

F. Scott Fitzgerald as a “Tycoon”

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Introduction

F. Scott Fitzgerald, one of the writers of the Lost Generation, wrote four novels, one unfinished novel and one hundred and sixty short stories in his whole life. It is surprising that he wrote such a great number of short stories but most of them were written in order to earn a living. As Fitzgerald says, “I’m the last of the novelists,”¹ he wanted to be a novelist in the true sense but the Fitzgerald’s extravagance did not allow him to be just a novelist. *The Last Tycoon*, which is about Hollywood, could not be finished though Fitzgerald had an earnest desire to make it a chance to go back into the literary world.

Fitzgerald cherished and sought an ideal of paradise not only through his writer’s life but also through his whole life. But this is not limited to just a childish illusion because of his double vision. He had Irish blood in his veins from both of his parents, which enabled him to look on the bright and dark sides of everything and he tried to keep it in his mind. Therefore, he entertained a romantic ideal and struggle for it, while he sees himself ironically and feels a hidden delusion on the other side of it. *The Last Tycoon* has an important meaning, for it is the very last novel of Fitzgerald after all his struggles and tragedies experienced during the time he was writing his four novels and the essay, “The Crack-Up.” All characters of his works reflect himself more or less. He writes, “Begins with an individual, and before you know it you find that you have created a type; begin with a type, and you find that you have created—nothing.”² According to this phrase, he makes it a rule to begin with an individual, which makes it natural for him to begin with himself very often, for he is the nearest individual. His “characters are all Scott Fitzgerald”³ and “It is only through portraying individuals that an author is able to convey

¹ Brucoli, J. Matthew, *The Last of the Novelists*, Southern Illinois University Press, 1977, p.9

² Fitzgerald, F. Scott, “The Rich Boy,” *The Collected Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, Penguin Books, London; Penguin Books Ltd, 1986. p.110

³ Turnbull, Andrew, *Scott Fitzgerald*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1962. p.259

their social identities.”⁴ Therefore, his novel undergoes a change in growth as he did. This would make it safe to say that *The Last Tycoon* is the work that is an expression of the true Fitzgerald, for it is the first work after “The Crack-Up,” through which he looks back over his career for the first time and releases himself from a lot of restraints by disclosing what he realized he has been so far.

This paper focuses on Fitzgerald’s unfinished novel, *The Last Tycoon*, elucidating whether it is, to borrow Edmund Wilson’s words, “Fitzgerald’s most mature piece of work”⁵ by describing the following points:

1. The changes he underwent in thoughts and attitudes toward his life both private and professional from his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, to his essays, “The Crack-Up.”
2. The changes wrought in his last unfinished novel *The Last Tycoon* by the changes discussed in 1.

Chapter I analyzes the first point and Chapter II elaborates the second.

Chapter I

The neurotic breakdown of Fitzgerald’s wife Zelda is one of the biggest turning points in his life, which occurred when he was writing *Tender Is the Night* and influenced its plot. Until the breakdown there were many problems and he knew they were being corrupted by wasting their energy spiritually and economically; nevertheless, he did not try hard to improve their life. Confronted with Zelda’s breakdown, he could not help facing up to reality, for he had to do everything concerning his family including his role as mother to his daughter Scottie. At the same time he could not escape from reflecting on his own life.

The breakdown might divide his life and work, so the former part of this chapter examines the period between *This Side of Paradise* and *The Great Gatsby* and then that between *Tender Is the Night* and “The Crack-Up.”

1. From *This Side of Paradise* to *The Great Gatsby*

- (1). *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned*

This Side of Paradise, the novel with which Fitzgerald makes his literary debut, plays a very important role because its success brought him “a certain bonus and a certain burden”⁶ and

⁴ Baughman, S. Judith and Matthew J. Brucoli, *F. Scott Fitzgerald*, Michigan; The Gale Group, 2000. p.45

⁵ Fitzgerald, F. Scott, *The Last Tycoon*, Ed. Edmund Wilson, London; Penguin Books Ltd, 2001. p.2

⁶ Penguin Books, *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald* 5 vols, London; Penguin Books Ltd, 1965. Vol.2. p.62

“a conviction that life is a romantic matter”⁷, that is, “ ...In the best sense one stays young,”⁸ which is to be his basic attitude toward life. These ideas stay fundamental to his life and works until they are broken by “The Crack-Up,” and releases himself though he had an idea from his childhood that life is romantic as he says, “I didn’t know till 15 that there was anyone in the world except me, and it cost me *plenty*,”⁹ he was pampered by his mother. “Early success,” in his words, was so huge that it temporarily and superficially blew off various sufferings and distresses he had to suffer in his youth as everyone does, to borrow Hemingway’s words, “Fitzgerald had gone from youth to senility without manhood in between,”¹⁰ and, moreover, he was too young to control it by himself. He was supported by the youth who were leaders of “the greatest, gaudiest spree in history,”¹¹ which gave him a mint of money and fame and caused him to be absorbed in a boisterous merrymaking with Zelda, who believes firmly that life is to be enjoyed. Having no sense of economy, the Fitzgeralds spent as much money as they had and they became at a loss afterwards. Fitzgerald’s energy and youthfulness enabled him to write more than one story a day which fetched an excessive price. Zelda felt great satisfaction that she could enjoy life without any worry, while Fitzgerald suffered from smoldering discontent in his heart. In spite of such feeling and the qualms of conscience the feminine Fitzgerald was at the mercy of the masculine Zelda. As early as 1920 he wrote to Maxwell Perkins saying, “...I don’t want to get broke in the middle and start in and have to write short stories again—because I don’t enjoy it and just do it for money.”¹²

This Side of Paradise was brought forth by his shrewdness and character of being able to join an event without losing presence of mind, and he noticed the smoldering new current of the times and described it accurately. He sat on “the dividing line between the two generations”¹³ “somewhat self-consciously”¹⁴ and looked into the Jazz Age with a double vision. This novel sold 49,000 copies in its first year but its structure is not admired by critics. Because of various comments about it, the next novel *The Beautiful and Damned* was better composed compared with the first one. However, it is not so good a novel though it sold more than 40,000 copies. In the novel Fitzgerald depicted a couple of sufferings from vacancy, loneliness, and corruption lying

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Turnbull, Andrew, ed. *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, New York; Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1963. p.5

¹⁰ Turnbull, Andrew, *Scott Fitzgerald, op. cit.* p.277

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.105

¹² Turnbull, Andrew, ed. *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, op. cit.* p.141

¹³ Penguin Books, *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald* 5 vols, *op. cit.* p.60

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

behind a spree. Their suffering was what he felt keenly as he wrote to Maxwell Perkins, "I'm having a hell of a time because I've loafed for 5 months and I want to get to work. Loafing puts me in this particularly obnoxious and abominable gloom."¹⁵

As is analyzed above, though Fitzgerald achieved a great success and realized the dream of being a hero with great wealth which he had had since his boyhood, and was taken to pleasure giving free rein to his desires, yet he witnessed destruction and corruption that lurk under the paradise and came to have an aversion to them. From his essay: "...All the stories that came into my head had a touch of disaster in them—the lovely young creatures in my novels went to ruin, the diamond mountains of my short stories blew up, my millionaires were as beautiful and damned as Thomas Hardy's peasants."¹⁶

He had "a double vision" before these two novels without doubt but it was strengthened through the experience he underwent at the time. Then he began to try to get out of destructions and corruptions.

(2). *The Great Gatsby*

Fitzgerald decided to stop drinking after he moved to New York from St. Paul with a guilty conscience about his luxurious life full of parties. He "...hired a couple to keep house and a nurse for the baby..."¹⁷ with the view of establishing order in their life, but in vain. His efforts bore little fruit, and he resumed a disordered life with hundreds of parties that provided many impressive scenes in *The Great Gatsby*. The corruptive aspect of their life was getting more and more serious though there had been some cheerfulness of the youth before. Three reasons can be seen. The first one is that he can hardly write a satisfactory work. Even if he took several days and managed to complete a short story that he could be satisfied with, its price the magazine offered was low. Meanwhile the one he wrote swiftly sold well. Such a contradiction between his own estimation and the magazine's distressed him much. The second is the play *The Vegetable* which he wrote with an enormous expectation of enough success to clear his debts and solve their economic difficulty. But it proved to be an utter failure. The third is that he had to write stories to earn money unwillingly because of the failure of the play. He suffered more and more and felt remorse welling out from his moral sense. Finally he came to a dead end and went over to Europe with his family for the second time.

It was in St. Raphael in France that he started to write *The Great Gatsby*, which is now

¹⁵ Turnbull, Andrew, ed. *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, op. cit. p.148

¹⁶ Penguin Books, *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, op. cit. pp. 59-60

¹⁷ Turnbull, Andrew, *Scott Fitzgerald*, op. cit. p.133

regarded as his masterpiece. The theme and art of this novel are marvelous. He drew a clear picture of the longing and the distrust for the rich, the unfairness that poor boys should not dream of marrying rich girls, the trauma of having been rejected by Zelda once, the hero pursuing the American Dream, and his tragedy. His “double vision” and his irony can be recognized in the title but the impression of the book with the striking protagonist allows Fitzgerald to call Gatsby “great” without a feeling that something is wrong. Above all, Nick’s important role in the book cannot be too much emphasized. Nick is at the same time a character and a narrator, who takes an active part in the story without losing cool judgment. The great success of this novel is due to the fact that this story was not told by Gatsby himself or its omniscient author. In 1925 *The Great Gatsby* was published and Fitzgerald received letters of applause from Willa Cather, Edith Wharton, Gertrude Stein, and T. S. Eliot. But the sales of the book fell short of Fitzgerald’s expectations. Nevertheless, he could become stable mentally and gain self-confidence as a writer. He wrote in a letter to Maxwell Perkins, “...This thing, both the effort and the result, have hardened me and I think now that I’m much better than any of the young Americans *without exception*...”¹⁸

He did not have religious faith though he went to a Catholic school and “...He went to Confession and talked a great deal of becoming a priest...”¹⁹ in 1917 when “...he spent July at the home of John Peale Bishop in Charles Town, West Virginia.”²⁰ To borrow his letter to Edmund Wilson, “I am ashamed to say that my Catholicism is scarcely more than a memory—no, that’s wrong, it’s more than that; at any rate I go not to the church nor mumble stray nothing over crystalline beads...”²¹ Instead of religion he believed in experiences as he was “a man whose basic feeling for experience was a religious one.”²² Fitzgerald, whose religion and standard of life are experiences, had a stable moral code. One of the fundamentals of this moral code was taught by his father as he wrote a phrase in a similar sense in *The Great Gatsby*. He wrote, “I loved my father always deep in my subconscious I have referred judgments back to him, what he would have thought, or done. He loved me—and felt a deep responsibility for me—I was born several months after the sudden death of my two elder sisters & he felt what the effect of this would be on my mother, that he would have to be my only moral guide....What he told me

¹⁸ Turnbull, Andrew, ed. *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, *op. cit.* p.179

¹⁹ Turnbull, Andrew, *Scott Fitzgerald*, *op. cit.* p.78

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Turnbull, Andrew, ed. *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, *op. cit.* p.325

²² Mizener, Arthur, *The Far Side of Paradise*, Rev. ed. Boston; Houghton Mifflin Company Boston, 1965. p.93

were simple things.”²³ And he was taught to write by his father, his “only moral guide” for the first time. “The first help I ever had in writing in my life was from my father who read an utterly imitative Sherlock Holmes story of mine and pretended to like it...,”²⁴ he wrote afterward. It would be too painful to keep writing against his conscience, which means that he felt guilty of betraying his father all the time. That is why *The Great Gatsby* is so important for him to be released from the qualms of conscience and solve the contradictions. He declared when he finished the novel, “I’ve found my line—from now on this comes first. This is my immediate duty—without this I am nothing....”²⁵

Fitzgerald could not have had enough confidence to decide whether he was a real writer or not before he wrote *The Great Gatsby*. Now he finally got one of the most important things in life; confidence, which would be the fountainhead of hope even in an uproarious and outrageous life from then on.

For the summing up so far, it can be said that there was a big change in his thoughts and works. First of all, he was given “a certain bonus and a certain burden” by *This Side of Paradise*, which enabled him to realize his dream of being a hero and experienced the dark side of the gaudy life. Although he earned far more than enough money to live, he fell into economic difficulty because he and his wife did not have an economic sense. So he invented a new means to gain money, that is, to write away whatever he could write for magazines. Once he had got money, he relapsed into a luxurious life feeling the pricks of conscience, which brought him to a writer’s conscience. The Fitzgerald family went over to Europe after moved from place to place attempting to put their life in order, and completed his masterpiece *The Great Gatsby*. The sales of the book were disappointing but he could implant self-confidence as a writer in his mind. Technically speaking, the structure of *This Side of Paradise* was poor but there can be seen an improvement in *The Beautiful and Damned*. After these first two novels came *The Great Gatsby*, which is so miraculous that it has invited the question of why he could have written such a marvelous novel as early as twenty-eight years old.

2. From *Tender Is the Night* to “The Crack-Up”

(1). *Tender Is the Night*

Immediately after the publication of *The Great Gatsby* Fitzgerald sent to Maxwell Perkins the telegraph that he conceived an idea of a new novel and would start to write it but he just

²³ *Ibid.* pp. 11-12

²⁴ Baughman, S. Judith and Matthew J. Brucoli, *op. cit.* p. 158

²⁵ Turnbull, Andrew, ed. *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, *op. cit.* p. 79

spent his time for pleasure in Europe without working on it. Though it is true that he could hardly make any progress in the novel, he was struggling as he says, "The history of my life is the history of the struggle between an overwhelming urge to write and a combination of circumstances bent on keeping me from it."²⁶ *The Great Gatsby's* royalties brought in offset a debt he owed to the Scribner's, and life in Europe did not cost so much as that in the United States, so they could get around their economic difficulties. The Fitzgerald family lived in Europe until they went back to the United States in 1927 and Fitzgerald worked only a little. When they returned to the United States, he was invited to work for Hollywood. He decided to join because he had had some interest in the movie world since he saw the studio of *Ben Hur* in Rome in 1924, he had a desire to test himself on his ability to write a script, and he was attracted by the reward. Hollywood did not give a good impression to him as he named the place "a tragic city of beautiful girls"²⁷ but he met the actress Lois Moran, who would be the model of Rosemary Hoyt in *Tender Is the Night*. The result of this work is that Fitzgerald's scripts were rejected and they fled the place, which brought a lasting humiliation to them. They began to live in "Ellerslie" in Delaware and tried to live a quiet life. That summer he made efforts to finish writing a novel and he sent a part of it to Maxwell Perkins, but "Ellerslie" was visited by too many people to concentrate on writing. Therefore, he got nervous and could not stop drinking in order to drown his irritation. And again they went back to a boisterous spree, whose mood was getting more and more corruptive as it had been since *The Beautiful and Damned*. Besides that fact, the relationship between Fitzgerald and Zelda became worse. This is because both of them had a complaint to each other. Zelda's complaint was that only Fitzgerald gained success as an artist though he owed it much to her, for example, he used her diary in *This Side of Paradise* and it was her who gave advice about how to describe women, for he was not good at portraying them. She could not stand any longer to stay just as a model for the heroine of his story or a myth at most, and to be unproductive by herself. Then she decided to be an artist in a different field of Fitzgerald and chose to resume ballet lessons she had once taken in her girlhood and to be a ballet dancer. On the other hand, this fact strengthened the feeling of being threatened by her vitality and power of will that Fitzgerald had had from the first. Moreover, his complaints against her were accumulated, to use the phrase in *The Far Side of Paradise*, "...there was some drive in Fitzgerald to destroy her concentration. He appeared unable to endure Zelda's successful-if neurotic-display of will when he felt that

²⁶ Baughman, S. Judith and Matthew J. Bruccoli, *op. cit.* p.152

²⁷ Kobori, Yoichiro, *Scott Fitzgerald*, Tokyo: Yumishobo, 1987 p. 125

self-indulgence and dissipation were ruining him.”²⁸ He was at an emotional crisis and he thought some of the causes for not being able to complete the intended novel were brought by Zelda. The escalation of Zelda’s enthusiasm for ballet lessons and the unstable life made them go between Europe and the United States. Their tension had mounted gradually, and at last Zelda’s neurotic breakdown occurred in 1930. This occurrence gave him the idea of *Tender Is the Night*, whose protagonist Dick Diver is a psychiatrist who assumes full responsibility for one of his female mental patients and brings ruin to himself, at last, by undergoing “emotional bankruptcy.” Fitzgerald had been writing about the ruin caused by the outside world rather than the ruin from the inside until he wrote this novel. There was a big change in his theme in *Tender Is the Night*. The tragedy of the hero was attributed not to him but to the other beings before this novel but now the cause of the hero’s tragedy is put inside of himself. In the summer of 1925 he began to write *The World’s Fair*, which is the predecessor of *Tender Is the Night*. In 1932 he rented “La Paix” in order to finish the novel whose outlook was in utter darkness though seven years had passed since he had started the novel. Zelda lived together so long as circumstances permitted. There he tried to go on writing but the change in Fitzgerald could be recognized from the second year at “La Paix” according to Andrew Turnbull, whose father was the landlord. He writes, “...the first year’s light-heartedness declined, to be replaced by a haunted sense of hope lost and time run out.,” and “...More and more he withdraw into his study where his light blazed on into the small hours...”²⁹ Thus Fitzgerald showed a sign of “emotional bankruptcy.” In 1933 he moved to Baltimore because of impending economic difficulties. While he was making an earnest effort to finish the novel, Zelda’s third neurotic breakdown occurred, and she entered the hospital. In such a tragic circumstance he managed to finish the novel after about nine years from the beginning. It was serialized in a magazine from January to April in 1934 and published in book form. He had great expectations of it. As is the case with Fitzgerald, he worked his composition over again and again and the title was changed from “Doctor Diver’s Holiday” into *Tender Is the Night* just before its publication. Even after its publication he tried his best to improve the book when he heard that its sales were not good. He cherished it and named it “My Testament of Faith”³⁰ and “Now he was worrying, not simply over sales and money, but over his morale, his ability to go on as a writer...”³¹ to borrow words from

²⁸ Mizener, Arthur, *op. cit.* p.231

²⁹ Turnbull, Andrew, *Scott Fitzgerald, op. cit.* p.235

³⁰ Mizener, Arthur, *op. cit.* p.263

³¹ *Ibid.*

The Far Side of Paradise. However, it had undesirable consequences as a whole. It sold only 13,000 copies, which means less than one-fourth of *This Side of Paradise*. He received a letter of scathing criticism from Hemingway, whom Fitzgerald called “an artistic conscience.”³² Although he wrote with all his strength cheering him up by drinking, for he had lost his vitality and tired out spiritually and physically, yet he suffered the worst defeat. *Tender Is the Night* was the touchstone of whether the self-confidence brought by *The Great Gatsby* was authentic or not, so the result threw doubt on the faint confidence he had.

(2). “The Crack-Up”

Fitzgerald was utterly exhausted by facing the most dreadful defeat in his life as a result of having devoted himself entirely to *Tender Is the Night*, so he took a vacation and set out on a trip to North Carolina, where he contracted tuberculosis and moved to Grove Park Inn. The person he mainly associated with was his secretary Laura Guthrie, who wrote down what he said to her then. The notes of his statements and comments are suggestive of “The Crack-Up.” He lost his appetite and needed medicine to sleep even when he wrote a short story he had to cheer him up by drinking gin. He sent to his agent Harold Ober a short story that he managed to finish anyhow but his correction was so slovenly that it was hard to make out even for Harold Ober. He demanded an advance without thinking about the fact that few magazines would buy his story. Emotional unstableness can be seen from the fact that his confidence soared to heaven when he heard his story was sold. An opportunity that gave vent to his pent-up feelings through which he could dispose of such feelings as he told Laura Guthrie, “I used to like being with my own thoughts, but for a year and a half I haven’t been able to enjoy myself. I would like a blank period. I have suffered too much and too long. I would like not to feel for a while.”³³ Then he fled to a small town in North Carolina, where nobody might know him, with only one baggage in 1935. He stopped to think over his life without any interference and wrote what he got in essays. His only means was to write down his feelings, for “....nothing was ever quite real to him until he had written about it.”³⁴ In Arthur Mizener’s view: “‘The Crack-Up’ was also the work of a lapsed Catholic, for whom confession was a rhythm of the soul. The Church had a stronger hold on Fitzgerald than he perhaps realized or would have admitted. He had broken with it intellectually but not emotionally.”³⁵ Though these essays were written

³² Penguin Books, *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, *op. cit.* p.50

³³ Turnbull, Andrew, *Scott Fitzgerald*, *op. cit.* p. 265

³⁴ Mizener, Arthur, *op. cit.* p. xviii

³⁵ Turnbull, Andrew, *Scott Fitzgerald*, *op. cit.* p. 270

when he had great difficulty in writing even a short story, the composition was so fluent and elegant, and figurative expressions reached such accuracy as he had never seen in his life. "A certain ebullience" is necessary to write anything as he says later, "It requires a certain ebullience about inessential and specious matters which I no longer possess."³⁶ His ebullience was very vehement because the feelings he wrote about in "The Crack-Up" had long accumulated and crystallized in his mind. That is why he could write such an excellent work even if he could not write a short story for a long time. "The Crack-Up" was an indispensable step for him to release himself. From his early success brought by *This Side of Paradise* to "The Crack-Up" he had not had any time to reflect on himself and think about what was going on in his life. However, the corruption made progress even if he did not know that. In the end "I suddenly realized that I had prematurely cracked..."³⁷ or "the realization of having cracked was not simultaneous with a blow, but with a reprieve..."³⁸ as he wrote in the essay. The two important things carried out in "The Crack-Up" are his release and reception; to release from "...a sense of sin which lies far deeper than any nominal commitment to a doctrine to be as powerfully affected by immoral conduct, especially his own immoral conduct, as Fitzgerald was..."³⁹; to receive his dissipation, for one of his friends remarked, "...he never really enjoyed his dissipation because he disapproved intensely of himself all the time it was going on."⁴⁰ The root of the affliction he had long suffered lay in the fact that he could not approve of himself. Thus he began to have the "habit of attacking the task of conducting himself like a gentleman with nervous anxiety"⁴¹ to gain interior security and exterior success. His nature was divided because it perceived his deceit and contradictions. He began to be very generous in order to conceal his contradictions as he told Laura Guthrie, "I must be loved. I tip heavily to be loved. I have so many faults that I must be approved of in other ways."⁴²

Fitzgerald recovered some morale though all the problems were not solved completely. But the disclosure of the writer who was called the "laureate of the Jazz Age"⁴³ and had once achieved a great success created a sensation among his contemporaries. Hemingway made him a laughingstock in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" and *New York Post* rallied him by quoting his

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 300

³⁷ Penguin Books, *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, *op. cit.* p. 40

³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 41

³⁹ Mizener, Arthur, *op. cit.* p.93

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 15

⁴² Turnbull, Andrew, *Scott Fitzgerald*, *op. cit.* p. 261

⁴³ Brucoli, J. Matthew, *op. cit.* p.5

work, which caused him to attempt suicide by taking poison. Though there were a lot of sufferings including his mother's death, he was tired of hiding behind the world and wanted to face the reality. Then his agent made a contract with one of the movie companies in Hollywood MGM and he flew to Hollywood.

This chapter makes it clear that Fitzgerald experienced from the nadir to the zenith of life in only forty years and underwent a big change in his thoughts and writings. Whether his condensed and fierce experience influenced him favorably or not depends on the unfinished novel to which he devoted himself with all his heart and soul, and the life he lived from then on. Fitzgerald himself thought that he could no longer write any good story but he could not abandon the desire to be a good writer, either. He had so sharp and observant eyes that he was still thought highly of as is shown by the words, "Fitzgerald has been placed with Edith Wharton and Henry James as a very shrewd observer of American society."⁴⁴ but everyone thought he lost his sharp and shrewd observation. But he recovered the spark of his eyes and went on writing cheerfully though he was in bad health when he found the model of the protagonist of the new novel *The Last Tycoon*. The next chapter discusses how the new novel is pictured and related with what this chapter has analyzed so far.

Chapter II

This chapter discusses the following points; the life Fitzgerald led after "The Crack-Up," what he saw and how he felt with his sharp, observing, and newly opened eyes after making a breakthrough by "The Crack-Up," and the fruit brought forth by all the changes analyzed so far.

1. Fitzgerald after "The Crack-Up"

He went to Hollywood for the third time to work as a playwright. His first two stays in Hollywood had ended up in failure and he left there thinking that he would never come again. But this time was different. He made a plan of paying his mounting debts and had a hope to extend a contrast by working steadily. His attitude to his colleagues softened as Andrew Turnbull writes: "The old confidence and dynamism were gone. Fitzgerald seemed like some mild-mannered clerk—sweet, gentle, amiable, but devoid of temperament or bite, as if he had been erased."⁴⁵ Then he met his companion for the rest of his life Sheila Graham, whom Edmund Wilson wrote about in the book review of *Beloved Infidel* that her assistance was

⁴⁴ Eble, Kenneth, *F. Scott Fitzgerald*, New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc, 1963. p. 156

⁴⁵ Turnbull, Andrew, *Scott Fitzgerald, op.cit.* p. 287

doubtlessly indispensable for Fitzgerald to write *The Last Tycoon*. He could not realize his hope despite all his efforts in the first year in Hollywood, so his discontent accumulated as he wrote to Maxwell Perkins, "It is strange conglomeration of a few excellent overtired men making the pictures, and as dismal a crowd of fakes and hacks at the bottom as you can imagine."⁴⁶ Though he worked very hard, the contract with MGM was not renewed in 1939. It is true that he was hurt but he wrote to Ober, "Baby, am I glad to get out!"⁴⁷ and he satirized the paradox of Hollywood in the letter to Maxwell Perkins, "We brought you here for your individuality but while you're here we insist that you do everything to conceal it."⁴⁸ He worked as a freelance until April in 1939 but he entered the hospital because of a slight trouble in one of his lungs. The problem was that he got inebriated so much as if he was punishing somebody. It was a pressing need for him to earn money for his increasing debts and medical expenses. Therefore, he tried to sell his short stories to magazines but few bought them from lack of the elegance, vigor, and vividness his stories had before. At that time people regarded him as a man of the past, which brought him home, as seen in his letter, "But to die, so completely and unjustly after having given so much!"⁴⁹ Nevertheless, he did not lose his dignity as a writer as he wrote, "Even now there is little published in American fiction that doesn't slightly bear my stamp—in a *small* way I was an original."⁵⁰ Thus he abandoned everything except for writing, especially, a novel. Until then he formulated a plan for a new novel and wrote to his daughter in excitement:

Look! I have begun to write something that is maybe great and I'm going to be absorbed in it four or six months. It may not *make* us a cent but it will pay expenses and it is the first labor of love I've undertaken since the first part of *Infidelity*...Anyhow I am alive again—getting by that October did something—with all its strains and necessities and humiliations and struggles.⁵¹

He finally made a declaration of his new novel after five years since *Tender Is the Night*.

2. *The Last Tycoon*

Fitzgerald started to write *The Last Tycoon* in October, 1939 and struggled to finish it until he died of a heart attack in December, 1940. Therefore, *The Last Tycoon* published in book form edited by Edmund Wilson is only an unfinished draft. It is dangerous to make a judgment

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 293

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p.294

⁴⁸ Turnbull, Andrew, ed. *op. cit.* p.284

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p.288

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.* pp. 61-62

easily, for he took great pains to polish his works by rewriting again and again as he told to his secretary, "...three drafts are absolutely necessary. First, the high inspirational points. Second, the cold going over. Third, putting both in their proper perspective."⁵² But it may be indisputable that even an unfinished novel in an incomplete form contains his spirit. Therefore, the remaining part of this chapter analyzes *The Last Tycoon* from the following points of view focusing on his spirit under the surface; title, theme, and the art of fiction.

(1). The Title

There are two suggestions of the title; "The Last Tycoon" and "The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western." It took a great amount of time for him to decide anything in his work, especially, the title. For example, he still doubted if the title was good when *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night* were on the verge of publication. Therefore, nobody can tell which was more likely to be the title or a totally different one would be. Besides, it is necessary to consider his idiosyncrasy in order to discuss the matter of the title, that is, two sides of the title. It is obvious that "tycoon" indicates its protagonist Stahr but the impressions are very different from each other. The former title leaves a romantic impression brought by using only three words. This is because each of the three words attracts attention, for "tycoon" contains three vowels and "last" is a very simple and imaginative adjective. On the other hand, the latter tells readers two pieces of information; the core of the story is the protagonist's love, and the protagonist is a self-made man from the West. In the case of *The Great Gatsby* the situation was very similar as he wrote, "If one book could ever be 'like' another, I should say it is more 'like' *The Great Gatsby* than any other of my books."⁵³ However, he also wrote, "But I hope it will be entirely different—I hope it will be something new, arouse new emotions, perhaps even a new way of looking at certain phenomena."⁵⁴ That means they are superficially similar but not so much so they seem. First of all, the adjective "great" is used as an irony but "last" is not. It really means that the protagonist Stahr is "the last tycoon," who keeps such old values as morals and the decencies in the bygone time of good old America. Secondly, the title of *The Great Gatsby* gives only the exact name of the hero without any of the author's images or thoughts about the hero except for "great." On the contrary, *The Last Tycoon* clearly shows the author's image of the protagonist as a "tycoon," which conveys the grandeur of Stahr. In addition, that "tycoon" is used as a nickname of President Lincoln, who always ranks high in popularity, increases the

⁵² Turnbull, Andrew, *Scott Fitzgerald, op. cit.* p.260

⁵³ Fitzgerald, F. Scott, *The Last Tycoon, op. cit.* p.172

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

grand image of Stahr.

(2). The Theme

In the novels of Fitzgerald so far a love romance exists beneath the surface where all other events happen. But in *The Last Tycoon* Stahr's romance is only one of the events rather than a basic idea; two sides of a tycoon's life. The work has been the center of Stahr's life since his wife Minna died. He has not had any love affair and has no more intention until he meets Kathleen. She is Minna to Stahr's life, which is the very reason why he falls in love with her. Until then he is the tycoon with an enormous power in such a complicated world as Hollywood and he is "the unity" of the brittle society. But after his meeting with Kathleen the shadow of a tragedy casts upon him. This plot shows that the setting of this story is not his love romance but Hollywood, where he works. The profession of the protagonist is picked up in *Tender Is the Night* but it is only a step to reach the core of the story, not the main theme. In *The Great Gatsby* the job is just a means to get enough money to achieve Gatsby's dream, Daisy. A Profession is regarded only as a way to a dream. But such a conception has changed in Fitzgerald's mind through various experiences within a long period of time. Thus he got "one of his hard-earned beliefs"⁵⁵ that "work was the only dignity."⁵⁶ He wrote to his daughter, "She realized too late that work was dignity, and the only dignity, and tried to atone for it by working herself, but it was too late and she broke and is broken forever."⁵⁷ In addition to that, he came to have a belief that "money and beauty were treacherous aides."⁵⁸ Hence the relationship between profession, and money and woman is described differently in *The Last Tycoon*. The scene was laid in Hollywood and the theme is Stahr "the last tycoon," who dominates the society as an absolute monarch.

(3). The Art of Fiction

a. Character Portrayal

Fitzgerald has been skillful in character portrayal since his school days. Reading *The Great Gatsby*, Maxwell Perkins wrote to him in excitement, "set of characters marvelously palpable and vital,"⁵⁹ "I would know Tom Buchanan if I met him on the street and would avoid him...."⁶⁰ He had a very good memory, so he could describe what happened in his boyhood with

⁵⁵ Turnbull, Andrew, *Scott Fitzgerald, op. cit.* p. 241

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Turnbull, Andrew, ed. *op.cit.* p.32

⁵⁸ Turnbull, Andrew, *Scott Fitzgerald, op. cit.* p.241

⁵⁹ Baughman, S. Judith and Matthew J. Bruccoli, *op. cit.* p. 45

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

immediacy and also he had a talent for writing from others' experiences and diaries by his imagination. Then what is strengthened in *The Last Tycoon* is one of his beliefs: "Action is character."⁶¹ He wrote down this phrase to encourage himself to see that each one of actions of characters conveys the character he is aiming at. It seems that the career in Hollywood as a scriptwriter gave him a good influence, for he acquired the method to write a story from episodes, as many kinds are seen in the notes he left. Using this method, he went on writing a story thinking what kind of episode would suit the character he wanted to convey. It takes a long time to decide what role he wants to convey through the character and the goal to aim at. Until he can decide that matter he has to stay in a difficulty. He can neither make a start nor create a vivid and realistic character without any concrete goal. He cherished his rough plan in his mind for a long time polishing the story as Edmund Wilson writes in the foreword of *The Last Tycoon*:

This Hollywood producer, in his misery and grandeur, is certainly one of Fitzgerald's central figures which he had thought out most completely and which he had most deeply come to understand. His notes on the character show how he had lived with it over a period of three years or more, filling in Stahr's idiosyncrasies and tracing the web of his relationships with the various departments of his business.⁶²

Therefore, he could write such a story as Edmund Wilson admired, "It is remarkable that, under these circumstances, the story should have already so much power and the character of Stahr emerge with so much intensity and reality."⁶³

b. Attitude toward the Sex of Characters

Another change happened in his attitude toward the sex of characters. His heroes and male characters so far seem to be superficially strong but actually they are weak inside. On the contrary, female characters are thought of as weak figures to be protected but they are so strong that they swallow naïve men. Is this reverse relationship between the two sexes what he wants to describe? In his Notebooks Fitzgerald wrote, "The two basic stories of all times are Cinderella and Jack the Giant Killer—the charm of women and the courage of men."⁶⁴ Accordingly, what he really wants to depict is not weak men and strong women but masculine men and feminine women. But he cannot write along with this wish. This can be one of the

⁶¹ Fitzgerald, F. Scott, *op. cit.* p196

⁶² Fitzgerald, F. Scott, *op. cit.* p. 2

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Baughman, S. Judith and Matthew J. Bruccoli, *op. cit.* p.60

reasons that emotional conflict and contradiction incurred. Then he tries to describe a womanly woman in *The Last Tycoon* as he writes, "...my present conception of her should make her the most glamorous and sympathetic of my heroines."⁶⁵ On the other hand, its hero Stahr has a manly courage, responsibility, and ability and achieves success in the field of a profession; "the only dignity." The description of Stahr is so impressive and powerful that he is "the tycoon" worthy of the name. Stahr is the only central character followed by all the other things in the story. Even in the scene of Brimmer's victory over him the core of attention is Stahr. The winner Brimmer is a nobody before Stahr. Fitzgerald made a detailed plan to make Stahr a tycoon and gradually implanted Stahr's impression in readers' minds with a lot of images of the Presidents of the United States.

Conclusion

In this paper his whole life is almost retraced in order to catch his true personality to analyze his last unfinished novel. His works are much influenced by his personal life economically, mentally, and physically. As is discussed above, there are several big turning-points in his life and his stories accordingly. Changes in his life tell changes in his writing. *This Side of Paradise* was written mainly because he wanted marry Zelda and actually got her with "a certain bonus and a certain burden." The root of his tragedy lies here and their corruption starts. Its progress is so slow that he cannot become aware until the neurotic breakdown of Zelda. Her breakdown may be the biggest occurrence, especially, in his writing. Without Zelda, he gets some quiet time to think and lives an unromantic life. Then he first opens his eyes to the real world and knows things he has believed in are illusions. His hero is turning into "a tycoon" little by little, which means Fitzgerald's mind is also undergoing a big change gradually deep in his mind. His sudden escape from ordinary days makes it clear what is happening to him. Finally he realizes it and stares at it with his eyes wide open. It is by writing that he can come through this crisis. He just keeps writing what he sees without realizing what kind of fuss it will bring. The publication of the essays brings a big dispute among his contemporaries. His innocence prevents him from understanding why others are so upset about his essays. He cannot help writing, for it is the only way to live through his tough life. Then he recovers from his mental and physical disorder; or rather, he was reborn "a

⁶⁵ Fitzgerald, F. Scott, *op. cit.* p.167

tycoon.” He releases and admits himself through writing. There is a short period when he cannot write anything after this release and admission as a preparation. After this hard time he regains his talent without any restriction. This is why he can produce such a hero as Stahr. Actually he was too deluded to realize what he really wants to be from the bottom of his heart. It was the first time to express his true dream to be “a tycoon” but unfortunately, he actually was “the *last* tycoon.”

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