Fitzgerald's Schizoid Stahr: America's Past, Present and Future in "The Last Tycoon"

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FITZGERALD'S SCHIZOID STAHR: AMERICA'S PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE IN THE LAST TYCOON

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ABSTRACT

F. Scott Fitzgerald's unfinished novel, *The Last Tycoon*, is a political morality play in which its author dramatizes his hopes and fears for the future of his country as he related them to ideas he found in Marx, Spengler and Edmund Wilson. Fitzgerald uses many Spenglerian ideas in the structural elements of the novel. The intended "meaning" of the story, however, appears to be closer to ideas in Marx, and in particular, in Edmund Wilson.

The major symbolic element of the novel involves the protagonist's schizophrenia. Analogues for Monroe Stahr's schizoid conflicts are found both in Spengler (in his delineation and in Wilson (who, in the essay "Brokers and Pioneers," described a split within the original American ideas of individualism and self-reliance). Fitzgerald's major concern in the novel is the viability of this divided ideal represented by the Pioneer (aesthetic truth-seeking) and the Broker-Tycoon (the profit-motive).

Fitzgerald sets Stahr's internal struggles against the economic struggles of America in the mid-1930s, so that his personal conflict reflects a major national one. Also, in Stahr's profession of movie producer, Fitzgerald provides his hero the means to influence the ideas of the rest of the country.

Stahr's schizophrenia reaches its crisis when he meets Kathleen Moore, a recent immigrant to the U.S. from the old world of princes (tycoons) and who bears an uncanny resemblance to his late wife. His love for Kathleen promises him a needed transfusion of emotional-creative vitality, and she offers him a future that promises to be "more like [his past with his wife] than how [that past appears] on the screen." But the cold, rational Tycoon side of his personality over-rules his instinctive pioneering aspects and he loses Kathleen and his promised future (the ability to incorporate new ideas into his "dream").

Although Stahr deteriorates and finally dies, the symbolic thrust of the novel is optimistic -- by showing what happens when he chooses one path, Fitzgerald is indicating which path the rest of us should choose.
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Nothing now has value but that which can be justified by reason. But, deprived thus of the exal­tation of a form that is essen­tially symbolic and works meta­physically, the national life loses the power of keeping its head up in the being-streams of history.

Spengler, The Decline of the West
Introduction

The Last Tycoon, sketchy as its half-finished state makes it, seems to be a political morality play, a symbolic working-out of F. Scott Fitzgerald's hopes and fears for the future of his country as he related them to ideas he found in Karl Marx, Oswald Spengler and Edmund Wilson.

There are not many markers of the intellectual path Fitzgerald cut for himself in the 1930's, but the curriculum he established for Sheilah Graham's "College of One" in 1939-40 (while he was writing The Last Tycoon) provides us a touchstone of the ideas and concerns that preoccupied him throughout the thirties. These reading lists not only reflect Fitzgerald's idea of what was important for an educated person to know, but also suggest what books and ideas he was most familiar with at the time. The suggested books, significantly, are almost as heavily directed toward the study of history, politics, economics, and philosophy, as toward the study of literature. The courses Fitzgerald designed for Ms. Graham require the reading of fiction against the background of H. G. Wells' The Outline of History. Several courses are organized by external references to ideas from Oswald Spengler's The Decline of the West, while the content of the lists themselves is oriented toward socialism and communism. A study of Spengler's ideas was to have been "the culmination of my education, as it had been for Kathleen and her ex-king in The Last Tycoon."
The Communist movement hovers in the background of *Tycoon* (in the studios' labor problems), while Spenglerian concepts provide a basis for the symbolic structure of the novel. As evidenced by a 1940 letter to Maxwell Perkins, Fitzgerald had succeeded in linking Marx and Spengler, whose ideas about history are not noticeably similar.

As early as 1925, Fitzgerald had characterized America's history as "the story of the moon that never rose." His ideas of America's promise and its failures from his vantage point in 1939-40 are quite similar to Edmund Wilson's views about America and communism expressed in his books and essays throughout the thirties. And, in *Tycoon*, Fitzgerald makes use of several of Wilson's ideas about why America's moon never rose: most importantly, the realization Wilson expressed in "Brokers and Pioneers" in 1932 that "the American Dream" is actually two separate dreams. Fitzgerald depicts his protagonist in *The Last Tycoon* as a man divided along the lines of his nation's history, a schizoid manifestation of America's divided promise.

Some notion of the ideas Fitzgerald used from Spengler and Marx, as well as from Wilson, is vital to understanding what he was attempting in *The Last Tycoon*.

I. Spengler

Fitzgerald seems to have taken from Spengler his basic notions of the shape and significance of history, notions that appealed to his romantic, symbol-seeking imagination. Spengler saw history as "the story of an indefinite number of cultural configurations . . . that 'grow with the same superb aimlessness as the flowers of the
Spengler used the term "Culture" to mean the living, "organic," creative forces of human life which invariably deteriorate into the dead, "inorganic," uncreative patterns of "Civilization." Spengler felt that Civilization is the "inevitable destiny" of a Culture, "the most external and artificial state of which a species of developed humanity is capable. [It is] a conclusion, the thing-become succeeding thing-becoming. . . . [It is] an end, irrevocable, yet by inward necessity reached again and again." Although the overall patterns of development are virtually the same in each Culture, the Cultures themselves are not necessarily connected in any other way. Hence, when he speaks of the West, Spengler is speaking only of the European culture that began about 800 A.D. with Charlemagne, not the traditional historian's construct of "Western Civilization," beginning with the ancient Greeks and continuing to our own day.

Spengler believed "the means to understand living forms is Analogy." The typical progress of a Culture, he thought, was analogous to the life of a man, having a youthful growing period, a maturity, an old age and a death." (The final two ages are characteristics
of Civilization, whose rigid reliance on rationality Spengler describes in the epigraph to this paper.) Conversely, Spengler wrote, "any being of any import, from intrinsic necessity, recapitulates the phases of the culture to which it belongs." Therefore the destiny, the ultimate working-out of the possibilities of a Culture, can often be read in the lives of its great individuals. (Unlike Marx, Spengler is willing to write the individual back into history.) While the destiny of a Culture is inevitable, great men can still have an effect on the shape of an era because they shape historical incidents. Leaders of men, especially political leaders, are important for Spengler, but he never specifies which aspects of a Culture can and which cannot be affected by its great men. Presumably, one could never do anything that would not fit into the pattern of his Culture.

The idea of symbolism plays an important part in Spengler's writings. For him the symbolic is an ongoing function that makes human culture possible:

By an act both creative and unconscious ... The bridge of symbol is thrown between the living 'here' [man] and 'there' [the natural world]. Suddenly, necessarily and completely 'the' world comes into being out of the totality of received and remembered elements: and as it is an individual who apprehends the world, there is for each individual a singular world.

(Spengler wriggles out of solipism by stating that the lived worlds of men of the same Culture are "interrelated.") He felt that the all-important key for knowing a Culture is its "prime symbol," the "distinctive concept of the space" in which the members of the Culture live and act; these are "spiritual phenomena ... rooted in a definite 'natural landscape.'" According to Spengler, "[e]very
Culture possesses a wholly individual way of looking at and comprehending the World-as-Nature. . . ." Since the prime symbol of Western, "Faustian" culture is "pure and limitless space," the Western "soul" is constantly aspiring, willing; while the "soul" of the as yet undeveloped Russian culture is "will-less," seeking to serve because Russia's prime symbol is that of the "limitless plane" (the Russian soul is "anonymous in the brother-world of the plane"). 17

It is easy to see why W. H. Dray in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy does not consider Spengler a serious philosopher: his ideas are decidedly more mythological or, as Dray has it, more "poetical" than philosophical. But if philosophers were unimpressed with Spengler's statements, it is not difficult to imagine why a writer with Fitzgerald's interest in both history and symbolism would be attracted to them. 18 As Robert Sklar noted, "It is hard to see how Fitzgerald could not have been deeply affected by a point of view which added a philosophical foundation to the values he had expressed from the earliest days of his career." 19 Sklar warned, however, that Fitzgerald's mention of The Decline of the West as his "bedbook" in an interview of the late 1920s should be "a warning against overestimating his grasp of Spengler's thought." 20 However limited Fitzgerald's grasp of this thought might have been, the evidence is overwhelming that he was very much preoccupied with at least some of Spengler's ideas while writing The Last Tycoon. Not only is Spengler present in his organization of the College of One, but Fitzgerald used many Spenglerian ideas for the structural basis of the novel (as the body of this thesis hopes to demonstrate). Fitzgerald was sufficiently aware
that he was doing this on such an overt level that, when the plot hints at non-Spenglerian possibilities (e.g., the spiritual rejuvenation of Stahr by Kathleen), he felt he had to let the reader know that Kathleen and Stahr are ignorant of Spenglerian Destiny and its relation to the symbolic implications of their future.  

Spengler's influence can be observed throughout Tycoon, but most strongly in its structural elements. In Spengler, Fitzgerald found the conceptual background for his plot and characterizations. Then he looked elsewhere for the "meaning" he put into these structural elements, to Karl Marx and Edmund Wilson.

II. Marx and Spengler

Spengler provided substantial support for Fitzgerald's Marxist ideas. Both Marx and Spengler described a similar world-change (from insular, self-sufficient national communities to interdependent, international megalopoli) with the advent of the machine age and the rise of the bourgeoisie. For Spengler, the megalopolis was both sign and symbol of "Civilization." Although Marx observed the same phenomena (see pp. 9-10 of the Communist Manifesto), he read these signs differently. Both eulogized (to some extent) the good old days of feudalism when each man knew his place and his worth, and both writers indicted the growth of what Spengler called the "acquisitive economy" and Marx the "rise of the bourgeoisie." Figuratively, they both stand on the same ground, back to back. Spengler, although he claimed the movement of history to be irreversible, gave his heart to the medieval "youth" of Western Culture (Marx would have called him a reactionary), while Marx invested his feelings in the inevitable

Marx fashioned a self-operative economic system out of his observations of the world picture, leaving creativity and leadership pretty much out of account. But Spengler emphasized the importance of other factors than economic in the progress of a Culture, thereby presenting a more complex psychological picture. For Spengler,

[Politics and trade in developed form . . . are both a replacement of war by other means. Every kind of diplomacy is of a business nature, every business of a diplomatic, and both are based on the penetrative judgment of men . . . But the genuine merchant wants only to be wealthy, and here the acquisitive economy divides to pursue aims and means separately. One may aim at booty for the sake of power; or at power for the sake of booty.]

He who is out for purely economic advantages [the Carthaginians and even more so, the Americans] is correspondingly incapable of purely political thinking . . . Only when a man has really ceased to feel his enterprise as "his own business," and its aim as the simple amassing of property, does it become possible for the captain of industry to become the statesman. 22

Spengler's ideas in this area enlarge and humanize those of Marx, who saw economic factors alone as the cause of most struggles throughout history.

Marx did not consider the creativity and thought-work that goes into a product to be of any account in figuring the real value of that product; only the physical labor expended on it was to be counted. Spengler, on the other hand, considered real value to be related directly to the need for a product in the life of the consumer and, therefore, to the quality of the product, which is often a function of the creativity and thought put into
its design. For Marx the main evil was the exploitation of labor; for Spengler, the evil was money itself, an idea akin to Fitzgerald's own for most of his career. According to Spengler, a Culture runs into trouble when urban man inevitably begins "thinking in money" rather than in goods, when thinking in quantity is substituted for thinking in quality. The acquisitive economy's abstract concern with money leaves the real values of Culture behind.

Spengler felt that the economic battles coming up in our machine-based economy would not be, as Marx believed, between the capitalist employer and socialism, but between "the hundred thousand talented, rigorously schooled brains . . . [who] worthy technical pathfinders . . . who will find their soul's health more important than all the powers of this world" and the "money-thought" that always seeks to enslave the "technical-thought" needed to keep the machines running. Spengler found the motivating source for his system in the "ruler-will, the political and social, technical and mental, creative power [that craves] a full-sized life," rather than in the purely economic motives that Marx cited.

Spengler belittled socialism as a sign of the soullessness of modern civilization, as a system attempting to provide "a practical morale [morality] for the governance of a Life that can no longer govern itself." He rejected Marx and regarded the reason for the American Revolution -- to rationally "reorder society" -- as a step from Culture to Civilization. Fitzgerald, a self-declared Marxist who, like several of his heroes, had flirted with socialism for some time, does not seem to have been particularly bothered by Spengler's bad opinion of Marx and socialism. But then, Fitzgerald
did not so much parrot Spengler as digest certain elements of his philosophy for his own use.28

III. Wilson and Marx and Spengler

By the time the Great Depression hit the United States, Fitzgerald had assimilated a good deal of both Marx and Spengler, and both were live issues for him then: Marx because American capitalism seemed to be cracking up and Spengler because the whole Western world seemed to be doing likewise. By 1934 Fitzgerald decided he had too little energy for active participation in the events of the day,29 however small his role might have been. But he had already found a guide for the times in his old friend from Princeton, Edmund Wilson, who came to serve the same function for him that Marx and Spengler had done — to conceptualize much of what he already felt intuitively. (Fitzgerald also probably got many of his Marxist ideas second-hand from Wilson.) Much of what Wilson was writing in the 1930s produced a "shock of recognition" in Fitzgerald, but perhaps nothing as strongly expressed as his reaction to Wilson's 1934 New Republic articles on Michelet. As he wrote to Wilson,

I've had a big reaction from your last two articles in the New Republic. In spite of the fact that we always approach material in different ways there is some fast-guessing quality that, for me, links us now in the work of the intellect. Always the overtone and the understatement. . . . [T]he stress you put on this in your New Republic article -- of forces never still, of rivers never ending -- this sense of clouds shifting their prophecies at evening, afternoon or morning -- this sense of things has kept our courses loosely parallel, even when your references to data have been so disparate as to throw us miles apart.30

An enigmatic but passionate response to an article about an eighteenth
century French historian: the articles had undoubtedly struck a responsive chord in Fitzgerald. Wilson had been writing about Michelet's rediscovery of the historical principle of the "organic character of human society." This is a concept close to one of Spengler's central ideas, as is Michelet's premise that all aspects of human life are interrelated and interinfluencing. Wilson also stated in these articles, later to become the first part of To the Finland Station, that "Michelet was interested in remarkable individuals as representatives of movements and groups," a notion close to Spengler's in encouraging the kind of symbolic development at which Fitzgerald was already adept. It is also strikingly close to Fitzgerald's own statement written on the flyleaf of his copy of Dubliners: "I am interested in the individual . . . only in relation to society. We have wandered in imaginary loneliness through imaginary woods for a hundred years -- Too long." Fitzgerald had followed Wilson's honest, liberally-oriented investigations of America and the Communist movement with sufficient intellectual and emotional investment by 1936 to publicly name him "my intellectual conscience."

What Fitzgerald particularly found when he "rediscovered" Wilson at the beginning of the Depression was a classical statement of the liberal American intellectual position which he could fit together with what he had already taken from Spengler and Marx. As early as the publication of Axel's Castle in 1931, Wilson was supplying critical and artistic support for Spengler's broad use of the idea of symbolism in relation to world history. But even more importantly for Fitzgerald's concerns at this time, Wilson put the literary studies of Axel's Castle into a social-political context:
"Americans and Europeans are both becoming more and more conscious of Russia, a country where a central social-political idealism has been able to use and to inspire the artist as well as the engineer. [We must consider] whether it is possible to make a practical success of human society. . . ."36 This is a very early statement of Wilson's concerns in the 1930s, but he struck here on a metaphor he was to use to greater effect in the essay "Brokers and Pioneers" where he called on the "American intelligentsia -- scientists, philosophers, artists, engineers --" to take up the task at hand, to remake the country:

[you] who have been weltering now for so long in a chaos of prostitutions and frustrations: that phase of human life is done! Stagger out of the big office, the big mill. . . . Remember that discovery and freedom which you enjoyed for a little while -- the discovery of humanity and the earth has only begun! . . . The mind can disintegrate steel and stone as it can pump life into the desolate plains, and make them homes for human beings. But the mind must first remake the mind, taking down the old structures of thought which alone keep the others in place, as wrecking crews demolish old buildings. The mind must attack its own assumptions, relay its own foundations. And we Americans, though our intellectual tool-making has never been of the same quality as our mechanical, have perhaps after all an advantage in the fact that in the material field we are used to demolition and reconstruction. What we need now are engineers of ideas as drastic as our practical ones.37

Wilson's call to American thinkers and technicians (not to the workers) to end their frustrating existence and restructure the desolate society by returning to the freedom from European class society that America once represented to so many immigrants is strikingly reminiscent of Spengler's prediction that the struggle of the future will lie between the money-power and its frustrated technicians who will seek a higher quality of life. Wilson's picture
of the great event, however, is hardly identical to Spengler's, whose idea of quality of life was closely linked to a rigorous class society.

Daniel Aaron characterized Wilson as one of the major voices of what he termed the "New Literary Left," liberal writers who felt that the Communist idea "must be translated into the terms of the native American situation."\(^38\) In *Travels in Two Democracies* (1936), Wilson observed that "certainly the case for socialism, which is merely the case of a high general standard of living secured by guaranteeing that people shall get the benefit of everything they produce, could be made out in the United States on the basis of American tradition and commonly accepted conceptions. From this point of view the socialist ideal is more natural to us than to the Russians."\(^39\) As early as 1932 in "Brokers and Pioneers" he wrote that "almost the whole development of America has taken place inside the bourgeois psychology. . . . There lies for us but little tradition of a pre-capitalist civilization."\(^40\) But, he felt, there was reason for hope of change because the American capitalist society "has not grown out of an older society and we haven't the moral and intellectual roots which in older nations serve to keep people's minds steady when social changes are taking place."\(^41\) In other words, we are still developing our own cultural traditions, not depending on ones already formed for guidance. This is one of Spengler's favorite notions turned inside out to make a Marxian advantage of a Spenglerian disability. In laying heavy emphasis on the importance of traditions in our changing modern times, Spengler forgets that the difference between Culture and Civilization is more a matter of response than of the times them-
selves. If one possesses a creative mode of cultural response, does he need traditions to prop him up?

Throughout the decade Wilson moved ever further from the Russian Communist movement while becoming more convinced that the United States itself had the power and the tradition to change to socialism. He believed that the pioneers, "escaping from the capitalist expansion. . . . [gave us] what is best in our American tradition;" this tradition produced Walt Whitman, "probably our greatest writer." In 1938 Wilson asserted with greater authority that "the country which has produced 'Leaves of Grass' and 'Huckleberry Finn' has certainly nothing to learn from Russia. We had created during our pioneering period a literature of the common man's escape, not only from feudal Europe, but also from bourgeois society. . . ."44

As Sherman Paul mentioned in his literary biography of Wilson, "creative" and "great individuals" were always central to his concerns. This very personal interest of Wilson's undoubtedly made his decision to join the Communist party even more difficult; it also probably aided his eventual disenchantment and disinvolve with the official movement. Fitzgerald knew there was little provision in the Communist system for intellectual and creative people, and, in a letter to Maxwell Perkins in 1933, he indicated he understood what was involved in Wilson's decision to join the Communists: "I thought he [Hemingway] seemed in good shape, Bunny, less so, rather gloomy. A decision to adopt Communism definitely, no matter how good for the soul, must be a saddening process for anyone who has ever tasted the intellectual pleasures of the world we live in."45 Both Fitzgerald and Wilson were concerned with the individual, and both, like Spengler,
saw biography as a key to the biographee's society, even if they did not always see Spenglerian ideas exemplified therein. Nearly all of Wilson's literary and historical investigations, Paul observed, tended to turn on a biographical approach.

Two of the most significant examples of this involvement concern Wilson's impressions of Lenin. Of the pages in *Travels in Two Democracies* describing Wilson's visit to Lenin's boyhood home, Paul exclaimed, "How deeply Lenin has stirred him! How much Lenin is in his mind!" Wilson's invocation of Lenin is indeed stirring: "Here [in Russia] has humanity bred, independently of all old disciplines, the socialist whose study is humanity . . . the superior man who has burst out of the classes and claimed all that is superior which man has done for the refinement of mankind as a whole." The idea of breaking out of "all old disciplines" to "liberate" mankind was an important one for Wilson, as important as its opposite was for Spengler, who felt that breaking free of the "old discipline" was a sign of decadent Civilization, not creative Culture.

For Spengler, the French and American Revolutions were bourgeois revolutions against the old cultural order, which sought to replace old symbols (which they no longer comprehended) "by tangible interests and the craving . . . of . . . world-improvers to have their conceptions actualized." Unlike Spengler, who felt the Enlightenment to be the highest attainment and also the end of Western Culture and who dated the beginning of Civilization with the French Revolution, Wilson felt the Enlightenment did not reach its height until the occurrence of the American and French Revolutions, with their democratic assertions of the rights of man, which the Russian Revolution continued
in the twentieth century. This idea of men changing traditions and therefore history (what Fitzgerald called "the Great Change I believe in" in a 1934 letter to Mrs. Richard Taylor) provides the central focus for To the Finland Station in which the image of Lenin figures dramatically.

Wilson's subtitle for Finland Station, "A Study in the Writing and Acting of History," indicates two of the major strains of thought that run through it, ideas that (Paul stated) Wilson rediscovered in Michelet and felt were exemplified in Lenin: namely "that humanity creates itself and that the truly superior man is he who most completely represents the people." Wilson characterized Lenin in Finland Station as the truly superior man who brought the humanistic forces of social change to bear on the Russian Revolution. He also tried to make Lenin more understandable to American readers; the Russian revolutionist, he wrote, is "imaginable as a statesman of the West, developing in a different tradition."

At the close of the 1930s Wilson ended To the Finland Station by stressing the historical potential of the Russian Revolution: it could have created "the first truly human culture." If Wilson was discouraged by 1940, the fragment of The Last Tycoon indicates that Fitzgerald was still excited by the possibilities for the Revolution in America in the future: he dedicated the book, even before it was half-finished, to "S. F. [Scottie] at seventeen and E. W. [Edmund Wilson] at forty-five. It must please them both." In 1940 Fitzgerald was just coming into the light at the end of the tunnel of his own depression and personal failures and was evidently looking toward his own future and that of his country. It is this sense of
history, future as well as past, that makes what we have of *The Last Tycoon* significantly different from his other books.
The Novel

Fitzgerald's base for mythologizing in *The Last Tycoon* is far broader than in *The Great Gatsby* because his protagonist, Monroe Stahr, is not only an American success, "the dream made flesh," but he is also intimately involved in recycling and sustaining the American Dream by taking "people's own favorite folklore and dressing it up and giving it back to them" (p. 105). This myth-sustaining function multiplies Stahr's symbolic and mythical connections to the fate of the American Dream and ultimately serves to question what the content of that dream is, and should be. Stahr is the symbolic representative of his society and in himself embodies both traditions of American aspirations Wilson described in his 1932 essay -- that of the broker and that of the pioneer. It is the fate, the viability of this divided ideal, that is Fitzgerald's major concern in *The Last Tycoon*.

To dramatize the relationship of his country's two most pervasive myths, Fitzgerald cast Monroe Stahr into two intrinsically opposed roles. He is a literal manifestation of the American myth of the self-made businessman, but he is also depicted as a pathfinder, both in film-making (where he is "a marker in the industry" -- p. 28), and in a larger arena as well where he serves the creative cultural function of discovering "a new way of measuring our jerky hopes and graceful rogueries and awkward sorrows . . ." (p. 20).
From the time Stahr appears in the story, Fitzgerald depicts him as a tycoon in both the ancient and the modern senses of the word. He is constantly referred to in some way as a "great prince," the literal meaning of the term in the original Chinese. But American princes are made, not born, so throughout the novel, Fitzgerald symbolically links his protagonist to those legendary persons in the American pantheon who personify the myth of the self-made man — Andrew Jackson, Daniel Boone (p. 150, in the Notes), and, most especially, Abraham Lincoln. Stahr is presented as the epitome of the American hero who is born in a Log Cabin but who rises to Great Heights because of his services to his countrymen as a Pathfinder. But Stahr also represents another sort of self-made man among our national myths: he is the archetypal businessman who has risen from a low stratum of society to the control of a huge business empire virtually of his own creation. In this role he is linked with "Gould, Vanderbilt, Carnegie, Astor" — another type of American royalty, the robber barons and rapacious pioneers of capitalism whose pioneering served themselves rather than their society.

Monroe Stahr, like Gatsby before him, "is a creature of myth in whom is incarnated the aspiration and the ordeal of the race." But, unlike Gatsby, Stahr is in a position and poised at such a place in the social and political history of American culture that he becomes the mythical metonymy of that culture: his literal struggles and actual fate stand for the symbolic struggles and fate of the double American Dream and that of the society that embraces it. Furthermore, as a movie producer, he is in the unique position of being able to emphasize one myth over another; he could even invent and promote
new myths, thereby influencing the course of the nation and becoming the sort of pioneer of the mind Wilson called for in "Brokers and Pioneers." Fitzgerald, like Lenin,\(^5\) was well aware of the propaganda value of films, and Tycoon takes the shape it does because of its author's long-time interest in their potential to serve a major artistic function -- that of opening people's eyes. Sheilah Graham states that Fitzgerald had long been interested in "the struggle . . . between the forces of Irving Thalberg . . . and those of Louis B. Mayer. He saw this as a war between art and money, between the unselfish boy genius, represented by Thalberg, and the ruthless industrialist, represented by Mayer. . . . [T]he struggle for power -- the creative versus the commercial. . . ."\(^6\)

As The Last Tycoon begins, Monroe Stahr is depicted as a whole man (a "sound nut") who has managed for some time to be both broker and pioneer. But, as the story develops, it becomes clear that Stahr is a man under intense pressure, both from within and from without. Hairline cracks have begun to show on him. The basic duality in Stahr's personality is externalized in the novel by the conflict between his mythic role of cultural visionary -- a role that he, significantly, does not consciously acknowledge -- and his functional role, at the practical level, as a merchant-tycoon who buys fragments of dreams from artisans to sell at a profit in the marketplace. This is the role of practical decision-maker he consciously projects for himself in his allegory of the railroad: he makes the decisions because someone must and he is willing to risk the bluff.\(^5\) This much he shares in common with all leaders (as Brimmer, the Communist, acknowledges in Chapter 6), but Stahr describes himself in quite
capitalistic terms to Wylie White, who plays the part of the licensed fool to Stahr's great prince: "I'm a merchant. I want to buy what's in your mind" (p. 16). But Wylie doesn't accept this pose: "You're no merchant" (p. 16), he remarks, adding that he can see little similarity between Stahr and the other well-known American merchant-princes. Wylie senses that Stahr is not in this business strictly for profit. Even if he is the dream of the self-made businessman made flesh, he has a more significant role -- one that Cecilia, in the throes of puppy-love, expresses far more romantically and symbolically than the cynical Wylie could ever have done. Cecilia perceives that Stahr is a pioneering visionary who "had a long time ago run ahead through trackless wastes of perception into fields where very few men were able to follow him" (pp. 17-18). His was an aerial vision encompassing the aspiration of the American nation:

He had flown up very high to see, on strong wings, when he was young... he had stayed up there longer than most of us, and then, remembering all he had seen from his great height of how things looked, he settled gradually to earth... Hollywood 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. (p. 20)

In making this kind of reconnaissance into and evaluation of our national life, Stahr seems to become not only a pioneer of the mind but also a Spenglerian leader who is capable of pushing the pioneering tradition forward into other regions of American life.

Stahr's is an artistic vision, but he is not really an artist. He has the vision but must depend on others to give him the pieces that fit together into the whole. The tension between his roles of
cultural pathfinder and paternalistic exploiter of skilled craftsmen is of central importance to Fitzgerald's story of the last tycoon. It is inevitable that the monetary pressures of one role would seek to permanently suppress the urge for originality and the interest in other concerns of his other role. And, however creative the submerged part of Stahr may be, he must be a merchant of the stuff in other men's minds in order to fulfill his mythic role as interpreter of the American Dream.

As Cecilia notes, Hollywood was where Stahr landed -- the place he chose to try out his "new way of measuring" our aspirations toward what Fitzgerald termed in *The Great Gatsby* "the orgiastic future that . . . recedes before us." To Cecilia who grew up there, Hollywood is no more than a Western boom town built on the promise of a fast buck. "It wasn't as romantic as the dingiest village of Virginia or New Hampshire, but it looked nice this morning" (p. 70). But for the rest of the nation, Hollywood is a glamorous Mecca, the Home of The Dream. It is a true Spenglerian "world-city" which "absorb[s] into [itself] the whole content of History, while the old wide landscape of the Culture, become merely provincial, serves only to feed the cit[y] with what remains of its higher mankind." Fitzgerald seems to be as aware as Spengler of the man-eating tendencies of a metropolis like Hollywood, and he has Stahr realize that "California was filled 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 he knew that people from other places spurted a pure rill of new energy for awhile" (p. 80). Hollywood may house the current illusion of the American Dream, but
the dream's real past, the roots on which it now feeds, lies elsewhere -- in the dingy villages of the East.

Hollywood is a town whose citizens deal daily in illusions; it is the true incarnation of Gatsby's "vast, vulgar and meretricious beauty." Its citizens respond typically to a pervasive national fear of the time: What to do when the Revolution comes:

The Actress: "I know what mother and I are going to do. . . . We're going out to the Yellowstone and we're just going to live simply till it all blows over. Then we'll come back. They don't kill artists -- you know?"

The Lawyer: "If the bonus army conquered Washington, [he] had a boat hidden in the Sacramento River, and he was going to row up stream for a few months and then come back 'because they always need lawyers after a revolution to straighten out the legal side.'"

The Director: "He had an old suit, shirt and shoes in waiting . . . and he was going to Disappear into the Crowd." (p. 5)

These are the vestigial remains of the old American impulse to move elsewhere (pioneer) when things become intolerable where they are. But both the actress and the lawyer have to go East to do this, while the director hopes to lose himself in the comparatively new American phenomenon of the crowd.

Because of the labor trouble there, as well as in the rest of the country, Hollywood had become obsessed with the possibility of The Revolution. In the novel this fear operates as a burlesque on the rest of the nation. Fitzgerald refers to Hollywood as "The Circus," but, however absurd its manifestation there, the situation is (to use Ken Kesey's phrase) "the current movie."
Tycoon is no more a novel about Hollywood than The Great Gatsby is about one summer on Long Island. Both locales provide the perfect backdrop for their protagonists: Gatsby, the mythical seeker after societal illusions and Stahr, the mythical producer of new versions of the old dreams.

Stahr surveys the madness of Hollywood and the movie studios and prides himself with being "the only sound nut in a hatful of cracked ones" (p. 19). Hollywood provides him with the raw materials from which to fashion movies ("dreams") from his vision of America. He alone of all the people associated with film-making is depicted as being able to see reality through the illusions that abound and to know what is valuable in it all. He tells Kathleen that she looks "more like Minna actually looked than how she appeared on the screen" (p. 89). He knows, in spite of the Old Russian Prince's determination never to portray an Old Russian Prince because of his political persuasions, that this is the only role the man can realistically perform (p. 57). He knows, too, that the best illusions have a grounding in reality: he appreciates Kathleen's apparent fragility all the more when he realizes that she "was ruggedly on the balls of her feet -- her fragility was, as it should be, an illusion" (p. 90). And he uses an actress whose back and chest are covered with eczema and whose hair is the "color and viscosity of drying blood" (p. 51) because he knows these elements can be disguised for the camera. The important element is that "there was starlight that actually photographed in her eyes" (p. 51). Stahr can also judge when an illusion is worthwhile and non-toxic. "There was a moon down at the end of the boulevard, and it was a good illusion that it was a different
moon every evening, every year" (p. 62).

For Stahr, "dreams hung in fragments at the far end of the room, suffered analysis, passed -- to be dreamed in crowds, or else discarded" (p. 56). Out of the vast, fragmentary method of movie production, Stahr puts together the efforts of others into a unified whole, weighing and selecting the right illusions and shaping it all according to his comprehensive vision of America. To do this he uses his instincts. Does it look right, sound right, feel right for this vision he has of what America needs? He is a creative man, unlike any of the others who have reached a similar position, notably Cecilia's father James Brady. Cecilia realizes that her father's "strong will didn't fill him out as a passable man. Most of what he accomplished boiled down to shrewd" (p. 28). Brady is a true merchant, descended from the line of Gould, Vanderbilt, Carnegie and Astor -- a man whose shrewdness brought him an empire, but "all the rest was an effort to hang on" (p. 28). Stahr "had been his luck" then, and Stahr's creative, pathfinding ability had brought them both successfully through a revolution (the change from silent to sound films) in their industry.

In this facet of his character, Stahr is the type of Spengler's "culture-man" who "follows straight onward naturally and unquestioningly" because he is still in touch with the prime symbol (the landscape) that motivates his culture. Fitzgerald follows Spengler closely in drawing many aspects of Stahr's character. He is the "born statesman [who] is above all a valuer -- a valuer of men, situations and things. He has the 'eye' which unhesitatingly and inflexibly embraces the round of possibilities. . . . [and does]
the correct thing without 'knowing' it. . . ."64 Very important, because Stahr has the power as a studio head to re-educate his country, is Spengler's insistence that the "true statesman must also be . . . an educator . . . an exemplar in doing. . . . Only the great personality . . . has been creative (not shaping but breeding and drawing) and has effectively modified the type of entire classes and peoples."65 Spengler is not speaking of intellectual, but of general, cultural education, the sort of educating that Fitzgerald felt films do best because "pictures are an emotional rather than an intellectual medium. . . . American films have acted as a common denominator of customs and even speech in other countries. They are largely responsible for the emancipation of Japanese women. . . ."66 Fitzgerald realized that propaganda films could be effective in their way, but action with less overt ideational content could often be more effective.67 In the novel Stahr develops progressively as a figure possessing the potential to do more and more significant work. Brady, however, is Spengler's Civilization-man at his worst -- the bourgeois that both Spengler and Marx recognized and detested who seeks power for the amassing of money alone and who must then find ways of hanging on to both.68

Besides his creative function of pathfinder, Stahr's day-to-day activities are likened to those of a general and from there to a major symbolic link to Abraham Lincoln. In his coordinating role as producer, Stahr deals

with faits accomplis -- the net result of months of buying, planning, writing and rewriting, casting, constructing, lighting, rehearsing and shooting -- the fruit of brilliant hunches or of counsels of despair, of lethargy, conspiracy and sweat. (p. 53)
As he tells Prince Agge, "I'm the unity" (p. 58). Later, the analogy to Lincoln is made explicit when the English writer Boxley realizes that "Stahr like Lincoln was a leader carrying on a long war on many fronts. . . . Stahr was an artist only, as Mr. Lincoln was a general, perforce and as a layman" (p. 106). As Boxley has this thought, Fitzgerald mentions that he had been reading Lord Charnwood's biography of Lincoln. Mizener has noted that this biography contains references to Lincoln by his contemporaries as "the Tycoon" and as "King Abraham I," terms that bring Lincoln into a closer symbolic relationship with Stahr, the last tycoon, who has also been described as a "great prince." But the "princely" tycoon and the visionary pioneering aspects of Stahr's personality combine uneasily in a schizoid relationship, so it is important to note here that these terms applied to Lincoln by his countrymen were derogatory in intention -- the Americans who used them felt that kings and tycoons had no place in a democracy. For Spengler the ideal leader would necessarily be a member of the first Estate, but here Stahr is brought into step with Fitzgerald's idea of "the Great American Line: Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln," who are all by our traditions "superior men" and each one of whom is closer to the people than the one before, as the country became more democratic.

This symbolic link between Stahr and Lincoln bears new fruit when Prince Agge responds to a Hollywood actor made up as Lincoln. The stimulus is an illusion, but Prince Agge's response is real:

He had been brought up in the dawn of Scandinavian socialism when Nicolay's Biography was much read. He had been told Lincoln was a great man whom he should admire, and he hated him instead, because he was forced upon him. . . . [N]ow Prince Agge, who
The connection of Lincoln with Lenin is startling to us today if we fail to remember the words from "Lincoln's Gettysburg routine" (p. 33) where he advocated a "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." These words have become a part of the American credo, but here their similarity to certain aspects of Communist ideology is implied — perhaps the two are not so foreign as is usually assumed. Edmund Wilson had certainly spent most of the thirties trying to convince his countrymen that America had a larger traditional base for socialism than most other countries. The important connective connotation of the Lincoln-Lenin analogy will surface later on.

Even though Fitzgerald builds Stahr up as the archetype of what Mizener calls "genuine authority in a democratic society," and though he, as a Spenglerian leader, still sees through the multi-faceted illusions of his city, Fitzgerald also depicts him as out of touch with the significance of the changes in America in the ten and more years since he formed his vision of his country. At the height of his power, Stahr is shown to be a gifted visionary myopically unwilling to see that the changes and warnings around him pertain, in fact, to him. He has not forgotten that it was he who deposed the original tycoons of the industry -- the directors. He says of Broaca: "he's getting old and it makes him cross. He doesn't see that a director isn't everything in pictures now" (p. 159). But he doesn't realize that his own position is not unassailable. In a prophetic remark, the down-and-out producer Manny Schwartz tells
Wyilie White that "once I used to be a regular man of decision — you'd be surprised" (p. 13). Then he gives Wylie a note of warning for Stahr, which goes unheeded. Later in the novel when Wylie, who had earlier seemed to be Stahr's privileged licensed fool, attempts to write a script in line with recent changes in the nation's attitude, telling Stahr that "[t]he world has moved on" (p. 39). Stahr retorts "[t]hat's not under discussion" (p. 39). A good Spenglerian would know that Stahr is in danger — he is exhibiting a symptom of Civilization, "the perpetual turning up of new facets of a now crystallized and undevelopable thought-stock. The solutions are there for good. . . . This it is that confers upon these very Late conditions . . . that character of changeless pagentry which the genuine Culture-man . . . has found so astonishing in comparison with his own vigorous pulse of development."75 Stahr somehow feels that, even with the world changing about him, he can remain unaffected himself and that his original vision can remain viable.

Perhaps even stranger than Stahr's unwillingness to take into account the changes and warnings around him is his assumption of the name Smith when he is first introduced into the story on the flight from the East. Twice in the novel (pp. 19, 59) Fitzgerald comments that Stahr's name never appears on the screen. Therefore, he is not likely to be known by name outside the industry. Inside the studios, on the other hand, he is known by sight to practically everyone, so an assumed name wouldn't -- and doesn't -- fool anyone who knows his face, and his own name would mean little to anyone outside Hollywood. Why, then, does he assume a false identity?

An easy explanation emerges from the text further on. "If he
was going to die soon, like the doctors said, he wanted to stop being Stahr for a while and hunt for love like men who have no gifts to give, like young nameless men who looked along the streets in the dark" (p. 90). But is this all that is involved? Stahr appears to realize this need only after he falls in love with Kathleen and after he has repelled Cecilia's advances. What did he feel before he met Kathleen that made him want to run from "Stahr," the name that has become synonymous with the work he seems to treasure so much? Cecilia says of him that "he was born sleepless, without a talent for rest or the desire for it" (p. 15), and Stahr himself has arranged his work schedule for short periods of intense concentration because he has found that in going "from problem to problem, there was a certain rebirth of vitality with each change" (p. 37). However, Stahr's doctor realizes that 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 . . . ." (p. 108).

Spengler states that "the man of the world-cities is incapable of living on any but this artificial footing" because "the cosmic beat in his being is ever decreasing, while the tensions of his waking consciousness grow more and more dangerous. . . . The head in all the outstanding men of the Civilizations is dominated exclusively by an expression of extreme tension. Intelligence is only the capacity for understanding at high tension." Stahr's tension stems from his attempt to perform a Culture-role and a Civilization-role at the same time. In this context, his desire to become someone else for a while may represent a flight from the "tycoon" aspects of
his personality which are trying to take over -- a search for a nameless revitalization of the creative energies which he knows he still possesses, but which he feels are being steadily depleted. Living in a Cosmopolis, Stahr is losing touch with his origins in the land. He senses the difficulties of Hollywood's "climate: "it was everyone's secret that sustained effort was difficult here. . . . But he knew that people from other places spurted a pure rill of new energy for awhile (p. 80). 77 Stahr senses the vampiric tendencies of both the town and the industry to feed on this new energy as long as it lasts and then to discard the shell. He senses also that his necessary energy must be found outside Hollywood, the world-city that attempts "to dominate the landscape." 78

In his mind Stahr associates his loss of creative energies with the loss of his wife: "Little by little he was losing the feel of such things [love and summer twilight], until it seemed that Minna had taken their poignancy with her; his apprehension of splendor was fading . . . " (p. 62). When his wife died, he had been "in love with Minna and death together" (p. 96), and now that he knows he is dying, he feels it happening from the inside out -- he is drawing on resources which he senses will soon leave him emotionally bankrupt, if he cannot replenish them soon.

The name of Stahr's dead wife, Minna, is the same as that of the vampire's first victim (who later returns as a vampire herself) in both the stage (1927-28) and the movie (1931) versions of Dracula. When Stahr first sees Kathleen, a "deadringer" for Minna, he thinks in funerary terms of his wife's having returned from the grave:

   Smiling faintly at him from not four feet away was the face of his dead wife, identical even to
the expression. Across the four feet of moonlight, the eyes he knew looked back at him, a curl blew a little on a familiar forehead; the smile lingered, changed a little according to pattern; the lips parted — the same. An awful fear went over him, and he wanted to cry aloud. Back from the still sour room, the muffled glide of the limosine hearse, the falling concealing flowers, from our there in the dark — here now warm and glowing. (p. 26)

What better way of dramatically expressing his notion of emotional bankruptcy could Fitzgerald have found than the legend of the vampire who gains a false life from the vitality of his victims? In connection with the vampire motif the symbolism of Kathleen's arrival on the head of Siva, goddess of both destruction and reproduction, gains more authority than if it had to act alone. Here it emphasizes two possibilities: one a genuine creative renewal (involving a viable future), the other a false destructive one (involving no future at all). These two possibilities reinforce the dual potential already symbolically at work in the schizophrenic nature of Stahr's personality.

When he falls in love with Kathleen, Stahr feels that he is truly alive for the first time since his wife died. Minna had come to represent his past visions and dreams; now Kathleen offers him the future: "You've got me in your dreams," she tells him (p. 75). And later, when he asks her what she is trying to hide in her silence about her past, she answers, "Perhaps the future,' in a way that might mean anything or nothing at all" (p. 78). There is a Spenglerian reason, of course, why Stahr finds vital renewal in the form of a woman:

The feminine stands closer to the Cosmic. It is rooted deeper in the earth... The male living-
ly experiences Destiny. . . . The female, on the contrary, is herself Destiny and Time and the organic logic of the Becoming. . . . Primevally, too, woman is the seeress, and not because she knows the future, but because she is the future. . . . Policy for Woman is eternally the conquest of man, through whom she can become History and Destiny and Future. . . .

Stahr has forgotten why he is building his house near Malibu, but Kathleen reminds him:

"Perhaps it's for me," she said.
"Maybe it is."
"I think it's splendid for you to build a big house for me without even knowing what I look like."
(p. 80)

They inspect the half-finished house and talk of putting a roof on it. Here in the "fuselage" of Stahr's uncompleted house (the image of the fuselage is a reminder of the flight involved with his original vision and a foreshadowing of his death), they consummate their love, and Stahr then gives Kathleen a brief glimpse of the vision that is so important an element of his life:

She looked at the feeble hills behind and winced faintly at the barren glitter, and Stahr saw —
"No use looking for what's not there. . . . 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."
"I understand," she said after a minute. "When you do that, you can feel the earth turn, can't you? . . ."
"Yes. Otherwise it's all manana -- waiting for the morning or the moon." (p. 81)

They both see the "feeble hills" and the "barren glitter," but Stahr supplies the God-like creative vision needed to extract the essential myth, to realize the dream in the harshness of reality and then to make that dream flesh, more than just manana, the potentiality waiting for realization. Spengler considers that the statesman's
most important task is "to create a tradition. . . . to become! the creator of a new life, the spirit ancestor of a young race. . . ." Here is another offer of a future for Stahr. But he is not yet quite ready to grasp his chance: Although he wants "the pattern of his life broken" (p. 90), his mood is such that "he wishes passionately to repeat yet not recapitulate the past" (p. 88). He wants a change, something different, but something that is not too different. His marriage to Minna had been "the most appropriate and regal match imaginable" (p. 96, emphasis added), but this new girl is offering him what he realizes "is a new life" (p. 115, emphasis is Fitzgerald's).

Kathleen reveals her background to Stahr, and their conversation about her education (which she says "was just in place of babies," (p. 91 -- that is, in place of building the future) reveals that she left her ex-king "before we got to Spengler" (p. 91). Symbolically she opens oceans of possibilities for Stahr as the mythic creator of America's future dreams. Kathleen is a modern immigrant, a fugitive -- like other immigrants to this country -- from the last gasps of European feudalism, the world of the princes. She has come to the United States to begin a new life. She is understandably future-oriented and rejects all that reminds her of her past. She drinks a Coke instead of tea because "tea is the past" (p. 81). She came here seeking independence from English men who "always wanted their own way. I thought it was different here" (p. 75). She offers Stahr a new life in the vitality and freedom to blaze a new path away from the world of tycoon, the world she escaped before she "got to Spengler." (And she lets him go when he does not act intuitively to claim her: She had "a fierce self-respect that would only let
her go so far. She had no illusions about the considerations that swayed princes" — p. 116.)

The tensions dramatized in Stahr's battle with the two divergent elements of his character (a battle which is portrayed most sharply in his feelings toward Kathleen) imply a larger symbolic context that is tangential to Spengler. If Stahr is a Civilization-man (tycoon), he will be unable to see the future in terms other than those of the past, and a past, Spengler adds, that is not quite real, since Civilization, having separated itself from the landscape and the moving forces of Culture, has lost touch with its cultural past. If he is a Culture-man (pioneer), he will be a leader who is still in touch with the source of his culture and therefore involved in the innovative creation of future traditions. Applying these distinctions to Wilson's (and Fitzgerald's) idea that America's original potential was to be a truly "new world," Kathleen's flight from the Old World (like that of our original pioneers) before Spengler could inform her of the hopelessness of her actions becomes significant symbolically.

Later in their evening together, they meet a Negro man on Stahr's beach. He is a self-reliant, self-made man (like Stahr himself). He comes to the beach not only to catch the punctual silver fish, but to "read some Emerson;"88 he is still in touch with the landscape and his Culture. When he tells Stahr that he doesn't go to the movies and never lets his children go because "there's no profit" (p. 92), he gives Stahr the direct challenge that Kathleen, who can only offer him possibilities, could not give him. Before long, Stahr picks up the challenge, deciding to go through with his earlier in-
ention to make a picture that will "lose money... [w]e have a certain duty to the public" (p. 48). That non-profit film was one about Russia, "The Russian Story," which he (like Edmund Wilson and others) felt "could be told in terms of the American thirteen states," but "it kept coming out different, in new terms that opened unpleasant possibilities and problems" (p. 60). Stahr now feels that he is ready to face those possibilities, whatever they might be.

Michael Millgate has said that "it is surely in terms of the Lincoln analogy that the curious scene with the Negro on the beach... begins to take on fuller meaning: Stahr, like Lincoln... will transform his kingdom for the Negro's sake." Yes; but the Lincoln analogy does not explain all that is happening inside Stahr. At first he rejects his obligation to the Negro by saying, "they have pictures of their own" (p. 93). But the creativity and emotion generated within him by his love for Kathleen accomplishes something else: he no longer needs to reject or ignore all that does not coincide with his original vision -- he is now open to the possibilities of the future that Kathleen, both personally and symbolically, has offered him. He is no longer bound either to repeat or recapitulate the past, and he discovers something new beginning inside himself:

he listened inside himself as if something by an unknown composer, powerful and strange and strong, was about to be played for the first time. The theme would be stated presently, but because the composer was always new, he would not recognize it as the theme right away... He strained to hear it, knowing only that music was beginning, new music that he liked and did not understand. It was hard to react to what one could not entirely compass -- this was new and confusing, nothing one could shut off in the middle and supply the rest from an old score.
Also, and persistently, and bound up with the other, there was the Negro on the beach. (p. 95)

At this point Stahr is again a whole man, who can be receptive to changes and new ideas and who can create new dreams from what he sees. A change has begun within him -- the result of the Negro's challenge and his emotional-creative renewal. It should be remembered here that the Lincoln analogy Millgate invokes involves a symbolic link to Lenin as well. "The Russian Story" may not be difficult to portray in terms of the early American states after all now that Stahr has regained his creative potential. Spengler had stated that a Culture's Destiny may take many forms: "A melody, in the hands of a great musician, is capable of many variations; it can be entirely transformed so far as the simple listener is concerned without altering itself -- which is quite another matter -- fundamentally."91

Unfortunately, Stahr has not built up his emotional bank account before he loses Kathleen to "The American." And when he loses her, he loses the future, too -- loses the possibility of life outside his existence as Stahr, the tycoon. Symbolically, his loss of the promised future in the person of Kathleen denies him any further development as a mythic embodiment of the original and future American Dream. The totality of his absorption into his role of business tycoon and the completeness of the vacuum that is left is foreshadowed by Stahr's reaction to Kathleen's letter, read only hours after his emotional "transfusion:"

the whole adventure began to peel away even as he recapitulated it searchingly to himself. The car, the hill, the hat, the music, the letter itself, blew off like the scraps of tar paper from
the rubble of his house. And Kathleen departed.

. . . The skies paled and faded -- the wind and
rain turned dreary, washing the silver fish back
to sea. It was only one more day, and nothing was
left except the pile of scripts upon the table.

(p. 98)

Stahr's second chance to win Kathleen before "The American"
arrives serves to heighten his emotional tragedy. His rationale
in waiting a day before claiming her comes from the "tycoon" side
of his personality and over-rides his perceptions of the reality
beneath the surface of the situation. Like Kathleen's ex-king, this
aspect of Stahr is not "romantic" (p. 114). He loses Kathleen be-
cause he does not act "opportunely" -- intuitively, as Culture-man
should. Instead, he stops to think how he should act. According to
Spengler, rationalism is a tell-tale sign of Civilization; it is "the
replacement of unconscious living by the exercise of thought" that
makes "inevitable a fresh conflict" 92 -- that between thought and
action. In losing Kathleen, Stahr loses his last chance "to live
in the present -- or, if there were no present, to invent one" (p.111).
Stahr's inability, through listening to his practical voice, to create
a present for himself (rather than living off recreations of the past
as he had been doing) denies him the possibilities of the future. If
Kathleen had gotten to Spengler, she would have been able to tell
Stahr that

[slow long as the man of a Culture that is approach-
ing its fulfillment still continues to follow straight
onwards naturally and unquestioningly, his life has
a settled conduct. This is the instinctive morale
[morality]. . . . As soon as Life is fatigued, 93
as soon as a man . . . needs a Theory in which suit-
ably to present Life to himself, morali[ty] becomes
a problem. . . . [All] pure intuition . . . vanishes
before the one need that has suddenly made itself
felt, the need of a practical morali[ty] for the
Stahr is now emotionally bankrupt and beyond the point where he can be revitalized. He must fight his battles now, exhausted, without the capacity to draw new "energy from each change," or the capacity to find a new path to the future.

The labor dispute in Hollywood is coming to a head, and Stahr, who could once see the reality through all the sham of his surroundings, does not realize that it is his own system of production, the one he pioneered in a revolution in the industry, that has at least in part made this conflict possible. The creative vitality he had recently gained, only to quickly lose, would have given him the flexibility to pioneer a new course as he had done before, but now he can only champion what he believes are the ideals of the past.

Stahr decides to take the initiative and end the labor dispute himself by confronting "a Communist party member... One of their organizers from New York" (p. 117). He prepares for this meeting by reading a two-page "treatment" of the Communist Manifesto and by "running off the Russian revolutionary films he had in his film library at home. He also ran off Doctor Caligari and Salvador Dalí's Le Chein Andalou, possibly suspecting they had some bearing on the matter" (p. 118). The two films mentioned are early classics of expressionism and surrealism and have little to do with political ideas. Stahr's preparation indicates that his reality-quotient is not significantly higher at this point than those of the actress, lawyer and director in the first chapter, with their plans for the Revolution.
Stahr is a self-made man like Jackson, Lincoln and Daniel Boone, but this tradition has also come to include the figures of Gould, Vanderbilt, Carnegie and Astor who are self-made merchants. Now that he has stepped out of the tradition of the early American pioneers, Stahr cannot understand that his appropriating the labors of artisans is exploitation in the classical Marxian sense:

But his mind was closed on the subject of Communism. He was a rationalist who did his own reasoning without the 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 all melt away -- he cherished the parvenu's passionate loyalty to an imaginary past. (p. 118)

It is not until after he loses Kathleen and the tycoon aspects of his personality predominate that he is described as a parvenu who cherishes an imaginary past -- the past of the merchant princes, not the present and future of the common man in line with the true American tradition. Here again, Stahr's direct symbolic link with Lincoln is important: Lincoln had become an early socialist hero because he freed the Negro people from the bonds of chattel slavery. If, as Michael Millgate suspects, Stahr has the power to "transform his kingdom for the Negro's sake," then perhaps the realization of who the new slaves are may have been part of "the theme that would be stated presently." But that new theme was blocked when he lost Kathleen and the future. Stahr's mental development is now described as being arrested in "the late eighteenth century" -- for Spengler, the beginning of Civilization, a point from which to look back on a Culture built on a rigorous class structure. But for Marx and Wilson, it is the beginning of the assertion of the rights of man, a point from which to look forward to the first truly human
culture coming in the future. Stahr will be unable to see that the slaves Lincoln freed have any likeness to the ones Lenin hoped to free when he got to the Finland Station.

It is the imaginary past identified with the American tycoons and robber barons that Stahr defends in his interview with Brimmer the labor organizer, whom Leslie Fiedler has called "the least convincing Communist in American fiction." Convincing or not, Brimmer is certainly not a stereotype Red. Stahr's interrogation reveals that his family has been American for several generations, that he is the son of a Baptist minister, and that he actually believes in the goals he is working toward. His background contrasts sharply with that of the board of directors of Stahr's studio, the ones Stahr had to haggle with about the non-profit picture: "Eight of the ten were Jews -- five of the ten were foreign-born" (p. 45). Both Marx and Spengler saw the bourgeois as an international phenomenon and its emphasis on money as devitalizing. For Spengler, especially, "Civilization . . . is the stage of a Culture at which tradition and personality have lost their immediate effectiveness, and every idea, to be actualized, has to be put into terms of money." The Hollywood screenwriters, who are word-technicians, are fighting to "maintain [their] liberty against money-thought . . . [because they] find their soul's health more important than all the powers of this world." 

Fitzgerald uses the interaction of the external political power struggles of Hollywood in 1935 and Stahr's internal schizoid spiritual struggles to dramatize the possibilities of what he calls in his letters "the Great Change I believe in." Like Wilson in To the
Finland Station, he focuses on the potentialities even though he knows the realities to be otherwise. The symbolic thrust of The Last Tycoon indicates a similar line of reasoning to Wilson's — the human ideal of freedom for the common man (in Communist terms, the Masses) is the main ideal on which this country was founded, and we were headed toward realizing that dream at least through the Civil War when we jumped the track somehow and our tradition of individualism was used to justify the rampant capitalism of the robber barons. During his confrontation with Brimmer, Cecilia sees that he "was fighting a losing battle with his instinct toward schizophrenia" (p. 126) Because of this battle with himself, Stahr is unable to grasp the future when Kathleen (whose father, significantly, was an Irish rebel killed by the forces of British imperialism, the Black and Tans) offers it. Perhaps Kathleen was willing to choose Stahr precisely because he is in the position to affect the nation's folklore and symbols (to "buy" her father's revolutionary book for the movies), whereas "The American" she had planned to marry is in no such influential position. But since Stahr did not follow his natural impulses and act opportunely, she marries the man she originally intended to.

Fitzgerald died just after he had written about Stahr's physical, spiritual and emotional defeat at the hands of Brimmer, when he decided to "do his own dirty work." The author's notes indicate the labor war would continue with plenty of dirty work in the offing, and with Stahr nominally on the side of the corrupt Brady. He is unable, because of his emotional-creative depletion, to stand alone and forge a new path between the two factions. Brady was to have plotted
Stahr's murder, and Stahr, now unable to do his own dirty work, plots Brady's murder -- and then flies away. Once he has escaped from the world-city of Hollywood into the heart of the landscape, Stahr was to have regretted his action and to have wanted to call the murder off. But his airplane flies into the side of a mountain -- he can no longer fly as high as he once could. (Barry Gross has pointed out that the "moral vehicle" in *Tycoon* is the airplane.\textsuperscript{100} Stahr dies in the wreckage of his airplane and Brady's murder goes through.

Since Monroe Stahr was the last tycoon to attempt to combine his instinct for making money with the production of quality goods, his death leaves the battle lines clearly drawn between the money-thought (the Board of Directors) and the laborers and skilled technicians led by Brimmer. As Spengler said, "We have not the freedom to reach to this or to that but the freedom to do the necessary or to do nothing. And a task that historical necessity has set will be accomplished with the individual or against him."\textsuperscript{101} Historical necessity, however, is not necessarily what Spengler saw it to be. By hinting strongly and significantly at what Stahr could have done, Fitzgerald seems to be showing his readers in 1940 that there is one tradition that is better for America to follow than another. It would only take "a new way of seeing" our traditions to put our country back on its original pioneering tracks.
Notes


3Graham, College, p. 74.


8For help in clarifying this brief description of Spengler's notion of morphology, see the three tables published between Volumes I and II of the single volume edition of The Decline of the West (1939). Fitzgerald probably based the tables of the Political Development of the Graeco-Roman and Anglo-European Worlds he drew up for Sheilah Graham's College on these more complex charts of Spengler's. Fitzgerald's charts are published in Graham, College, pp. 218-219.


10Spengler, p. 5.

11Spengler, p. 362.

12Spengler, p. 75.
An even greater sanction for his own symbolic method of conceptualizing lies in Spengler's "Preface to the Revised Edition" of 1922, where he defines a thinker as

a person whose part it is to symbolize time according to his vision and understanding . . . Truth in the long run is to him the picture of the world which was born at his birth. It is that which he does not invent but rather discovers within himself. It is . . . the meaning of his personality formed into a doctrine which so far as it concerns his life is unalterable, because truth and his life are identical. This symbolism is the one essential, the vessel and the expression of human history. (Spengler, xvii)


Another rather strange clue for Fitzgerald's conscious use of Spengler is his substitution of "Charles Francis Adams" (Chas. Francis Atkinson was Spengler's English translator) for "Henry Adams" in an earlier draft of the novel now at Princeton University. The original name makes more sense in the context of Wylie White's reference in a statement to Stahr on page 16 of the published version, except that Fitzgerald probably invented the statement he attributes first to Adams, then to his composite Adams-Atkinson.

Amory Blaine in This Side of Paradise, the dedicated young socialist newspapermen in "May Day," and Dick Diver, who in one draft of Tender is the Night decided to send his son to Russia for his education.
This cannot be over-emphasized. The reader should resist every temptation to consider this thesis "a Spenglerian interpretation" of The Last Tycoon. As mentioned previously, Fitzgerald himself was aware that he was leaning heavily on Spengler, enough so that he went out of his way to indicate the point of his departure from Spengler's thought by bringing Spengler's name into the text of the novel. An attempt to rely solely on Spengler in interpreting the book will produce results similar to Kermit Moyer's (in "Fitzgerald's Two Unfinished Novels: The Count and the Tycoon in Spenglerian Perspective," Contemporary Literature, 2, No. 2, Spring 1974, p. 254). He senses a certain optimism in The Last Tycoon but his attributing this to Fitzgerald's finding "a revised way of looking at the decline of the West" is not entirely satisfactory.

Letter to Mrs. Richard Taylor, August 17, 1934:

"I've given up politics. For two years I've gone half haywire trying to reconcile my double allegiance to the class I'm a part of, and the Great Change I believe in. . . . I have become disgusted with the party leadership and have only health enough for my literary work. . . ." Letters, p. 417.


Edmund Wilson, To the Finland Station: A Study In the Writing and Acting of History, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1941), pp. 5-6.

Ibid., p. 10.

Quoted in Sklar, p. 331.


Wilson, Axel's Castle, p. 293.


Wilson, "Brokers and Pioneers," pp. 142-144.


47 Wilson, Travels in Two Democracies, p. 322.

48 Spengler, p. 363.

49 Letters, p. 471, quoted in n. 31 above.

50 Paul, Edmund Wilson, p. 131.

51 Wilson, To the Finland Station, p. 394.


53 F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Last Tycoon: An Unfinished Novel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), p. 50. All future citations of page references will be from this edition and will be included within the text of the paper.


57 An unexpected analogue for the railroad story, which many have felt Fitzgerald "planted" in Thalberg's myth, turns up in Wilson's Travels in Two Democracies (p. 180). Wilson found the answer to his question "why no one ever makes the long trip from Leningrad to Moscow by day 'to see the country,'" in an "antiquated Russian grammar." Why? Because the road runs 400 miles in a straight line that ignores the terrain and "rarely catches sight of human
habitation." It does this because Tzar Nicholas caught wind of pork-barrelling among the men deciding the route, so he set a ruler on the map and drew a line straight between the two cities, remarking "in a tone that precluded all discussion, 'you will construct the line so.'"

Stahr shook his head distastefully. Wylie kept on ribbing him -- he was one to whom this privilege was allowed" (p. 16).


Spengler, p. 25. Also, p. 379: "The Cosmopolis, the great petrifact, a symbol of the formless -- vast, splendid, spreading in insolence. It draws within itself the being-streams of the now impotent countryside, human masses that are wafted as dunes. . . ." And on p. 324: "whatever disconnects itself from the land becomes rigid and hard."


According to Spengler, another characteristic of the "world-city" is the return of "panem et circenses in the form of wage disputes and sports stadia," Decline of the West, p. 26.

Spengler, p. 182.

Spengler, p. 383.

Spengler, p. 384.

Graham, College, pp. 181-182.

Graham, College, p. 178. Fitzgerald mentions in the speech he wrote for Sheilah that an example of the effect films can have on the public is "in the picture San Francisco, when Gable hits a man of God -- and the ineffable reproach on Spencer Tracy's face as he sinks down before the fists of his friend. No boy who would see that bit . . . would ever again be able to take delight in being a bully."

The unpublished Tycoon MS, in the Princeton University Library contains this note: "The strongest man is he who stands most alone.' Ibsen's The [sic] Enemy of the People. Stahr encounters it in a time of crisis + it plays a part in his decisions." Ibsen's play deals with a man who is persecuted as "an enemy of the People" because he insists on telling the truth -- even when public opinion (based on economic considerations) desires the published "truth" to be otherwise. Although his position remains the same, the townspeople call Ibsen's protagonist alternately "an aristocrat" and "a revolutionary." The hero learns that the greatest enemy of the People is the opinions and moral cowardice of "the compact majority," who "dare not" see
things as other than what is already a "well-established truth." At the end of the play he dedicates himself to trying to educate the town's urchins, "to experiment with cures" because "there may be some exceptional heads among them." Ibsen's hero is named Stockmann and his talk in the play of morally "well-bred animals" is quite similar to Spengler's concept of a leader "modifying" his people by his own strong example. (Henrik Ibsen, An Enemy of the People in Eleven Plays by Henrik Ibsen, Intro. H. L. Mencken, New York: The Modern Library, 1935[?], pp. 77-173.) Fitzgerald was apparently considering working the Ibsen reference into the Brimmer episode of Tycoon. The Princeton MS also contains an incomplete and somewhat garbled exchange between Stahr and Brimmer where Brimmer cites the Ibsen quote for Stahr.

Besides the military and Lincolnesque symbolism I am following in this paper, Fitzgerald also develops Stahr symbolically as a representative of deity, a "son of god" like Gatsby: on p. 15, "he watched the multitudinous practicalities of this world like a proud young shepherd." He is always being depicted as seeing things from a great height and in his aerial vision, god-like in itself, "he had looked at all the kingdoms, with the kind of eyes that can stare straight into the sun" (p. 20). There are other examples, all of which tend to reinforce his mythic role of pathfinder, and his artistic function of bringing order to chaos, as well as certain sacrificial aspects of his nature that become evident late in the story.


Quoted by Graham from one of Fitzgerald's handwritten comments in her copy of Lord Charnwood's Lincoln, College, p. 106.

Cf. Wilson's statement: "The central fact, from which one can never escape, which one is always stumbling upon . . ., is the relationship of the Russian people to the tomb under the Kremlin wall. Day after day, rain or shine, the people line up and wait for hours in slowly advancing queues . . . in order to go into the tomb . . ., and stare for a moment at that face . . .," Travels in Two Democracies, p. 321. Another striking parallel occurs on page 270 of the same book. After Wilson has quoted a young Russian's comment that "yes, Lenin was a great leader. He loved the people very much. All the country people have pictures of him up in their houses," he states that "I realized that . . . [for the young people of Russia, Lenin] was already on his way to become a sort of Russian Washington or Lincoln." Americans make pilgrimages to the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial from a similar impulse.


This quote comes from the notes, but there is a parallel statement from Broaca's point of view in the text on p. 41.
75 Spengler, p. 244.
76 Spengler, p. 250.

77 In this light, one of the more significant of Fitzgerald's revisions occurs on p. 62 of the published text. As Stahr leaves the studio for his second meeting with Kathleen, he is "still tense," but in an earlier version, however, he is depicted as feeling "free and almost young," Princeton University MS.

78 Cf. Spengler's cannibalistic image of "the cosmopolis . . . settled in the midst of the Culture landscape, whose men it is uprooting, drawing into itself and using up," Decline, p. 182.

79 Fitzgerald's use of a vampire motif to express his ideas about emotional bankruptcy appear to be quite deliberate; however, it should not, I feel, be over-emphasized thematically. This motif helps to explain what Fitzgerald felt was the only way to regain necessary emotional energy when the individual's well is dry -- the source can only be another person. Obviously Stahr is no more vampire than any other lover: use of the vampire motif for further thematic development should proceed with extreme caution.

80 Thalia [Kathleen] originally arrived on the head of Vishnu, but Fitzgerald changed this to Siva in an early typescript, now at Princeton. The change is quite significant, as evidenced by the entry under "Siva" in The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Eleventh Ed. (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1910), XXV, p. 162:

SIVA, in Hindu mythology, a god who forms the supreme trinity with Brahma and Vishnu. As Brahma is the creator and Vishnu the preserver, so Siva is the destroyer. . . . it is in the form of the linga (phallic emblem) that he is almost universally worshipped. Death being a translation to a new form of life, the destroyer is really a re-creator, and thus Siva is styled the Bright or Happy One. [Specific reference to Siva's "reproductive power" is made in Vol. XIII, p. 507.]

Kathleen's association with both the destructive and the procreative and regenerative powers of Siva provides important reinforcement later for her symbolic association with the future of both Stahr and the United States.

81 In a note to himself in the Princeton MS (which he had marked with a "U" for use), Fitzgerald sets down a goal and an idea: "Reinforce the sense of a deep rich past with Minna — he brusque[ly] says to Kathleen that it can never be the same. Her reaction is in spunkily saying the same, but knowing its [sic] comparatively in a minor key."
In this context it is interesting to note what Marius Bewley says of Gatsby: "the essence of the American dream whose tragedy Gatsby is enacting is that it lives in a past and a future that never existed, and is helpless in the present that does," Bewley, op. cit., p. 137. Until he met Kathleen, Stahr had been functioning in the present with less and less vitality, taking his life from a vision out of the past. American society had been living the same sort of existence: Hope for them both will lie in the ability of each to incorporate new ideas into the fabrics of self and nation, respectively. It is significant that Stahr tells Kathleen that she "looks more like Minna [the past] actually looked than how she appeared on the screen [the Hollywood version]" (p. 89).

Manny Schwartz, who was, like Stahr, a producer, killed himself on the steps of Andrew Jackson's completed house, The Hermitage, a house that has come to stand for the man who built it: "At both ends of life man needed nourishment: a breast -- a shrine. Something to lay himself beside when no one wanted him further . . ." (p. 13). Fitzgerald refers to this scene as the "Waste Land of the house too late" (p. 142). Stahr's house also symbolizes the unfinished state of the original American Dream.

"And God made two great lights. . . . to rule over the day and over the night . . . and God saw that it was good" Genesis, 1:16-18 (emphasis added). Also, Spengler states that Culture "is the one point at which man lifts himself above the powers of nature and becomes himself a Creator," Decline, p. 358. Cf. 69 above.

It is important to remember in this connection that the woman who has made this future possible looks exactly like ("identical even to the expression") the woman who was his past.

When Stahr asks the Negro if it's "worth the trip" to come out to the beach, he replies, "I don't figure it that way. I really come out to read some Emerson. Have you ever read him?" (p. 92). Graham states that when Fitzgerald was seeing a psychiatrist after his Dartmouth binge, the doctor quoted Emerson to him: "On the debris of your despair, you build your character," Beloved Infidel, p. 273.


Spengler, p. 81.

Spengler, p. 25 and p. 228, respectively.
It is significant that Fitzgerald placed the scene where Stahr's doctor speculates about his fatigue and declares it "a perversion of the life force" (p. 108) between the scene where Stahr thinks he has lost Kathleen and the scene where he does lose her.

Spengler, pp. 182-183.


Spengler, pp. 412-413.

One idea of Spengler's lends support to the duality of American ideals Fitzgerald and Wilson saw — the idea of cultural "pseudo-morphosis." Here, new molten cultural materials are, because of historical incident, forced into old, fixed forms. Spengler gives as examples of this phenomenon the old Classical forms forced onto the young Arabian culture by Alexander's conquests and the forcing of the unformed Russian culture "into a false and artificial [Western] history" by Peter the Great (p. 271). Wilson and Fitzgerald would have undoubtedly added to Spengler's examples that of the United States, whose early growth had been away from European tradition, being forced back into the bourgeois tradition by the merchant-princes involved in its too rapid development.

A possible analogue for part of Stahr's characterization may be found in Wilson's description of Henry Ford in his essay "Detroit Motors." While acknowledging Ford's mechanical genius, Wilson describes other character traits that are "naive and capricious," giving several examples of contradictory behavior and statements. Among these, he quotes from a book by one of Ford's former aides: "In no other person . . . have I observed so pronounced a dual nature as in my former chief. There seems to be a constant struggle for control on the part of these two natures. The natural Henry Ford is the warm, impulsive, idealistic 'Old Man.' . . . The other . . . has been imposed by the artificialities of modern civilization, by his environment, his business associates, his responsibilities to the huge Ford interests." Wilson sums this up by stating that the "result of all this is that Ford today is surrounded by professional yes-men who live in terror of differing from him" ("Detroit Motors" in The American Earthquake: A Documentary of the Twenties and Thirties (Garden City, N. J.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1958, pp. 239-244). Stahr has his own internal struggle and his "mental cadavers" (p. 22).

Cf. the discussion of Ibsen's An Enemy of the People in 68 above.


Spengler, p. 415.
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