciousness of Faulkner or Wolfe, but rather disturbing the relationship of time to space. This narrative splintering is technically evident in the writing itself, where Fitzgerald again as in *Gatsby* intimates the aesthetics of cubism in certain aspects of description as well as in the novel's overall structure. Consequently, *Tender* adopts a form that paradoxically captures and frustrates its artistic intention, what Fitzgerald referred to as "the lingering after-effects of emotion"[57] which had so influenced him through the works of Joseph Conrad. This chapter will explore how in *Tender* Fitzgerald provides a more rounded psychological profile of what a "failed" American hero may look like, while at the same time addressing how such a figure may represent the basis for a more radical critique of the white bourgeois American male.

The foregrounding of the moral and psychological conflict within Dick is clear in Fitzgerald's original plan for the novel where he describes him as, "a man who is a natural idealist, a spoiled priest,[58] giving in for various causes to the ideas of the haute Bourgeoisie, and in his rise to the top of the social world losing his idealism, his talent and turning to drink and dissipation" (qtd. in Bruccoli 393). However, if the form of the novel is ironically held together and given coherence, due to the language of physical and mental disintegration, the concept of the American hero becomes much more tenuous in so far as the structure of the novel is concerned. *Tender* is a novel held together by diametric extremes whether it be aesthetically in the interplay

between outer light and inner dark, or geographically and culturally between the old world and the new. Writing through the upheaval of the Wall Street Crash and the early years of the Depression, Fitzgerald recognizes and responds to the bipolar nature of America's new socio-cultural and economic climate, by articulating what he would later express to be, "the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function" (Fitzgerald, *The Crack-Up* 69). Consequently, the "natural idealist" and "spoiled priest" suggest in Dick a discursive paradox, whose language consistently both figures and fragments while at the same time maintaining a clear narrative framework

The idea of both financial debt and emotional bankruptcy are central to the disintegration of Dick Diver, where Fitzgerald infers that Nicole Diver's insanity and Dick's alcoholism are symptomatic of the capitalist system itself. The direct link between madness and capitalism is prefigured and foregrounded in the incestuous relationship between Nicole and her father, an American trade baron, who represents one of "the great feudal families" (*TITN* 147) [59] of Chicago, and which leads to her breakdown and schizophrenia. David S. Brown describes this relationship in more depth where he observes how Devereaux Warren, "conforms to Fitzgerald's tragic vision of an American whose creativity, culture, and sexual codes have recently come under the purview of money and moneymakers" (255).[60] Yet as Brown goes on to underline it is an incestuous dynamic, which also lies at the heart of Nicole's relationship with Dick, who as her psychiatrist and husband provides for her a surrogate father figure, "In the "battle" of the fathers, Warren wealth triumphs over Diver integrity. As Nicole's physician, Dick becomes her new lover, directing his patient's emotional transference to himself. This violation of professional ethics, encouraged by Baby Warren's interest in "buying her sister a doctor, raises the point

of a greater generational seduction" (256). Most tellingly the symbiosis between Dick and Nicole is a form of self-identification and psychic detachment around which the parties they throw on the Riviera and in Paris serve to conflate them, as one single personality "the Divers".

Dick Diver's character embodies the values of white bourgeois society as a study in psychological disintegration. Consequently viewed in relation to the decadence of the so called "lost generation" of expatriate Americans in Europe during the 1920s, *Tender* delineates the re-drawing of new national borders and social conventions, to reflect the post-war order. Dick as a child of the Gilded Age is divided between loyalty to both his idealism and ambition, values which conflate in America's increasing preoccupation with wealth during the late 19th century. Yet as Van Wyck Brooks points out society disapproves of the individual who resists the new materialism of a pioneer culture rapidly conforming to the principles of American business and industry:

> The mere assertion of individuality was a menace to the integrity of what is called the herd: how much more so that extreme form of individuality, the creative spirit, whose whole tendency is skeptical, critical, realistic, disruptive! "It is no wonder consequently," as Herbert Croly says, "that the pioneer democracy viewed with distrust and aversion the man with a special vocation and high standards of achievement." In fact, one was required not merely to forgo one's individual tastes and beliefs and ideas but positively to cry up the beliefs and tastes of the herd. (71)

The cultural myth of America as prelapsarian second Eden[61] is a powerful one. In *Gatsby* Fitzgerald inverts the historical trajectory of the western movement towards the Pacific, by having both his protagonist and narrator turn back east in order to expose the hypocrisy attendant to the thesis of national identity, as a product of the frontier.[62] Dick goes one step further and leaves the New World for the Old, in which together with Nicole he not only re-invents himself objectively, but also projects national identity as a separate environment. When Rosemary Hoyt asks whether the Divers like the Riviera, Abe North replies, "They have to like it," . . . "They invented it" (*TITN* 24). Nicole herself refers to, "*Our* beach that Dick made out of a pebble pile" where what differentiates Dick's own act of self-invention from that of Gatsby is that Dick's imagination does not give birth to his own 'Platonic conception' (*GG* 77) as it does his predecessor, but more the multiplicity of roles both public and private, which lend credence to the social mirage of the Divers as a couple. The cultural myth of America now becomes the mass-produced image of Dick's own social class, a wealthy yet ultimately decadent and doomed expatriate American community on the French Riviera.[63]

Fitzgerald plays with the popular image of American expatriates, as a means of both disassociating and relating to a more problematic dialectic of national identity determined by wealth. However, the overall schema of *Tender* lies in not so much dismissing the commercial mythology of American materialism, but in the more telling observation that one may both recognize and mistake oneself in the same reflection.[64] Towards the end of the novel, as Nicole leaves Dick for Tommy Barban, the ex soldier of fortune who fights a duel in defense of Nicole's 'honor' and who becomes her lover, a newspaper vendor encaptures how the economic boom of the 1920s has cheapened and vulgarized the mystique that the Divers once embodied:

> "Buddies," interrupted the American again. "You think I'm wasting my time – but lots of others don't." He brought a grey clipping from his purse . . . It cartooned millions of Americans pouring from liners with bags of gold. "You think I'm not going to get part of that? Well, I am. I'm just over from Nice for the Tour de France." (*TITN* 345)

Dick recognizes the American as the same man who accosted him five years earlier in the Rue de Saint-Ange in Paris, an individual whom he describes at the time as, "a thin faced American, perhaps thirty, with an air of being scarred and a slight but sinister smile . . . a type of which he had been conscious since early youth – a type that loafed about tobacco stores . . . Intimate to garages, where he had vague business conducted in undertones . . . the dim borderland of crime on which he stood" (*TITN* 106).

Here for Dick there is no attempt to identify with his fellow countryman. The cheap reproduction of newsprint does not change, but merely highlights Dick's imminent abandonment by both Nicole, and American expatriate society. Yet if the newspaper cartoon is an associative image for Dick's memory, where time and space are themselves divided by the Divers' physical and symbolic disintegration as a couple, it is an image that also fundamentally undermines Dick's heroic validity. The minute he attempts to self-identify outside modernity's typology of, "Americans pouring from liners with bags of gold" he becomes a redundant figure of literal and figurative dissipation whose story has no more insight than the hustler who, "watched, through heaven knew what small chink of the mind, the people who came in and out" (*TITN* 106). In his failure to resist the forces of capital, which dominate and underwrite his

marriage, Dick simply fades back into the anonymous boom of an America heading towards its own crash.

What further complicates the argument for Dick Diver, as a figure of heroic renewal is in part the novel's unresolved structural problems, which Fitzgerald continued to revise until his death in 1940. The long gestation of *Tender*, which Fitzgerald struggled with between 1925 and 1934, reflects not so much a stalled creative impulse[65], as it does a prolonged intellectual attempt to manage his material in a more innovative narrative form. The immediate problem is one of credibility, where for the reader to accept Dick as a model of noble failure, the circumstances of his deterioration have to achieve a naturalism, which the chronology of the narrative fails to deliver. As Matthew J. Bruccoli points out with regards to the initial critical reception of the novel, "The most likely cause for the critics' feeling that Dick's collapse is unconvincing is that the time-scheme of *Tender* is unclear or even contradictory. Because it is impossible to be sure of the years in which certain crucial events take place after 1925, it is difficult for the reader to gauge the rate of Dick's deterioration" (*The Composition* 439). However, if the narrative impetus and artistic integrity of the novel is centered around understanding the pathological weakness of Dick himself, the subject of heroic renewal becomes far more integral to the consistency of character perspective, which has itself implications for how best to present the work as a whole.

In attempting to resolve this problem, Malcolm Cowley's 1953 "final author's" version of the novel based on Fitzgerald's notes, repositions the early part of Dick Diver's history[66] in order to ensure a linear chronology of events. This does away with the lengthy exposition of Rosemary Hoyt's viewpoint in presenting the

initial glamour and mystery surrounding the Diver's lifestyle and marriage. As Fitzgerald himself noted in a letter to H. L. Menken,

> The first part, the romantic introduction, was too long and too elaborated, largely because of the fact that it had been written over a series of years with varying plans, but everything in the book conformed to a definite intention and if I had to start to write it again tomorrow I would adopt the same plan irrespective of the fact of whether I had, in this case, brought it off or not brought it off. That is what most of the critics fail to understand . . . that the motif of the "dying fall" was absolutely deliberate and did not come from any diminuition of vitality, but from a definite plan. (Fitzgerald, *Letters* 256)

Whatever his own personal misgivings may have been about the artistic success of the novel, Fitzgerald's "definite intention" clearly rejects a straightforward chronology, in favor of a more jarring narrative shift in part two. However, Wayne C Booth maintains, "If "identification" with Dick is to be the one standard of this book's success, Rosemary's angle of vision is not adequate at the beginning; it cannot establish the contrast between Dick and the world that is pulling him down." (195). That said, Booth's point regarding the lack of 'contrast' as offered by Rosemary's narrative viewpoint, overlooks the very clear idea of contraposition as an aesthetic and structural feature of Fitzgerald's prose. Kirk Curnutt responds to criticism of Fitzgerald's narrative structure in *Tender* where he observes, "According to Morton P. Levitt, the defining difference between nineteenth and twentieth-century literature is the modernists' desire to eliminate the authorial presence within the novel . . . Through techniques of fragmentation, juxtaposition, and allusion, they manipulated

point of view 'to incite our involvement with the text, . . . they induce the modern reader to become a virtual co-creator of the text'" (133). This method is chiefly evident where Fitzgerald's highly sophisticated contrast of light and dark offers a more fruitful insight into how the narrative spine and coherence of the novel works.[67] Fitzgerald's delayed juxtaposition of, "the bright tan prayer rug of the beach"(*TITN* 9) and "the outer, darker sea" (*TITN* 17), later gives way to an inversion of inner darkness and external light, and suggests a consistent fault-line linking the more latent images of disintegration cogent to the Riviera and the Divers' marriage. In using the term fault-line, I am looking to highlight Fitzgerald's deconstruction of the textual as much as physical landscape still bearing the scars of the trenches, where the Western Front continues to both literally and psychologically split continental Europe. Indeed through the violation of the natural environment, the connection between landscape and language finds itself profoundly embedded in the poetic and prosaic rhythms of speech of the post-war period. As Paul Fussell notes of the pre-war literary psyche:

> There was no *Waste Land*, with its rats' alleys, dull canals, and dead men who have lost their bones: it would take four years of trench warfare to bring these to consciousness . . . There was no "Valley of Ashes" in *The Great Gatsby*. One read Hardy and Kipling and Conrad and frequented worlds of traditional moral action delineated in traditional moral language. (23)

In *Tender* the idea of text as broken landscape allows Fitzgerald to construct a new heroic mode, in which failure is not so much the catalyst for renewal, as it is the means by which the novel's perspective disseminates to cohere. In other words, the text serves to reify its social environment, as a conscious reality navigated by a character whose personality is captured in montage. For an individual such as Dick

Diver the need to locate, orientate and assert his masculinity requires a more counter-intuitive language, where when judged against the collective global trauma of millions dead, a man can no longer adopt the qualities and values of exceptional courage, direct action, and absolute moral integrity. In *Tender* the concepts of heroism and masculinity, already weakened and compromised by the decadence and decay of late Victorian fin di siècle, reflect how the romantic language of chivalric battle[68] has been reconfigured after four years of bloodshed on the Western Front. As Fussell points out, "The language is that which two generations of readers had been accustomed to associate with the quiet action of personal control and Christian self-abnegation ("sacrifice"), as well as with more violent actions of aggression and defense" (21). In Dick Diver the 19th century gentleman's code of fair play built on an image of muscular Christianity has been shattered, and replaced by modernism's ironic coup d'état. This irony Fussell goes on to underline stems from a ""raised" essentially feudal language" where, "To be earnestly brave is to be *gallant*, . . . Bravery considered after the fact is *valor*, . . . Obedient soldiers are *the brave*, . . . Cowardice results in *dishonor*" (21-22).

Consequently in *Tender*, Fitzgerald uses the industrialized slaughter of the war to question the practical role and intellectual function of the individual, faced with the radical new conditions of a degraded and degenerate Western culture, "an old bitch gone in the teeth . . . a botched civilization" (Pound 101). The "willingness of heart", which defines and informs Gatsby's heroic mode of both thought and feeling, achieves in Dick Diver a much darker tone and rhythm. Whereas Gatsby projects an imaginative vision in the pursuit of a mythic ideal, Dick's golden lifestyle cannibalizes and consumes itself, "Save among a few of the tough-minded and perennially suspicious, he had the power of arousing a fascinated and uncritical love.

The reaction came when he looked back with awe at the carnivals of affection he had given, as a general might gaze upon a massacre he had ordered to satisfy and impersonal blood lust" (*TITN* 35). Under the weight of its own glittering façade, the transformative quality of violence serves the analogy of Dick, not as a hero of manly virtue, but rather a pariah who as host consumes and feeds on his own merciless celebrity. As a result, Fitzgerald combines the social environment of Dick's parties and the savage topography of the war, to produce a more questionable model of heroic individualism.

Unlike Gatsby's parties, Dick is looking to sustain rather than create a mirage. Just as Gatsby's "extraordinary gift for hope" carries an impetus and imaginative energy, which is ultimately fatal to him, Dick possesses a similar "willingness of heart", which collapses under the psychological strain of attempting to live up to and maintain an impossible ideal of transcendent youth and beauty. Dick's value as a Rhodes scholar, "too much of a capital investment to be shot off in a gun" (*TITN* 113) not only keeps him out of the war, but also represents what he considers a defining moment, "the very acme of bachelorhood", where in full heroic mode he feels his yet unrealized potential, "Most of us have a favorite, a heroic period, in our lives and that was Dick Diver's" (*TITN* 134). The nobility of Dick's heroic failure,[69] to some extent mirrors Fitzgerald's own struggle to achieve an emotional and psychological cohesion during the onset of Zelda's insanity. With *Tender*, Fitzgerald's attempt to maintain his critical reputation as a literary artist, combined with the creative and financial strain of having to continue to write short stories to pay for both Zelda's medical care and his daughter Scottie's education, added to his own alcoholic breakdown during the early 1930s where he acknowledges the diminishment of his own imaginative powers and creativity.[70]

Nonetheless, it is a heroic struggle where Fitzgerald draws on his own moment of crisis in outlining a new idiom of American masculinity. Here Dick who does not see action during the war, but rather works as part of "a neurological unit forming in Bar-sur-Aube" stands in stark contrast to the quasi fascist machismo of Tommy Barban, who interjects a harsh, inconsonant edge to the Divers' parties, "He was tall and his body was hard but overspare save for the bunched force gathered in his shoulders and upper arms[71] . . . a faint disgust always in his face which marred the full fierce lustre of his brown eyes" (*TITN* 24). Barban appears the epitome of modern man permanently at conflict, "since I was eighteen I've worn the uniform of eight countries" (*TITN* 18). It is ironic; therefore, that Barban should also subscribe to an entirely romantic adherence and attitude to the "civilized" code of male violence, in carrying with him a pair of "archaic" dueling pistols (*TITN* 55). When Rosemary asks Barban how he feels about the Divers he replies, " . . . they make me want to go to war" (*TITN* 38). Barban offers no further explanation of this statement, yet what is clear is that Fitzgerald himself continues to highlight the lingering presence of the Western Front, and the way it challenges the conventional language of heroism in Dick's own practice of self-analysis, signaling its wider conscious and unconscious influence on civilian society:

> Dick awoke at five after a long dream of war, walked to the window and stared out of it at the Zugersee. His dream had begun in somber majesty; navy blue uniforms crossed a dark plaza behind bands playing the second movement of Prokofieff's Love for Three Oranges. Presently there were fire engines, symbols of disaster, and a ghastly uprising of the mutilated in a dressing station. He turned on his bed-

> lamp light and made a thorough note of it ending with the half-ironic phrase: "Non combatant's shell-shock." (*TITN* 206)

The satiric undertone to the passage captures the increasing cognitive dissonance Dick feels towards his wife as patient, and himself as healer. The phallic Freudian overtones of such symbols and phrases as "fire engines" and "ghastly [male] uprising" carries a highly staged and artificial gloss. Moreover, Dick's memory reconfigures chronological time as he recognizes the growing disconnection between himself and Nicole, "For him time stood still and then every few years accelerated in a rush, like the quick re-wind of a film, but for Nicole the years slipped away by clock and calendar and birthday, with the added poignance of her perishable beauty" (*TITN* 206). In his self-analysis, Dick's "long dream of war" is suggestive of a more ingenuous quality of affectation, with its military colors of "somber majesty" and "navy blue uniforms" orchestrated to Prokofieff's *Love for Three Oranges*. Moreover, as a clinical symptom, his own half mocking diagnosis of "Non combatant's shell shock" highlights a keen self-awareness that Dick is a former soldier with no combat experience to speak of.[72] The "long dream of war", where as a man Dick may have "proved" himself in battle is a world in which Dick as a psychiatrist now embodies and practices the language of Freudian analysis, which destabilizes the relationship between discursive modes of pre and post-war masculinity.

Dick's heroic persona as one of noble failure is not seeking to disguise his past, or reinvent himself in the same way that from the collective dead of the war James Gatz emerges to become Jay Gatsby. Dick is more accurately personified through both his domestic and social role, where the private and the public sphere of both American and European society momentarily synthesize to achieve a dazzling

golden alchemy of youth and beauty. On this point, similarities between *Tender* and Ford Maddox Ford's *The Good Soldier* bear a fruitful comparison. This is evident not only in their themes of marital infidelity, and the emotional disillusionment of the principle characters, but also how the figure of Edward Ashburnham serves as a forerunner to Dick Diver. Both are men, who represent on the surface, "the cleanest looking sort of chap" (Ford 18) with impeccable social reputations and military credentials, yet whose private weakness and vice leads to their mutual downfall. More significantly, the Ashburnhams and the Divers are two couples whose marriages reflect a singularly existential post-war sensibility and psychological conflict, where the dominant personality is ultimately female. In this sense Fitzgerald was revolutionary in anticipating the problems inherent in subverting the performative language of post-war American masculinity. In Dick the "spoiled priest" is not simply a man who has abandoned his vocation, but one who represents a means of recognizing modernity's feminizing threat of emasculation.

Here Fitzgerald captures how the male dominated pre-war feudal system of land ownership is crucial in linking Dick's tragedy to more problematic questions of gender and capital. To talk of failure in relation to the renewal of the American hero, male virtues of nobility, chivalry, and honor are no longer capable of sustaining a stable historical continuity, based on the caste system of inherited wealth. As society's organizing principle, traditional patriarchal structures of language are being rapidly eroded by women energized politically through newly acquired suffrage,[73] and by the social economy of post-war consumption.[74] Just as Ashburnham abdicates his martial role, and the running of his estate to his wife Leonora, Dick combines his domestic role in marriage to Nicole, with his public persona as eminent psychiatrist. As a result, Dick finds himself unable to reconcile his early idealism as a renowned Doctor of

Psychology with the emasculating role of social host, from which he derives and equally abdicates responsibility for protecting and taking care of Nicole. In applying the idea of heroic masculinity to a more nuanced critique of capitalism, the opening of *Tender* with its panoramic view of the Cote d'Azur takes on a more salient resonance;

> On the pleasant shore of the French Riviera, about half way between Marseilles and the Italian border, stands a large, proud, rose-colored hotel. Deferential palms cool its flushed façade, and before it stretches a short dazzling beach. Lately it has become a summer resort of notable and fashionable people; a decade ago it was almost deserted after its English clientele went north in April. Now, many bungalows cluster near it, but when this story begins only the cupolas of a dozen old villas rotted like water lilies among the massed pines between Gausse's Hotel des Etrangers and Cannes, five miles away. (*TITN* 9)

The silent workings of private wealth dominate the opening image of the novel. Fitzgerald establishes and imbues the historical timeline with money's insidious agency, hinting at the cracks in the paintwork embedded in the perception of a landscape married to the movement and exchange of capital. The temporal shift from "a decade ago" gives the "short dazzling beach" a harsh distortive glare in foregrounding the "notable and fashionable people", who currently make up the resort's clientele. The hotel is "large, proud and rose colored", adjectives which suggest both hubris and the distortion of nostalgia, where the past in relation to the present is colored by a cosmetic quality of artificial preservation and servility in the image of the hotel's "deferential palms" which, "cool its flushed façade." While at first glance the textual and navigational points of reference, appear fairly innocuous, the subtextual signposts of *Tender* reflects a decaying landscape unable to naturally

sustain itself organically, where "a dozen old villas rotted like water lilies" serve as a reminder of both the transitory nature of beauty[75], and by inference their previous occupants.[76]

Hence, by the time the novel opens, the workings of American capital have already altered the topographical shape of the Riviera in defining the social hegemony of its current atmosphere. This wealth is gendered in both the appearance and behavior of expatriates, who have come to create their own self-sustaining community. As seen from the perspective of Rosemary Hoyt, the introduction of Dick is particularly revealing, where on her first meeting with the Divers, predominance is given initially to Nicole, "Her bathing suit was pulled off her shoulders and her back, a ruddy, orange brown, set off by a string of creamy pearls, shone in the sun. Her face was hard and lovely and pitiful" (*TITN* 12). It is Nicole's face which Fitzgerald goes on to describe in terms of masculine substance and solidity, "the effect was that it had been made first on the heroic scale with strong structure and marking, as if the features and vividness of brow and coloring, everything we associate with temperament and character, had been molded with a Rodinesque intention, and then chiseled away in the direction of prettiness to a point where a single slip would have irreparably diminished its force and quality" (*TITN* 23). As a result, there is a gendered displacement of male authority, where Nicole's beauty controls and directs the "Rodinesque intention", while at the same time undermining its assertion of "temperament" and "character."

It is the dissemination of these perceived "male" qualities, in Dick's exposure to Nicole's wealth that undermines his own ability to achieve the ambition of becoming a great psychiatrist. Fitzgerald further suggests the idea of Dick's "emasculation", where in the opening scene at the beach, Nicole's "ruddy" complexion and "hard" face pose an acute juxtaposition with Dick, who on wearing a

pair of "transparent black lace draws . . . lined with flesh-colored cloth" is accused by Mr. McKisco of playing "a pansy's trick!" (*TITN* 28). McKisco is himself described as, "a scrawny, freckle-and-red man of thirty" (*TITN* 14) who, "had created his wife's world, and allowed her few liberties in it" (*TITN* 16). McKisco's criticism of Dick gives crisp voice to the repression of his own anxiety at the suggestion of camp effeminacy, where the erosion of Victorian codes of masculinity does not prevent them continuing to inform social attitudes towards gender roles. In this sense, Fitzgerald was well aware of how the ongoing social and cultural transformation that permeated the music, fashion and popular media of the 1920s facilitated more unsettling constructions of sex and gender. McKisco attempts to assert his masculinity, through financially catering to his wife's material desires, and suppressing her voice. Ironically it is his wife's over-talkative nature, which leads him to his ill advised duel with Tommy Barban. On the other hand Dick is financially dependent on Nicole, and asserts his masculinity through attempting to manage and maintain a social ideal of his wife as a product of capitalist consumption, which ultimately absorbs and destroys him. Greg Forter goes even further where he writes:

> The shift to the second stage of capitalist production – monopoly capitalism – vastly curtailed possibilities for self-making, . . . Many (white) men experienced and described this shift as emasculation. There developed, in other words, a widespread consensus about the "feminizing" effects of bourgeois modernity, a consensus solidified by the growing economic and political autonomy of women. It began to seem as if perhaps the feminine virtues had "overcivilized" men in ways that enabled women to displace them and even to gain ascendancy over them. (26)

Similarly throughout *Tender,* the increasingly ambiguous boundaries of gender and sexuality pronounce the death of a more mythic masculinity around which American national identity coheres. On this point, Dana Brand goes so far as to assert that, "Women, *Tender is the Night* implies, are the sex most suited to enjoy the experience of modernity, the sex most suited to dominate American culture in the era of advanced capitalism" (138). Following this analysis, Dick illustrates the inherent tensions felt within an American social economy, in which male social capital is increasingly powered and undermined by female consumption.

Turning to the influence of modernist art on Fitzgerald's writing, this concern with the feminizing effects of modernity highlights a new approach, not only to a reading of *Tender*, but Fitzgerald studies in general. Once again the influence of cubism on Fitzgerald's work in asking questions of the traditional male idiom of American heroism should not be viewed as critically inexpedient. As Linda Patterson Miller observes in relation to *The Great Gatsby*:

> The brilliance of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* as a cubist narrative cannot be overplayed . . . Rather than telling Gatsby's story chronologically, Fitzgerald fractures the telling by moving both forward and backward simultaneously, recreating layers of time and providing increasingly varied and contradictory renditions of the "true" story. Within this perfectly balanced structure that continues to provide checks and balances and counterbalances, *Gatsby* becomes the quintessential cubist narrative that evokes the "fragmentary and unconsulting feel of lived life." (196-197)

Yet while Miller's analysis of cubist influence on Fitzgerald's writing provides an eloquent insight into *Gatsby*, it does not go far enough in tracing how he continues to develop its style and technique in *Tender*. More tellingly, Miller also overlooks how the aesthetic cohesion and quality of Fitzgerald's writing suggests a wider range of artistic influence, in the possibilities and interplay of light and texture found in the impressionism of 19th century artists such as Monet or Cezanne, and which subsequently gives rise to the more primitive colors of post-impressionist artists such as Gauguin and Van Gogh. The effect is not merely to imply a sense of cognitive dissonance, but rather to convey a landscape whose boundaries compromise a structurally gendered perspective where, "In the early morning the distant image of Cannes, the pink and cream of old fortifications, the purple Alps that bounded Italy, were cast across the water and lay quavering in the ripples and rings sent up by sea-plants through the clear shallows" (*Tender* 9). It is not merely the fluidity of the image, pink and cream and purple with its quavering ripples and rings suggestive of a feminine mystique infusing the waters of the Mediterranean. It is the multiplicity of echoes, refractions, and reflections in whose figurative and literal dissipation the environment of the Riviera is held together, that encapsulates the cubist logic of reality, and which highlights the crack in both the Divers' lives and tragedy.

However, in making a stylistic comparison between cubism and Fitzgerald's own writing, it is necessary to be more explicit as to what the key features of cubism are. While critics may contest an exact definition of what represents early, high and post cubist aesthetics, the creation of volume by faceting, line used as a structural element rather than to create perspective, and the use of a series of planes tilted at varying angles to the surface of the canvas in order to induce volume in space (Cooper 30-31), would be the obvious components to acknowledge. From a structural point of

view *Tender* with its shifting timeframe, and sense of fragmentary perspective suggests a similar re-arrangement of textual elements to create a more radical narrative canvas, where everything is strained, heightened and intensified in the effect of color and movement. Yet this effect in itself continues to affirm a strong female control and influence. As Ronald Berman points out:

> In a letter of 1935 to Sara Murphy, Fitzgerald described his "theory" of fiction in terms of modernist painting. He had, he admitted, used her often in *Tender is the Night*. She was present throughout the book but not as a fulfilled character: "[I]n a hundred . . . places I tried to evoke not *you* but the effect that you produce on men – the echoes and reverberations – a poor return for what you have given by your living presence, but nevertheless an artist's (what a word) sincere attempt to preserve a true fragment rather than a 'portrait' by Mr. Sargent." (152)

Sara and Gerald Murphy, who were the Fitzgeralds' closest friends during their time on the Riviera at Juan-les-Pins[77], were also friends with Picasso having met the artist in the early 1920s in Paris. Gerald Murphy produced a number of paintings in the Cubist style, and Picasso also painted Sara in a number of his works. Fitzgerald's direct exposure to the style of cubism, as a predominantly male dominated perspective, may inform the basis for a richer consideration of how the structure of *Tender* responds not only to modernity's aesthetics, but the focus of the male gaze as a destabilizing metaphor for male anxiety, as much as male desire.

So far this chapter has addressed how the role of the American hero in *Tender* highlights the critical problem of reading a novel largely privileged by the assumption

of white heteronormative language, around which the central protagonist is constructed. I further submit, that one way of critically negotiating the perceived temporal and spatial dissonance of *Tender* is to allow for a more fluid approach to how questions of gender and sexuality inform Fitzgerald's deliberate plan to fracture, and aesthetically splinter the text, through recalibrating the gendered relationship between modernist art, and the cultural landscape of American post-war society. By emphasizing new forms of female consumption and social capital, I would argue that Fitzgerald is looking to locate the dissolution of the traditional American hero, within the dying fall of his general narrative schema. In doing so, Fitzgerald subverts the idea of heroism, by using Dick as an example of noble failure to deliberately destabilize the narrative lens of an essentially white male modernist intelligentsia. I will now go on to expand on how Fitzgerald further plays out this dynamic of noble failure, where the battlefields of World War One mark not only the death of an older discourse of über-masculinity for the American hero, but also the re-birth of a more radical romantic sensibility.

The self-destructive tendency, one might even argue "death drive"[78] of Dick and Nicole Diver's marriage is a key dynamic in understanding Fitzgerald's juxtaposition of both the cosmetic glamor of the Riviera, and the ravaged landscape of Northern France and Flanders. These two symbolic as much as physical topographies are central to Fitzgerald's presentation of Dick as struggling to maintain a unified 'self', in that they conflate the romantic language of pre-war heroism with the dissemination of post-war masculinity, as a form of meta-narrative. Here the transformative power of the violence of the trenches, and the underlying chic informing the nihilism of the Divers' relationship is manifest in one of the best-known

scenes of the novel, where Dick, Nicole, Rosemary and Abe North take a tour of the Somme battlefields:[79]

> Dick turned the corner of the traverse and continued along the trench walking on the duckboard. He came to a periscope, looked through it a moment, then he got up on the stoop and peered over the parapet. In front of him beneath a dingy sky was Beaumont Hamel; to his left the tragic hill of Thiepval. Dick stared at them through his field glasses, his throat straining with sadness." (*TITN* 67)

On one level, the problem of heroic persona presents itself in the fact that Dick's range of vision and sensibility are compromised as first person authoritative elements. A romantic hero without the first hand experience of war, Dick views the battlefield as a decipherable landscape, yet as James Meredith points out, "For all its complicated logical manifestations, the Somme simplified the individual's combat role, essentially meaning that the human being was lost on the battlefield . . . and as a consequence a complete psychological reorientation about the nature of war took place" (193). At this point, it is interesting to consider how the memoirist Vera Britain eulogizes the image of American manhood as she describes the reinforcement of the British troops, while working as a nurse at the front in 1918, "I pressed forward . . . to watch the United States physically entering the War, so god-like, so magnificent, so splendidly unimpaired in comparison with the tired, nerve-racked men of the British Army" (qtd. in Strachen 304). The collective body of masculine strength that Britain projects stands in marked contrast to the image of the individual "nerve-racked" British soldier, and also implies that American male heroism is most "god-like" where the symptoms of shellshock are clearly foregrounded in contrast.

The language of heroism as the natural idiom of the romantic hero, now inverts to express itself in symptoms of broken speech, mutism and amnesia. As Meredith again notes, "Interestingly enough, . . . this dehumanizing objectification of the human on the battlefield, had much to do with a whole host of emerging post-war psychological problems, such as shell shock or war neuroses, that occurred on and off the World War I battlefield and became more clearly manifested after the war" (193). Through the new diagnosis and recognition of combat trauma, female hysteria is contained and demystified. It is therefore telling how in Dick, Fitzgerald stresses the individual "romantic" hero in both Rosemary's perception of how, "His voice, with some faint Irish melody running through it, wooed the world," (*TITN* 26) and Nicole's own disordered first impression of her Doctor/Savior, "in your uniform you were so handsome . . . all soft like a big cat" (*TITN* 140). Both impressions combine to highlight how Dick's "American" masculinity is constructed in terms both "godlike" and at the same time "nerve-racked".

Dick's self-diagnosis of "non-combatant shellshock" goes beyond a private joke. As David Rennie points out, "Dick Diver, a non-combatant during the war, has been prevented from experiencing the horrors of the war at first hand . . . Tiffany Joseph argues that, 'Although Dick's self-diagnosis may be half –ironic, it is more than half-true . . . Shell shock is a gendered trauma that is closely linked to ideas of masculinity and femininity, and men who suffered from shell-shock were frequently stigmatized as unmanly"" (190). Hence, there is a discernably feline softness and musicality in Rosemary and Nicole's description of Dick's persona, that disturbs the martial tone of, "god-like", 'magnificent", and "splendidly unimpaired" men found in Britain's description of America's army. Advancing on this point, Fitzgerald uses

such masculine and feminine traits to inform a more ironic heroic mode, which aligns Dick with a much older 'European' milieu of thought and feeling.

In terms of early twentieth century modernity, Dick functions as the symbolic lynchpin of two male dominated cultures and epochs. He stands at the center of not only a distinctly European post-war landscape, but also as the practitioner of a distinctly European discourse of psychoanalysis; a tragic hero caught figuratively in the crossfire between the death of American individualism, and the rebirth of Europe's modernist intellectual tradition. As Lionel Trilling observes, "Fitzgerald was perhaps the last notable writer to affirm the Romantic fantasy, descended from the Renaissance, of personal ambition and heroism, of life committed to, or thrown away for, some ideal of self" (156). Moreover, Fitzgerald depicts in Dick how tropes of American and European masculinity sit together uneasily, and even become volatile, when the former attempts to ally the image of its collective strength and military firepower with an older European intellectual tradition and history of ideas. Leslie Fielder goes further noting, "In Fitzgerald's world, the distinction between sexes is fluid and shifting, precisely because he has transposed the mythic roles and values of male and female . . . Thematically, archetypically even such chief male protagonists as Gatsby and Dick Diver are females, at least they occupy in their stories the position of Henry James's Nice American Girls" (*Love and Death* 313). Consequently, Meredith's notion of the individual soldier's function on the Somme being reduced, or as he puts it "simplified" is captured in *Tender*, where Fitzgerald makes use of this new angle of vision as a means of exploring the more fluid plasticity of such intersections between masculinity and femininity.

Dick's collective framing of memory is a failure of individual form. Comparing the Divers' parties to the battlefields of the Somme, Nicole's "abstraction" and Dick's

"simplification" of the violence and carnage, imbue a terrible lack of meaning to the glamour of their own eternal summer and the beach at Antibes, "Nicole was abstracted, biting her lips and reading over the guidebooks to the battlefield that Dick had brought along – indeed he had made a quick study of the whole affair, simplifying it always until it bore a faint resemblance to one of his own parties" (*TITN* 70). Again Fitzgerald demonstrates how the Divers' relationship is itself a response to the post-war shift in attitudes towards heroism, where Dick reflects on the senseless nature of a battle, as men walked blindly into a maelstrom of bullets and shrapnel loyal to the memory of what they believed they were fighting for, "This Western-Front business couldn't be done again, not for a long time. The young men think they could do it but they couldn't. They could fight the First Marne again but not this. This took religion and years of plenty and tremendous sureties and the exact relation that existed between the classes" (*TITN* 68). Yet as Samuel Hynes asserts these same certainties of religion, class and economic prosperity had all been fundamentally exploded and debunked by the outbreak of war in 1914, "A civil war, a sex war, and a class war: in the spring of 1914 these were all foreseen in England's immediate future, and with a kind of relish. Rhetorically speaking, they were already being fought; the language of war had become, by then, the language of public discourse" (7). The real trauma to which Dick's narrative and life increasingly gravitates, identifies with the figure of Nicole, rather than the Unknown Soldier.

This centering of Nicole's insanity at the heart of the novel serves to articulate not only the post-war social taboo of war neurosis, but also subverts Dick's own "heroic" mode in relation to his mythologizing eulogy to those who died in the trenches. In doing so, Fitzgerald exchanges the absence of a heroic male voice for the

presence of a female one whose individual memory has been exposed to profound psychological damage.

Indeed, the narrative function of memory is crucial in understanding Dick's attitude towards making sense of the indecipherable, "The Russians and Italians weren't any good on this front. You had to have a whole-souled sentimental equipment going back further than you could remember. You had to remember Christmas, and postcards of the Crown Prince and his fiancée, and little cafes in Valence and beer gardens in Unter den Linden and weddings at the mairie, and going to the Derby and your grandfather's whiskers" (*TITN* 68). The nostalgia evoked here for a peaceful, civilized past constructs a scenic "postcard" snapshot of 19th century culture.[80] However, it is clear that what Dick sees as embodied by the vastness of the war cemeteries lends emphasis to a European rather than American narrative. Dick in playing the role of tour guide moves beyond the reality of the trenches, and into the discursive terrain of national mythology. The war cemeteries of World War One are fundamental to the reconstruction of both post-war landscape and post-war memory, where the dead are compartmentalized by and written into the spatial text and act of commemoration. Yet if memory takes on a new concrete form in the symbols of such war memorials, they also represent a paradoxical immateriality onto which both individual and national identity are projected. As Benedict Anderson observes:

> No more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers. The public ceremonial reverence accorded these monuments precisely *because* they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them, has no true precedents in earlier times. To feel the force of this modernity one has only to imagine the general reaction to the busy-body who 'discovered'

> the Unknown Soldier's name or insisted on filling the cenotaph with some real bones. Sacrilege of a strange, contemporary kind! Yet void as these tombs are of identifiable mortal remains or immortal souls, they are nonetheless saturated with ghostly *national* imaginings. (9)

For Anderson it would appear the human text of the fallen warrior symbolizes a curiously vacant construction. A nameless body that both affirms a defining national consciousness, yet at the same time negates the solidity of the monument that allows a nation's collective memory to identify his origins. Consequently, Anderson's deconstruction of the cenotaph highlights the paradox of an empty space, as offering a concrete substance to the "ghostly" organizing principle of collective memory, or what he terms, "*national* imaginings*"*. It also echoes the reflections of another, albeit fictional veteran of the First World War in *The Great Gatsby*, where Nick Carraway imagines Gatsby's own final thoughts in synthesizing America's ghostly historical reality, with its modern national mythology, "A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts breathing dreams like air drifted fortuitously about" (Fitzgerald, *GG* 126). Here, Gatsby's "heroic" imagination as voiced through the "moral" filter of Carraway's narration, represents the futility of equating personal memory with historical truth. Moreover, it directly links to how Dick Diver attempts to reconcile his own absence from the Western Front, with the heroic model of language based around the nobility of self-sacrifice, which in terms of his relationship with Nicole costs him his character rather than his life.

Furthermore, Dick also links heroism and the reason men continue to fight to a fallacy of false equivalence conflating the patriotic duty to the "Crown Prince and his fiancée" with the familial intimacy of "going to the Derby and your grandfather's

whiskers" (*TITN* 68). Once more it is the nobility of failure[81] captured in the self-sacrifice of young men in the service of their country, that informs Dick's entirely localized perspective, where through the trench periscope the scene is navigable as less an abstract idea of bravery, than it is a three dimensional reality:

> See that little stream – we could walk to it in two minutes. It took the British a month to walk to it – a whole empire walking very slowly, dying in front and pushing forward behind. And another empire walked very slowly backward a few inches a day, leaving the dead like a million bloody rugs. No Europeans will ever do that again in this generation." (*TITN* 67)

Framed in Freudian terms Dick's narrative as a whole is implicitly gendered. The male and female parental archetypes of the Crown Prince and his fiancée symbolize the progenitive origins of a primal landscape, that is itself violently suggestive of a woman giving birth with the British, "dying in front and pushing forward behind" leaving their dead like an umbilical cord of, "a million bloody rugs." Consequently, what emerges from Dick's view of the trenches is on one level another example of how the conditions of modernity threaten to submerge the masculine agency of the heroic mode. The female hysteric has to be made to conform to the standard historical landscape of commemoration, Nicole's guidebooks, and the reductive vision of a national identity built upon empty tombs.

The trenches allow Dick to play out a role parallel to that of his parties as a sophisticate, cultured man of the world. Yet, there remains a staged voyeuristic quality to his staring, "through his field glasses . . . throat straining with sadness" towards the "tragic hill of Thiepval" that appears as self-rehearsed and artificial as did his "long

dream of war" (*TITN* 206). As Dick continues to take in the battlefields, this quality of pretension becomes more accentuated, "He went on along the trench, and found the others waiting for him in the next traverse. He was full of excitement and he wanted to communicate it to them, to make them understand about this, though actually Abe North had seen battle service and he had not" (*TITN* 67). Dick reconstructs and re-appropriates Abe North's personal experience of the Great War, as again privileging a collective rather than individual "heroic" identity. Moreover, it is in the self-destructive alcoholism of Abe North, that Dick's own breakdown is foreshadowed. Fitzgerald portrays Abe as a helpless drunk, "heavy, belly frightened" (*TITN* 94) in his unspoken love for Nicole. Here the death of the American hero is caught in a short but memorable outburst of violence at the Gare Saint-Lazarre in Paris, where a young woman of the Divers' acquaintance shoots her lover. Abe sets the background tone to this scene in his conversation with Nicole, as they wait for Dick to arrive:

> "Tired of women's worlds," he spoke up suddenly.
>
> "Then why don't you make a world of your own?"
>
> "Tired of friends. The thing is to have sycophants."
>
> Nicole tried to force the minute hand around on the station clock,
> but, "You agree?" he demanded.
>
> "I am a woman and my business is to hold things together."
>
> "My business is to tear them apart." (*TITN* 95)

Subverting the conception of heroism as a distinctly male quality, Fitzgerald indicates a shift towards female "heroic" coherence as opposed to male "belly frightened"

dissolution. As this conversation plays out Dick joins them together with Rosemary Hoyt and Mary North, "a fine glowing surface on which the three women sprang like monkeys with cries of relief . . . Now, for a moment, they could disregard the spectacle of Abe's gigantic obscenity" (*TITN* 96). The way the women hang and drape themselves on Dick "like monkeys" is not to crudely undermine their own femininity, but to highlight his increasing submission to their world as an accessory. This is a crucial moment in *Tender*, where Fitzgerald suggests American society as a whole begins to transgressively blur the boundaries of conventional male and female gender roles. Maria Wallis "a tall girl with straw hair like a helmet" (*TITN* 95) in preparing to do murder appears chimerically transformed into a new modernity, "Nearby some Americans were saying good-bye in voices that mimicked the cadence of water running into a large old bathtub . . . it seemed as if they were vicariously leaning a little over the ocean, already undergoing a sea-change, a shifting about of atoms to form the essential molecule of a new people." (*TITN* 96). Milton Stern argues that the scene of Abe's departure, followed immediately by the sudden outburst of violence where Maria Wallis shoots her lover is the turning point in the novel:

> Until that moment Fitzgerald has allowed the reader to know of Dick's increasing disintegration, but only by seeing into Dick's hidden mind. From this scene on Fitzgerald externalizes Dick's growing defeat and impotence . . . In the Maria Wallis scene, Nicole takes over for the first time and firmly prevents Dick from acting as savior, party director, doctor . . . The war sounds that "cracked the narrow air of the platform" sound the crack-up of morale beneath the manner, a crack-up that is the dramatic function of the action that makes up the rest of Dick's story. (79)

Unlike the figure of the Unknown Soldier, the question of identity lies less at the heart of who the victim is as who the murderer was, "It was Maria Wallis," Dick said hurriedly. "The man she shot was an Englishman – they had an awful time finding out who because she shot him through his identification card" (*TITN* 97). In the aftermath of the killing there is a conflict between the sense of a final ending, and a natural continuation of events, "Then, as if nothing had happened, the lives of the Divers and their friends flowed out into the street. However, everything had happened – Abe's departure and Mary's impending departure for Salzburg this afternoon had ended the time in Paris" (99). Dick the romantic hero observing the Somme battlefields, and deriving order out of the remains of chaos, cannot now make such an easy distinction in the wake of real violence committed by a woman, and witnessed for himself:

> Or perhaps the shots, the concussions that had finished God knew what dark matter had terminated it. The shots had entered into all their lives: echoes of violence followed them out onto the pavement where two porters held a post – mortem beside them as they waited for a taxi.
>
> "Tu as vu le revolver? Il etait tres petit, vraie perle – un jouer."
>
> "Mais, assez puissant! Said the other porter sagely. "Tu as vu sa chemise? Assez de sang pour se croire a la guerre." (99)[82]

The societal changes that Fitzgerald gives voice to underwrite a failed, outdated model of an American hero ruined by the new conditions of post-war prosperity. The economic frenzy of the boom contributes towards not only the effeminacy of Dick's material image be it, "the beautiful crown of his hat or the gold head of his cane"

(*TITN* 96), but also the way his masculinity responds to more complex questions of gender and sexuality. Yet in the final analysis, Dick facilitates the theme of noble failure as ironically allowing for the renewal of the American hero, by both blurring gender norms, and acknowledging the radical creative potential of mental and physical breakdown as opening up new possibilities for exploring the fragmentation inherent to modernist aesthetics. This in turn, anticipates Fitzgerald's own breakdown, which he addresses in "The Crack-Up".

Published in 1936 two years after the failure of *Tender* to restore his fortunes, Fitzgerald concedes his own self-image as romantic hero is undermined by a lack of both strength and courage, " . . . my two juvenile regrets – at not being big enough (or good enough) to play football in college, and at not getting overseas during the war – resolved themselves into childish waking dreams of imaginary heroism that were good enough to go to sleep on in restless nights" (Fitzgerald, *The Crack-Up* 70). As Bonnie Shannon McMullen notes, "Matthew Bruccoli has remarked, *a propos* of Fitzgerald's juvenilia and his failure in the sports arena, that he 'was learning to use writing as a substitute for action' (*Epic Grandeur* 30). It might be more accurate to say that he increasingly came to see writing as an alternative, and higher, form of action" (21). This reading of "The Crack Up" suggests Fitzgerald proposes "heroism" as a problem of definition, rather than characteristic of a more narcissistic self-studying masculinity,[83] a paradox he so memorably expresses as his thesis with, "the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function" (Fitzgerald, *The Crack-Up* 69).[84] In "The Crack Up" as in *Tender*, Fitzgerald refers to a lost style of heroism suggestive not so much of Freud's famous definition of mourning as it is melancholia,[85] where he discusses his breakdown with an unnamed woman:[86]

> ‘Instead of being so sorry for yourself, listen –‘ she said, (She always says ‘Listen’, because she thinks while she talks –*really* thinks.) So she said: ‘Listen. Suppose this wasn’t a crack in you – suppose it was a crack in the Grand Canyon.’
>
> ‘The crack’s in me,’ I said heroically.
>
> ‘Listen! The world only exists in your eyes – your conception of it. You can make it as big or as small as you want to. And you’re trying to be a little puny individual. By God, if I ever cracked, I’d try to make the world crack with me. Listen! The world only exists through your apprehension of it, and so it’s much better to say that it’s not you that’s cracked – it’s the Grand Canyon.’ (Fitzgerald, *The Crack-Up* 74)

In demonstrating what he considers to be his own psychological and emotional redundancy, Fitzgerald admits to and amplifies an implicitly female concern and potential. The only reported dialogue in all three of “The Crack-Up” essays, the passage positions an empowering female voice at the heart of Fitzgerald’s self-analysis. In taking the Grand Canyon, that great fracture of the American landscape, to illustrate to Fitzgerald his own “puny” attempts at perspective, his female companion highlights the failure of heroic masculinity, and Fitzgerald’s own measure of himself as a great American writer. She suggests failure on her terms, as having the power to nurture, and re-imagine an alternative to the social and cultural iconography of the west, and by extension the romantic male American hero that develops out of the frontier. Fitzgerald admits it is her “vitality” that give her a heroic telling of her own, whereby he recognizes her “old woes . . . more dolorous than mine, and how she had met them, over-ridden them, beaten them” (Fitzgerald, *The Crack-Up* 74).

Despite the criticism of Maxwell Perkins, Hemingway and John Dos Passos,[87] who all viewed "The Crack-Up" as a sign of professional weakness, Fitzgerald lays the foundations for what would move well beyond the popularization of self-reflective and confessional writing of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Moreover, closer reading reveals that the whole process of "The Crack-Up" is not that of breakdown, but of recovery. The final essay in the series "Pasting it Together" has Fitzgerald observe as to the damaging mental erosion of his own "heroic" self-image:

> A writer need have no such ideals unless he makes them for himself, and this one has quit. The old dream of being an entire man in the Goethe-Byron Shaw tradition, with an opulent American touch, a sort of combination of J.P Morgan, Topham Beauclark and St Francis of Assisi, has been relegated to the junk heap of the shoulder pads worn for one day on the Princeton freshman football field and the overseas cap never worn overseas. (Fitzgerald, *The Crack-Up* 84)

Fitzgerald finally rejects the model of romantic masculinity he has nurtured since his college days at Princeton for a new tone of voice, which is not so much emasculating as it is evolving. Consequently by balancing a strong female voice in dialogue with the public exposure of his nervous breakdown, a new form emerges. As Bruce L Grenburg notes, "Fitzgerald was challenging the specific readership of *Esquire* to recognize the disintegration not only of F. Scott Fitzgerald but of themselves and the American identity" (206). Fitzgerald's attempt may have been as with *Tender* initially doomed to failure, yet his tone of voice sounds a more radical conception of how an American hero may be defined.

"Show me a hero, and I will write you a tragedy" (Fitzgerald, *Notebooks* 51).

To a large extent Fitzgerald's epigram strikes at the heart of a creative mantra that links *Gatsby*, *Tender* and *Tycoon* in both their technical and thematic movement. At the same time it also inadvertently expresses the critical paradox of identifying a criteria for heroism, which may continue to satisfy, and in some way renew Fitzgerald's tragic mode. *Tender is the Night* embodies a prolonged moment of personal crisis for Fitzgerald, in which he discovers a new mode of treating the conditions of failure and self-defeat, as key to revitalizing the core language around which modern American identity is constructed. Through Dick Diver, Fitzgerald explores the possibilities of self-invention as a means of redefining and re-invigorating the social experiment of America. I further submit that by destabilizing the patriarchal nuclei of the American hero in both Gatsby and Dick Diver, Fitzgerald provides a more radical creative agenda in carrying forward a new novelistic form, doomed ultimately to failure. While *Tender* represents perhaps not as successful a novel as *Gatsby* with regards to its narrative coherence, it nevertheless illustrates Fitzgerald's noble attempt to aesthetically and structurally subvert the concept of a failed American hero, as a means of questioning the mythology of the West in order to disrupt the ideology of manifest destiny, a creative ambition that he goes onto articulate more clearly in his final unfinished novel *The Love of the Last Tycoon*.

Chapter 3 - 'Last of the Princes' – Re-imagining the New Frontier in *The Love of The Last Tycoon*.

Hollywood is the physical and symbolic point of terminus. America's western movement towards the Pacific concludes the inherent contradiction of its culture, that there can be no limits, no true endings. It is the premise, that where one has failed in the East means nothing, if one can keep making a fresh start in the West, that informs Scott Fitzgerald's own final sojourn in Hollywood as part of the overarching narrative of that same western movement.[88] In Fitzgerald's last unfinished novel *The Love of the Last Tycoon*[89] the protagonist Monroe Stahr completes the heroic cycle developed in *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is the Night*. Consistent with Jay Gatsby and Dick Diver, Stahr in *Tycoon*[90] emerges through a new critical awareness of modernity that reflects Fitzgerald's conception of an American hero as ironically indicative of the failure rather than success of self-invention. As a result, Stahr is in many ways the most transformative symbol of the heroic mode, where failure suggests a more radical experiment of American character. Moreover, *The Love of The Last Tycoon*,[91] albeit it only a fragment of what Fitzgerald intended for the complete text,[92] is remarkable in the way it presents a vision of America, and a singularly American industry, complete in itself, whereby Fitzgerald achieves a stylistically advanced level of realism[93] by returning an essentially cinematic language[94] to its literary roots.

In "The Crack-Up" [95] Fitzgerald draws the analogy of his own broken psychology as similar to a cracked plate,[96] that may still be of use in a more limited capacity. In other words, Fitzgerald submits that even if his writing can no longer be used or 'seen' in public, it may still serve a valuable purpose. Through writing "The Crack-Up" Fitzgerald re-models himself as a commodity, and highlights a turning

point in the development of his own narrative voice, "I have now at last become a writer only" (Fitzgerald, *The Crack-Up* 83). As Brian Diemert notes, "The failure of any unitary conception of the self, of such a fiction, to endure is the great theme of all Fitzgerald's writings, reflecting as it does his belief that, "all life is a process of breaking down" (138). I have already touched on the way in which the Japanese model of noble failure offers a more radical critical premise for re-evaluating Fitzgerald's work. In approaching *The Love of The Last Tycoon*, I would submit Fitzgerald's own courage and integrity in facing his own moment of psychological and emotional crisis, epitomizes the Japanese model of heroism, as well as the sincerity of purpose[97] that characterizes Gatsby, Diver and Stahr.

Through *Gatsby* and *Tender*, Fitzgerald records the physical and metaphysical death of an American hero, whose roots lie in the romantic promise of the Western Frontier, and whose final demise comes in the trenches of the Western Front. Staying with the theme of decline and renewal in *Tycoon*, Fitzgerald reflects a paradigm shift from the idea of failure as tragedy, to that of rebirth.[98] In doing so, he decouples the self-invented American romantic hero from the American dream he comes to represent, to suggest a more subversive premise for the interplay between individual and national identity. Gatsby, Diver and Stahr, all to a greater or lesser degree represent or carry with them qualities of youth, purity and sincerity destroyed by the consumption and corruption of modern American society. Thematically *Gatsby*, *Tender* and *Tycoon* all treat the way American migration allows for the conditions of a distinctly modern national identity to evolve. Yet it is possible to go even further, and assert that in all three protagonists, Fitzgerald ironically traces the inherent 'otherness' of American modernity built on material success, in order to renew the heroic mode.

All three men represent individual stages in the development of a singular heroic prototype, which highlight the strangeness of the forces of capital, that facilitate their self-invention. The Japanese configuration of heroism with failure, not only allows for a re-evaluation of the language of material wealth which shapes Fitzgerald's heroes, but also introduces the 'other' as a means of reconfiguring the discursive parameters of white hetero-normative male heroism. Gatsby, Diver and Stahr are all, to varying degrees representative of non-conformist masculinity. All three men undermine the gendered language of class privilege, by which failure and success in America are defined in alignment with the cultural narrative of manifest destiny. In *Tycoon*, as in *Gatsby* and *Tender* Fitzgerald evolves a protagonist, whose failure is ironically fundamental to his mystique and attraction, as the culmination of heroic myth in Fitzgerald's vision of America. Therefore, to understand the character of Monroe Stahr, it is necessary to contextualize him, not only in relationship to Gatsby and Dick Diver, but also the way Fitzgerald renders him critically capable of questioning the mythology of the West in his role as 'pioneer' of the American film industry. It is the link between Hollywood's film industry, and the end of the American frontier that I intend to make explicit, as the basis for understanding how Stahr's own heroic failure lies at the heart of this dynamic.[99]

The mythology of the American West is both ambivalent and contradictory.[100] While it informs the pioneer language of self-reliance and self-governance that underwrite the philosophy of American democracy, it gives rise to an iconography, that is impossible to empirically date and define as local to one specific time and place.[101] From the eastern seaboard encountered and documented by the Puritan colonists of Jamestown, to the vast plains of the Mid-West, and the influx of immigrant settlers throughout the 19th century, the frontier evolves across multiple

and diverse geographic and narrative timelines, culminating in the Oklahoma Land Rush of 1899, and its final closure the following year.[102] Yet if as Frederick Turner argues the closing of the frontier represents the end of the first stage in American history epitomized by qualities of individualism, self-sufficiency, and the development of national character, Los Angeles and Hollywood may be said to represent in many ways the new antithesis of manifest destiny.[103] In *Tycoon*, Fitzgerald depicts a post frontier landscape, born of the late 19th century's technological and economic momentum,[104] where the ideological adhesive of manifest destiny finds itself redundant in the urban sprawl of a city, whose population can no longer expand into new territory, only their dreams, celluloid or otherwise.

In *The Love of the Last Tycoon* Fitzgerald captures an America transformed from the raw immigrant melting pot, into a more consolidated collaborative identity. By the late 1930s, it is no longer an individual as much as an entire nation seeking to re-imagine itself in heroic terms, yet unable to recognize the fundamental necessity of failure to the construction of that heroic mode. With film emerging as the new dominant force in American popular culture, Los Angeles is a city where the work of Greek cameramen, Jewish producers, and British screenwriters, sell all-American myth[105] as global product. Consequently in *Tycoon*, Hollywood facilitates an industrial process of assimilation, where Fitzgerald declares in his working notes for the novel, "Action is character"[106] (Fitzgerald, *Notebooks* 336). This formulation[107] exemplifies not only a technical lesson that working as a screenwriter impressed on him,[108] but his own attitude regarding the role of America's cinema, as a potentially all-powerful new medium, for concentrating national values. Throughout the novel, Fitzgerald addresses the dialectic between individual artist and collective artistry, through deconstructing the language of individualism, materialism, and competition,

upheld by the constitutional principles of freedom, equality and the pursuit of happiness. This again links back to the inherent philosophical conflict between American values, and American democratic principles, that is so integral to Fitzgerald's more ironic expose of the heroic mode explored in Jay Gatsby and Dick Diver.

In *Tycoon,* Fitzgerald goes further in exploring how Hollywood exploits the lack of moral and discursive cohesion between those same national values and democratic principles, as a means of again underlining what is so exceptional about Stahr's own character:

> Like many brilliant men he had grown up dead cold. Beginning at about twelve probably with the total rejection common to those of extraordinary mental powers, the "see here – this is all wrong – a mess – all a lie – and a sham" he swept it all away, everything, as men of his type do and then instead of being a son-of-a-bitch as most of them are he looked around at the barrenness that was left and said to himself "*This* will never do." And so he had learned tolerance, kindness, forbearance, and even affection like lessons. (*TLOTLT* 97)[109]

Stahr's heroic 'greatness', as both distilled and yet remaining distinct from Gatsby and Diver's 'old world' ideals of nobility and chivalry, allows his business ethics to develop in tandem with a softer and gentler set of human virtues, in alignment with the making of a new American industry. Although Stahr grows up hardened to the world, he is not made 'hard' by what he recognizes to be "a mess" and "a lie" and "a sham". Stahr's worldliness retains a quality of other-worldliness, which upholds and sustains him, and through which Fitzgerald explores Hollywood as

a re-casting of the conditions of self – invention. Gatsby's abstract moral view of his relationship with Daisy, stands in stark contrast to Stahr's attentive adherence to ethics, both in his business and personal relationships. It is precisely this distinction between morality and ethics that allows Stahr to perceive himself in relation to his own product, as a guarantee of quality. Rather than a soft-focused figure of dangerous rumor such as Gatsby, he is a legible conduit for processing and distributing a trusted and authentic reproduction of American culture. The film mogul does not have to distance himself from the means of his success, as does the bootlegger. To understand Stahr as a heroic renewal of what has failed in the character of Gatsby, Stahr must be seen as the conduit of other dreams belonging to different cultural backgrounds, and imaginations. Yet, unlike Gatsby who cultivates the smokescreen of gossip that surrounds him, Fitzgerald allows Stahr a degree of cognitive dissonance in refusing to acknowledge he is himself a deliberate construction of other people's fantasies. In doing so he perpetuates a national myth in moving pictures, by attempting to reconcile virtue with business, while retaining a self-awareness of this process as part of his own mythology:

> He spoke and waved back as the people streamed by in the darkness, looking I suppose a little like the Emperor and the Old Guard. There is no world so but it has its heroes and Stahr was the hero . . . The old loyalties were trembling now – there were clay feet everywhere – but still he was their man, the last of the princes. And their greeting was a sort of low cheer as they went by. (*TLOTLT* 27)

The comparison of Stahr to Napoleon is not transformative in the sense of implying a tangible measure, or model of greatness that exists between both men. However, it does provide a more subversive dynamic between Napoleon the historical leader, and

Stahr the fictional magnate, in so much as they are both non-conformists whose failure does not so much diminish as add to their legend. Here in *Tycoon* as in *Gatsby* Fitzgerald was attempting to tailor an epic scope of vision to a shorter narrative form.[110] Hence, it is the rejection of the feudal order of American business that links Stahr's personality to not only Napoleon, but also the mythic Japanese hero, when Stahr insists to his board that he intends to make a picture that he knows will be a financial failure, [111] "It'll lose money," he said as he stood up, his jaw just slightly out and his eyes smiling and shining . . . But we have a certain duty to the public . . . It's a good thing for the production schedule to slip in a picture that'll lose money" (*TLOTLT* 48). Stahr's recognition of cinema's more radical potential to raise critical awareness in its audience of the commodity being sold to them, suggests his belief in what the studio system could be as correspondent to America itself, and stands in stark contrast to the vulgarity and unethical values of his business partner Pat Brady.

Following Fitzgerald's schematic notes for the novel, it is Stahr's open acknowledgement that he is making a film destined to be an economic failure, that later will precipitate Brady's plan to oust Stahr from the studio. Although this is an episode Fitzgerald had still to write, his secretary Frances Kroll clarified in her response to Edmund Wilson's synopsis for the novel, what Fitzgerald had intended. Kroll asserts, "The story of Hollywood is not as important as the conception of Stahr, the man. Although Scott definitely told me he did not want to make Stahr a hero in the conventional sense of the word and did not want to justify Stahr's manner of thinking, he did want to present it thoroughly and show the cause of Stahr's reactions . . . Despite Stahr's genius and artistry he did not "come along" politically"(qtd. in Bruccoli lv). This last point does not affirm Stahr's lack of political acumen, but rather his resistance to any radical ideology, be it left wing or conservative, coming

between himself and his workforce.[112] However, Kroll's assertion that Stahr does "not come along politically" in Fitzgerald's plan for the novel, not only sets him at odds with the populist dogma of communism, but also the realpolitik of American business itself.

On this level, Kroll's emphasis on Stahr as a non-conventional hero would again be consistent with the Japanese model of an individual operating outside the accepted cultural praxis. Again Ivan Morris notes in his study of heroism as noble failure, "In a tight-knit, conformist society like Japan . . . there is a special fascination about an individual whose idiosyncratic personality and commitment to a set of abstract ideals impel him to . . . confront the overwhelming force of established authority in an outburst of desperate defiance" (158). Kroll goes on to expand in her letter to Wilson about what Fitzgerald had discussed with her regarding Stahr's characterization, "I think, too, it should be emphasized how badly Stahr felt about the pay cut. Brady took advantage of Stahr's absence from the studio to call a meeting of the writers . . . The writers agreed to take the cut and Brady about-faced and slashed the stenographers' salary to a new low anyhow. These are tactics which Stahr's sense of fair play would never have allowed" (*TLOTLT* lvi). Here Stahr's commitment to his workforce, and sense of integrity estranges him from the financial interests of his fellow board members. Moreover, what should also be remembered is that just as the Japanese borrow from both folktales and historical heroes in their conception of noble failure, Fitzgerald bases Stahr on the real life figure of Irving Thalberg,[113] as much as the romantic American hero of his own imagination. The juxtaposition of Stahr and Thalberg evokes a similar interplay of Hollywood folklore, and cinematic history through circumventing other mainstream readings of Western heroism.

Fitzgerald made his initial acquaintance with Irving Thalberg during his first visit to Hollywood in 1927. One of the key creative talents behind films such as *Ben-Hur*, *Flesh and the Devil*, and *The Crowd*, Thalberg's own status as cinematic visionary, and auteur producer had already generated its own legend.[114] In seven years Thalberg had achieved an unprecedented level of success for a man with no formal qualifications, or experience of filmmaking prior to his arrival in Hollywood in 1920.[115] Although Fitzgerald was by his own admittance never close to Thalberg, he recognized in him qualities of temperance, vision, and intellectual acuity as he had with Gerald Murphy, that allowed him to envisage in transferring those qualities to himself, and by extension the male protagonists of his fiction, a more heroic nobler figure. As Arthur Mizener observes, "At certain moments, he [Fitzgerald] wrote in one of his notes for *The Last Tycoon*, 'one man appropriates to himself the total significance of a time and place . . . When I like men . . . I want to be like them – I want to lose the outer qualities that give me my individuality and be like them'" (99). This longing for a vicarious transference of what he perceived as heroic qualities suggests as a model for Stahr a highly exceptional, yet distinctly peripheral figure, neither belonging to the accepted celebrity mainstream of Hollywood, and yet integral to the working of its studio system. Moreover, as I will go on to demonstrate, Thalberg's influence on Fitzgerald highlights the very concept of how the atypical American hero further enhances a critical understanding of Fitzgerald's final novel, when viewed in relation to the Japanese model of noble failure.

The narrator of *Tycoon* Cecilia Brady envisages Stahr in the 'role' of the romantic hero, yet she immediately concedes her own pretense, whereby she recognizes the impossibility of any genuine relationship developing between them. This perceived role is something of a foil as to how Fitzgerald portrays Stahr as a Jew

in Hollywood. Physically he is slight and dark, a direct contrast to the more physically robust figures of Gatsby and Diver, dying from a congenital heart condition, and physically unable to compete in a fight with the communist union member Brimmer. Yet in describing the meeting of the studio commissary, where Stahr advocates making a film he knows will not make money, it is clear that Stahr is not distinguished racially, "Eight out of the ten were Jews – five of the ten were foreign born, including a Greek and an Englishman – " (*TLOTLT* 45). That Fitzgerald does not isolate Stahr as a Jew, as much as highlight his unorthodox approach to making films underlines Cecelia's heroic vision of Stahr, as a deeply ambivalent figure.[116] On giving Cecilia a ring as a gift she is fully aware, that there is no romantic subtext to the gesture, yet notes:

> I had been thinking how oddly its bulk contrasted with his fingers, which were delicate and slender like the rest of his body, and like his slender face with the arched eyebrows and the dark curly hair. He looked spiritual at times but he was a fighter – somebody out of his past knew him when he was one of a gang of kids in the Bronx, and gave me a description of how he walked always at the head of his gang, this rather frail boy, occasionally throwing a command backward out of the corner of his mouth. (*TLOTLT* 16)

Moreover, there is a strangely asexual quality to the way Cecelia describes Stahr. She refers to his eyes, "kind, aloof and, though they often reasoned with you gently, somewhat superior" (*TLOTLT* 15), and boyish manner as that of, "a proud young shepherd, to whom night and day had never mattered" (*TLOTLT* 15). Even his height, while not imposing, conveys a quasi-Godlike authority, "though he was not a tall man it always seemed high up" (*TLOTLT* 15). Here, Cecelia goes further in rewriting the

myth of Icarus as a working class Jewish boy from the Bronx. In this sense, Stahr's reinvention as film mogul is the creation of a feminine, just as much as a masculine imagination. In doing so, Cecelia senses the underlying feminine sensibility of the heroic masculine protagonist, and opens up the critical imagination to the more radical, subversive implications of such a figure, as presented through a female voice:

> He had flown up very high to see, on strong wings when he was young. And while he was up there he had looked on all the kingdoms, with the kind of eyes that can stare straight into the sun. Beating his wings tenaciously –finally frantically – and keeping on beating them he had stayed up there longer than most of us, and then, remembering all he had seen from his great height of how things were, he had settled gradually to earth. (*TLOTLT* 20)

This passage again links to Jay Gatsby's imaginative conception of himself as "a son of God", and the moment he first kisses Daisy where, "Gatsby saw that the blocks of the sidewalk really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees – he could climb to it, if he climbed alone, and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder" (*GG* 86). It is through the innocuous perspective of an outsider in the figure of Cecelia Brady,[117] that Stahr, an outsider in his own right transfigures, as the central agent in the process of motion pictures. By having a largely marginalized female perspective, as the narrative lynchpin for defining the male heroic mode, Fitzgerald directly raises the question of Stahr's own outsider status.

Fitzgerald's use of American history in identifying and exploring more unorthodox qualities of heroism is again evident, where Stahr gives a visiting

European aristocrat Prince Agge a tour of the studio. Passing by a group of extras on their lunch-break Agge observes the recreation of American history by Hollywood, that reveals its intrinsic artifice:

> Then he saw Abraham Lincoln and his whole feeling suddenly changed. He had been brought up in the dawn of Scandinavian socialism where Nicolay's biography was much read. He had been told Lincoln was a great man whom he should admire and he had hated him instead because he was forced upon him. But now seeing him sitting here, his legs crossed, his kindly face fixed on a forty cent dinner, including dessert, his shawl wrapped around him as if to protect himself from the erratic air-cooling- now Prince Agge, who was in America at last, stared as a tourist at the mummy of Lenin in the Kremlin. This then was Lincoln. Stahr had walked on far ahead of him, turned waiting for him – but still Agge stared. – This then, he thought, was what they all meant to be.
>
> Lincoln suddenly raised a triangle of pie and jammed it in his mouth and, a little frightened, Prince Agge hurried to join Stahr. (*TLOTLT* 48-49)

While the actor playing Lincoln reflects the nobility and potential of an American national character, the mythology of Lincoln as American hero is offset against the underwhelming failure of the common man playing him to maintain the illusion. As Robert C. Utrup notes, "Constantly compared to Abraham Lincoln, Stahr is most heroic in his idealism and leadership . . . While Lincoln made good on America's founding promise – maintaining that all men had the right to pursue their dreams –

Stahr has kept the film industry in line with the ideals of its founding" (76). Utrup goes on to observe, "Preserving the industry through the hardships and culture of the Great Depression and against the will of Brady and his financiers, Stahr is fighting a battle to sustain the Hollywood film industry he has built. Like Lincoln, Stahr is a mythic figure who, still living in the midst of his heroic period, will die before he has to witness the corruption of his dream" (76). In Fitzgerald's Hollywood and its cinematic variations on the theme of American history,[118] the spirit of Lincoln is now as synthetic as the forty-cent dinner, and the false glamour beneath which Agge disguises his own more distasteful fascist beliefs. Moreover, it is through Stahr's own "Presidential" role as figurehead of the studio, that Fitzgerald projects a creative vision illustrative of how American history becomes a function of modern business. President Lincoln is now himself subordinate to Stahr the artist, who controls the new medium of historical representation through which the former's image, and legacy is filtered and received. On a mundane, prosaic level both Lincoln and Stahr's deaths mean they fail to complete their work, yet that same failure elevates them both in the synthesis of modern leader as fallen king. History and myth borrow from each other, not only in conveying a new American hero upheld by the language of failure, but also as a point of resistance to the baser forces of modernity threatening to stifle Stahr's creative vision and genius.

Ironically Stahr as creative director of the studio company he helped establish and build represents anything but a failure, "He was a marker in industry like Edison and Lumière and Griffith and Chaplin. He led pictures way up past the range and power of the theatre, reaching a sort of golden age before the censorship in 1933" (*TLOTLT* 28). Added to this, Stahr's physical courage in the way he faces his

terminal heart condition works to frame him in highly romanticized terms, as heroic martyr to the cause of art:

> He was due to die very soon now. Within six months one could say definitely. What was the use of developing the cardiograms? You couldn't persuade a man like Stahr to stop and lie down and look at the sky for six months. He would much rather die. He said differently but what it added up to was the definite urge toward total exhaustion that he had run into before. Fatigue was a drug as well as a poison and Stahr apparently derived some rare almost physical pleasure from working lightheaded with weariness. It was a perversion of the life force he had seen before but he had almost stopped trying to interfere with it. He had cured a man or so – a hollow triumph of killing and preserving the shell. (*TLOTLT* 110)

Physically Stahr is fighting a losing battle, as he works himself constantly to the point of exhaustion, in order to retain control of the studio. As such Stahr's heroism stems from his doomed attempt to reconcile a more personal, transcendent vision of modernity, with a baser set of conditions imposed by the process of mass production. As Stahr admits to the English novelist Boxley, whom he has hired as a screenwriter:

> "That's the condition," said Stahr. "There's always some lousy condition. We're making a life of Rubens – suppose I asked you to do portraits of rich dopes like Pat Brady and Me and Gary Cooper and Marcus when you wanted to paint Jesus Christ! Wouldn't you feel you had a condition? Our condition is that we have to take people's own

favorite folklore and dress it up and give it back to them." (*TLOTLT* 106)

Stahr's reference to folklore stands in more nuanced relationship to the subtitle of *Tycoon* itself, "A Western". Stahr implies that if the west cannot be reinvented or re-discovered, the American as an individual member of a paying audience can nevertheless be transformed, and inspired to see beyond the formulaic language that goes into creating the cinematic image. The closing of the frontier is not the end of the American hero. However, the conditions of modernity embodied in the studio system it gives rise to anticipate the more problematic expectations of an audience, who are in part a creation of that same myth. Fitzgerald's "poor ghosts breathing dreams like air" in *Gatsby* are transfigured by the California sunshine into an illusion projected inversely as a real audience. Only now the mythology of the audience based on the cultural signifiers of 'happiness', 'freedom', and 'destiny' reimagines its own homogenized image of a new frontier, designed to cater to an ever expanding leisure class. Hence, in *Tycoon* a new hero emerges, where character portrayed through action, and the ability to make a decision, carries these principles to a new global audience. Stahr as the self-described "unity"[119] of cinematic process exemplifies this ability to heroically take charge of his own destiny. In this sense I propose that Stahr, as with Diver and Gatsby before him, continues to invoke qualities of the traditional Japanese hero, celebrated for accepting his inevitable death, as both sincere and unorthodox.

So far this chapter has examined how the closing of the frontier links to Stahr's own heroic status. Fitzgerald is the first writer to directly connect the closing of the frontier, with the conditions of mass production exemplified by the Hollywood studio system that replaces it. Stahr's heroic failure may be expressed in part as the

inevitable outcome of the new industry of cinema, which sells its voice to the cognitive dissonance of a modern American nation. In doing so, Fitzgerald characterizes Stahr, as an assimilated part of his own industrial product. Yet I would also argue at the same time he is seeking to renew the conditions of self-invention for the American hero, by using Hollywood to stage the opening of a new frontier, which allows for other more marginalized voices to emerge as alternative heroic tropes. Fitzgerald in *Tycoon* offers a more radical reconfiguration of how both mainstream Hollywood cinema, and American literature is perceived, as the cultural paradigm for defining and reflecting its heroic values. This is further exemplified in the way Fitzgerald blurs American history with Hollywood folklore, in basing Stahr both on Irving Thalberg, and in comparing him to Lincoln to highlight a new history as presented from the perspective of outsider. I will now go on to highlight how Fitzgerald uses the idea of 'home' to introduce other voices into the post-frontier landscape of Hollywood, in understanding Stahr as a more radical figure of heroic renewal.

Stahr believes that the quality of pictures do not have to be compromised by their formulaic quantity. Yet, it is his inability to fully protect his workers collectively within the capitalist system of private control, which will ultimately prove his undoing. Stahr is both benevolent towards and protective of his workers as demonstrated in his reinstatement of the Greek cameraman Pete Zavras, who describes him as, "the Asclepius and the Diogenes of the moving picture . . . Also the Asclepius and Menander" (*TLOTLT* 61) [120]. As Tom Cerasulo observes, "In *The Last Tycoon*, Stahr prefers to confront the threat of unionization face-to-face and one-on-one . . . and like Fitzgerald himself during most of the 1930s, the screenwriter characters in *The Last Tycoon* seem too self-absorbed-or too self protective- to care

about unionization one way or another" (160). This is further reflected in Stahr's attitude towards the Writers Guild. In displaying qualities, that are both typical and atypical of the American hero as pure businessman, Stahr's man-management skills reflect the paternalistic attitude of an artisan-boss, who adopts direct relationships with his directors and writers, in working to achieve a high standard of production:

> As a "free lance" writer Wylie had failed from lack of caring but here was Stahr to care, for all of them . . . He felt a great purposefulness. The mixture of common sense, wise sensibility, theatrical ingenuity and a certain half naïve conception of the common weal which Stahr had just stated aloud inspired him to do his part, to get his block of stone in place, even if the effort were foredoomed, the result as dull as a pyramid. (*TLOTLT* 43)

At the same time, Stahr refuses to concede that the Unionization of the studio's workers is in their best interests, "I never thought," he said, "- that I had more brains than a writer has. But I always thought that his brains belonged to me – because I knew how to use them. Like the Romans – I've heard that they never invented things but they knew what to do with them" (*TLOTLT* 126).[121] Hence the Stahr Cecelia describes is, "a rationalist who did his own reasoning without benefit of books – and he had just managed to climb out of a thousand years of Jewry into the late eighteenth century. He could not bear to see it melt away – he cherished the parvenu's passionate loyalty to an imaginary past" (*TLOTLT* 118). Here Stahr represents the businessman as hero, as much as the businessman as artist, who while in spirit remains in solidarity with his workers, cannot accept that his own "unitary" vision of the studio should be compromised. In talking with Brimmer the communist party member, Stahr half mockingly jibes, "You don't really think you're going to

overthrow the government" to which Brimmer replies, "No, Mr. Stahr. But we think perhaps you are" (*TLOTLT* 124). Moreover, in developing Stahr's character against the context of left-wing agitation, Fitzgerald appears more politically attuned to the political anxieties and concerns of the 1930s that Hollywood refuses to address, on the basis of being bad for business. When Brimmer challenges Stahr over his reasons for not backing the Anti-Nazi League, Stahr tells him:

> "Because of your people," said Stahr. "It's your way of getting at the writers. In the long view you're wasting your time. Writers are children – even in normal times they can't keep their minds on their work."
>
> "They're the farmers in this business," said Brimmer pleasantly.
>
> "They grow the grain but they're not in at the feast. Their feeling toward the producer is like the farmers' resentment of the city fellow." (*TLOTLT* 121)

Brimmer's analogy of writers to farmers, strikes at the heart of a more intimate relationship and connection for the American people with the American landscape. By the mid 1930s writers are part of a new socio-cultural economy developed through the marketability of the moving image. Yet they are also working from an older folklore, whose geography connects them to the farmer, and which historically informs a unique American sensibility of self-determination and self-definition. It is an analogy, which also calls to mind the final passage of *Gatsby*, where Nick Carraway refers to, "that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night" (*GG* 141). Equally one finds a similar feeling of America's generational connection with the land expressed in *Tender*, where Dick on

returning home for his father's funeral, "once more identified with his surroundings . . . The dead, he knew them all, their weather-beaten faces with blue flashing eyes, the spare violent bodies, the souls made of new earth in the forest-heavy darkness of the seventeenth century" (*TITN* 233). Throughout all three novels, there would appear a textually evident link, that for Fitzgerald it is the land, and by imaginative extension the frontier, that allows Americans primarily to identify with a heroic mythology, that is a much more culturally determining influence than its social democracy. This is once more evident where the narrator Cecelia Brady relates the story of how Stahr was once asked how he would decide to build a railroad:[122]

> He was looking down at the mountains.
>
> "Suppose you were a railroad man," he said. "You have to send a train through there somewhere. Well, you get your surveyors' reports, and you find there's three or four or half a dozen gaps, and not one is better than the other. You've got to decide – on what basis? You can't test the best way – except by doing it. So you just do it."
>
> The pilot though he had missed something.
>
> "How do you mean?"
>
> "You choose some one way for no reason at all – because that mountain's pink or the blueprint is a better blue. You see?"
> (*TLOTLT* 20-21)

Stahr's outline of the railroad combines both the mathematical precision of chance,[123] or as he puts its, the blueprint being a better blue, with industrial process

as art form. Superficially, the anecdote suggests Stahr's success in his own field works as the result of accident, or personal whim. However, on closer reading, Fitzgerald suggests the more complex workings of a creative vision moved by more than personal foible. Fitzgerald recognizes how cinema embodies the potential of high art, as an innovation of mass culture. In *Tycoon*, the American dream becomes the human dream, as a new frontier emerges, where history's reconstruction turns perspective subjectively inward rather than objectively outward, first in the form of studio back-lots, and later through the cinema screens of America's film theatres.[124] Subsequently Fitzgerald conveys Stahr's ability to construct stories cinematically, as part of his own use of narrative perspective. If the railroad is the prime symbol of a destructive, invasive technological force, which ultimately brings an end to the frontier, it also opens up by definition the possibility of alternative social movements and migrations. Stahr's Western movement is not that of the former railroad owners and robber barons, whose more mercenary plans for expansion, underwrites the mythology of the frontier during the 19th century. Moreover, Stahr's ability to distinguish between individual morality and American ethics, again highlights the difference between himself and those other 'Tycoons', where for Stahr the idea of the frontier as a means of not only literal, but also imaginative passage be it by railroad, or by air, reconfigures any number of alternative historical narratives, and destabilizes the imaginative grounding of the 20th century American cultural psyche.[125]

Los Angeles and Hollywood represent not only the symbolic vanishing point of America's Western movement, but also a new mode of 'seeing' beyond the frontier. By the 1930s the idea of the frontier as a contemporary phenomenon, offering new opportunities for people coming West to California suggests in *Tycoon*

an underlying awareness, of a more personal, private sense of individual history emerging out of the landscape of Hollywood cinema. Fitzgerald acknowledges that the urge to come West does not end with the closure of the frontier, but merely finds new outlets through which to express itself in the studio system:

> California was filling up with weary desperadoes. And there were tense young men and women who lived back East in spirit while they carried on a losing battle against the climate. But it was everyone's secret that sustained effort was difficult here – a secret that Stahr scarcely admitted to himself. But he knew that people from other places spurted a pure rill of new energy for a while. (80)

Rather than depicting the frontier as a physical boundary or topographical landmark, Fitzgerald represents it figuratively as a new syntax and grammar of projected light. Nonetheless, the frontier remains both a search for, and a memory of home, a place ever diminishing in reality, yet continually growing in the individual and collective imagination. In *Tycoon* the hero is no native son of the Mid-West, as is the case with Gatsby and Diver. Coming from the Bronx and the East Side of New York, Stahr's childhood home lies firmly fixed in the modernity of the immigrant experience, around which Manhattan stands as the metropolitan nexus of the continent. However, here Stahr's character represents a fundamental departure from the way the East in both *Gatsby* and *Tender* stand for corruption and moral decay. In doing so *The Love of The Last Tycoon* exemplifies the nostalgic lens of much of Fitzgerald's fiction, in its concern with how the Western movement evolves beyond the closing of the frontier. Here the word 'home' as Sveltana Boym points out is directly equated to the meaning of nostalgia stemming from the Greek roots, "*nostos* meaning "return home" and *algia* "longing" (7). Boym goes on to define it as "a

longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy" (7). Boym's understanding of nostalgia, as a self-critical reflex in responding to modernity, may be usefully applied to a reading of *Tycoon*, where Stahr's 'unfinished' house, which he is building in Malibu suggests a more unfulfilled climax to American history, that extends beyond the closing of the frontier itself.

Stahr's house is the setting for the main love scene of the novel between himself and Kathleen Moore. It stands overlooking the Pacific, as the most westerly point in Fitzgerald's fiction. Like the flooded soundstage where Kathleen is introduced, the house represents a broken, fragmentary space, which symbolically undermines the idea of home, as both a point of arrival and return. More specifically Stahr's house is a motif of social movement, that having nowhere else to expand into has to invent if not a literal, then a new imaginative territory. One also sees this in both *Gatsby* and *Tender*, where the western movement reverses itself towards the blue lawns of Gatsby's mansion, and by extension all the way back to the old world with Diver's villa in Antibes and his golden beach. All represent a concept of time being nostalgically reconstructed as an imaginary space. Yet it is this very modality between arrival and return, that is one of the key means by which Fitzgerald highlights the experience of modernity in America, as a more self-critical reflex in addressing the question of what he considers the heroic mode:

> Five miles further on they turned down a small promontory and came to the fuselage of Stahr's house.
>
> A headwind blowing out of the sun threw spray up the rocks and over the car. Concrete mixers, raw yellow wood and

> builders' rubble waited, an open wound in the sea-scape, for Sunday to be over. They walked around front where great boulders rose to what would be the terrace.
>
> > She looked at the feeble hills behind and winced faintly at the barren glitter, and Stahr saw –
>
> "No use looking for what's not here," he said cheerfully. "Think of it as if you were standing on one of those globes with a map on it – I always wanted one when I was a boy. (*TLOTLT* 81)

Describing Stahr's house as a "fuselage" serves two purposes both semiotic and structural. The noun 'fuselage' isolates as a unit of construction the idea of the text as being itself incomplete, and recalls the narrator Cecelia Brady's flight to the West Coast, which opens the novel. At the same time it foreshadows the end of the novel where Fitzgerald planned to have Stahr die in a plane crash.[126] Just as Fitzgerald represents time suspended during Gatsby's reconciliation with Daisy Buchanan through the subject's orientation and movement in physical space, here he describes what is essentially a non-space to conversely suggest the idea of time in dissolution. Semantically, "fuselage" both grounds Stahr's home among "concrete mixers", "yellow wood" and "builders' rubble", and at the same time gives it the dynamics of flight, where the "headwind blowing out of the sun threw spray up". Fitzgerald's use of the word "fuselage" as this precise point in the text rewrites the language of home, and the modernity of Hollywood, to encapsulate not so much the literal terminus as the metaphorical renewal of American history.

Stahr's vision of his new house grounded as "fuselage" filters through Kathleen's own perception as she looks back from, "the open wound of seascape" to

take in, “the barren glitter of feeble hills, and Stahr saw - .” The em dash displaces the actual object of Stahr’s gaze, where his ironic appraisal of, “No point looking for what’s not here” disqualifies the voyeuristic impulse to try and follow his line of sight. Fitzgerald literally launches the verb “to see” through the em dash into a textual void, which allows for a new discursive space to evolve into a new world, where he encourages Kathleen to imagine she were, “standing on one of those globes with a map on it – I always wanted one when I was a boy.” Fitzgerald captures language in a slow dissolve, where the primary sensory input of vision projects the reader’s gaze simultaneously towards an “open wound in a sea-scape”, while looking back to the previous landscape of “barren glitter”, and the home that may or may not yet be built there. In doing so, Fitzgerald presents a more complex cultural trajectory around which the ‘algia’ or desire for a return home coheres, and where Hollywood begins to compete with New York, as the cosmopolitan catalyst of American identity.[127]

To understand the frontier in Fitzgerald’s imagination as a function of language is to recognize, “The notion of the self as an intertextual site . . . in part emphasized through the foregrounding that often occurs in the Hollywood novel (one thinks of Nathanael West’s *The Day of the* Locust) of the distinction, or lack of it, between reality and illusion, dream or artifice” (Diemert 142). Moreover, the presence of the frontier in *Gatsby*, *Tender*, and *Tycoon* epitomizes the more paradoxical question of how the American hero treats history as part of his own mythology.[128] Robert A Martin points out,

> There are at least three primary and related levels of American history that Fitzgerald uses in *Tycoon*. The first is exemplified by the immediate focus on the Hermitage, the home of Andrew Jackson . . . The second is

> the symbolic association of presidential names scattered throughout the book . . . And third, he uses history in a parodic and comedic sense to contrast the genuine tycoons of the past with the shallow Hollywood illusionists of the present. In this last usage history becomes distorted and is turned into myth, illusion, and metaphor – the transformation of the American Dream and history into the dream factory." (*TLOTLT* 144)

Fitzgerald's dreamlike description of the flooding of the studio back-lot, underscores the way in which the studio environment contracts space and time to highlight an acute sense of nostalgia, "thirty acres of fairyland – not because the locations really looked like African jungles and French chateaux and schooners at anchor and Broadway by night, but because they looked like the torn picture books of childhood" (*TLOTLT* 25). The idea of the studio reduced to virtual non-space with the dissolution of the various sets, submerged and intermingled, allows for a new awareness of the fluidity of temporal as much as spatial movement between subject and object. It is no accident that Stahr first sees Kathleen here stranded on the head of the God Siva,[129] "The idol had come un-loosed from a set of Burma and it meandered earnestly on its way, stopping sometimes to waddle and bump in the shallows with the other debris of the tide" (*TLOTLT* 26). Once again Fitzgerald experiments with the narrative implications of capturing a distinctly new 20th century conception of time, indicative of a new understanding of the mobility of space, where Stahr on taking Kathleen to see his unfinished house admits, "The studio is really home" (*TLOTLT* 82). Stahr's correlation of time as it operates mnemonically between these two separate locations, again replaces myth for history, where the idea of home and the memory of his dead wife Minna are transfigured in the physical and figurative symbiosis of Siva and Kathleen. It is this association between Hollywood

studio as both workplace and broken myth, that I would like to finally turn to now as a locus of both terminus and new beginnings in *Tycoon*.

The novel opens with Cecelia's description of an air flight from the East Coast to the West. On a basic level, the associations and sensations of flight is a metaphor for Hollywood itself, " . . . we were the coastal rich, who casually alighted from our cloud in mid-America. High adventure might be among us, disguised as a movie star" (*TLOTLT* 8). On a more symbolic level, the female voice is associated with how the aerodynamics of modern travel encapsulate a means of navigating, exploring, and critically observing the geographical palimpsest of America's landscape and history.[130] Cecelia and her fellow passengers are no longer held contained by the temporal and physical boundaries of America, but quite literally cut loose, socially and imaginatively from their immediate past and future, "We sat for a while in the half-light of the swaying car. It was vaguely like a swanky restaurant at that twilight time between meals. We were all lingering – and not quite on purpose.[131] Even the stewardess, I think had to keep reminding herself why she was there" (*TLOTLT* 5). It is in this "twilight" context, that Hollywood and the end of the frontier take on a new form of movement in Cecelia's narrative perspective. The movement of the "swaying car" has a maternal nurturing quality once more highlighting the newly feminized space, where Cecelia is fully aware of her own ability to make and imagine her own pictures. It is through the modernity of a woman's memory, that Cecelia describes the frontier as a transformative connection to the historical past, "the sense of that sharp rip between coast and coast" (*TLOTLT* 4). Hence, the male dominated film studio as a self-contained environment, which equates to the plane itself, physically subsumes and replaces the frontier as a geographically fixed boundary, and becomes a painfully feminized space, a "sharp rip" disembodied and suspended in mid-air.

After being forced to land in Nashville, Cecelia, Wylie White a scriptwriter, and Manny Schwartze, a down on his luck Hollywood producer decide to make an early morning trip to the Hermitage, the home of America's tenth President Andrew Jackson. In microcosm, it is a reflection on the historical as much as literal stages of that journey, in addition to the inner psychology of an outsider's point of view regarding Hollywood, "We drove for a long time over a bright level countryside . . . and then suddenly along a winding twist of woodland. I could feel even in the darkness that the trees of the woodland were green – that it was all different from the dusty olive- tint of California." (*TLOTLT* 9). Cecelia describes passing, "a Negro driving three cows ahead of him . . . They were real cows . . . and the Negro grew gradually real out of the darkness", before recalling another memory of Hollywood itself:

> "I thought of the first sheep I ever remember seeing, . . . how our car drove suddenly into them on the back of the old Laemmle studio. They were unhappy about being in pictures but the men in the car with us kept saying: "Swell?" . . . If I ever knew what picture they were in I have long forgotten." (*TLOTLT* 10)

Cecelia's subliminal connection of the Southern "bright level countryside" with "the dusty olive-tint of California", and the "real" African-American farmer with the forgotten "picture" made in Hollywood, where she saw as a child her first real sheep, as an associative set of images capture the reality and unreality of America, as a montage landscape. Yet it is a passage, that in modulating into conversation between Cecelia and White emphasizes a certain lack of belonging and abandonment, "You don't like Hollywood," I suggested. "Yes I do. Sure I do. Say! This isn't anything to talk about on the steps of Andrew Jackson's house at dawn" (*TLOTLT* 11). White

describes Hollywood as "a mining town lotus land . . . It was all there – that swimming pool, green moss at two dollars an inch, beautiful felines having drinks and fun" (11) displacing the backdrop of the Hermitage itself, which Cecelia describes as, "a nice big white box, but a little lonely, and vacated still, after a hundred years" (*TLOTLT* 13). Yet it is the figure of Manny Swartze, whose suicide at the Hermitage provides a more profound connection between Hollywood and American history:

> I kept thinking of him all the way back to the airport – trying to fit him into that early hour and into that landscape. He had come a long way from some ghetto to present himself as that raw shrine. Mannie Schwartze and Andrew Jackson – it was hard to say them in the same sentence. It was doubtful if he knew who Andrew Jackson was as he wandered around, but perhaps he figured that if people had preserved his house Andrew Jackson must have been someone who was large and merciful, able to understand. At both ends of life man needed nourishment – a breast – a shrine. Something to lay himself beside when no one wanted him further, and shoot a bullet into his head. (*TLOTLT* 13)

Schwartze takes his own life believing he is a failure, and that Stahr no longer retains any faith in him. There is nothing noble or heroic about Schwartze's suicide; he does not die for a lost cause or romantic ideal. The scene of his death is the house of a man whose Presidency oversaw the forced removal of native American tribes from their sacred lands in the Southeastern United States, which led to the 'trail of tears' and the decimation of the Chickasaw, Creek, Seminole and Cherokee population. Schwartze's own Jewish ethnicity does not make him an "outsider" within the power structure of Hollywood, but relates him in a more nomadic sense to the forced exile of those

Native Americans, which was a direct product of the Western Movement itself. Yet in bringing him to the Hermitage, Cecelia's attempt to "fit him into that early hour and into that landscape" implicitly and immediately recognizes a point of resistance. In acknowledging that she finds it difficult to say the name Schwartze and Jackson in the "same sentence", she articulates the conflict between an episode of America's history, which directly connects the scene of Schwartze's death, with the displacement and cultural amnesia directed towards the Native American population:

> You can take Hollywood for granted like I did, or you can dismiss it with the contempt we reserve for what we don't understand. It can be understood too, but only dimly and in flashes. Not half a dozen men have ever been able to keep the equation of pictures in their heads. And perhaps the closest a woman can come to the set-up is to try and understand one of those men. (*TLOTLT* 3)

The premise, that a woman can only understand Hollywood, through understanding one of the few exceptional men at the head of the film industry, would suggest Fitzgerald's attitude towards Cecilia is one that appears initially to marginalize her authorial role and narrative voice. Yet it is a premise, which by definition implies, that to understand Stahr as the great Svengali of America's film industry, one must first understand the woman who believes in him. Joan Didion notes, "To the extent that *The Last Tycoon* is "about" Hollywood it is about not Monroe Stahr but Cecilia Brady, as anyone who understands the equation of pictures even dimly or in flashes would apprehend immediately: the Monroe Stahrs come and go, but the Cecilia Brady's are the second generation, the survivors, the inheritors of a community as intricate, rigid, and deceptive in its mores as any devised on this continent" (153). Subsequently, the first chapter of *Tycoon* goes some way to asking

more pertinent questions of the way Fitzgerald addresses gender through Cecelia's eyes, in depicting the inverse journey of an entire nation:

> I suppose there has been nothing like the airports since the days of the stage-stops – nothing quite as lonely, as somber-silent. The old red-brick depots were built right into the towns they marked – people didn't get off at those isolated stations unless they lived there. But airports lead you way back in history like oases, like the stops on the great trade routes. (8)

The phrase "history like oases", invokes the mystic American Eden that links back to Gatsby and the green light. This again highlights the notion, that for Fitzgerald there is something essential about the conflation of myth and reality in American society. What Cecelia describes goes beyond simple anecdotes regarding the Hollywood studio system. Talking about a young actress, whose fears of social revolution during the Depression lead to her fantasizing about escape to the rural sanctuary of Yellowstone Park, Cecelia reflects, "It conjured up a pretty picture of the actress and her mother being fed by kind Tory bears who brought them honey, and by gentle fawns who fetched extra milk from the does and then lingered near to make pillows for their heads a night."(5). In describing this scene with its overtones of a Hollywood film set Cecelia enjoys her whimsical fantasy, and yet remains fully aware of the illusion. By viewing the frontier as the imaginative disconnect between historical truth and pastoral fantasy, Fitzgerald allows in Cecelia an alternative voice. It is through this female voice, that Hollywood is disseminated and mobilized as a new textual space, that has the ability to critical view itself as a typically modern subject.[132]

In *The Love of the Last Tycoon* Monroe Stahr completes the heroic cycle embarked upon and developed by Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is the Night*. In doing so, Stahr ironically stands as an incomplete example of a new heroic mode; an outsider whose otherness is not framed in conventional terms of race, class, gender or sexuality, as much as it is indelibly conceived in the way in which the American Western frontier continues to haunt the experience of modernity. It is precisely this fact, which makes Stahr in many ways the ideal prototype for examining alternative questions of race, class, gender and sexuality in relation to American identity as a whole. Fitzgerald's use of a female narrative voice for his final work is perhaps the most telling example, of a re-evaluation of what was the largely accepted white male hetero-normative voice of American fiction, being the predominant heroic trope of the literary protagonist. The American hero remains an unfulfilled project, an ongoing possibility of moving pictures, where Stahr retains his youth and sincerity despite Fitzgerald's tragic failure to complete the work. What Stahr may have gone on to become in the final version of the novel is more than what can be captured in mere synopsis. Nevertheless, Fitzgerald's characterization of Stahr expands the potential of such a hero, in challenging the self-invented qualities of what such a hero was previously conceived to be. In the final analysis Fitzgerald suggests the nobility of failure, through a protagonist capable of pointing towards how a post-frontier America begins to develop and redefine a new set of discursive parameters, through which a new hero may emerge.

Conclusion – 'So peculiarly American' – A Scott Fitzgerald Reader for the 21st Century

The central question this study has aimed to address is how Scott Fitzgerald subverts the possibilities of a uniquely American protagonist[133] in literature by reconfiguring failure as key to re-invigorating the heroic mode. Jackson Bryer observes, "One of the best attributes of Fitzgerald's fiction is that there are no pure heroes; while he clearly admires those who aspire beyond life's limitations—the romantic dreamers–-he has no illusions as to their ultimate success."[134] While this may be true, there is more to Fitzgerald's treatment of the heroic mode than a purely symbolic convention. In Jay Gatsby, Dick Diver and Monroe Stahr, Fitzgerald works out of, and at the same time deconstructs the ideology of manifest destiny, by which the American hero is constructed and mythologized, which subverts a traditionally white, hetero-normative language of "heroism". I would also argue the theme of "failure" in Fitzgerald's work highlights a dynamic between American masculinity, and the closing of the frontier, whereby Fitzgerald explores a more counter-intuitive possibility regarding the renewal of the American literary hero as a worthy aim. Consequently, I have focused much of my reading on examining the premise that Fitzgerald uses the possibilities of successful, or more ironically, unsuccessful self-invention, as a potential means of renewing a heroic model of America.

The consistent re-envisaging of the heroic mode in Fitzgerald's fiction links to the unifying theme of his life and work, perhaps most poignantly epitomized in "The Crack-Up",[135] as writing serving as a metaphor for his own personal and creative recovery as an artist.[136] Writing in 1936, at a point where both public and critics assumed he was already dead Fitzgerald notes:

> Life, ten years ago, was largely a personal matter. I must hold in balance the sense of the futility of effort and the sense of the necessity to struggle; the conviction of the inevitability of failure and still the determination to "succeed" – and, more than these, the contradiction between the dead hand of the past and the high intentions of the future. If I could do this through the common ills – domestic, professional and personal – then the ego would continue as an arrow shot from nothingness to nothingness with such force that only gravity would bring it to earth at last. (*The Crack-Up* 70)

This passage taken from the first essay of "The Crack Up"[137] highlights a number of key nouns, that would appear essential to Fitzgerald's conception of the heroic mode namely, 'futility', 'necessity', 'conviction', 'determination' and 'nothingness'. Fitzgerald's rendition of heroic character does not deny the contradiction inherent in ostensibly declaring himself an un-heroic figure. Fitzgerald moves from a more abstract conception of the romantic hero, and to a certain extent himself during his early career, to a more refined critical awareness that heroic success has nothing to do with quality of work or artistic purpose as a motivating factor.[138] Whereas 'futility' and 'nothingness' merely offset the stoicism of 'necessity', 'conviction' and 'determination', they are in fact catalysts for what Fitzgerald considers the moral, emotional, intellectual and physical virtues of courage required for creative work.[139] This position remains a contentious one among Fitzgerald scholars.[140] In understanding Fitzgerald's use of failure in "The Crack-Up", as representative of more than a mere misanthropic confessional, Scott Donaldson[141] stresses, "The articles hardly achieve a "heroic awareness." It took courage to say as much as he did, but Fitzgerald left a great deal only hinted at and blamed too many outside forces for his

predicament to be adjudged a hero of self-revelation" (188). However, what Donaldson overlooks is that Fitzgerald in assessing the nature of his own breakdown is addressing failure counter-intuitively as a means of self-affirmation. Moreover, the qualities and conditions of failure Fitzgerald ascribes to heroism, and which pattern his self-analysis are not simply traits of an aesthetic cognitive dissonance in his writing, but point towards the grander narrative cycle of American life and letters through which he sought to position himself and his fiction.

Fitzgerald is constantly aware of a spirit of migratory movement in America, as fundamental to the development of national character. This movement is resonant in his sense of the frontier as a constant means of rediscovery and reinvention, yet equally cognizant in "The Crack-Up's" directed image of, "an arrow shot from nothingness to nothingness with such force that only gravity would bring it to earth at last". It is the same nothingness absent nihilism, which carries the kinetic energy to project Gatsby, "Mr. Nobody from Nowhere", as Tom Buchanan labels him, to the level of a more worthy dream, where he can, "suck on the pap of life . . . gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder" (*GG* 86). What carries and sustains Gatsby is quantifiable as a constant acceleratory movement towards, and retreat from the "orgastic future" (*GG* 141) conveyed in the very rhythm and pace of Fitzgerald's sentences.[142] Again in *Tycoon*, this image of a descending momentum is detectable in Cecelia's description of Stahr, as a kind of modern Icarus:

> The California moon was out, huge and orange over the Pacific . . . this was where Stahr had come to earth after that extraordinary illuminating flight where he saw which way we were going, and how we looked doing it, and how much of it mattered. You could say that this was where an accidental wind blew him but I don't

> think so. I would rather think that in a "long shot" he saw a new way of measuring our jerky hopes and graceful rogueries and awkward sorrows, and that he came here from choice to be with us to the end. Like the plane coming down into the Glendale airport, into the warm darkness. (*TLOTLT* 21)

The image of the arrow and the airplane both have a potency, uniting past and future through the textual space, where this dream of flight presents a new configuration of space and time. From this perspective, *Gatsby* is the true starting point for understanding Fitzgerald's claim as he was writing *Tycoon* that, "I am the last of the novelists for a long time now" (*Notebooks* 326) and his self-comparison to the legacy of the western movement itself as, " . . . the history of all aspiration – not just the American dream but the human dream and if I came at the end of it that too is a place in the line of the pioneers" (*Notebooks* 332). T.S. Eliot's own assessment of *Gatsby*, as the first major step forward in the American novel, when contextualized as merely the initial stage of a broader artistic vision expanded on in *Tender* and *Tycoon*, underlines what may be considered Fitzgerald's own critical awareness of his final three novels speaking to each other, as a discourse of constant re-invention. Just as the novels of Henry James and Joseph Conrad represent a significant bridge[143] between 19th century realism, and the more experimental work of early modernism, their influence on Fitzgerald reflects how by 1925 and the publication of *Gatsby*, he views his own work as seeking new forms that stretch beyond the modernist experiment.

Consequently, from 1925 onwards, Fitzgerald works on developing a singularly American novel, that is not only capable of combining and investing the more avant-garde elements of modernist narrative with the thematic substance and gravitas of 19th century realism, but also of matching and absorbing the new

storytelling potential of cinema and radio. As a result, *Gatsby*, *Tender*, and *Tycoon* work out of a more nuanced awareness of an American protagonist developing as part of the same heroic cycle, not only over time, but also textual space. It is the contemporary reception and reading of Fitzgerald's 'hero' through this textual space, in terms of how he is encoded and constructed with regards to an understanding of race, gender, sexuality, and class, that continues to address and engage the multi-media environment of 21st century American society, as it comes to be shaped by an increasingly diverse population of subjects and readers. Thus it is not to the past, but rather a vision of the future, that Fitzgerald speaks of himself as "the last of the novelists" and taking a final place "in the line of the pioneers". The 'hero' of Fitzgerald's novels carries an awareness of a failed "falling" history that nevertheless continues to propel America forward. The American novel, as Fitzgerald conceives it, functions in dynamic terms as a form of both individual and collective social movement, fundamental to American history and culture. It is furthermore a transformative mode of self-discovery, which allows Fitzgerald to self-identify, as a man who has survived himself as a part of that history and culture. Consequently, while Fitzgerald underpins his own ongoing project of heroic renewal, in relation to a number of other protagonists in American literature,[144] his true courage reveals itself, in the attempt to use the American novel to discover a new form of cultural vitality in American life.

The structural movement of the frontier in Fitzgerald's novels captures a textual instability, through which new narrative paradigms continue to emerge. For Dick Diver the American frontier manifests on one level as, "the illusions of eternal strength and health, and of the essential goodness of people – illusions of a nation, the lies of generations of frontier mothers who had to croon, falsely, that there were no

wolves outside the cabin door" (*TITN* 134). Here it is the absence and perceived diminishment of a tangible father figure in *Tender*, as a centrifugal force of moral authority, which links the lies of "frontier mothers" to the cynical currency and urban corruption of the Warren family's millions. Nicole's incestuous relationship with her own father, and the death of Dick's own, both influence the movement which his life steadily takes in returning West, first for his father's funeral and finally at the end of the novel. It is at the funeral of Dick's father, where again the frontier stands as a point of both orientation, and dislocation for him,[145] "Flowers were scattered on the brown unsettled earth. Dick had no more ties here now and did not believe he would come back. He knelt on the hard soil. These dead, he knew them all, their weather-beaten faces with blue flashing eyes, the spare violent bodies, the souls made of new earth in the forest-heavy darkness of the seventeenth century" (*TITN* 233). Dick's emotional bankruptcy and ruin are thematic material, which Fitzgerald treats as textual fissures, where the illusions of the frontier, and America as a nation are played out as a study of personality disintegration. Consequently, in Diver Fitzgerald presents a hero, whose acceptance of failure ensures a much more profound resolution to the overall narrative of *Tender*, and represents a major step forward in Fitzgerald's development as a writer, in looking to address more complex themes of psychology and pathology. It is precisely this sense of a stalled creative momentum at the heart of *Tender is the Night*, which in providing a transitional link between *Gatsby* and Tycoon, cannot be overstated.

Historically the Western movement towards the Pacific provides Fitzgerald with the conditions for developing the heroic trajectory, which he traces in each of his three mature novels. Through Jay Gatsby, Dick Diver and Monroe Stahr, Fitzgerald introduces and advances a new take on the American principle of self-invention, by

linking the idea of 'failed' history to the symbolic language of the "green light", that informs America as a pioneer nation, where as Jeffrey Steinbrink notes:

> The roar of the twenties . . . announced the arrival of the first generation of modern Americans . . . Disenchanted observers remarked . . . the perennial fruits of the American experience were frustration and disappointment. The New Jerusalem envisioned by our Puritan fathers was never to be realized; the possibilities of spiritual regeneration in a boundless New World were fatally diminished by the closing of the frontier . . . The very impetus or direction of American history came repeatedly into question, and what once had appeared . . . an ascending spiral curve now became a steady downward sweep toward the void of nonexistence. (158)

In relation to the closure of the frontier, Fitzgerald's 'hero' certainly assimilates the Puritan fathers' vision of an unrealized second Eden, and the initial promise of the New World. Similarly Ronald Berman asserts that, "Fitzgerald has taken the subtext of the early twentieth century, its obsession with energy, action, progress, and becoming, and replaced them with displays of anemia, passivity, blank and unreflective suspension, unconsciousness, negation, and even delusion. His insight into the authority of failure may be a historical stance" (49). Yet equally Gatsby, Diver, and Stahr may all be said to paradoxically stand in direct opposition to this reading of American history, as determined through a white, patriarchal power structure. The stimulus of unsuccessful, rather than successful self-invention, as driving forward the renewal of the American hero, brings into focus a new criteria for examining Fitzgerald's work, that seeks to move beyond a more well trodden analysis of the American class system. Within Fitzgerald's heroic model, and the use of narrative

voice, there remain a much more subversive range of 'other' voices. This is particularly evident in *Tycoon*, and how it both links back to and yet at the same time represents a natural advance on the themes and language of *Gatsby*, illustrative of a more political engagement and awareness on Fitzgerald's part, with the anti-Semitism and racism which underscores much of his own writing, and American society as a whole.

What makes Fitzgerald's 'hero' so relevant, as we read him at the beginning of the 21st century is the ability to subvert the meaning and conditions of failure, by taking the idea of writing not only as a metaphor for existence, but a means of looking to self-repair, and recover following failure. It is the inability of the white, hetero-normative male within traditional Western narrative, to respond and answer to 'the other' as a threat to established tropes of romance and tragedy, which Fitzgerald's American hero explores and challenges. Here, the emphasis on the nature of recovery as writing itself, offers a genuine possibility for new critical voices and identities operating within the field of Fitzgerald scholarship to emerge. Moreover, while failure as an underlying theme in Fitzgerald's work has long been recognized as representative of his maturity as a writer, particularly during the dark years of the 1930s,[146] one of the more intriguing characteristics of Fitzgerald's development of the heroic mode, is the non-western quality of noble failure traditionally attributed to Japanese tradition and culture. I submit that the model of the Japanese warrior, who willingly accepts his death in the face of overwhelming odds, finds a Western equivalent in the same qualities of sincerity and purity of vision, which informs and defines the characters of Gatsby, Diver and Stahr. Each of Fitzgerald's heroes reach of a moment of epiphany, where despite their failure being clear to them, they continue to stay true to the qualities of integrity and courage, which have

paradoxically contributed to the conditions of their defeat, and a goal which they know will elude them.[147] However, at the same time, there are clear differences that must be acknowledged between the Japanese and American attitude to failure as a feature of tragedy.[148]

Fitzgerald writes to borrow his own phrase from *Gatsby*, 'within and without' both an American and Japanese conception of heroic behavior. The evidence to support this lies, not only in the way Fitzgerald's heroes bear an uncanny resemblance to the virtues of noble failure present in the Japanese hero, but conversely in the way they may also serve as models for contemporary authors working from an Eastern tradition. Haruki Murakami's 2018 novel *Killing Commendatore*[149] makes explicit, not only the self-acknowledged influence of Fitzgerald on Murakami's work, but also the way the shift from a Western to an Eastern perspective, allows for an inversion of standard readings of masculinity, race and class, that may be subverted and questioned. In doing so, Murakami as a Japanese writer, uses the figure of Gatsby as a Western model of heroism, to experiment with and reconfigure the generic possibilities of the 21st century novel. Moreover, Murakami's own translation of *Gatsby* points towards the modernity, or even postmodern quality of the American hero, as being read outside conventional Western paradigms.[150] For future Fitzgerald scholarship, the implications of acknowledging the Japanese model of heroic failure, goes far beyond informing Fitzgerald's reputation as a prose stylist, and offers a means of reading *Gatsby*, *Tender*, and *Tycoon* as a narrative cycle, not only in stressing the 'heroic' similarities of the central protagonists, but also by focusing on how the novels are working together collectively.

Questions remain as to whether Fitzgerald's model of heroism is merely a renewal of an older literary trope, or a genuinely new conception of how the

American novel continues to move forward. This poses the question, as Fitzgerald's novels continue to evolve along with America into the 21st century, as to how does his model of heroism continue to reflect and acknowledge American individualism as a development of Enlightenment liberal values, that have themselves been seen largely to have failed? One way is certainly to reconsider how Fitzgerald's work may be received and re-positioned in relation to non-Western critical paradigms. While I am not suggesting that Fitzgerald is consciously writing with a working knowledge of Japanese folklore, the values and beliefs of his heroes closely align with noble failure, most notably in their shared quality of 'makoto' whose, "common denominator has always been a purity of motive, which derives from man's longing for an absolute meaning out of time and from a realization that the social, political world is essentially a place of corruption whose materiality is incompatible with the demands of pure spirit and truth" (17). In Jay Gatsby, Dick Diver, and Monroe Stahr, Fitzgerald traces this purity of motive as key not only to overcoming his own personal breakdown, but essential to the act of creation, which comes through the conditions of failure rather than success.

One might argue that the real hero of Fitzgerald's work is not so much Gatsby, Diver nor Stahr, but the novel itself, as the chief agent essential to restoring the cultural vitality of American life. In other words, through ascribing action as character, Fitzgerald achieves a full artistic awareness of what he is doing in adapting the function of the novel to a re-imagining of America, as a creative territory socially, historically, and geographically. As such, and in these terms, it is possible to justify describing Fitzgerald, as a genuine pioneer of American letters. Through *Gatsby*, *Tender*, and *Tycoon* Fitzgerald identifies the novel as crucial in moving from past to present, and the key actor essential to restoring a sense of purpose and direction to

American society. The specific aspects of the novel, that Fitzgerald sees as fundamental to this process of re-genesis are demonstrably manifest, in the creation of a particularly sensitive narrator (Nick Carraway and Cecelia Brady) attuned to the subtextual continuity inherent in the ever shifting spheres of both their immediate social environments and historical epochs, and a restructuring of the narrative relationship between time and space, through the dissociative use of narrative flashback in *Tender* and also *Gatsby*. One might also add to this Fitzgerald's burgeoning, and not entirely un-ironic recognition of America's innate heroic 'other', the role of women and other alternative minority voices, whose critical role in subverting the dominant perception of white, patriarchal, hetero-normative tropes of Western heroism, remains largely marginalized and repressed.

This is most keenly demonstrated in *The Love of The Last Tycoon* and Fitzgerald's failure to complete a work, which was clearly moving towards asking more pertinent questions of narrative voice, American nationhood, and the social and political direction of the continent as a whole.[151] What is particularly ennobling about the novel viewed metaphorically as hero, may be read in the way *Tycoon* embraces the failure of white, patriarchal, hetero-normative discourse, and begins to indicate Fitzgerald is continuing to grow and improve as a writer, asking more radical questions of how race, gender, and class inform the very basis for reading the American hero.[152] Fitzgerald's work particularly from 1925 onwards is driven by a desire to keep moving forward in the face of overwhelming odds, and to continually test aesthetic and textual boundaries. Fitzgerald's three mature novels working together as a narrative arc, on one level replays a pioneer movement, first as failure returning from West to East in *Gatsby*, and later the Old World in *Tender*, before turning Westward again in *Tycoon*, an unbroken circle, that beginning again continues

to ask new questions of America as a pluralistic society, its people, their languages and literatures.

To conclude, Fitzgerald's work speaks to the authority of failure as neither definitive nor irrevocable, but more as a key function of an ongoing revolutionary spirit. Fitzgerald's treatment of failure as a thematic concern embodies a cognitive dissonance, which allows for both the language of self-invention, and also that of failed self-invention to co-exist in positive tension. In doing so, Fitzgerald's characterization of Jay Gatsby, Dick Diver, and Monroe Stahr presents other, alternative narrative possibilities in seeking a renewal of the heroic mode, which subverts the conventional westernized language of "heroism". In the noble failure of the Japanese warrior lies a point of reference, that has not been previously considered in relation to how *Gatsby*, *Tender*, and *Tycoon* follow a distinct narrative trajectory, that allows all three novels to be read and critically evaluated, as working towards the evolvement of a new heroic mode of thinking. Moreover, Fitzgerald's own creative renewal in metaphorically reinventing himself through his work, speaks on a deeper level to how he envisages the reinvention of America, through a willingness to acknowledge failure as conducive to an ennobling vitality of creative endeavor. What impresses the contemporary 21st century reader in the critical reception of Fitzgerald's writing is the way these novels capture and retain a quality of imaginative and creative movement, which in many ways continues to match the speed and acceleration of American life in answering to its ongoing democratic experiment. From the publication of *Gatsby* in 1925 to the final working manuscript of *The Love of The Last Tycoon*, Scott Fitzgerald continues to ask questions concerning the direction of modern American society, and the heroism of its literature. In doing so, he embraces the sense of overwhelming odds that are stacked against him, and re-

imagines the creative possibilities of failure as our own most common human link as readers.

Endnotes

[1] I would interpret what Fitzgerald refers to as "struggle" to be the willingness to meet and respond to failure, with a quality of courage required both to self-define and self-invent outside of one's immediate environment.

[2] By this I mean Fitzgerald's engagement with the heroic tradition in American literature frames more complex questions of how race, gender, class, and sexuality inform cultural discourse.

[3] For more insight into contemporary questions regarding gender and race in the novel, the reader may find Morris Dickstein's volume *Critical Insights*: *The Great Gatsby* offers a variety of scholarly readings from a more comparative critical context.

[4] The heroic model that Fitzgerald develops not only in *Gatsby*, but also *Tender* and *Tycoon* inevitably poses questions as to the specific nature by which Gatsby, Diver and Stahr may be crediby described as heroes. Stephen Brauer goes further stating, "Inevitably . . . each time that I teach the novel [*Gatsby*] to my undergraduate students, one of them insists that we need to acknowledge that Gatsby is the hero of the novel . . . What is it about Gatsby, I ask them, that is great? Is it his desire for Daisy or his doggedness in pursuing her? The difference, it seems to me, is crucial in that it dramatizes the distinction between our dreams and how we go about achieving them" (qtd. in Bryer and VanArsdale 84).

[5]As Jack Kerouac in a 1962 interview with *Time* magazine declared, "Nobody'll ever know America completely because nobody ever knew Gatsby, I guess." The conflation of Gatsby with America, in the literary as well as popular imagination, assumes an epistemological truth that there is a singular foundation for how America is written and read. For the purposes of this study this statement can be localized further in asking how and why does 'not knowing' Gatsby answer to a clear workable definition of the American hero?

[6] Gatsby himself is representative of a much older heroic tradition than the context of 20th century modernity. As Deborah Davis Schlacks points out, "many of Fitzgerald's works . . . often have a medieval flavor born of his fascination with the Middle Ages and of his recognition of medievalism as a significant social force during the 1920s. *The Great Gatsby* with its emphasis on feudalism, the grail search, and courtly love is a prime example" (qtd.in Bryer and VanArsdale 164).

[7] On one level it remains understandable to conflate F. Scott Fitzgerald with his most famous creation Jay Gatsby. In his notebooks Fitzgerald himself wrote, "I am an only child. Gatsby my imaginary older brother"(158). Yet if both Gatsby and Fitzgerald are to a certain extent combined in both the literary and popular imagination as icons of mainstream American culture, they are also paradoxically both exemplars of social outsiders seeking acceptance within American society. I submit that the model of

heroism Fitzgerald works from in *Gatsby*, *Tender*, and *Tycoon* represents an extended narrative trope, which subverts standard Western definitions of heroic masculinity.

[8] While critical scholarship on *Gatsby* rightly underlines Fitzgerald's treatment of Western heroism as ironic, it falls short of asking how *Gatsby* presents more complex questions of heroic identity, that speak to traditionally under-represented voices within American society.

[9] The major work on this subject remains Ivan Morris's *The Nobility of Failure* published in 1976.

[10]Tom Buchanan in *Gatsby*, Baby Warren and Tommy Barban in *Tender*, and Pat Brady in *Tycoon* all represent stronger and more vindictive antagonists that ultimately overcome Fitzgerald's heroes, not simply by means of money or politics, but through their ability to betray and double-deal in such a way, that Gatsby, Diver and Stahr are destroyed by their own innocence. Here I do not mean innocent in the sense that they are unworldly, but more the purity of their more ennobling vision of life. This purity in Gatsby, Diver and Stahr all stems from and relates to the sheer power and integrity of their imagination, in looking beyond the base materialism of modern culture, to an older more worthy set of goals.

[11] Nick Carraway's description of Gatsby's own record as a soldier during the First World War is worth underlining where he reports, "He did extraordinarily well in the war. He was a captain before he went to the front and following the Argonne battles he got his majority and the command of the divisional machine guns" (*GG* 117). In contrasting the model of the Japanese hero with that of the Western, Ivan Morris notes, "Unlike the West, where there has traditionally been a debate concerning the comparative virtues conferred on a man by arms and by arts, Japan has never regarded the two as incompatible. Far from it: a feeling for poetry was confirmation of the warrior's sincerity. For all the conventional limits of its form, the little *tanka* verse with its rigid syllabic framework has been honored as the supreme means of expressing deep emotion. The Japanese tragic hero, whose life is pitched at a higher emotional level than most men's, will often reveal his most powerful feelings in verse, especially as his career races towards it culmination" (8). Morris goes on to provide an example in describing the death of Prince Yamato Takeru who as he was dying composed the following lines:

> On the Cape of Otsu
> Directly facing Owari,
> There you stand,
> Oh, lone pine tree!
> Oh, my brother!
> Were you a man,
> Oh, lonely pine,
> I would gird you with a sword
> I would give you robes to wear.
> Oh, lone pine tree!
> Oh, my brother! (Morris 9)

Although edited from the final novel, in the manuscript typescript Gatsby composes a verse, which might be taken to reflect a similar death song as his life approaches its apotheosis:

> We hear the tinkle of the gay guitars
> We see the sleeping Southern moon,
> Where the fire-flies flit
> And the June bugs sit
> Drones the crickets single tune.
> We hear the lapping of the wavelets
> Where the lonesome nightbirds sing
> And the soft warm breeze
> Tell the tall palm trees
> The Dreamy Song of Spring

"I made it up when I was fourteen", he said eagerly, "and the sound of it makes me perfectly happy. But I don't sing it often now because I'm afraid I'll use it up." (*GG* lv)

Gatsby at this point in the novel has no immediate or impending anticipation of his demise. Yet his admission that he may have 'used up' the song, and the melencholic quality of the lyric with its 'lonesome nightbirds' echoes the 'lonely pine' of Yamato Takeru as emblematic of the "Japanese tragic hero, "whose life is pitched at a higher emotional level than most men's" and as Morris again notes:

> . . . will often reveal his most powerful feelings in verse, especially as his career races towards its culmination. The tradition of farewell poems goes back to the country's most distant past, and hardly a single Japanese hero, from Yamato Takeru in legendary times until the kamikaze pilots in recent years, died without having first taken poetic leave of the world. This verse is rarely of the highest quality; yet, whatever such valedictions may lack in elegance and prosodic skill, they will always reflect the emotional sincerity that marks the true hero. (8)

[12] Fitzgerald's own 'dauntless courage' is attested to in his letter to Zelda's physician Dr Carroll where despite knowing her chances of recovery were non-existent he maintains, "So long as she is helpless, I'd never leave her or ever let her have a sense that she was deserted" (Fitzgerald, *Letters* 350).

[13]As Morris Dickstein highlights in "The Authority of Failure" Fitzgerald does more than simply treat the theme of defeat as a vehicle for expressing his personal sense of loss, "Starting with stories he wrote in 1929 and 1930, long before the *Crack-Up* articles, Fitzgerald gave an unsparing account of what was going wrong in his life. More than that he made creative use of it to take his work in a daring new direction . . . This points to the great difference between a writer who breaks down and can't work and one who uses his frustrations and disappointments as new material, producing work that shows a quantum leap in human understanding" (75).

[14] In his foreword to the first edition of, as it was initially published, *The Last Tycoon*, Wilson wrote,

> It is worth while to read *The Great Gatsby* in connexion with *The Last Tycoon* because it shows the kind of thing that Fitzgerald was aiming to do in the latter. If his conception of his subject in *Tender is the Night* had shifted in the course of his writing it so that the parts of that fascinating novel do not always quite hang together, he had recovered here the singleness of purpose, the sureness of craftsmanship, which appear in the earlier story. (*The Last Tycoon* 3)

[15] On *The Great Gatsby* and *The Last Tycoon* as it was then titled, John Dos Passos wrote immediately following Fitzgerald's death:

> As a man he was tragically destroyed by his own invention. As a writer his triumph was that he managed in *The Great Gatsby* and to a greater degree in *The Last Tycoon* to weld together again the two divergent halves, to fuse the conscientious worker that no creative man can ever really kill with the moneyed celebrity who aimed his stories at the twelve-year olds . . .
>
> Stahr, the prime mover of a Hollywood picture studio who is the central figure, . . . constitutes a real advance over the treatment of such characters in all the stories that have followed Dreiser and Frank Norris . . . Fitzgerald writes about Stahr, not as a poor man writing about someone rich and powerful, nor as the impotent last upthrust of some established American stock sneering at a parvenu Jew; but coolly, as a man writing about an equal he knows and understands . . .
>
> The fact that at the end of a life of brilliant worldly successes and crushing disasters Scott Fitzgerald was engaged so ably in a work of such importance proves him to have been the first-rate novelist his friends believed him to be. In *The Last Tycoon* he was managing to invent a set of people seen really in the round instead of lit by an envious spotlight from above or below. *The Great Gatsby* remains a perfect example of this sort of treatment at an earlier, more anecdotic, more bas relief stage, but in the fragments of *The Last Tycoon*, you can see the beginning of a real grand style. Even in their unfinished state these fragments, I believe, are of sufficient dimensions to raise the level of American fiction to follow in some such way as Marlowe's blank verse line raised the whole level of Elizabethan verse. (*The Crack Up* 342-343)

[16] In a letter to Max Perkins Fitzgerald resists comparison to General Grant after Perkins had sent him a copy of Horace Green's book *General Grant's Last Stand*, "It is needless to compare the force of character between myself and General Grant . . . What attitude on life I have been able to put into my books is dependent upon entirely different field of reference with the predominant themes based on problems of personal psychology" (Fitzgerald, *Letters* 312). The emphasis Fitzgerald places here on his own 'attitude to life' as playing out in his work along lines of 'themes based on problems of personal psychology' would again support a critical position that *Tender*

stands at the heart of a more extended heroic cycle, which Fitzgerald develops in his final three novels. This is particularly interesting when one considers that in *Tender*, at the end of the first chapter of Book 2 describing Dick Diver's studies during the war in Zurich, the narrator notes, "The foregoing has the ring of a biography, without the satisfaction of knowing that the hero, like Grant, lolling in his general store in Galena, is ready to be called to an intricate destiny" (*TITN* 136).

[17] Consequently, few scholars have noted the way Gatsby, Diver and Stahr reflect a narrative progression of the American hero through the subversion of Western assumptions towards failure as having no heroic qualities.

[18] *Gatsby's* structure is symbolically framed and organized from start to finish entirely through the unreliable narration of Nick Carraway, who in looking back on the summer of 1922 incorporates scenes of flashback to delay Gatsby's backstory within the main body of the narration. *Tender's* narrative is much looser in moving between different time frames, and revealing the causes of Diver's disintegration.

[19] In *Tender* scenes are juxtaposed and arranged to give the impression of a much wider, cinematic scope. This stylistic innovation gives the impression of a much more diffused, external environment being used to reflect on a more complex interior pathology of disintegration.

[20] Fitzgerald in his three most mature works *Gatsby, Tender,* and *Tycoon* consistently develops a relationship between time and space, which he uses to experiment with and advance the form of the modernist novel. This is itself indicative of the influence of cubist art and theory on Fitzgerald's writing both through his friendship with Gerald and Sara Murphy, and direct exposure to artists such as Picasso and Matisse.

[21] The weakening of Western culture post 1918 as George Steiner notes remains the undeniable condition of artistic production throughout the 20th century, "We cannot think clearly about the crises of Western culture, about the origins and forms of totalitarian movements in the European heartland and the recurrence of world war, without bearing sharply in mind that Europe, after 1918, was damaged in its centers of life" (33). Steiner goes on to assert, "An aggregate of mental and physical potentiality, of new hybrids and variants, too manifold for us to measure, was lost to the preservation and further evolution of Western man and of his institutions. Already in a biological sense we are looking now at a diminished or 'post-culture' (33).

[22] This reframing often takes the form of active discourse on the part of secondary, and even minor characters in the book. The scene in *Tender* where Diver's speaks with a female patient suffering from nervous eczema is one such example through which Fitzgerald emphasizes the woman's courage in facing her condition:

> "I'm sharing the fate of the women of my time who challenged men to battle."
> "To your vast surprise it was just like all battles," he answered, adopting her formal diction.

> "Just like all battles." She thought this over. "You pick a set –up, or else win a Pyrrhic victory, or you're wreaked and ruined – you're a ghostly echo from a broken wall."
> "You are neither wrecked nor ruined," he told her. "Are you quite sure you've been in a real battle?"
> "Look at me!" she cried furiously.
> "You've suffered, but many women suffered before they mistook themselves for men." It was becoming an argument and he retreated. "In any case you mustn't confuse a single failure with a final defeat." She sneered. "Beautiful words," and the phrase transpiring up through the crust of pain humbled him. (*TITN* 210-211)

The woman represents an entirely immobile figure, who nevertheless allows Diver the opportunity to acknowledge his own weakness, and give voice to the reasons behind the deterioration of his own marriage. The female voice is what articulates Diver's own suffering:

> "You are sick," he said mechanically.
> "Then what was it I had almost found?"
> "A greater sickness."
> "That's all?"
> "That's all." With disgust he heard himself lying, but here and now the vastness of the subject could only be compressed into a lie. "Outside of that there's only confusion and chaos. I won't lecture to you – we have too acute a realization of your physical suffering. But it's only by meeting the problems of every day, no matter how trifling and boring they seem, that you can make things drop back into place again. After that perhaps you'll be able again to examine –"
> He had slowed up to avoid the inevitable end of his thought: "-the frontiers of consciousness. The frontiers that artists must explore were not for her, ever. She was fine-spun, inbred – eventually she might find rest in some quiet mysticism. Exploration was for those with a measure of peasant blood, those with big thighs and thick ankles who could take punishment as they took bread and salt, on every inch of flesh and spirit.
> -Not for you, he almost said. It's too tough a game for you. (*TITN* 211)

[23] While one might argue as protagonists Gatsby, Diver and Stahr are fundamentally removed from each other, if the qualities of honesty, order, responsibility and rationality remain somewhat absent from Gatsby's character, those of courage, politeness, courtesy, integrity, discipline and hard work are markedly present. Out of Gatsby's "capacity for hope" Fitzgerald derives what may be said to be in Diver a capacity for hopelessness, "I guess I'm the Black Death," he said slowly. "I don't seem to bring people happiness any more."" (*TITN* 249). Subsequently there emerges in *Tycoon*, even in its incomplete form, a fully matured concept of the American hero in Monroe Stahr achieved through Fitzgerald's own ability to reconcile hope with hopelessness as also described in "The Crack-Up" and his explanation of cognitive dissonance.

[24] I would argue that this comment is especially applicable to the major novels Fitzgerald wrote between 1925 and 1940. Read as a 'work in progress' *Gatsby* lays the groundwork for both *Tender* and *Tycoon*. Moreover, the artistic advance Fitzgerald makes with *Gatsby* in comparison to his first two novels cannot be overstated. While one would not go so far as to argue *Gatsby* represents the true beginning of Fitzgerald's career, it is certainly the moment in which he establishes, and clearly defines the themes and concerns, which he will repeatedly return to in his writing for the rest of his life.

[25] To cite a few examples of this migratory movement, in *Gatsby* Nick Carraway's travels from the Mid-West to the East Coast and back again, in *Tender* Dick Diver's expatriate movements across Europe from the Riviera to Paris and Rome preceding his final return to America at the end of the novel, and in *Tycoon* the opening chapter where Cecelia Brady recounts her journey to Hollywood as a history of Western pioneer movement in microcosm.

[26] Here the reader may also find Thomas Pendelton's 1993 study *I'm Sorry About the Clock: Chronology, Composition and Narrative Technique in The Great Gatsby* useful.

[27] Ronald Berman also presents a pertinent analysis on how Fitzgerald uses the Great War in *Gatsby* as not only a historical checkpoint, but a means of engaging broader social questions emerging in America as a whole:

> The novel begins with mention of two important events in national consciousness, the Civil War and the Great War of 1914-18. Neither holds Nick's attention for more than a moment. Hemingway was to make a career out of recollections of his war; Fitzgerald understands things differently. For him the war is a checkpoint in history, a barrier to the influence of the past. His imagination is sociological. Nick dreams neither of the past nor of the war but rather of the new agenda of the twenties – banking and credit and investment.
>
> The postwar world is free of the past and of its institutions, but it is not free of its own false ideas. When Tom Buchanan informs Nick and the reader that "Civilization's going to piece" (14), he has probably never said truer words. But he is of course displaying more than he describes. He echoes a vast national debate about immigration, race, science and art. There is something seriously wrong in America – yet it may be Tom's own class and type that is responsible. He represents a group as idle and mindless as that excoriated by Carlyle in *Past and Present*. There is something wrong with the immoral pursuit of wealth by historical figures like James J. Hill – except that inherited possession seems no better. Fitzgerald's rich boys often pose as guardians of tradition and often adduce a false relationship to public values. (32)

[28] Franco Nasi notes the first appearance of *The Great Gatsby* in Italy, " . . . in 1950 with the translation of Fernanda Pivano, but already before, in 1936 a curious *Gatsby the magnificent* had been published by Mondadori in the popular literary series "I romanzi della Palma", translated into Italian from the French version of 1926, by

Gianfranca Balestra with a timely comparative textual analysis, which then extends to the other numerous translations (a dozen, one of which with a front text edited by the same Balestra for Marsilio) that have appeared since 2011, once the copyright expired." (". . . nel 1950, con la traduzione di Fernanada Pivano, ma già prima, nel 1936 un curioso *Gatsby il magnifico* era stato pubblicato da Mondadori nella collana di letterature popolare "I romanzi della Palma", tradotto in italiano dalla versione francese del 1926, come dimostra Gianfranca Balestra con una puntualissima analisi testuale comparata, che si estende poi alle altre numerose traduzioni (una dozzina, di cui una con testo a fronte curate dalla stessa Balestra per Marsilio) che sono apparse a partire dal 2011, una volta scaduti i diritti d'autore"; my trans.; "Gatsby uno e plurimo").

[29] R.W.B. Lewis observes," Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, for example, demonstrates once more the dramatic appeal of the hero as a self-created innocent . . . He had repudiated his former self, with its ancestry, as represented by his former name of James Gatz. And in his new role he had (to use the phrase of Horace Bushnell) 'just begun to be.' The legend of the second chance is thus poignantly re-enacted by Gatsby, as he carries forward his incorruptible dream beneath the surface of his guessed at corruption. In *The Great Gatsby*, the Adamic anecdote retains a singular purity of outline; the young hero follows the traditional career from bright expectancy to the destruction which, in American literature, has been its perennial reward. But the image of the New World as a second, last chance for humanity – an image with which, in retrospect, the murdered Gatsby is associated – is subtly exploited by Fitzgerald as a mirror to reveal the true ugliness of society's hard malice and shallow sophistication" (197).

[30] Fitzgerald establishes a challenging dichotomy between the idea of renewal, and Gatsby as a modern, and even contemporary symbol of American masculinity. This chapter will propose that Fitzgerald subverts a conventional language of myth in the novel by suggesting both gender and narrative voice are embedded in the commodification and consumption of capital.

[31] Gatsby's own summary of Tom and Daisy's relationship, "It was just personal" (118) echoes Jordan Baker's opinion of large parties offering a more intimate space for both Gatsby's guests and memory to occupy, within the physical dimensions of his mansion.

[32] It should be noted that for all his individual endeavor, and potentially criminal ingenuity, Gatsby's reunion with Daisy requires the help of Nick and Jordan and serves to highlight the failure of his original plan for her, "to wander into one of his parties some night" (*GG* 63). It is the party to which Daisy never arrives that reflects Gatsby's doomed attempt to reconcile pre-war time with post-war space.

[33] All references to *The Great Gatsby* in my in-text citations will use the abbreviation *GG*.

[34] Consequently, Gatsby and Daisy may be seen to represent not only what Marx defines to be commodity fetishism, "a definite social relation between men that

assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things" (31), but also specifically the idea of money as part of the new grammar and lexicon of time.

[35] "Gatsby's concern with time – its arrestability, recuperability, repeatability – is equally obsessive (as was Fitzgerald's – he seemed to write surrounded by clocks and calenders said Malcom Cowley)" (Tanner 166).

[36] Both Gatsby and Keats's sad knight illustrate the twin concepts of Fitzgerald's cognitive dissonance, and Keats's negative capability. Both mirror, and at the same time function as symbolic points of resistance to the social, political and intellectual climate of modernity.

[37] Although told from Nick's perspective, this passage is as much a moment of self-invention, as when James Gatz takes the initial step to join the crew of Dan Cody. As Nick envisages the moment of Gatsby's death he is challenging a distinctly American definition of failure where Gatsby takes the outline of a new modern hero. Here I would posit that self-invention is not simply a theme in *Gatsby*, but also a means of stressing the importance of the modern novel to American cultural life. I would further assert that the idea of the American novel as working to renew the cultural vitality of American society is an implicit thesis, which Fitzgerald continues to build and expand on in *Tender* and *Tycoon*.

[38] Fitzgerald goes on to underline this growing atmosphere of psychological dissonance, contrasting the distant green light of Daisy's dock with the close dim light of Gatsby's inner chambers, "In the music room Gatsby turned on a solitary lamp beside the piano. He lit Daisy's cigarette from a trembling match and sat down with her on a couch far across the room where there was no light save what the gleaming floor bounced in from the hall" (*GG* 74). The dream of being reconciled with Daisy takes on an almost surreal quality, where the introduction of new electric light ironically only makes it more difficult to bring her into focus.

[39] As Sigfried Giedion notes, "Space in modern physics is conceived of as relative to a moving point of reference, not as the absolute and static entity of the baroque system of Newton. And in modern art, for the first time since the Renaissance, a new conception of space leads to a self-conscious enlargement of our ways of perceiving space . . . Cubism breaks with Renaissance perspective. It views objects relatively: that is, from several points of view, no one of which has exclusive authority . . . It goes around and into its objects. Thus to the three dimensions of the Renaissance which have held good as constituent facts throughout so many centuries, there is added a fourth one – time. The poet Guillaume Apollinaire was the first to recognize and express this change around 1911" (436). The potential relationship between cubist art and *The Great Gatsby* should not be viewed as a vague arbitrary response to the novel, but a direct critical engagement of its structure and textual form. By introducing time as movement into the narrative framework, Fitzgerald evokes Gatsby's love for Daisy, and the wider theme of America as simultaneity, which collapses and condenses the textual space in which he tells the story.

[40] Here Gideon's observation that Cubism also represented a break from the dominant Renaissance view of art is equally telling. In highlighting these lines of architectural

perspective and their textures, whether comprised of landscaped gardens, feudal silhouettes or marble steps, it would appear Fitzgerald is keenly attuned to the aesthetic and critical distinction between Renaissance and modern art. The case can certainly be made that Fitzgerald is acutely aware of how texts whether artistic or literary could facilitate a radical new awareness of how movement alters perspective in relation to time and space.

[41] Fitzgerald as a means of representing the commodification and reproduction of memory introduces in *Gatsby* a new dynamic of movement equivalent to, "The advancing and retreating planes of cubism, interpenetrating, hovering, often transparent, without anything to fix them in realistic position . . . in fundamental contrast to the lines of perspective, which converge to a single focal point" (Gideon 437).

[42] Liam O. Purdon notes, "In his 1991 Cambridge Edition of *The Great Gatsby*, Matthew J. Bruccoli speculates in his explanatory notes that Daisy's repeated remark about the resemblance between 'the advertisement of the man' and Gatsby calls to mind the 'Arrow Collar advertisements of the time, which featured classically handsome young men' (*GG* 200). Through a surmise, this identification of Daisy's reference at this critical point in the story's action has nearly come to be accepted as fact. In *A Historical Guide to F. Scott Fitzgerald*, Kirk Curnutt has similarly observed that 'The advertising icon Daisy has in mind is likely the Arrow Collar Man, the ultimate 1920s symbol of cool' (124). Curnutt has even advanced instructive speculation about the resemblance between Gatsby and J. C. Leyendecker's iconic illustration by agreeing with Carolyn Kitch that the Arrow Collar man's pre-dominant characteristic of '*class*' is true about Gatsby if that distinction is understood to be a commodity (Curnutt 125), a commodity in Kitch's words 'available to people who did not have it but could afford to buy it' (Kitch 163)" (161).

[43] For Daisy and Tom, time and memory are mutually expendable in the service of inherited wealth. Both their lives are structured around the ability to bypass any moral check on their character and behavior. It is the privilege of extreme wealth that allows them the luxury of a selective memory, and which accounts for their lack of both empathy and imagination. In stark contrast to Daisy and Gatsby's reunion the hard, unfiltered electric light, which illuminates the two of them together after returning from New York and the death of Myrtle Wilson, frames America's corrupted history as a domestic scene in miniature. Here Fitzgerald's language renders in sharp focus the faces of both husband and wife. Time does not add to as much as strip away all hints of romantic illusion. In stark contrast to the impressionistic pink and golden light which frames Daisy and Gatsby's reunion, the sparse effect of a single electric filament deals simply in the uncompromising reality of death, and the necessity of deceit:

> I came to a small rectangle of light which I guessed was the pantry window. The blind was drawn but I found a rift at the sill.
>
> Daisy and Tom were sitting opposite each other at the kitchen table with a plate of cold fried chicken between them and two bottles of ale. He was talking intently across the table at her and in his earnestness his hand had

fallen upon and covered her own. Once in a while she looked up at him and nodded in agreement.

They weren't happy, and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale – and yet they weren't unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together. (*GG* 113)

[44] Throughout the novel Fitzgerald links memory with the consumption of commodities, as part of the industrial machine of America. Fitzgerald initially draws a direct link between Gatsby's memory of Daisy, and the corruption and decay behind his wealth, "what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams" (*GG* 6). Fitzgerald continues to stress the consistent juxtaposition of dust with memory, where Nick describes Daisy's anxiety while waiting for Gatsby to return from the war, "All the night the saxophones wailed the hopeless comment of the "Beale Street Blues" while a hundred pairs of golden and silver slippers shuffled the shining dust" (*GG* 118).

[45] It is in Gatsby's later assertion that, "Her voice is full of money" (94) that Nick's response to Daisy's voice as both impossible to "over-dream" and "deathless" becomes synthesized as commodity value. "That was it. I'd never understood before. It was full of money – that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it . . . High in a white palace the kings' daughter, the golden girl . . . " (*GG* 94). On the other hand Nick also recognizes the advancing and retreating planes of time as expressed by Daisy's voice, where its "cymbals song" is visualized not only in its movement as it rises and falls, but also in its depth perspective where, "High in a white palace, the king's daughter, the golden girl . . . ." focuses and fades with the ellipsis. In her "voice full of money" Fitzgerald gives Daisy's speech the neat economical modernity of capital in the tone of an advertising slogan, yet any attempt to make the abstract concrete only hints at a deeper sense of vacuity and failure.

[46] The essence of Fitzgerald's prose style lies in its rhythm and musicality where the reader is pulled in by the living, breathing fluidity of the language in similar terms to the mystical, and yet entirely modern quality of Daisy's voice. In analyzing the specific quality of that "voice full of money" and how it is achieved Brett Zimmerman points out that, "Several devices in addition to "alliteration," "assonance," and "onomatopoeia" prove that Fitzgerald had a kind appreciation for the melopoeic qualities of language, a sensitivity to the aural potentialities of words – that he is truly a *prose poet* . . . with a particular love of "synaesthesia" (194-195).

[47] In "My Lost City" Fitzgerald again describes New York in terms of a discourse of illegibility, " . . . Incalculable city. What ensued was only one of a thousand success stories of those gaudy days, but it plays a part in my own movie of New York . . . There was already the tall white city of today, already the feverish activity of the boom, but there was a general inarticulateness" (*My Lost City* 109). Fitzgerald goes on to give a memorable overview of the city in its entirety following the Stock Market Crash of 1929:

From the ruins rose the Empire State Building, lonely and inexplicable as the Sphinx, and, just as it had been a tradition of mine to climb to the Plaza Roof to take leave of the beautiful city, extending as far as eyes

> could reach, so now I went to the roof of the last and most magnificent of towers. Then I understood – everything was explained": I had discovered the crowning error of the city, its Pandora's box. Full of vaunting pride the New Yorker had climbed here and seen with dismay what he had never suspected, that the city was not the endless succession of canyons he had supposed but that *it had limits* – from the tallest structure he saw for the first time that it faded out into the country on all sides, into an expanse of green and blue that alone was limitless. And with the awful realization that New York was a city after all and not a universe, the whole shining edifice that he had reared in his imagination came crashing to the ground. (*My Lost City* 114-115)

[48] As Gianfranca Balestra points out, "The impossibility of deciphering Daisy and interpreting her mysterious and elusive voice means that Nick brings her back to the seductive model and finally accepts, even if only partially, the famous interpretation of Gatsby: "her voice is full of money". With a word play now common in the English-speaking world, "her story" becomes "his story" and ultimately coincides with "history". The novel however, in its hidden folds and voids, also allows us to recognize traces of her history, which speaks of her desires, dreams and disillusions. ("L'impossibiltà di decifrare Daisy e di interpretare la sua voce misteriosa ed elusiva, fa sì che Nick la riconduca al modello seduttivo e infine ne accetti, anche se solo parzialmente, la celebre interpretazione di Gatsby: "la sua voce è pieno di soldi". Con un gioco di parole ormai frequente in ambito anglofono, "her story" diventa "his story" e in definitiva coincide con la "history". Il romanzo tuttavia, nelle sue pieghe nascoste e nei suoi vuoti, consente anche di riconoscere tracce della storia di lei, che parla dei suoi desideri, sogni e disillusioni"; my trans.; 31).

[49] The maturation of Fitzgerald's style and intellectual control of his material in *The Great Gatsby* can on one level be seen to recognize the growing hybridity of American immigrants, which added approximately 37 million foreigners between the 1820s and 1920s to the population (Luedtke 8). While Gatsby, who Tom Buchanan at one point refers to as "Mr Nobody from Nowhere" (*GG* 101) and whose parents are "shiftless and unsuccessful farm people (*GG* 76) is not directly described as an immigrant, his original name "Jimmy Gatz" has been interpreted by some critics as Jewish (Vogel 42).

[50] I would argue Fitzgerald's treatment of manifest destiny as a theme in each of his final three novels is to a large extent a theme of failure allowing for the emergence of a new American protagonist.

[51] As Mauro Conti affrims, "The novel marked Fitzgerald's progress with respect to his previous work, also from a stylistic and structural point of view. Now all the details in the narration, the description of Gatsby's car, for example, acquire a suggestive force, a symbolic and poetic value absolutely new and original with respect to the past. Gatsby's mansion is a large amusement park: it is, in hindsight, an almost scientific document – we could venture – of the society of the time, staging, among other things, the bewitching magic of the class stratification, of a struggle that, in this case, is also a struggle between love and death." (Il romanzo segnava un progresso rispetto alla produzione antecedente dell'autore, anche dal punto di vista

stilistico e strutturale. Ora tutti i particolari nella narrazione, la descrizione dell'auto di Gatsby, ad esempio, acquisiscono una forza suggestiva, una valenza simbolica e poetica assolutamente nuova e originale rispetto al passato. La residenza di Gatsby è un grande parco di divertimenti: si tratta, a ben vedere, di un documento quasi scientifico – potremmo azzardare – della società dell'epoca, mettendo in scena, fra l'altro, la magia ammaliante della stratificazione di classe, di una lotta che, in questo caso, è pure una lotta fra amore e morte"; my trans.; xvii).

[52] It should be noted that Fitzgerald made a specific point of writing Maxwell Perkins that the word he intended to use here was not "orgiastic" but rather "orgastic" pointing out that, "Orgastic" is the adjective from "orgasm" and it expresses exactly the intended ecstasy" (Fitzgerald, *Letters* 94).

[53] Dick Diver's "act" of "self-sacrifice" in salvaging Nicole's sanity at the expense of his own physical health, and professional reputation follows a similar pattern to Ivan Morris's analysis in *The Nobility of Failure* of the Japanese warrior, who Morris argues sees virtue and strength in the inevitability of failure. Morris argues, "Even we in our success-worshipping culture can recognize the nobility and poignancy of those eager, outrageous, uncalculating men whose purity of purpose doomed them to a hard journey leading ultimately to disaster. While historical heroes in the West are mostly winners and while we have no strong tradition of empathy with historic failures, our literature ever since the *Iliad and Oedipus Rex* has accustomed us to the concept of the "hero as loser"; and especially in recent times there has been a tendency to respect those individuals who cannot or will not bow to the bitch-goddess Success" (xiv).

[54] The scholarly attitude towards Gatsby as racially constructed as "other" is acutely captured in the work of Carlye V Thompson, Charles Lewis and Meredith Goldsmith, who have all mounted critical readings of the novel examining claims as to whether Gatsby himself is a black man passing as white.

[55] As Heidi M. Kunz points out, "Fitzgerald's characteristic focus was racially white and socioeconomically privileged. His writing of the period tacitly asserts the normativity of his own race and class identifications, which in turn frame his constructions of gender"(234).

[56] "What Modernism does is to raise in ferment the notion not only of form but also of significant time, and this is one reason why audacious attempts to discern a moment of transition (Henry Adams's 1900; Virginia Woolf's 1910; D.H.Lawrence's 1915) are themselves a feature of Modernist sensibility. The consequences of this apocalyptic ferment of order help explain much of Modernism. It illuminates the symbolist effort to transcend historical sequence by intersecting with it the timelessness of artistic revelation: the artist, like Scott Fitzgerald's Gatsby tips back the clock on the mantelpiece and sees beauty, form dream" (Bradbury and McFarlane 51).

[57] Conrad expresses what he considers the aim of literary art to be in the preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* observing that, "A work that aspires, however humbly to the condition of art should carry its justification in every line . . . It is an attempt to find in its forms, its colors, in its light, in its shadows, in the aspects of matter and in

the facts of life, what of each is fundamental, what is enduring and essential – their one illuminating and convincing quality – the very truth of their existence" (705).

[58] "The most intriguing phrase in the "Sketch" is "spoiled priest," which has been woefully overworked as the master key to all of Fitzgerald's work. "Spoiled priest" . . . is used by Roman Catholics to describe a candidate for the priesthood who has failed to take his final vows. When Fitzgerald applied it to Dick Diver, he appears to have meant that Dick tried to combine his function as doctor of medicine with the role of spiritual doctor to the sick souls around him, but that he lost his idealism and was finally corrupted by his own flock" (Bruccoli, *The Composition* 83).

[59] All references to *Tender Is the Night* in my in-text citations will use the abbreviation *TITN*.

[60] Fernanda Pivano underlines how Fitzgerald, " . . . still considered by some to be "frivolous" and "superficial" from the point of view of social commitment, is actually a harsh denunciator of wealth as a source of corruption and therefore of moral disintegration" (Quest'autore, considerato tuttora da alcuni "frivolo" e "superficiale" dal punto di vista dell'impegno sociale, è in realta un durissimo denunciatore della ricchezza come fonte di corruzione e dunque di disintegrazione morale."; my trans.; xvii).

[61] As Robert Ornstein notes, "Like *The Portrait of a Lady and The Ambassadors*, *Gatsby* is a story of "displaced persons" who have journeyed eastward in search of a larger experience of life. To James, this reverse migration from the New to the Old World has in itself no special significance. To Fitzgerald, however, the lure of the East represents a profound displacement of the American dream, a turning back upon itself of the historical pilgrimage towards the frontier which had, in fact, created and sustained that dream" (54).

[62] Frederick Jackson Turner argues in "The Significance Of The Frontier In American History" how the expansion and development of the western movement gives rise to the specific "democratic" traits of American national identity where, "The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization . . . The fact is that here is a new product that is American. At first, the frontier was the Atlantic coast. It was the frontier of Europe in a very real sense. Moving westward, the frontier became more and more American . . . the frontier promoted the formation for a composite nationality for the American people" (5 -18).

[63] In this sense, a purely Marxist treatment of capitalism based on the social function of labor and exchange value, takes on a more nuanced quality in Fitzgerald's description of how the American protagonist emerges to both rise, and fall in relation to Marx's own objectification, and consequent fetishism of the commodity:

> Nearby, some Americans were saying good-bye in voices that mimicked the cadence of water running into a large old bathtub. Standing in the station, with Paris in back of them, it seemed as if they were vicariously leaning a little over the ocean, already undergoing a

> sea-change, a shifting about of atoms to form the essential molecule of a new people.
>
> So the well-to-do Americans poured through the station onto the platforms with frank new faces, intelligent, considerate, thoughtless, thought-for . . . When there were enough Americans on the platform the first impression of their immaculacy and their money began to fade into a vague racial dusk that hindered and blinded both them and their observers (*TITN* 96).

[64]Michael Nowlin asserts that, "F. Scott Fitzgerald saw popular culture not as a vehicle for identifying with "everybody," but rather as an institution through which he might realize his dream of being one of the chosen" ("The World's Rarest Work" 60).

[65] Between 1925 and 1935 Fitzgerald wrote and published 57 short stories in addition to the non produced screenplay *Lipstick* which he wrote during his second stay in Hollywood, and early drafts of *Tender is the Night* entitled *Our Type, The World's Fair, The Melarky Case, The Boy Who Killed His Mother* and *The Drunkard's Holiday*.

[66] In Cowley's version of *Tender*, the opening of Book Two, and Dick Diver's love affair with Nicole precedes the Riviera sequence of the 1934 original publication. Fitzgerald writing to Maxwell Perkins in December 1938 claims, "Its great fault is that the *true* beginning - the young psychiatrist in Switzerland – is tucked away in the middle of the book. If pages 151-212 were taken from their present place and put at the start the improvement in appeal would be enormous (Kuehl and Bryer, *Dear Scott-Dear Max* 251).

[67] Fitzgerald's use of chiaroscuro characterizes both Dick and Nicole, the former's "hard, neat brightness" (*TITN* 38) throwing into sharp relief the latter's, ". . . soft gleam of piteous doubt that looked from her green eyes. Her once fair hair had darkened, but she was lovelier now at twenty-four than she had been at eighteen, when her hair was brighter than she" (*TITN* 33). Fitzgerald's opening quotation from Keats's "Ode to the Nightingale", ". . . But here there is no light,/Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown/Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways" highlights and carries over this dynamic into the Divers' various surroundings, for example, "Into the dark, smoky restaurant, smelling of the rich raw foods on the buffet, slid Nicole's sky-blue suit like a stray segment of the weather outside" (*TITN* 63) and again where he describes the Swiss sanatorium, "illuminated from open French windows, save where the black shadows of stripling walls and the fantastic shadows of iron chairs slithered down into a gladiola bed" (*TITN* 154).

[68] Barbara Tuchmann in *The Guns of August* describing the events leading up to the outbreak of the Great War makes a similar point, "In 1914 "glory" was a word spoken without embarrassment, and honor a familiar concept that people believed in" (124).

[69] Expanding on the concept of noble failure in the Japanese tradition, Ivan Morris points out, " . . . in the very impermanence and poignancy of the human condition the Japanese have discovered a positive quality. Their recognition of the special beauty inherent in evanescence, worldly misfortune, and "the pathos of things" (*mono no*

aware) in many ways replaces the blithe Western belief in the possibility of "happiness." This understanding of *lacrimae rerum* is reflected in an instinctive sympathy with the tragic fate of the failed hero, whose defeat by the forces of a hostile world exemplifies in a most dramatic form the confrontation of every living creature with adversity, suffering and death. While we are all eventually doomed to go under, the pathos of worldly misfortune is especially evocative when the victim stands out as being young, pure, and sincere." (40)

[70] In "The Crack-Up" Fitzgerald notes of this period, "Now the standard cure for one who is sunk is to consider those in actual destitution or physical suffering – this is an all-weather beatitude for gloom in general and fairly salutary day-time advice for everyone. But at three o-clock in the morning . . . and in a real dark night of the soul it is always three o clock in the morning, . . . At that hour the tendency is to refuse to face things as long as possible by retiring into an infantile dream . . . one is not waiting for the fade out of a single sorrow, but rather being an unwilling witness of an execution, the disintegration of one's own personality . . . (Fitzgerald, *The Crack-Up* 75-76).

[71] Barban's physical description echoes that of Tom Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby* where Nick Carraway narrates, "Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body – 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" (*GG* 9).

[72] Fitzgerald follows one dream of military pageantry and traumatic injury with another dream of domestic routine, where the language of martial action is re-appropriated by Nicole and his son. The reference to Dick adopting the meditative posture of a Japanese before sleep is telling, when read in the context of noble failure itself, "He scrunched his pillow hard, lay down, and put the back of his neck against it as a Japanese does to slow the circulation, and slept again for a time. Later, while he shaved, Nicole awoke and marched around, giving abrupt, succinct orders to the children and servants. Lanier came in to watch his father shave . . . He was a handsome, promising boy and Dick devoted much time to him, in the relationship of a sympathetic but exacting officer and a respectful enlisted man" (*TITN* 207).

[73] The 19th Amendment to the American Constitution giving American women the vote ratified August 18th 1920.

[74] Fitzgerald describes Nicole's own function as part of the dynamic between gender and capital:

> With Nicole's help Rosemary bought two dresses and two hats and four pairs of shoes with her money. Nicole bought from a great list that ran two pages, and bought the things in the windows besides . . . Nicole was the product of much ingenuity and toil. For her sake trains began their run at Chicago and traversed the round belly of the continent to California; chicle factories fumed and link belts grew link by link in factories; men mixed toothpaste in vats and drew mouthwash out of copper hogsheads; girls

> canned tomatoes quickly in August or worked rudely at the Five-and-Tens on Christmas Eve; half-breed Indians toiled on Brazilian coffee plantations and dreamers were muscled out of patent rights in new tractors – these were some of the people who gave a tithe to Nicole, and as the whole system swayed and thundered onward it lent a feverish bloom to such processes of hers as wholesale buying, like the flush of a fireman's face holding his post before a spreading blaze. She illustrated very simple principles, containing in herself her own doom, but illustrated them so accurately that there was grace in the procedure, and presently Rosemary would try to imitate it (*TITN* 65-66).

[75] Written during the early stages of World War One, Freud in his essay "On Transience" speaks to the idea of the value of beauty, as working independently of time. His definition and explanation of "mourning" through the attachment of the ego to the "loved object" is in many ways illustrative of Dick's relationship with both Nicole, and his attachment the Riviera itself.

[76] Michael K. Glenday makes clear how the changes in the beach at Antibes reflect a new economic reality:

> As Nicole Diver realizes when she and Dick visit the beach at Antibes together for the last time, its boundaries have quite literally disappeared, crumbled beneath the sand: 'Let him look at it – his beach . . . he could search it for a day and find no stone of the Chinese wall he had once erected around it, no footprint of an old friend' (280). In its stead there is a new style of expatriate presence – an idiom of abject mediocrity, the presence of no style at all. This new reality is entirely without nuance, a democratized mass without discrimination (151).

[77] Bruccoli recognizes the influence of the Murphy's on Fitzgerald and his writing:

> During the summer of 1924 the Fitzgerald's met Gerald and Sara Murphy, who would become their closest friends in France . . . Eight years older than Fitzgerald, Gerald was handsome, witty and charming. Sara matched his intelligence and had a strong streak of directness in her speech . . . Their close friends included Pablo Picasso, Philip Barry, Cole Porter, John Dos Passo, Archibald MacLeish, and Fernand Leger. Between 1922 and 1930 Murphy completed ten paintings that combined minute detail with abstract techniques . . . In *Tender is the Night* he [Fitzgerald] transferred Murphy's 'power of arousing a fascinated and uncritical love' to Dick Diver (238).

[78] The moment towards the end of Book 2 where, Nicole tries to commit suicide in attempting to grab for the wheel of the car which Dick is driving represents the culmination of this annihilative narrative trajectory:

> The children were screaming and Nicole was screaming and cursing and trying to tear at Dick's face. Thinking first of the list of the car and unable to estimate it Dick bent away Nicole's arm climbed over the top

side and lifted out the children; then he saw the car was in a stable position. Before doing anything else he stood there shaking and panting.
"You -!" he cried.
She was laughing hilariously, unashamed, unafraid, unconcerned. No one coming on the scene would have imagined that she had caused it; she laughed as after some mild escape of childhood.
"You were scared, weren't you?" she accused him, "You wanted to live!" (*TITN* 218-219)

[79] Bruccoli highlights the importance of this chapter as, " . . . thematically significant, for it is one of the places where Fitzgerald unmistakably indicates that the novel is a commentary on the post-war world. Fitzgerald excelled at conveying moods; the mood that emanates from the visit to the battlefield is one of sadness and regret – a sense of loss. This is a far cry from the bitter disillusionment that characterizes so many post-war novels of the period" (*The Composition* 43).

[80] Similarly, Sveltlana Boym makes the uncanny link between nostalgia and modernity explicit, where she notes, "The twentieth century began with utopia and ended with nostalgia. Optimistic belief in the future became outmoded, while nostalgia, for better or worse, never went out of fashion, remaining uncannily contemporary" (7).

[81] It is in the figure of the Japanese soldier towards the end of the Second World War, that Ivan Morris views the culmination of the tradition of noble failure, "When organized military resistance became impossible, some three thousand Japanese soldiers, most of them armed with nothing but bayonets and sticks, charged into the concentrated machine gun fire of the American marines and were mown down to the last man" (299). While perhaps not a direct parallel with the "suicidal" British attacks on the Somme almost thirty years earlier, there remains in the image of the Japanese soldiers being slaughtered by lines of machine gun fire, a haunting echo of British infantry walking into German machine guns armed similarly with trench sticks. Perhaps further telling is that Morris also refers to the muted symbolism of a preserved Kamikaze aircraft hung in the London Science Museum, overshadowed by British Spitfires and Hurricanes.

[82] "You saw the revolver? It was very small, true pearl – a toy."
"But powerful enough! Have you seen his shirt? Enough blood to believe himself in the war" (*TITN* 99).

[83] Fitzgerald's conflation of heroism with masculinity illustrates a symbolic tension between the alpha male of Hemingway's military and literary exploits, and his own self-diagnosis of emotional-bankruptcy. Fitzgerald in reference to Hemingway notes, "Too often literary men allow themselves to get into internecine quarrels and finish about as victoriously as most of the nations at the end of the World War . . . He is quite as nervously broken down as I am but it manifests itself in different ways. His inclination is toward megalomania and mine towards melancholy" (Turnbull 562).

[84] This associatively links back to *Gatsby*, and the way Fitzgerald characterizes his hero through the concept of cognitive dissonance to both play on, and extend Keats's

original definition of negative capability. In both *Gatsby* and *Tender* Fitzgerald complicates the idea of mourning by the apposite resistance of an optimistic world-view, premised ironically on accepting the hopelessness of the lost cause. Just as Gatsby's gift for hope is tempered in the narration of Carraway himself, Dick's alcoholic breakdown does not end in his suicide or death, but a return to the New World, and whatever future awaits him.

[85] In "Mourning and Melencholia" Freud defines mourning as period of grief attendant to the loss of a perceived loved object, whose process often comes to a spontaneous end once an adequate replacement is discovered and substituted. Freud argues melencholia is resistant to this process, and insists on preserving the loved object to which the ego has attached itself.

[86] This may possibly be Dorothy Parker, although scholars have never definitively confirmed the woman's identity.

[87] Perkins, Hemingway and Dos Passos were three of the chief critics of "The Crack-Up" on its publication in 1936.

[88] Fitzgerald directly equates himself in his Notebooks to both a literal and imaginative pioneer heritage of America, "I look out at it – and I think it is the most beautiful history in the world. It is the history of me and of my people. And if I came here yesterday like Sheilah I should still think so. It is the history of all aspiration – not just the American dream but the human dream and if I came at the end of it that too is a place in the line of the pioneers" (332).

[89] Matthew Bruccoli again draws attention to the centrality of the frontier for Fitzgerald in his choice of title for the novel, where he notes:

> No good case for the title "The Last Tycoon" can be made on the basis of the surviving Fitzgerald documents. The choice is between "Stahr: A Romance" and "The Love of The Last Tycoon: A Western." The latter is preferable because it is close to the title by which the novel has been known and because it has the Fitzgerald bouquet. Fitzgerald was in fact writing a western – a novel about the last American frontier, where immigrants and sons of immigrants pursued and defined the American dream. It is appropriate that these tycoons made movie westerns: they too were pioneers (*TLOTLT* xvii).

[90] "The title by which the shogun of Japan was described to foreigners; the earliest *Oxford English Dictionary* citation is 1857. The *OED Supplement* (1986) adds: "An important or dominant person, especially in business or politics; a magnate," noting that "tycoon" was applied to Abraham Lincoln" (Bruccoli, *TLOTLT* 287).

[91] For textual quotation I am working from the 1993 Cambridge Edition of *The Love of the Last Tycoon* edited by Matthew Bruccoli, rather than the version of the novel many readers may already be familiar with as *The Last Tycoon* edited by Edmund Wilson following Fitzgerald's death, and first published in 1941. I have chosen to do so both as a point of scholarly consistency in working also from the Cambridge

editions of both *Gatsby* and *Tender*, and in taking into account the need to make the structural distinction clear between Fitzgerald's manuscript as it stood at his death, and the changes made by Wilson. As Andrew Hook in reviewing Bruccoli's edition points out:

> The late Fredson Boers was the original text consultant for the Cambridge Fitzgerald, and on his advice, it was decided that the works should be edited not from a single designated 'copy-text' but from what he called the 'base-text': 'the stage of composition or publication with Fitzgerald's latest decisions' (p. lxxix). Thus in the case of *Tycoon*, the base-text consists of 'the latest secretarial typescripts for the first seventeen episodes as revised by Fitzgerald in holograph' (p.lxxx). Collation of this base-text with Wilson's published text reveals the following: Wilson silently regularized punctuation, corrected spelling, altered names, and combined Fitzgerald's seventeen episodes into six chapters (in line with Fitzgerald's outlines). Towards the end of Chapter 3 he included a brief bridging scene which Fitzgerald seems to have discarded, and placed at the opening of Chapter 4 a scene whose location Fitzgerald had not finally decided. In other words Edmund Wilson's text can fairly be seen as an honorable attempt to produce an accessible 'popular' or 'reader's' version of Fitzgerald's unfinished and fragmentary novel." (450).

[92]Scholarship on *The Love of the Last Tycoon* remains limited, as Shinichiro Mori in the late 1990's notes, following Bruccoli's 1993 Cambridge edition of the text, "Among a dozen book-length studies of Fitzgerald's novels, some completely exclude the novel from their discussions, while others treat it rather sketchily" (49).

[93] One of the singular differences between *Tycoon*, and the first and third person voice used in *Gatsby* and *Tender*, is the way Fitzgerald recognizes the potential of the motion picture camera to offer a level of realism through which the novel will continue evolve. While the overlap of narrative voice with Cecelia Brady and the omnipresent narrative voice of Fitzgerald represent one of the unresolved problems of the text, it also reveals ironically a critical discourse in resolving that problem. In mediating between Cecelia, and his own narrative perspective, Fitzgerald wants the reader to recognize Hollywood as a business, but a business, which allows for a more nuanced level of self-reflexivity, as to the evolvement of American identity.

[94] Working in the medium of cinema Fitzgerald was aware of being hamstrung by his commitment to novelistic convention, "He was worried about camera angles," wrote Taylor. "I pointed out that it was his dialogue and characterization that they were after, and if he could manage to get his story down, he could be sure that they would photograph it" (Viera 164). It is also worth noting that during his work on *Gone With The Wind* Fitzgerald replaced previous drafts of artificial screen dialogue with the original lines from Margaret Mitchell's novel. As Aaron Latham points out, "Beside many of the screenplay's big speeches Fitzgerald wrote "trite and stagy." Time and time again he found Margaret Mitchell's "good dialogue . . . infinitely more moving" than the more sophisticated made-in-Hollywood lines" (216).

[95] Fitzgerald writes in "The Crack Up":

> I saw that the novel, which at my maturity was the strongest and supplest medium for conveying thought and emotion from one human being to another, was becoming subordinated to a mechanical and communal art that, whether in the hands of Hollywood merchants or Russian idealists, was capable of reflecting only the tritest thought, the most obvious emotion. It was an art in which words were subordinate to images, where personality was worn down to the inevitable low gear of collaboration. As long past as 1930, I had a hunch that the talkies would make even the best selling novelist as archaic as silent pictures. People still read . . . but there was a rankling indignity, that to me had become almost an obsession in seeing the power of the written word subordinated to another power, a more glittering, a grosser power . . . " (*The Crack-Up* 78).

[96] "Sometimes, though, the cracked plate has to be retained in the pantry, has to be kept in service as a household necessity. It can never again be warmed on the stove nor shuffled with the other plates in the dishpan; it will not be brought out for company, but it will do to hold crackers late at night or to go into the ice box under left-overs . . ." (*The Crack-Up* 75).

[97] Ivan Morris speaks of the quality in Japanese culture of "makoto", the word usually translated as meaning "sincerity". Morris goes on to describe this word, as having a more nuanced connotation and meaning than in the West whereby, "its common denominator has always been a purity of motive, which derives from man's longing for an absolute meaning out of time, and from a realization that the social, political world is essentially a place of corruption, whose materiality is incompatible with the demands of pure spirit and truth" (17).

[98] As Sheliah Graham writing to Maxwell Perkins following Fitzgerald's death noted with regards to the title, "he wanted it to sound like a movie title and completely disguise the tragic-heroic content of the book" (Bruccoli, *TLOTLT* xiv).

[99] As George Santayana notes:

> I speak of the American in the singular, as if there were not millions of them, north and south, east and west, of both sexes, of all ages, and of various races, professions, and religions. Of course the one American I speak of is mythical; but to speak in parable is inevitable in such a subject, and it is perhaps as well to do so frankly . . . As it happens, the symbolic American can be made largely adequate to the facts; because, if there are immense differences between individual Americans . . . yet there is a great uniformity in their environment, customs, temper and thoughts. They have all been uprooted from their several soils and ancestries and plunged together into one vortex, whirling irresistibly in a space otherwise quite empty. To be an American is of itself almost a moral condition, an education, and a career (qtd.in Luedtke 7).

[100] This is nowhere more evident than in "The Turner Thesis", which first posed the question concerning the frontier's significance on the development of American character and democratic values.

[101] The concept of the West in the 20th century, where the frontier although not a physical reality is nevertheless still a cultural imaginary, remains at the heart of a distinctly American landscape, whose function is largely utilitarian, "The hydraulic West came of age only after World War Two, while western historians have, until late, been preoccupied with the nineteenth century. It is a more technically abstruse and more organizationally complex mode than ranching, therefore requires more effort to penetrate . . . The West has been created by irrigations ditches, siphons, canals, and storage dams. In it daily existence depends on the intensive management of that scarce, elusive, and absolutely vital natural resource, water (Worster 30). This point about the emergence of what would become the hydraulic West is well illustrated in Roman Polanski's 1974 film *Chinatown* set during the same period as Fitzgerald's *Tycoon*.

[102] In defining the closure of the frontier as the end of the first stage of American history, Frederick Turner asserts:

> The fact is that here is a new product that is American. At first the frontier was the Atlantic coast. It was the frontier of Europe in a very real sense. Moving westward, the frontier became more and more American. As successive terminal moraines result from successive glaciations, so each frontier leaves its traces behind it, and when it becomes a settled area the region still partakes of the frontier characteristics. Thus the advance of the frontier has meant a steady movement away from the influence of Europe, a steady growth of independence on American lines. And to study this advance, the men who grew up under these conditions, and the political, economic, and social results of it, is to study the really American part of our history (5).

[103] Luther S. Luedtke notes:

> The social and psychological conditions of the period separating the First and Second World Wars were not favorable to a balanced analysis of the American character. The spiritual waste of the First World War and the ensuing return to "normalcy" introduced a decade of general skepticism, intolerance, and conservatism. Nativists pointed with alarm at the prewar immigrants ghettoed in American cities and, playing on the fear of alien ideologies, the Red Scare, and a general spirit of isolationism, closed the doors of asylum with legislation in the early 1920s that severely restricted further immigration. The apparent values of the decade were its materialism, conformity, and provincialism; its representative man was Sinclair Lewis's George Babbitt. Turning their backs on the car, church, and club culture at home, the more sensitive intellectual and literary spirits of the nation expatriated to Europe or explored the foreign ideas of Freud and Marx" (13).

[104] "The "boom" period of the 1880's spawned LA's territorial, commercial, and industrial expansion. The railroads, land speculation, and the growth of urban industry and specialized farming brought newcomers . . . Anglo-Americans from Northeastern and Midwestern farming communities encountered African Americans . . . and immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, China, Japan, and Mexico . . . As LA's total populations increased from 50,000 to 1.2 million inhabitants between 1890 and 1930, its non-white, foreign-born population rose from 23,000 to 360,000 residents" (Lewthwaite 49).

[105] Despite playing to this myth as the self-styled laureate of the jazz Age, Fitzgerald knew that working on contract for Hollywood studios such as MGM, he was an all but forgotten author, operating as both observer and participant to a new evolving art form. One character in *Tycoon* who encapsulates Fitzgerald's own awareness of being both part of and yet set apart from Hollywood's post frontier is a former cowboy actor "Old" Johnny Swanson, who in Cecelia's narration is introduced standing on the corner of the studio lot as Cecelia describes him, "in his semi-cowboy clothes staring gloomily past the moon. Once he had been as big in pictures as Tom Mix or Bill Hart – now it was too sad to speak to him and I hurried across the street and through the front gate" (*TLOTLT* 21). Although Swanson is a peripheral figure, and only mentioned briefly, Fitzgerald intended to use him at the end of the novel as a pallbearer at Stahr's funeral, thus restoring his fortunes and former celebrity status, through the chance accident of having been mentioned as one of Stahr's former friends.

[106] As an object lesson in screenwriting, the equation "Action is character" works well enough. Yet where action as manifest destiny is misguidedly and deliberately conflated with character, the ideological implications for viewing moral character as synonymous with democratic reality are potentially disastrous.

[107] Sergio Perosa notes regarding this dynamic between character and action that Fitzgerald was not the first to make the correlation, "As Henry James had rightly warned, in the successful work of art it is not possible to distinguish, only if theoretically, between character and action, since the character "determines" the accident, so the accident merely "illustrates" the character" ("Come aveva giustamente avvertito Henry James, nell'opera d'arte riuscita non è possibile distinzione, se non teorica, fra personaggio e azione, giacchè come il carattere "determina" l'incidente, così l'incidente non fa che "illustrare" il carattere"; my trans.; 125).

[108] ". . . Fitzgerald could not justify the need to tell a story visually, especially at the expense of his beloved prose. Thalberg was aware of this pitfall. He told an interviewer: "Novelists and playwrights without picture experience – especially those who don't see cinema and who have never visited a studio – will be inclined to sacrifice action to dialogue." Thalberg did not know the full extent of Fitzgerald's resistance (Viera 164).

[109] All references to *The Love of The Last Tycoon* in my in-text citations will use the abbreviation *TLOTLT*.

[110] While Fitzgerald originally planned for a novel the size of *Gatsby*, he was clearly aware that *Tycoon* would run longer than the fifty thousand-word limit he was hoping for. Nevertheless, the sheer scope and scale of not just Hollywood as an industry, but the historical context within which he looked to position that industry is conveyed in a similar way to *Gatsby,* through a foreshortening effect of color and movement, for example the scene where Stahr and Kathleen first encounter the old African American collecting silverfish from the Pacific:

> It was a fine blue night. The tide was at the turn and the little silver fish rocked off shore waiting for 10:16. A few seconds after the time they came swarming in with the tide and Stahr and Kathleen stepped over them barefoot as they flicked slip-slop in the sand. A Negro man came along the shore toward them collecting the grunion quickly like twigs into two pails. They came in twos and threes and platoons and companies, relentless and exalted and scornful around the great bare feet of the intruders, as they had come before Sir Francis Drake had nailed his plaque to the boulder on the shore.
> "I wish for another pail," the Negro man said, resting a moment.
> "You've come a long way out," said Stahr.
> "I used to go to Malibu but they don't like it those moving picture people."
> A wave came in and forced them back, receded swiftly leaving the sand alive again.
> "Is it worth the trip?" Stahr asked.
> "I don't figure it that way. I really come out to read some Emerson. Have you ever read him?"
> "I have," said Kathleen. "Some."
> "I've got him inside my shirt. I got some Rosicrucian literature with me too but I'm fed up with them."
> The wind had changed a little – the waves were stronger further down and they walked along the foaming edge of the water.
> "What's your work?" the Negro asked Stahr.
> "I work for the pictures."
> "Oh." After a moment he added, "I never go to movies."
> "Why not?" asked Stahr sharply.
> "There's no profit. I never let my children go."
> Stahr watched him and Kathleen watched Stahr protectively.
> "Some of them are good," she said, against a wave of spray, but he did not hear her. She felt she could contradict him and said it again and this time he looked at her indifferently.
> "Are the Rosicrucian brotherhood against pictures?" asked Stahr.
> "Seems as if they don't know what they *are* for. One week they for one thing and next week for another."
> Only the little fish were certain. Half an hour had gone and still they came. The Negro's two pails were full and finally he went off over the beach toward the road, unaware that he had rocked an industry.
> Stahr and Kathleen walked back to the house and she thought how to drive his momentary blues away.
> "Poor old Sambo," she said.

"What?"
"Don't you call them poor old Sambo?"
"We don't call them anything especially." After a moment he said, "They have pictures of their own." (Fitzgerald, *TLOTLT* 92-93)

[111] Frances Kroll to Edmund Wilson, "From what I remember of our discussion, Stahr, inherently the artist, was to make one artistic flop – the kind of picture that would not be a movie "box office hit" but one that would be an artistic achievement. It was to be a picture in good taste and perhaps filled with all the ideas Stahr, the artist has always wanted to see realized on the screen, but which Stahr, the Hollywood producer could not very well make because such a film would not be money-making. It was to be a picture he knew from the start would "lose a couple of million" but which he nevertheless makes to satisfy himself despite opposition from other studio financial heads" (qtd. in Bruccoli *TLOTLT* lvi).

[112] In a deleted scene intended for chapter two of the novel Stahr argues with a drunken Wylie White giving perhaps the most explicit indication, that Fitzgerald had at least considered the idea of developing Stahr's political opinions in more detail:

"Oh, I just got tired hearing what a great man you are, Monroe," said Wylie coldly, "Somebody told me once to often . . . You're doing a costume part and you don't know it – the brilliant capitalist of the twenties. But these secretaries and typists that have been living on hay since '29 – they don't see themselves as Joan Crawford characters anymore. They want to eat." . . .
"Tonight isn't going to help," said Stahr, "And I'll be damned if you can come up here and blame me for the whole American system. I've fought Bradogue and his bastards till we're just about speaking and that's all. I've threatened to quit so often that I laugh when I say it. And now you boys turn on me. Why, I made you. Most of you are once-a-week writers that couldn't earn a good living in the east – maybe thirty a week on a newspaper. And we pay you enough for chauffeurs and swimming pools."
He was tieing his tie in the mirror.
" - and you kid yourself into thinking you're horny handed workers. Some little tit still wet behind the ears called me a fascist the other day."
"You're done, Monroe," said Wylie stubbornly, "I like you because I'm a romantic but the times have passed you by. You don't know what's happening."
"When I was sixteen, Wylie, during the war, I was an office monkey on the New York Call. I was there during the suppression and the raids and all us boys read the Communist Manifesto and swore by it."
"I guess it didn't sink in."
"In a way-but I'm not one of these natural believers always asking where the church is. Or the cathouse or the saloon either. Thinking's a lot harder than believing but it's more fun too. And it occurred to me that I was a better man than most of those fellows. If they'd been

planning to make me a big shot I might have played along, but there wasn't any future."

"That was a bad guess, Monroe."

"Don't be so sure. I saw this world was going to function a little longer anyhow. I couldn't breath with those people-nine-tenths of them ready to sell out for a nickel. More dirty politics than there is in a studio and all covered up with holy talk, and not a laugh in a carload. I became a Jew again. I swear I did. And I was good one till Minna died. A perfectly happy good Jew" (Bruccoli, *The Last of the Novelists* 69-70).

[113] One screenwriter who worked for Thalberg, Lenore Coffee described him in markedly feminine, yet austere terms, "I was not prepared for the slender body, the delicately boned and strikingly Italianate face. I thought immediately of how he would look as a Renaissance prince, for he had a princely air" (Viera 9).

[114] "Within three years, his partnership with Mayer had made M-G-M the most successful studio in Hollywood. For twelve years, virtually no M-G-M film was made without Thalberg's imprint . . . He introduced the horror film and coauthored the Production Code. He innovated story conferences, sneak previews, and extensive retakes. He strove to achieve a synthesis of theater and film . . . To his everlasting credit (or disgrace), he established the producer – not the director – as the author of the Hollywood film . . . Knowing that he was on borrowed time, he pushed himself to the limit, working sixteen hours a day on forty films a year, determined that motion pictures should be accorded the same respect as literature and drama" (Viera xiv).

[115] Thalberg's wife Norma Shearer recalled Thalberg's ability as a storyteller in his own right, "He understood stories, . . . he had read so much. He got the wheels turning by first revising the scripts and then putting more pictures to work, by assigning directors and casts, by contending tactfully with conflicting authority when he could, and by overruling when he couldn't. He would just make up his mind and bear the consequences" (Viera 10).

[116] Existing scholarship on *Tycoon* stresses Fitzgerald's relationship with Irving Thalberg as crucial to Stahr's characterization, "Irving Grant Thalberg, born in Brooklyn in 1899, survived a series of childhood illnesses only to be told that his damaged heart would not sustain him past the age of thirty . . . In 1934 he and Louis B. Mayer founded M-G-M. In 1927 Thalberg married Norma Shearer, one of the stars he and Mayer had launched, and guided her to superstardom" (Bruccloi xiv).

[117] In Fitzgerald's original outline of the novel he specifically notes of Cecelia that, "She is *of* the movies but not *in* them" (Bruccoli, *TLOTLT* xxxi).

[118] As an uncredited scriptwriter on *Gone with the Wind*, Fitzgerald would have been familiar with how Margaret Mitchell's novel was itself an account of not only the history, but also the mythology of the South to come out of the civil war where, as Charles Maland notes, "The film's conservative social ideology both contributed to its popularity and opened it to critique. *Gone with the Wind* portrays the Southern Plantation Myth and the place of African Americans in it from the perspective of the white southern planter class" (249).

[119] The scene where Prince Agge discusses how Stahr uses multiple writers working on a single script, highlights the collaborative nature of film-making Fitzgerald experienced, and which had been perfected by Thalberg himself:

> "These are good writers," Stahr explained to Prince Agge. "And we don't have good writers out here."
> "Why you can hire anyone!" exclaimed his visitor in surprise.
> "Oh we hire them but when they get out here they're not good writers – so we have to work with the material we have."
> "Like what?"
> "Anybody that'll accept the system and stay decently sober – we have all sorts of people – disappointed poets, one-hit playwrights, college girls – we put them on an idea in pairs and if it slows down we put two more writers working behind them. I've had as many as three pairs working independently on the same idea.
> "Do they like that?"
> "Not if they know about it. They're not geniuses - none of them could make as much any other way. But these Marquands are a husband and wife team from the East-pretty good playwrights. They've just found out they're not alone on the story and it shocks them - shocks their sense of unity - that's the word they'll use."
> "But what does make the - the unity?"
> Stahr hesitated – his face was grim except that his eyes twinkled.
> "I'm the unity," he said. "Come and see us again" (*TLOTLT* 57-58).

[120] Bruccoli notes, "Fitzgerald was referring to Diogenes of Sinopé (fourth century B.C.), the celebrated Cynic philosopher. Wilson's emendation to Euripides, the Athenian tragic poet, is unnecessary and inappropriate. As a graduate of the University of Salonika, Zavras would have a correct knowledge of Greek classical civilization." He goes on to further add, "Wilson's emendation to Aristophanes, the Greek comic dramatist, is imperceptive: since Stahr has "cured" Zavras's blindness, it is appropriate for Stahr to be compared to Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine" (*TLOTLT* 230).

[121] A terse exchange between Stahr and a trade union representative Brimmer on the subject of writers in Hollywood underlines this dichotomy:

> "They are not equipped for authority," said Stahr. "There is no substitute for will. Sometimes you have to fake will when you don't feel it at all."
> "I've had that experience."
> "You have to say 'It's got to be like this-no other way'-even if you're not sure. A dozen times a week that happens to me. Situations where there is no real reason for anything. You pretend there is."
> "All leaders have felt that," said Brimmer, "Labor leaders, and certainly military leaders."
> "So I've had to take an attitude in this Guild matter. It looks to me like a try for power and all I am going to give the writers is money"
> "You give some of them very little money. Thirty dollars a week."
> "Who gets that?" asked Stahr surprised.

> "The ones who are commodities and easy to replace."
> "Not on my lot," said Stahr.
> "Oh yes," said Brimmer. "Two men in your shorts department get thirty dollars a week."
> "Who?"
> "Man named Ransome-man named O'Brien."
> Stahr and I smiled together.
> "Those are not writers," said Stahr. "Those are cousins of Cecelia's father." (*TLOTLT* 122)

Stahr's treatment of the writers he employs undermines their sense of self-determination and autonomy. The studio is not a democracy and cannot allow in Stahr's view men like Brimmer to gain a controlling influence anymore than Pat Brady. Yet despite his absolutist mentality Stahr remains, an employer who on an individual level respects, and looks to protect not only his workers, but the audience they are providing a product for. Just as he steps in to ensure the cameraman Pete Zavras does not lose his job based on a rumor he is losing his sight, he does not allow the director Red Ridingwood to continue to work on a picture, where he is unable to deliver an adequate performance from his lead actress.

[122] This scene represents what Matthew Bruccoli refers to as the "seed" of the novel as a whole, where Fitzgerald in his working notes recalls his meeting Irving Thalberg on whom the character of Stahr was based during his first trip to Hollywood in 1927:

> We were sat in the old commissary at Metro and he said, "Scottie, supposing there's got to be a road through a mountain – a railroad and two or three surveyors and people come to you and you believe some of them and some of them you don't believe, but all in all, there seem to be a half a dozen possible roads through those mountains, each one of which so far as you can determine, is as good as the other. Now suppose you happen to be the top man, there's a point where you don't exercise the faculty of judgment in the ordinary way, but simply the faculty of arbitrary decision. You say, "Well I think we will put the road there' and you trace it with your finger and you know in your secret heart and no one else knows, that you have no reason for putting the road there rather than in several other different courses, but you're the only person that knows that you don't know why you're doing it and you've got to stick to that and you've got to pretend that you know and that you did it for specific reasons, even though you're utterly assailed by doubts at times as to the wisdom of your decision because all these other possible decisions keep echoing in your ear. But when you're planning a new enterprise on a grand scale, the people under you mustn't ever know or guess that you're in any doubt because they've all got to have something to look up to and they mustn't ever dream that you're in doubt about any decision. Those things keep occurring" (*TLOTLT* xviii).

[123] To expand slightly on what I mean by the "mathematical precision of chance", one finds in Stahr's seemingly random decision, as to how a decision may be taken on the basis of a particular shade or color, the poetics of Chaos theory, the idea of non-linear

variations at work in dynamic complex systems most famously referred to in Edward Lorenz's "butterfly effect".

[124] Nathanael West's *The Day Of The Locust* memorably captures this interplay between dream and landscape, as a form of mnemonic retrograde captured in the simulacra of the studio back-lot:

> In the center of the field was a gigantic pile of sets, flats and props. While he watched, a ten-ton truck added another load to it. This was the final dumping ground. He thought of Janvier's "Sargasso Sea." Just as that imaginary body of water was a history of civilization in the form of a marine junkyard, the studio lot was one in the form of a dream dump. A Sargasso of the imagination! And the dump grew continually, for there wasn't a dream afloat somewhere which wouldn't sooner or later turn up on it, having first been made photographic by plaster, canvas, lath and paint. Many boats sink and never reach the Sargasso, but no dream ever entirely disappears. Somewhere it troubles some unfortunate person and some day, when that person has been sufficiently troubled, it will be reproduced on the lot. (West 81-82)

[125] As George Steiner notes, "It is not the literal past that rules us . . . It is images of the past. These are often as highly structured and selective as myths . . . Each new historical era mirrors itself in the picture and active mythology of its past or of a past borrowed from other cultures" (13).

[126] In Fitzgerald's synopsis for the novel, which he sent to Kenneth Littauer the fiction editor of *Collier's*, Fitzgerald outlined this ending for the novel as he envisaged it:

> Now occurs the final episode which should give the novel its quality – and its unusualness. Do you remember about 1933 when a transport plane was wrecked on a mountain-side in the Southwest, and a Senator was killed? The thing that struck me about it was that the country people rifled the bodies of the dead. That is just what happens to this plane which is bearing Stahr from Hollywood. The angle is that of three children who, on a Sunday picnic, are the first to discover the wreckage. Among those killed in the accident besides Stahr are two other characters we have met . . . Of the three children, two boys and a girl, who find the bodies, one boy rifled Stahr's possessions; another, the body of a ruined ex-producer; and the girl, those of a moving picture actress. The possessions which the children find, symbolically determine their attitude toward their act of theft. The possessions of the moving picture actress tend the young girl to a selfish possessiveness; those of the unsuccessful producer sway one of the boys toward an irresolute attitude; while the boy who finds Stahr's briefcase is the one who, after a week, saves and redeems all three by going to a local judge and making full confession. (Bruccoli, *The Last of the Novelists* 29-30)

[127] Robert M. Fogelson describes the heady increase and impact of migration on Los Angeles during the 1920s, "The appeal of Los Angeles . . . was almost irresistible . . . under the stimulus of massive migration, the metropolitan economy expanded at such an unparalleled pace that land brought high prices if not easy fortunes, and newcomers found remunerative employment if not instant fame. And the mild climate, exotic landscape, and suburban environment still so intrigued those in quest of a new life that so long as the nation and the region prospered and the immigrants discounted the psychic and social costs of relocation, the movement proceeded in a spiral fashion whereby response fulfilled wish and reality approximated vision" (75).

[128] In his poem "Facing West from California's shores", Walt Whitman speaks of the paradox manifest in the closing of the frontier, and its implications for American migration within a set of spatial and temporal boundaries, that are constantly looking to simultaneously define and at the same time redefine their parameters:

Facing west from California's shores,
Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound.
I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the house of maternity, the
land of migrations, look afar,
Look off the shores of my Western sea the circle almost circle;
For starting westward from Hindustan, from the vales of Kashmere,
From Asia, from the north, from the God, the sage, and the hero,
From the south, from the flowery peninsulas and the spice islands,
Long having wander'd since, round the earth having wander'd,
Now I face home again, very pleas'd and joyous,
(But where is what I started for so long ago?
And why is it yet unfound?) (145)

[129] "The third person in the Hindu triad, with Brahma and Vishnu. Siva represents the principle of destruction and reconstruction; he is also the god of the arts. Fitzgerald's drafts refer to Siva as a goddess" (Bruccoli, *TLOTLT* 295).

[130] As Walter Prescott Webb affirms, "The American thinks of the frontier as lying *within*, and not at the edge of a country. It is not a line to stop at, but an *area* inviting entrance . . . In Europe the frontier is stationary and presumably permanent; in America it *was* transient and temporal" (3).

[131] The forward momentum of the journey to the West Coast contradicted by Cecelia's uncanny sense of lingering, suggests a similar dialectic to William Faulkner's *As I lay dying*, where Peabody equates the American landscape to a prolonged evolution of national character shaped and framed through the conditions of failure, "That's the one trouble with the country : everything, weather, all, hangs on too long. Like our rivers, our land : opaque, slow, violent; shaping and creating the life of man in its implacable and brooding image" (38).

[132] There is a passage in Sheilah Graham's *College of One* taken from a lecture written for her by Fitzgerald to deliver on Hollywood, which again addresses this question of what direction film will take in the future. Despite the sexist assumption that it will be a 'boy' rather than a 'girl' who answers 'Hollywood's great problem'

the unstated question Fitzgerald nevertheless poses is who will the future audience be as the medium continues to evolve, and how will they increasingly dictate the type of stories they want to see:

> Once in a while a great figure has appeared on the horizon and led it through a mighty exodus. Griffith was one, Thalberg was another. There is no such person now in Hollywood – no single person whom we, of the movie industry, believe capable of controlling this vast art in all its many manifestations. But there's some boy growing up in America now who by some combination of genius and luck will answer Hollywood's great problem.
>
> Now that we have every device of nature itself – nature's color, nature's sound. And technicians have made experiments in nature's three dimensions so that figures on the film will seem to have the corporeal reality of life itself. Now that we have all this - what are we going to do with it? Now that we've a way of saying in pictures almost everything that used to be said in books, how far do you want us to go? And what do you want us to say? (190)

[133] In defining the formative characteristics of American national identity, St Jean De Crèvecoeur in "What is an American?" argues that, "*He* is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds . . . Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigor, and industry which began long since in the east; they will finish the great circle" (407). For both Crevecoeur and Fitzgerald the figure of the pioneer or 'western pilgrim' remains defined as a largely masculine construct. However, with Fitzgerald's re-conception of the American hero, that same pioneer becomes capable of accommodating and expressing both minority and non-western identities. In other words the original figure of the American pioneer functions in the characters of Gatsby, Diver, and Stahr, as the operative creative space, wherein these 'other' more liminal identities are discovered to co-exist in a constantly evolving state of flux.

[134] Matthew J. Bruccoli similarly observes, "Fitzgerald was a life-long hero-worshipper, but he was not able to create an unflawed hero until he himself was in his forties. It is meaningful that Monroe Stahr is the first hero in a Fitzgerald novel with a successful career . . . Gatsby's business activities are shadowy; and Dick Diver abandons his promising career. But Stahr is totally committed to his work and the responsibility that goes with it. He is Fitzgerald's only complete professional . . . In *The Last Tycoon* Fitzgerald created his only strong novel hero" (Bruccoli, *The Last of the Novelists*, 5).

[135] Ugo Rubeo emphasizes the correlation between the circumstances of Fitzgerald's own breakdown and the practical function of his art where he observes, "The work of renewal that Fitzgerald carries on in the last years of his life, in terms of language, structure, narrative modes, does not seem to be able to be disjointed from that act of conscious confrontation with his autobiographical past that the three chapters of "The Crack Up" precisely describe" (L'opera di rinnovamento che Fitzgerald porta avanti

negli ultimi anni della sua vita, sul piano del linguaggio, delle strutture, dei modi narrativi, non sembra pertanto poter essere disgiunta da quell'atto di confronto consapevole col proprio passato autobiografico che i tre brani di "The Crack-Up" appunto descrivono"; my trans.; 88).

[136] Edmund Wilson in looking to find a publisher for his first edition of "The Crack-Up" following Fitzgerald's death writes to Fitzgerald's literary executor John Biggs stressing his own reappraisal of the essays, " . . . if you read *The Crack-Up* through, you realize that it is not a discreditable confession but an account of a kind of crisis that many men of Scott's generation have gone through, and that in the end he sees a way to live by application to his work" (qtd. in Donaldson "The Crisis of Fitzgerald's Crack-Up").

[137] Haruki Murakami in his essay "The Illusion of Scott Fitzgerald: Asheville, 1935" highlights qualities in "The Crack-Up" that to a Japanese reader would immediately resonate as part of a tradition of noble failure, which Western readers may not recognize or immediately appreciate:

> The summer of 1935 was a sterile season for Scott. He produced nothing then. He could not write any good stories. He could not make anybody happy, nor could he make himself happy either. But the darkness without end and the deep despair he underwent during those days, and also the emptiness he felt on Chimney Rock, eventually bore good fruit in the form of "The Crack-Up" trilogy toward the end of the year. And the essays move us greatly. We can sense a sympathy-evoking sound there, as if in writing them he was carving them from his own flesh. Moreover, the style is firmly noble and each word that he picked is filled with a fine sadness . . . There lies a profound despair that almost surpasses everything. However, we can see something in his writings that even surpasses the despair. Scott Fitzgerald was a man filled with contradictions and faults. That is for sure. But he could be the noblest man when he wrote. Once he took up his pen, he could sit up straight far better than anybody else no matter how heavily he was beaten down . . . He always believed in writing no matter how deep his despair was, and it served as a talisman for him to the end of his life. He clung to the brilliance of the writing to the last moment of his life, no matter how unmanly he was said to be. He always believed that he could be redeemed someday as long as he kept writing. (qtd. in Miyawaki 270-271)

Here I would suggest that Murakami's reference to Fitzgerald's "firmly noble" style and "fine sadness" are particularly revealing in directly speaking to and providing an awareness of the tradition of heroic failure in Japan.

[138] Indeed, the seventeen Pat Hobby stories, which Fitzgerald wrote during the last year of his life between 1939-40 were written entirely for money to support himself, while at the same time he continued to work on *The Love of The Last Tycoon*. However, in these stories Fitzgerald already lays something of a foundation for the

early development of the anti-hero, who becomes a more prominent feature of both American literature and cinema post World War Two. Although Fitzgerald depicts Hobby on one level as a comic grotesque, at the same time the qualities of self-preservation and survival embodied in the alcoholic, burnt out studio hack anticipates not only the later anti-heroes of Saul Bellow, Kurt Vonnegut and Joseph Heller, but upholds the virtues of resilience and resourcefulness, that allow Pat through mendacity and duplicity to survive and make a living. Richard Lehan describes the Pat Hobby stories as a key insight into Fitzgerald's maturation in his conception of the heroic mode noting, "The idea here is more significant than the artistic achievement, and in an inchoate way Fitzgerald was showing that survival had its merits. But Pat's survival is at the expense of a heightened conception of self, and Fitzgerald had come a long way from the genteel and romantic hero, from the *homme épuisé* and the Faustian prince. He could not give up easily his belief that such heroes were necessary despite the shoddy world that destroyed them. Even Pat Hobby can warm to a romantic occasion . . . If the modern air would not sustain heroic flight, the attempt to fly was still worth the effort" (Lehan 21).

[139] Fitzgerald writing to Frances Turnbull two years after the publication of The Crack-Up speaks specifically to this quality of courage as 'technique' in advising her how to develop her skills as a writer:

> You've got to sell your heart, your strongest reactions, not the little minor things that only touch you lightly, the little experiences that you might tell at dinner. This is especially true when you begin to write, when you have none of the technique which it takes time to learn . . . This is the experience of all writers. It was necessary for Dickens to put into Oliver Twist the child's passionate resentment at being abused and starved that had haunted his whole childhood. Ernest Hemingway's first stories "In Our Time" went right down to the bottom of all that he had ever felt and known. In "This Side of Paradise" I wrote about a love affair that was still bleeding as fresh as the skin wound on a haemophile . . . That, anyhow, is the price of admission. Whether you are prepared to pay it or, whether it coincides or conflicts with your attitude on what is "nice" is something for you to decide. But literature, even light literature, will accept nothing less from the neophyte. It is one of those professions that want the "works". You wouldn't be interested in a soldier who was only a little brave." (Fitzgerald, *Letters* 368-369)

[140] Fitzgerald's own opinion of "The Crack-Up" as 'biography', rather than 'autobiography' points towards a more nuanced 'objective' understanding of his emotional and psychological crisis. It at the very least indicates, that Fitzgerald did not personally view the essays as straightforward confessional narratives, but rather a test of his own critical reflexivity.

[141] Ruth Prigozy observes:

> As Scott Donaldson has suggested, *The Crack-Up* essays were in part public confession, in part an effort to recast his private life into a public image with which readers who might have forgotten him could identify

(Donaldson, "The Crisis of Fitzgerald's 'Crack-Up'"). Letter after painful letter to Zelda, to Perkins, to Ober attempt to explain the public's neglect. On the one hand, he would tell Zelda, in 1940, that "a whole new generation grew up in the meanwhile to whom I was only a writer of Post stories" (*Life in Letters*, 466), and on the other, in the same year, he would tell her of a "new idea" . . . a comedy series which will get me back into the big magazines – but my God, I am a forgotten man" (*Life in Letters*, 439). To Perkins, he would write, "But to die, so completely and unjustly after having given so much" (*Life in Letters*, 445). He is mourning, of course, his neglect as a serious writer, but again, he is looking for any way back into public favor – even taking the route of the "commercial" stuff he claimed had destroyed his reputation. In his last letters, he frequently linked the public image of the Fitzgerald's with the unaccountable public neglect. He wrote to Zelda in 1940, "It was partly that times changed, editors changed, but part of it was tied up somehow with you and me – the happy ending" (*Life in Letters*, 467, 469)." (Prigozy 14)

[142] Matthew Bruccoli stresses the importance of movement in Fitzgerald's careful selection of verb, as a means of enhancing description and imagery, for example in *The Great Gatsby*:

> The values of the story are enhanced through imagery as detail is used with poetic effect. Thus the description of the Buchanans' house reveals how Fitzgerald's images stimulate the senses: 'The lawn started at the beach and ran toward the front door for a quarter of a mile, jumping over sun-dials and brick walks and burning gardens - finally when it reached the house drifting up the side in bright vines as though from the momentum of its run.' In his richest prose there is an impression of movement; here the lawn runs, jumps and drifts." (Bruccoli, *Epic Grandeur* 257)

[143] As Paola Cabibbo and Donatella Izzo observe, "From a perspective of the history of narrative forms, the organic-fragmentary bipolar structure would naturally place *The Great Gatsby* as the "classic of the transition" between the nineteenth-century narrative - the tradition of the compact and "well-designed" novel that is usually culminated with Henry James - and the narrative of the twentieth century that tends to privilege the fragment, or in any case the discontinuous one." ("In una prospettiva di storia delle forme narrative, la struttura bipolare organico-frammentario collocherebbe naturalmente *The Great Gatsby* come "classico della transizione" tra la narrative dell'Ottocento – la tradizione del romanzo compatto e "ben architettato" che si suole far culminare con Henry James – e la narrative del Novecento che tende a privilegiare il frammento, o comunque il discontinuo"; my trans.; 31).

[144] Fitzgerald's American hero may be said to have antecedents in any number of earlier literary protagonists from Natty Bumpo's retro-aging frontiersman to Billy Budd's 'handsome sailor', Huckleberry Finn's 'romantic outcast' to the self-belief of Ragged Dick, and even shares certain elements of moral and aesthetic modality within

the oeuvre of modernist characters be it Eugene Gant's alienatory imagination, Jake Barnes's flawed integrity, or Darl Bundren's cerebral monomania.

[145] For Dick Diver, one may read the frontier as a form of affirmative exile, or an imaginative form of continuity based on the expectancy of arrival rather than departure. Ha Jin observes in *The Writer as Migrant* that, "Many exiles, emigrants, expatriates, and even some immigrants are possessed with the desire to someday return to their native lands. The nostalgia often deprives them of a sense of direction and prevents them from putting down roots anywhere. The present and the future have been impaired by their displacements and their absence from their original countries gives them nothing but pain" (63). He goes on to assert that, " . . . for most migrants especially migrant artists and writers, the issues of homeland involves arrival more than return. The dichotomy inherent in the word "homeland" is more significant now than it was in the past. Its meaning can no longer be separated from home, which is something the migrant should be able to build away from his native land. Therefore, it is logical to say that your homeland is where you build your home" (84). This idea of nostalgia as a preventative to the expatriate's ability to settle down, when combined with the contemporary conflation of 'homeland' with 'home' in discussing the migrant as artist, is another means of considering Fitzgerald's work as questioning conventional paradigms of western narrative.

[146] Morris Dickstein notes that for contemporary readers, ". . . it may not be the lyrical, romantic Fitzgerald of the 1920s who most claims our attention today, but the shattered, disillusioned Fitzgerald of the 1930s – not the poet of early success, romantic possibility, and nostalgic regret, but the hard-edged analyst of personal failure and irretrievable loss the man who redeemed in his work what was slipping away from his life, who achieved a hard-won maturity even as he described himself as a failure, an exhausted man, a spent force" (75).

[147] Ivan Morris observes, "In the life of the Japanese failed hero, there usually arrives a moment when he suddenly realizes that his early upward course of success has reached its limit and that from this point forward the emotional logic which determined his career – the sincerity, the courage, the refusal to compromise with the evil forces of reality will ineluctably plummet him to defeat and a disaster" (137).

[148] Ivan Morris again notes in *The Nobility of Failure*:

> Prince Arima belongs to a long line of ill-fated young heroes who through the centuries have had a particular appeal to the Japanese sensibility . . . a general outlook on life, which in many ways is diametrically opposite to dominant Western attitudes. The Judaeo-Christian approach is based on the comforting idea that, so long as a man keeps faith, God will be on his side and he, or at least his cause, will eventually triumph. Thus a hero like Roland, though defeated in battle, is never abandoned by God and succeeds in contributing to the Christian victory over the Saracens.
>
> This basically optimistic outlook has been especially conspicuous in the most western of all major Western countries the United States of America, whose tradition has always tended to extrude any tragic sense of

> life and, often against cogent evidence to the contrary, to put its trust in the essential goodness of mankind, or at least that part of mankind which is fortunate enough to reside within its boundaries . . . Americans, of course are no strangers to despair, yet it comes not from any philosophical awareness of man's existential limitations but from disappointment that follows excessive hope in the possibility of compassing worldly happiness" (30).

[149] Critical reception of Murakami's *Killing Commendatore* has varied both in drawing attention to *Gatsby* as a clear source text, while considering the stylistic strengths and weaknesses of the novel (an unsettling combination of both realism and magic realism) in its treatment of such themes as loneliness, desire, memory and renewal. Anne Margaret Daniel writing for *The Spectator* observes, "Neither longtime inspirations nor his own imagination fail Murakami here; *Commendatore* is a perfect balance of tradition and individual talent. As well as Fitzgerald, William Faulkner is a guiding presence . . . The landscape in *Commendatore* is a Japanese Yoknapatawhpha, where past and present, interior and exterior consciousness, and art and life in a recreational game with each other are the setting, the characters and the plot ("Gatsby in Japan"). Xan Brooks writing for *The Guardian* also draws attention to the novel's external and internal landscapes noting, "Murakami's mountainside setting is full of wormholes and blind spots, arrivals and exits . . . His character is casting about for the correct way forward. He's attempting to script a fresh adventure that will give his battered life meaning and distract him from his divorce, so his story sets forth as a tale of creative rebirth" ("Killing Commendatore"). Charles Finch writing in *The Washington Post* similarly points out how the idea of reinventing oneself as an artist in mid-life is a concern Murakami addresses where, "this sensation surges again in the middle of life, when we realize that we know less as we age, not more. His characters want to turn themselves inside out, to escape the indecipherable mechanical momentum of their lives. The only path he offers them out of that despair is art; the narrator of "Killing Commendatore" learns "the courage not to fear a change in one's lifestyle, the importance of having time on your side." (Haruki Murakami turns his gaze) Considering how in *Killing Commendatore* Murakami explores the possibility of overcoming life's existential horror, through his unnamed narrator's metaphorical reinvention as an artist, would again seem to echo the thesis of "The Crack Up" underlining the similarity between the Japanese concept of 'noble failure', and Fitzgerald's own writing.

[150] The influence of Fitzgerald on Murakami, and subsequently how the former's novels are read and received in Japan highlights how Fitzgerald's critical status has steadily grown over the last forty years outside the Western hemisphere. As Yuji Kato notes:

> Most postwar Japanese writers appear to be satisfied with more traditional Japanese cultural attitudes and practices, including Ryu Murakami and Kenji Nakagami . . . What sets Haruki Murakami apart is his serious acceptance of American contemporary and classic literature such as Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is the Night*, Salinger's novels, and probably the works by later writers such as Richard Brautigan, Kurt Vonnegut Jr., and Thomas Pynchon . . .

> Murakami's novels share the characteristics and the limits of American novels up to the 1950's that are the last works of genuine realism and family romance, such as Philip Roth's *Goodbye Columbus* and Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye.* He also shares their surviving forms by Brautigan, Vonnegut, Jr., John Irving, Ann Beattie and Raymond Carver . . .
>
> There must also have been influence from F. Scott Fitzgerald, who became immensely popular as "Murakami's writer," though Murakami often emphasizes his difference from Fitzgerald . . . Murakami's comments on Fitzgerald in his essays totally changed his status in Japan. Everybody had read Hemingway, and specialists in literature had to be familiar with Faulkner's works. And yet, even though Fitzgerald's works had been translated with these better-known contemporaries during the 1950's, he had never been as popular as Hemingway and Faulkner until Murakami's introduction. There were reading groups of Fitzgerald's works such as *Tender is the Night* at universities in the early 1980's in Tokyo, probably because Murakami made him known among young people. After the late 1980's when Murakami began to be read by the general public that is outside the literary circles and the universities, particularly with the huge success of *Norwegian Wood*, Fitzgerald must have been much more widely read than Hemingway or Faulkner. (25-26)

While this study is not attempting to claim Murakami is representative of the majority of Japanese fiction, I believe it is possible by reading Gatsby, Diver and Stahr in the context of 'noble failure', to nevertheless view Murakami on one level as a Japanese author drawn to Fitzgerald, in whom he recognizes, unconsciously or otherwise a familiar heroic trope, that belongs to an Eastern rather than Western tradition.

[151] Fitzgerald's view of America as part of its 'heroic' scope is largely continental rather than national. By this I mean his engagement with and representation of America as a visionary space, rather than federal territory to creatively expand into. This is most clearly articulated at the end of *Gatsby* when Nick observes, "for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder" (*GG* 140). It is the quintessential moment of rediscovery in Fitzgerald's work, that moves beyond the closing of the frontier.

[152] I should note here that this analysis is in no way an attempt to redefine or investigate what has come to be referred to as the Great American novel. While *Gatsby* has often been spoken of as a potential candidate for this title, what this study has attempted to show is how future Fitzgerald scholarship can potentially benefit from questioning the concept of 'greatness' itself through an understanding of the Japanese definition of 'noble failure'. Encouraging the scope of scholarly research to move beyond *Gatsby*, as the accepted summit of Fitzgerald's artistic achievement may itself be considered something of a heroic worthwhile endeavor, even if ultimately doomed to failure.

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