NARCISSISM IN THE NOVELS OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

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A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

MASTER OF ARTS (1992) McMASTER UNIVERSITY
(English) Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Narcissism in the Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald

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SUPERVISOR: Professor Joseph Adamson

NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 102

Abstract

This thesis begins with the observation that, despite structural and stylistic differences, Fitzgerald's novels are thematically similar. All of his protagonists search, ultimately in vain, for some aspect of their environment that will ensure them complete and lasting happiness. From the perspective of the self psychology of Heinz Kohut each is searching for that which will compensate for his own incomplete psychological development. As a result of dysfunctional relationships early in life, they are missing psychological structure that would allow them to regulate their sense of self-esteem from within. But because they are deficient, they depend on the responses of others for self-validation. This condition leads to a heightened sense of self-consciousness; they are, more so than healthy individuals, acutely aware of and responsive to social recognition. And, because of the immensity of their psychological demands, it is ultimately the inability of the environment to respond adequately that results in their various downfalls.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Joseph Adamson, whose guidance and support made this thesis possible. I would also like to thank Dr. Joseph Sigman for his support and enthusiasm regarding this project, and Dr. Jim Brasch, who introduced me to American literature and provided friendship and guidance during my years at McMaster.

I would also like to thank Michael Pysklywec and Bradley Peddle, whose friendship during the writing of this thesis made the summer a memorable one.

Contents

It could be said of the major characters of F. Scott Fitzgerald that they are all in search of something and that their various searches are all destined to fail because their quarry is either elusive or indeterminate. In a character like Jay Gatsby this search is readily apparent in his five year quest to possess Daisy Buchanan. A similar plot is developed in the novel *The Last Tycoon*, in which Monroe Stahr combs Hollywood for information on Kathleen Moore, the girl with the face of his dead wife Minna. In *Tender is the Night* Dick Diver keeps a constant watch for Rosemary Hoyt throughout the novel, idealizing her while simultaneously re-evaluating his relationship with Nicole. In *This Side of Paradise* Amory Blaine has everything but lasting happiness; he enjoys fleeting moments of joy, but cannot attain anything but a transient contentment regardless of his efforts to find happiness in his various relationships. The situation of Anthony Patch, in *The Beautiful and Damned,* is similar to that of Amory; while he has formed a lasting relationship with Gloria, happiness continues to elude him.

While occurring in a variety of contexts, these quests have much in common. In each case the character is motivated by a desire to fill a space, to complete a missing part of his or her life. They all share a certain dissatisfaction with their present conditions which leads them to look elsewhere, always outside of themselves, for the answers to their malaise. In each case, the protagonists' motivation exceeds mere desire and is experienced by the characters as a need; they search with an intensely felt passion for that which will ensure them

complete and lasting happiness. And what makes their situations especially notable is their remarkable consistency from character to character, from novel to novel. Many critics dismiss Fitzgerald's first two novels in favour of his later "more mature" ones. But in dealing with the lifelong quest of Jay Gatsby, how can we afford to ignore the lifelong quest of Amory Blaine? His search is in every way identical; his every need and desire mirrors those of Jay Gatsby. The aesthetic achievement of Fitzgerald's work may vary, but the psychological characteristics of his five protagonists remain the same. This thesis is an exploration of the motivation behind this insistent pattern.

From the perspective of the *self psychology* of Heinz Kohut, the particular nature of the various characters' searches is readily apparent. Each character is driven by a psychological deficiency, and because of this psychic lack they are forced to look outside of themselves for others to perform functions that they cannot. Heinz Kohut (1913-1981) is a classically trained psychoanalyst who broke with established practice on a number of issues. After his clinical analyses of what he would later call *narcissistic personality disorders*, Kohut came to the conclusion that the early experiences during the pre-Oedipal formation of the self were at least as important to psychological development as later Oedipal conflicts. In his early work, *The Analysis of the Self* (1971), Kohut formulated a theory of complementarity between classical psychoanalysis and self psychology. His theories would apply to the pre-Oedipal developments of the formation of the self while those of Freud would be regarded as more applicable to later structural (Oedipal) conflicts. But by the time that *The Restoration of the Self* (1977) and *How Does Analysis Cure?* (1984) were published, Kohut had reformulated his position on a number of issues basic to classical psychoanalysis. Freud believed that narcissism was part of the normal course of development from self-love to object love and that, present in the child as ego-cathexis, it is

gradually transformed into the mature object-cathexis found in healthy adults. Freud, in his essay "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914), referred to adult narcissism as a "perversion" with "the characteristics which we expect to meet with in the study of all perversions"(73). He linked it to megalomania, homosexuality, hypochondria and women.

Kohut rejected this notion, postulating separate lines of development for self-love and object love:

> As you know, I maintain that the proper appreciation of the role played by narcissism in human life demands that we posit a separate line of development for it, leading from archaic to mature forms. Specifically: we postulate two lines of development (one from archaic narcissism to mature narcissism, the other, side by side with it, from archaic to mature object love), not a single line of development (from narcissism to object love). (*The Search for the Self*[1] 2:556)

Eventually Kohut's concerns for the development of a healthy sense of self, i.e., of proper narcissistic investments, came to dominate his thinking on all other psychological developments. The Oedipal period became a "joyfully accepted reality"(*The Restoration of the Self*[2] 229) for the child possessing a healthy and cohesive sense of self. What Morris Eagle calls the "heart"(6) of Freud's metapsychology, the primacy of the drives, was also rejected by Kohut. Drives, both aggressive and sexual, are for Kohut indicators of self-pathology, not the essential motivation for all of our behaviors. They are *disintegration products*, the result of libidinal cathexes, formerly employed in the maintenance of self-cohesiveness, being redirected during the breakup of the self.

Kohut posits that every infant, male or female, is born into a state of undifferentiated harmony with the environment. The infant does not perceive

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[1]Hereafter cited as SS.
[2]Hereafter cited as RS.

the world as distinct from him or herself and expects the environment to act in accordance with his or her will (however primitive that *will* may be). An example of this sort of environmental equilibrium is a situation in which a parent responds to the child's crying. The child's sense of omnipotence over and "in-tuneness" with the world around remains unbroken as long as the environment is perfectly responsive. Kohut calls this state of undifferentiated harmony the period of *primary narcissism.* As a consequence of the inevitable shortcomings of parental care this state of *primary narcissism* is disturbed and

> The child replaces the previous perfection (a) by establishing a grandiose and exhibitionistic image of the self: *the grandiose self*; and (b) by giving over the previous perfection to an admired, omnipotent (transitional) self-object: *the idealized parent imago*. (*The Analysis of the Self*[3] 25)

It is these two *archaic* psychological structures that mediate the child's experiences of the environment for the next four to six years. The *grandiose self* (also referred to as the *grandiose-exhibitionistic self*) demands approving mirroring responses from the world around while the *idealized parent imago* provides an omnipotently perceived "other" with which the child can *merge*, thus allowing him or her to participate in the *idealized parent imago's* perfection. *Merging* can be accomplished in a number of ways, the most obvious being direct physical contact, i.e. being picked up and held by the idealized parent, the less obvious being simply a feeling of harmony between infant and parent.

During this time the child does not perceive him or herself as distinct from the environment. He or she does not have the experience of true object relations[4]; rather, as much as the child remains undifferentiated from the

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[3]Hereafter cited as AS.

[4]This is the point over which Kohut's self psychology and other modern psychoanalytical schools, specifically object relations theorists, differ.

environment he or she experiences objects in the environment as *selfobjects*—objects that are experienced as a part of the self. Kohut provides us with this analogy for the child's experience of *selfobjects*: he tells us that the child expects to exert control over his or her *selfobjects* in the same way that the adult expects to assert control over his or her own body (AS 33). The child looks to his or her *selfobjects* to fulfill his or her psychological needs, but no parent is perfectly responsive to the infant, whether it be the need for approving mirroring responses or the need to merge with an idealized parent. With each environmental failure (i.e. each time that a *selfobject* fails to respond to the child) there is an injury to the child's sense of self—a *narcissistic injury.* This results in the child's withdrawal of a certain amount of the libidinal cathexis from the *selfobject* and its reinvestment, through the process of *transmuting internalization*, into permanent psychological structure:

> Under optimal circumstances the child experiences gradual disappointments in the idealized object—or, expressed differently: the child's evaluation of the idealized object becomes increasingly realistic—which leads to a withdrawal of the narcissistic cathexes from the imago of the idealized self-object and to their gradual [...][5] internalization, i.e., to the acquisition of permanent psychological structures which continue, endopsychically, the functions which the idealized self-object had previously fulfilled. (AS 45)

With the aid of the *selective mirroring responses* of the *ideal selfobjects* the child's archaic grandiosity and sense of omnipotence are gradually tamed as he or she learns which sorts of behaviors and attitudes are appropriate and which ones are not. Those behaviors and attitudes which continue to receive empathic approval will be maintained by the child while those that do not receive approval will not.

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[5]I use these square brackets to indicate to the reader that this omission is mine. The need for this practice arises primarily when citing Fitzgerald, who uses ellipses often in his own writing.

According to Kohut, the *selective mirroring responses* of the *ideal selfobjects* determine which aspects of the *ideal parent imago* and the *grandiose self* become integrated as realistic ideals and ambitions, which in turn provide an internal and independent means of self-esteem regulation. Also developing in the child's psyche at this time is the *tension arc*, the "dynamic essence of the complete, nondefective self"(*How Does Analysis Cure?*[6] 4-5). The *tension arc* is the "energic continuum"(HD 43) that is made up of libidinal investments in the acquisition of talents and skills necessary for the achievement of the child's ideals and ambitions. For Kohut, the major developmental achievement of childhood is proper individuation: the successful integration of the archaic structures resulting in a cohesive sense of self with realistic ideals and ambitions, and the realization that one is distinct from the environment.

Kohut describes the experience of "gradual disappointments" leading to the acquisition of psychological structures and a realistic outlook on life as the experience of *optimal frustration*. This process is most beneficial when the responsive failures of the selfobjects are gradual and phase appropriate, and when they occur in the context of a generally empathic relationship with the ideal selfobjects. As Kohut tells us:

> These optimal failures may consist in the self-object's briefly delayed empathic response, in mild deviations from the beneficial norm of the self-object's experiences in which the child participates, or in the discrepancy between the experiences provided through the merger with the empathic self-object and the actual satisfaction of needs. (RS 87)

When there is extended empathic failure, phase inappropriate empathic failure, or a single but grossly traumatic empathic failure, then the possibility of extensive damage to the child's sense of self arises. *Narcissistic injury* is an unavoidable

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[6]Hereafter cited as HD.

aspect of growing up, without it psychological development would be impossible. But an environment that is grossly traumatic has severe psychological consequences:

> If the child [...] suffers severe narcissistic traumas, then the grandiose self does not merge into the relevant ego content but is retained in its unaltered form and strives for the fulfillment of its archaic aims. And if the child experiences traumatic disappointments in the admired adult, then the idealized parent imago, too, is retained in its unaltered form, is not transformed into tension-regulating psychic structure, does not attain the status of an accessible introject [i.e., it does not become a part of the conscious mind], but remains an archaic, transitional self-object that is required for the maintenance of narcissistic homeostasis. (AS 28)

Kohut posits that, because of the existence of multiple *selfobjects* in the environment, the child has "two chances as it moves toward the consolidation of the self"(RS 185):

> The two chances relate, in gross approximation, to the establishment of the child's cohesive grandiose-exhibitionistic self (via his relation to the empathically responding merging-mirroring-approving self-object), on the one hand, and to the establishment of the child's cohesive idealized parent-imago (via his relation to the empathically responding self-object parent who permits and indeed enjoys the child's idealization of him and merger with him), on the other. (RS 185)

"Self disturbances of pathological degree result only from the failure of both of these developmental opportunities"(RS 185). Unintegrated, or only partially integrated archaic structures, are the defining features of *narcissistic personality disorders*. Libidinal investments to the grandiose self and the idealized imago remain in unaltered form within the psyche of the injured individual. The main consequence of this is that the individual maintains an archaic perception of the environment, which involves difficulties with subject-object differentiation and the inability to internally regulate self-esteem. The psychological sense of self in

the narcissistic personality disorder is essentially incomplete; it is missing important psychological structure. Since the unintegrated archaic structures remain outside of the conscious ego they are able to function autonomously and unconsciously, and as long as they are able to function in this manner, they are a threat to the cohesiveness of the self. The two sectors of the mind, the reality-based ego and the unintegrated archaic structures, may be working in conjunction with each other, in which case the conscious ego is in a state of subservience relative to the archaic structures, or the demands of the archaic structures may be relatively small. Under these circumstances the self will be relatively stable as long as the ego is able to maintain the sorts of mirroring approving relationships that the archaic structures need for their narcissistic contentment. On the other hand, the ego and the archaic structures may be working against each other. The ego may be resisting the exhibitionistic urges of the archaic structures or the archaic structures may be demanding more narcissistic sustenance than the ego is able to provide, in which case the individual's self-cohesiveness is seriously threatened. It is in these cases that we are likely to see the appearance of the various *disintegration products*—intense rage, shame, envy, greed or depression—which indicate more or less severe self-pathology.

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (3rd. ed.), published by the American Psychiatric Association, defines *narcissistic personality disorder* as follows:

> A grandiose sense of self-importance or uniqueness; preoccupation with fantasies of unlimited success; exhibitionistic need for constant attention and admiration; characteristic responses to threats of self-esteem; and characteristic disturbances in interpersonal relationships, such as feelings of entitlement, interpersonal exploitativeness,

> relationships that alternate between the extremes of overidealization and devaluation, and lack of empathy. (315)

The individual's "grandiose sense of self-importance or uniqueness" occurs as a result of the unintegrated *grandiose self* asserting its archaic claims. His or her "preoccupation with fantasies of unlimited success" results from a combination of the archaic beliefs in the individual's grandiosity and omnipotence. The "need for constant attention and admiration" is a function of the individual's lack of an internal system of self-esteem regulation. For without the integration of the *ideal selfobject* this individual lacks internal ideals against which to measure his or her performance.

The narcissistically injured individual's "characteristic responses to threats of self-esteem" generally fall into two broad categories, feelings of shame or rage. *Narcissistic injuries* constitute any real or perceived threat to the narcissist's relatively fragile sense of self; any direct, implied or even perceived attack will be taken as an injury. One possible reaction is the feeling of shame and the accompanying desire to withdraw from the threatening situation. *Narcissistic rage,* the other possible reaction, is a phenomenon particular to narcissistically injured individuals. Kohut differentiates it from mature aggression by noting the archaic quality of *narcissistic rage*:

> The opponent who is the target of our mature aggressions is experienced as separate from ourselves, whether we attack him because he blocks us in reaching our object-libidinal goals or hate him because he interferes with the fulfillment of our reality-integrated narcissistic wishes. The enemy who calls forth the archaic rage of the narcissistically vulnerable, however, is seen by him not as an autonomous source of impulsions, but as a *flaw in a narcissistically perceived reality.* The enemy is a recalcitrant part of an expanded self over which the narcissistically vulnerable person had expected to exercise full control. The mere fact, in other words, that the other person is independent or different is experienced as offensive to those with intense narcissistic needs. (SS 2:644)

The experiential content of *narcissistic rage* is also distinct from that of mature anger. It typically includes "heightened sadism, the adoption of a policy of preventive attack, the need for revenge, and the desire to turn a passive situation into an active one"(SS 2:639). This person will often employ "the active (often anticipatory) inflicting on others of those narcissistic injuries which he is most afraid of suffering himself"(SS 2:638). One noteworthy physiological indicator of narcissistic injury is blushing, the reddening of the features of the injured individual.

The narcissist's "characteristic disturbances in interpersonal relationships" are all explicable within the context of the unintegrated archaic structures. Feelings of entitlement are derived from the assertion of archaic feelings of omnipotence and the related expectation of complete control over the environment. Interpersonal exploitativeness is a function of archaic perception, specifically the individual's need for approving and mirroring self-objects. Under these circumstances "others" tend to be used solely for their mirroring capacity. Related to this point is the observation that relationships tend to alternate between the extremes of overidealization and devaluation. For as long as a selfobject provides the needed approving mirroring responses the narcissistically injured individual will idealize that selfobject. But as soon as the idealized selfobject withdraws its empathic support the individual interprets this withdrawal as a *narcissistic injury* and reacts with characteristic shame and rage, devaluing the previously idealized selfobject in the process. The narcissistic individual's lack of empathy occurs as a consequence of his or her tendency to use others for their mirroring capacity, and not to appreciate them as independent and inherently valuable objects.

To a certain extent, we are all narcissists; every individual knows the experience of a *narcissistic injury*. The line that separates the normal healthy

individual from the narcissistically injured one is not qualitative but quantitative. Everyone can be placed on a continuum between complete integration of the archaic structures and complete non-integration of the same structures. Many degrees of severity of *narcissistic personality disorder* are possible and not every individual classified as narcissistically injured will display every distinguishing characteristic. Some, because of their particular endopsychic circumstances, will become shame-prone individuals; others, because of their backgrounds, will be rage-prone. Kohut's theory, because of the number of variables involved, allows for a great deal of complexity, even while working within a relatively simple framework.

It is within this framework that I wish to study the characters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, for to varying degrees they are all narcissistically injured individuals. By identifying them as such and applying Kohut's self psychology to them we will be able to see why they act as they do. We will be able to understand the particular obsessional characteristics of Jay Gatsby's pursuit of Daisy. And we will understand why Amory Blaine fails to form a lasting relationship with any of the women with which he becomes involved. All of Fitzgerald's protagonists' have experienced traumatic selfobject failure and now search without rest for individuals able to perform the functions of these lost selfobjects. By examining the particular nature of each character's narcissistic personality disorder we will be able to determine the distinctive failures that have occurred in his life. We will be able to determine the severity of the disorder and speculate on future possibilities for that character. We will be able, where the material is available, to examine the particular vicissitudes of a character's childhood in order to clarify the genesis of the disorder and to ascertain the particular relationship between childhood circumstances and the situation in which the mature character finds himself. As Kohut tells us, "the vicissitudes of the early formation of the self

determine the form and the course of later psychological events that are analogous to the crucial early phase"(SS 2:623). For

> The replacement of one long-term self-representation by another endangers a self whose earlier, nuclear establishment was faulty; and the vicissistudes of early pathology are experienced as repeated by the new situation. Extensive changes of the self must, for example, be achieved in the transition from early childhood to latency, from latency to puberty, and from adolescence to young adulthood. But these sociobiologically prescheduled developmental processes are not the only ones that impose on us a drastic change of our self; we must also consider external shifts, such as moves from one culture to another; from private life into the army; from the small town to the big city; and the modification in the self that is necessitated when a person's social role is taking a turn—whether for better or worse, e.g., sudden financial success or sudden loss of fortune. (SS 2:623)

All of Fitzgerald's protagonists are selves in transition, and because each lacks a cohesive sense of self these transitions become insurmountable obstacles. Jay Gatsby is not simply *unwilling* to stop admiring Daisy, but psychologically *unable*. And like Gatsby, Anthony Patch is *unable* to accept the reality that he must find a job because his entire sense of self is founded on an aristocratic conception of himself. And when reality no longer mirrors his *perceived* reality self-trauma occurs. In each major character this same paradigm appears. When reality no longer mirrors their own grandiosity, Fitzgerald's characters turn to idealized others for the self-confirmation that they so desperately need.

I.

> He moved his bed so that the sun would wake him at dawn that he might dress and go out to the archaic swing that hung from an apple tree near the sixth-form house. Seating himself in this he would pump higher and higher until he got the effect of swinging into the wide air, into a fairy-land of piping satyrs and nymphs with the faces of fair-haired girls he passed in the streets of Eastchester. As the swing reached its highest point, Arcady really lay just over the brow of a certain hill, where the brown road dwindled out of sight in a golden dot. (*This Side of Paradise* 37)

Readers of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* may be reconciled, as Amory Blaine seems to be, by the line that concludes the novel: "'I know myself,' he cried, 'but that is all'"(254). Rather than signifying a sense of forlorn isolation, this line seems to herald an end to his lifelong struggle to come to terms with his past. After his long and tortuous "education," which culminates in the episode in Mr. Ferrenby's car, Amory is ready to admit that his "selfishness is not only part of [him]. It is the most living part"(251). But in typical Amory fashion, instead of spurring him on to greater self-awareness this realization is rationally integrated into his outlook on life: "It is by somehow transcending rather than by avoiding that selfishness that I can bring poise and balance to my life. There is no virtue of unselfishness that I cannot use"(251-2). Fitzgerald tells us that "[Amory] knew he was safe now, free from all hysteria—he could accept what was acceptable, roam, grow, rebel, sleep deep through many nights...."(253-4). It seems that, at long last, Amory's search for contentment is over: he has found reconciliation with his

past in identification with the growing socialist movement in post-World War One America. But to the reader looking at *This Side of Paradise* from a Kohutian self psychological perspective, the irony of the last line of the novel is that it is precisely "himself" that Amory knows least, and this condition will continue to plague him throughout his life regardless of his attempts to integrate himself into society. His own words have proven uncannily correct throughout the novel: "It is by somehow transcending rather than by avoiding that selfishness that I can bring *poise and balance* to my life"(251, emphasis added). For, although the statement is true, Amory, as a narcissistically *imbalanced* individual, will never be able to "transcend" his selfishness, his intensely felt need for the attention of others. Nor will Amory be able to avoid the correlative effect of his narcissistic imbalance, his compulsion to idealize suitable mirrors for his narcissistic needs.

Traditional criticism has paid very little attention to Fitzgerald's first novel. Although it was well received by the public and made Fitzgerald an instant commercial success, the novel is almost universally disparaged by critics. Edmund Wilson, writing in 1925, declared that "it has almost every fault and deficiency that a novel can possibly have"(78):

> In short, one of the chief weaknesses of *This Side of Paradise* is that it is not really *about* anything: intellectually it amounts to little more than a gesture—a gesture of indefinite revolt. For another thing, *This Side of Paradise* is very immaturely imagined: it is always just verging on the ludicrous. And, finally, it is one of the most illiterate books of any merit ever published (a fault which the publisher's proof-reader seems to have made no effort to remedy). It is not only ornamented with bogus ideas and faked literary references but it is full of English words misused with the most reckless abandon. (78)

Heywood Broun, reviewing the book in 1920, wrote of the "generally callow quality of the author's point of view"(50) and stated that he remained

"unconvinced as to the authenticity of the atmosphere"(50). A more sympathetic reviewer found the book "refreshing" and "fundamentally honest" yet tempered his approval with an acknowledgement of the book's many faults. In recent criticism the reputation of *This Side of Paradise* has remained low, if not fallen. Henry Dan Piper finds that "for all its commercial success and literary influence, *This Side of Paradise* was not an especially good novel. Its interest today lies chiefly in what it reveals about Fitzgerald's development as a serious writer of fiction"(42). John F. Callahan, in his book *The Illusions Of A Nation: Myth and history in the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, does not even mention *This Side of Paradise*.

Psychological criticism of *This Side of Paradise* is rare and, for the most part, does not go beyond Freudian exploration of the nature of Amory and Beatrice's relationship. Joan Allen has correctly pointed out that "the troubled relationship of parent and child is central to the background of Amory Blaine"(66), but concludes that Amory is safe from the psychological effects of the family romance because of his "cynical" attitude regarding Beatrice. While identifying a key relationship within the novel Allen has neglected to fully explore the effects of Beatrice's failure as an empathic caregiver. Madelyn Hoffman's article "*This Side of Paradise*: A Study in Pathological Narcissism" utilizes a modern psychoanalytical approach, integrating within it aspects of three theories—those of Heinz Kohut, Otto Kernberg and David Winnicott. This approach allows her to make some astute observations regarding the nature of Amory's personality, but owing to the brevity of her article, she does not fully explore the psychological mechanisms that are at work in the novel.

This Side of Paradise, written in the style of the *Bildungsroman,* offers the psychoanalytic reader ample opportunity to track the psychological development of Amory Blaine. The first chapter of *This Side of Paradise* introduces us to

Amory's parents, Stephen and Beatrice Blaine. The father, we are told, is an "ineffectual, inarticulate man with a taste for Byron and a habit of drowsing over the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*"(11). The father "grew wealthy at thirty through the death of two elder brothers [...] and in the first flush of feeling that the world was his, went to Bar Harbor and met Beatrice O'Hara"(11). And "for many years"(11) afterwards,

> He hovered in the background of his family's life, an unassertive figure with a face half-obliterated by lifeless, silky hair, continually occupied in "taking care" of his wife, continually harassed by the idea that he didn't and couldn't understand her. (11)

It is clear that Stephen Blaine had little influence on his son—"Stephen Blaine handed down to posterity his height of just under six feet and his tendency to waver at crucial moments"(11)—and that there was little, if any, empathy between the two. Joan Allen is correct in her observation that Beatrice and Amory are allied in their "estrangement" from Stephen Blaine. All of the information that the reader garnishes about Stephen Blaine comes in the first paragraph of *This Side of Paradise*. After this, the only other mention of his father occurs when he dies "quietly and inconspicuously"(96) when Amory is twenty years old. At the funeral Amory is more interested in the incongruity between the beauty of Lake Geneva and his father's death, and he "looked at the funeral with an amused tolerance"(96).

The title of the first section of Book One, "*Amory, Son of Beatrice,*" informs the reader which parent's influence was more important in the family. If the father is described as "ineffectual, inarticulate" and "unassertive," then the mother stands in complete opposition to him: "But Beatrice Blaine! There was a woman!"(11):

> Early pictures taken on her father's estate at Lake Geneva [...] showed the exquisite delicacy of her features, the consummate art and simplicity of her clothes. A brilliant education she had—her youth passed in renaissance glory, she was versed in the latest gossip of the Older Roman Families; known by name as a fabulously wealthy American girl to Cardinal Vitori and Queen Margherita and more subtle celebrities that one must have had some culture even to have heard of [...] All in all Beatrice O'Hara absorbed the sort of education that will be quite impossible ever again; a tutelage measured by the number of things and people one could be contemptuous of and charming about; a culture rich in all arts and traditions, barren of all ideas, in the last of those days when the great gardener clipped the inferior roses to produce one perfect bud. (11)

Beatrice Blaine is in many ways extraordinary, having received the best of everything, but it is apparent in the descriptions of her and her actions that the one thing that she never received and was never able to give is love. Beatrice would seem to be an extremely caring mother. Indeed, her concern for Amory sometimes becomes excessive:

> When Amory had the whooping-cough four disgusted specialists glared at each other hunched around his bed; when he took scarlet fever the number of attendants, including physicians and nurses, totalled fourteen. (13)

But, despite appearances, she is the centre of her own narcissistically perceived universe and in the process of ensuring that Amory is brought up according to her wishes, she denies him any chance for a normal childhood. Her concern for Amory stems from her narcissistic concern for her own grandiose body-self, which encompasses her son. As Kohut tells us:

> The essential genetic trauma [i.e. the cause of the child's narcissistic personality disorder] is grounded in the parents' psychopathology, in particular in the parents' own narcissistic fixations. The parents' pathology and narcissistic needs contribute decisively to the child's remaining excessively and protractedly enmeshed within the narcissistic web of the parents' personality. (AS 79)

The "highly specialized education" that Amory derives from his mother consists of learning to appreciate everything of cultural value to Beatrice ("a culture rich in all arts and traditions, barren of all ideas") so that he may become, like his mother, the "one perfect bud." As Kohut tells us, in circumstances such as these

> The child's deprivation from the side of the parental selfobject is not as easily discerned—indeed, evaluated in terms of behavior, these parents give an appearance of overcloseness to their children. But the appearance is deceptive, for these parents are unable to respond to their children's changing narcissistic requirements, are unable to obtain narcissistic fulfillment by participating in their children's growth, because they are using their children for their own narcissistic needs. (RS 274)

We see that Amory, at an early age, becomes Beatrice's companion: "When Amory was five he was already a delightful companion for her"(12). He is made into a mirror for his mother's own narcissistic needs, conversing with her and reflecting her values and attitudes. And inevitably he becomes an object to be proudly exhibited not for any value of his own, but as a part of her narcissistically perceived universe:

> "This son of mine," he heard her tell a room full of awestruck, admiring women one day, "is entirely sophisticated and quite charming—but delicate—we're all delicate; here, you know." Her hand was radiantly outlined against her beautiful bosom; then sinking her voice to a whisper, she told them of the apricot cordial. They rejoiced, for she was a brave raconteuse. (13)

What makes this passage most interesting is that, despite the fact that the story is about Amory, Beatrice is the true centre of the other ladies' attention. She is exhibiting her own sense of grandiosity; she is performing and receiving the approving mirroring responses that she seeks from the "room full of *awestruck, admiring* women"(emphasis added).

The inevitable outcome of the empathic failure of both parental selfobjects is a child who suffers from a narcissistic personality disorder. Looking at the chapter entitled "Code of the Young Egotist," in which Amory "formulate[s] his first philosophy [...] a sort of aristocratic egotism"(24) what we see is the expression of a thoroughly narcissistic outlook on life. This chapter takes the form of a catalogue of Amory's perceptions of himself:

> *Physically*: Amory thought that he was exceedingly handsome. He was. He fancied himself an athlete of possibilities and a supple dancer.
>
> *Socially:* Here his condition was, perhaps, most dangerous. He granted himself personality, charm, magnetism, poise, the power of dominating all contemporary males, the gift of fascinating all women.
>
> *Mentally*: Complete, unquestioned superiority. (24-5)

It is readily apparent from this passage that Amory has a "grandiose sense of self-importance" resulting from an archaically splintered grandiose self. He considers himself superior in all aspects. Other people, in accordance with his archaic sense of omnipotence, are seen as "automatons to his will"(25).

Amory, like his mother, enjoys being the centre of attention. This aspect of his personality is probably most apparent in his athletic ambitions, for "as soon as he discovered that [athletics were] the touchstone of power and popularity at school, he began to make furious, persistent efforts to excel in the winter sports"(16). His "furious" and "persistent" efforts come to fruition when Amory discovers football:

> The game with Groton was played from three of a snappy, exhilarating afternoon far into the crisp autumnal twilight, and Amory at quarter-back, exhorting in wild despair, making impossible tackles, calling signals in a voice that had diminished to a hoarse, furious whisper, yet found time to revel in the blood-stained bandage around his head, and the straining glorious heroism of plunging, crashing bodies and aching limbs. For those minutes courage flowed like wine out of the

> November dusk, and he was the eternal hero, one with the sea-rover on the prow of a Norse galley, one with Roland and Horatius, Sir Nigel and Ted Coy, scraped and stripped into trim and then flung by his own will into the breach, beating back the tide, hearing from afar the thunder of cheers. (36)

But this desire to exhibit is tempered by a certain distrust of others: "Amory usually liked men individually, yet feared them in crowds unless the crowd was around him"(77). This distrust, a strong feeling of self-consciousness, is grounded in the narcissist's fear that those watching him are criticizing him:

> Several times he could have sworn that men turned to look at him critically. He wondered vaguely if there was something the matter with his clothes, and wished he had shaved that morning in the train. He felt unnecessarily stiff and awkward among these white-flannelled, bareheaded youths. (41)

Never having internalized the values of the idealized selfobject, Amory relies entirely on environmental response for his self-esteem. This results in his heightened sense of self-consciousness as he maintains an almost continuous awareness of others' responses to him. An entirely neutral incident, such as passing strangers on the street, is perceived by Amory as an injury because the others are felt to be actively ignoring or avoiding him.

In response to real or perceived criticism, slights to his sense of self, Amory's reactions are those typical of the narcissistically injured individual. At various times he feels anger, shame, inferiority, or humiliation in response to attacks on his sense of self. Fitzgerald tells us that "there was, also, a curious strain of weakness running crosswise through his make-up [...] a harsh phrase from the lips of an older boy (older boys usually detested him) was liable to sweep him off his poise into surly sensitiveness, or timid stupidity"(25). The chapter entitled "Incident of the Well-Meaning Professor" documents the casebook response of the narcissist to an injury to his sense of self-esteem. Mr.

Margotson draws Amory's attention to the fact that he is "not very popular with the boys"(34) with the intention of helping Amory "cope with [his problem]"(34). This draws an immediate reaction from Amory: he walks out, absolutely enraged by the professor's actions:

> Amory could stand no more. He rose from his chair, scarcely controlling his voice when he spoke.
>
> "I know—oh, *don't* you s'pose I know." His voice rose. "I know what they think; do you s'pose you have to *tell* me!" He paused. "I'm—I've got to go back now—hope I'm not rude—"
>
> He left the room hurriedly. In the cool air outside, as he walked to his house, he exulted in his refusal to be helped.
>
> "That *damn* old fool!" he cried wildly. "As if I didn't *know*!" (34)

Elsewhere in the novel we read of various embarrassing incidents, the results of which are Amory becoming "fiery red"(135), "red in the face"(55) and "furiously embarrassed"(54).

The facets of Amory's personality that we have investigated so far, his sense of grandiosity, his exhibitionism and his typical reaction to narcissistic injury, are all three related to his archaic grandiose self, created in response to a nonempathic relationship with his parents. The other archaic structure that remains unintegrated within Amory's personality is the idealized selfobject. Kohut elaborates on the importance of the ideal selfobject in this passage from his article "Creativeness, Charisma, Group Psychology:"

> During the normal phase of development that corresponds to the idealizing transference, the caretaking empathic adult is held to be omnipotent by the child, who obtains a sense of narcissistic well-being (of being whole and powerful, for example) when he is able to experience himself as part of the idealized selfobject. Under favorable conditions the adult's empathic response to the child sets up a situation in which the child's phase-appropriate need for a merger with an omnipotent object is sufficiently fulfilled to prevent traumatization. This basic fulfillment of the need, however, is the precondition for the

> subsequent developmental task, which involves the child's gradual recognition that the adult is not omnipotent and that he, the child, is not a part of him but a separate person. In consequence of this gradual and phase-appropriate disillusionment, the idealizing cathexes are withdrawn from the archaic object and set up within the psychic apparatus (e.g. idealizing the values of the superego). In other words, an archaic selfobject imago has been transmuted into psychological structure. If this developmental task is not completed, however, then the personality will be lacking in sufficiently idealized psychological structures. In consequence of this defect, the person is deprived of one major endopsychic method by which he could maintain his self-esteem: the self's merging into the idealized superego by living up to the values harbored by this psychic structure. Yearning to find a substitute for the missing (or insufficiently developed) psychic structure, such persons are forever seeking, with addictionlike intensity and often through sexual means (the clinical picture may be that of perversion), to establish a relationship to people who serve as stand-ins for the omnipotent idealized selfobject [...] In everyday life and in the analytic transference the self-esteem of such persons is therefore upheld by their relations to archaic selfobjects. (814-5)

Never having internalized an ideal conception of themselves, these individuals are dependent upon external measures for their self-esteem, and they search with "addictionlike intensity" for people to fulfill this psychological requirement.

Throughout the novel, Amory's self-esteem is entirely dependent upon his relationship with others:

> He had been two months in Minneapolis, and his chief struggle had been the concealing from "the other guys at school" how particularly superior he felt himself to be, yet this conviction was built upon shifting sands. He had shown off one day in French class [...] to the delight of the class [...] But another time Amory showed off in history class, with quite disastrous results, for the boys were his own age, and they shrilled innuendoes at each other all the following week. (15-6)

And having learned at this young age that his conviction that he is superior to all others is "built upon shifting sands" Amory is afterwards more selective in who he chooses as "friends." At St Regis's "with a dread of being alone he attached a few

friends, but since they were not among the élite of the school, he used them simply as mirrors of himself, audiences before which he might do that posing absolutely essential to him"(33). Just as his mother once sat amongst her circle of "awestruck, admiring women" Amory finds his own circle of mirroring friends for whom he can pose and from which he can receive necessary narcissistic sustenance.

We read at various points in the novel that Amory carries around a sort of ideal position for himself, that he has vague plans for his future:

> Always, after he was in bed, there were voices—indefinite, fading, enchanting—just outside his window, and before he fell asleep he would dream one of his favourite waking dreams, the one about becoming a great half-back, or the one about the Japanese invasion, when he was rewarded by being made the youngest general in the world. It was always the becoming he dreamed of, never the being. This, too, was quite characteristic of Amory. (24)

And elsewhere:

> Amory watched [the faces on Broadway] in fascination. He was planning his life. He was going to live in New York, and be known at every restaurant and café, wearing a dress-suit from early evening to early morning, sleeping away the dull hours of the forenoon. (36)

These "waking dreams" of his clearly represent his desire and need for increased popularity (narcissistic sustenance). Related to Amory's dependence upon an external source for self-esteem is his tendency to idealize positions of social power (e.g. football player, chairman of the *Princetonian*, member of the right club at Princeton, upper classman). He idealizes those who are or seem destined to be socially popular. Dick Humbird is described as "a perfect type of aristocrat [...] He seemed the eternal example of what the upper class tries to be"(77). Burne Holiday "stood vaguely for a land Amory hoped he was drifting toward"(116).

It is thus no surprise that Amory's moments of greatest happiness are directly related to his popularity amongst his peers. At each new school he goes to, at Minneapolis, at St Regis's, and at Princeton, Amory goes through an adjustment process during which he finds an audience for himself. At St Regis's "he went all wrong at the start, [and] was generally considered both conceited and arrogant, and universally detested"(32). It is only through finding "mirrors of himself" and playing football that Amory finds the acceptance that he needs to be comfortable. Later, during his first days at Princeton, "Amory was far from contented. He missed the place he had won at St. Regis's, the being known and admired, yet Princeton stimulated him, and there were many things ahead calculated to arouse the Machiavelli latent in him"(47). In time the process is complete and

> Amory, by way of the *Princetonian* had arrived. The minor snobs, finely balanced thermometers of success, warmed to him as the club elections drew nigh, and he and Tom were visited by groups of upper classmen who arrived awkwardly, balanced on the edge of the furniture and talked of all subjects except the one of absorbing interest. Amory was amused at the intent eyes upon him, and, in case the visitors represented some club in which he was not interested, took great pleasure in shocking them with unorthodox remarks. (71)

And:

> Long afterward Amory thought of sophomore spring as the happiest time of his life. His ideas were in tune with life as he found it; he wanted no more than to drift and dream and enjoy a dozen new-found friendships through the April afternoons. (73)

His need to find suitable mirrors of himself also explains his close relationship to Thayer Darcy, who is in many ways a surrogate father, or ideal selfobject, for Amory. Thayer Darcy is the individual to whom Beatrice directs Amory to visit, knowing that the two are perfect for each other. And experience

proves Beatrice correct, for Amory and Thayer "took to each other at first sight"(30):

> He and Monsignor [Darcy] held the floor, and the older man, with his less receptive, less accepting, yet certainly not colder mentality, seemed content to listen and bask in the mellow sunshine that played between these two. Monsignor gave the effect of sunlight to many people; Amory gave it in his youth and, to some extent, when he was very much older, but never again was it quite so mutually spontaneous. (31)

It is with Darcy that Amory discusses his most private matters, and it is from Darcy that he always receives recognition and confirmation. In a very revealing moment Darcy differentiates between a "personality" and a "personage:"

> Personality is a physical matter almost entirely; it lowers the people it acts on—I've seen it vanish in a long sickness. But while a personality is active, it overrides "the next thing". Now a personage, on the other hand, gathers. He is never thought of apart from what he's done. He's a bar on which a thousand things have been hung—glittering things sometimes, as ours are; but he uses those things with a cold mentality back of them. (100)

A "personage" is a nonempathic individual who keeps his accomplishments in public view. What is clear from this distinction between personalities and personages, and the fact that Darcy defines not only Amory but also himself as personages, is that both are narcissists, each needing the mirroring responses of the other. Commenting on this passage Madelyn Hoffman tells us that "it would be hard to find a better description of the narcissist's use of other people as things to complete an empty self"(180n). What makes Amory and Darcy such an instant pair is that they are both perfect mirrors for the other: "The priest seemed to guess Amory's thoughts before they were clear in his own head, so closely related were their minds in form and groove"(100). Elsewhere Darcy refers to Amory as a "reincarnation of [him]self"(147). Because they are so much

alike it is Darcy, among all of Amory's friends, that has the most insight in to Amory's personality: "You are unsentimental, almost incapable of affection, astute without being cunning and vain without being proud"(101). And elsewhere:

> Splendid is the one thing that neither you nor I are. We are many other things—we're extraordinary, we're clever, we could be said, I suppose, to be brilliant. We can attract people, we can make atmosphere, we can almost lose our Celtic souls in Celtic subtleties, we can almost always have our own way; but splendid—rather not! (146)

What Darcy is describing in Amory and himself are some of the classic symptoms of the narcissistically injured individual, the nonempathic, often manipulative aspects of the individual who *can* attract people and make atmosphere because he or she *must* attract people in order to maintain his or her sense of self-esteem.

Nowhere are Amory's attempts to find suitable mirrors for himself more apparent than in his relationships with women. Here is Amory's quest to find his ideal selfobject most consuming. All of his relationships are with others who are experienced as extensions of himself. Indeed, the strength of his love for the other is directly related to how strongly he feels that the other is an extension of himself. This trend begins with Isabelle; she becomes Amory's first real mirror of himself:

> He was in love and his love was returned. Turning on all the lights, he looked at himself in the mirror, trying to find in his own face the qualities that made him see clearer than the great crowd of people, that made him decide firmly, and able to influence and follow his own will. (87)

Being in love with Isabelle makes Amory feel good about himself; it gives him self-validation. But within the first few times that they are together Amory discovers that

> He had not an ounce of real affection for Isabelle [...] He wanted to kiss her, kiss her a lot, because then he knew that he could leave in the morning and not care. On the contrary, if he didn't kiss her, it would worry him [...] It would interfere vaguely with his idea of himself as a conqueror. (89)

What Amory finds out about his "love" for Isabelle after everything goes wrong is that it was never Isabelle he was in love with but himself reflected in her: "perhaps all along she had been nothing except what he had read into her"(91-2).

Rosalind is the girl for whom Amory feels the most strongly: "She had taken the first flush of his youth and brought from his unplumbed depths tenderness that had surprised him, gentleness and unselfishness that he had never given to another creature"(188). His relationship with Rosalind is similar to his relationship to Thayer Darcy, each finding in the other a perfect mirror. And each is thus completely empathically satisfied. With Rosalind, Amory is able to merge with his archaic idealized selfobject; subject-object distinctions disappear and the two become one: "They were together constantly, for lunch, for dinner, and nearly every evening"(169). The rhetoric that Rosalind uses when talking to Amory is suggestive of the blurring of the line between the two:

> I've got your precious self—and that's enough for me. (171)

> No, I'll do what you want. We're you—not me. Oh, you're so much a part, so much all of me. (171)

> I'm not his, I'm yours, Amory, I belong to you. (171)

When their relationship ends, Amory experiences the loss of Rosalind as a severe injury to his sense of self. His sense of self-esteem, previously maintained by his relationship to Rosalind, plummets. He spends the next three weeks stumbling from bar to bar, loses all self-respect, quits his job, and goes so far as to contemplate suicide. At the Knickerbocker Bar "he tried to look at himself in the

mirror but even by squinting up one eye could only see as far as the row of bottles behind the bar"(181). The severity of the injury to his self can be measured by the degree to which he loses any stable sense of himself.

Amory's relationship with Eleanor is also similar to his relationship with Darcy, for

> As long as they knew each other Eleanor and Amory could be "on a subject" and stop talking with the definite thought of it in their heads, yet ten minutes later speak aloud and find that their minds had followed the same channels and led them each to a parallel idea, an idea that others would have found absolutely unconnected with the first. (204)

Amory finds himself asking the question: "Was it the infinite sadness of her eyes that drew him or the mirror of himself that he found in the gorgeous clarity of her mind?"(200). Like his other relationships, this one is very intense and very short. Amory and Eleanor begin to irritate each other and, when it is over, "for a minute they stood there, hating each other with a bitter sadness. But as Amory had loved himself in Eleanor, so now what he hated was only a mirror"(216). With this relationship, the last of the three that Amory has in the novel, "he lost a further part of him that nothing could restore; and when he lost it he lost also the power of regretting it"(200).

Thayer Darcy is correct when he diagnoses Amory as "incapable of affection." In his relationships with Isabelle and Eleanor, Amory used the two women only as mirrors for his own self-esteem. Both relationships are shallow and the first time that delicate sensibilities are offended, they end. For both Isabelle and Eleanor are narcissists like Amory, seeking self-confirmation rather than reciprocity. Amory's quest for love seems to come to an end in his relationship with Rosalind, for with her he achieves an empathic merger with an ideal selfobject. But Rosalind, like the other two, is also narcissistically vulnerable. She

too seeks an empathic merger with Amory, and the intensity of their relationship attests to this. The problem arises when Rosalind is ridiculed by her mother for "wast[ing her] life"(173) on Amory. Her mother also ridicules Amory. To Rosalind, an attack on her ideal selfobject (the object perceived as a part of the self) is necessarily felt as an attack on her sense of self-worth. And this is the case: she is deeply hurt when her mother devalues Amory for being a "dreamer" and "merely clever"(173). This, I think, is the main reason for the failure of Amory and Rosalind's relationship: Rosalind cannot bear the ridicule, the narcissistic injuries, that she receives from her mother as a consequence of her relationship with Amory.

One question remains. Amory demonstrates a large degree of insight into his own character. As we have seen, Thayer Darcy aids him in this respect, stating that "all you need tell me of yourself is that you still are; for the rest I merely search back in a restive memory [...] and match you with what I was at your age"(145). Clara Page, a third cousin with whom Amory becomes strongly infatuated, also provides Amory with a considerable amount of insight into his character. Jeffrey Berman, in his book *Narcissism and the Novel,* identifies this paradox at the heart of the narcissistically injured individual: "behind narcissists' self-love lies self-hate; beneath their grandiosity lies insecurity"(18). Clara, in conversation with Amory, articulates the very same paradox: "you have tremendous vanity, but [...] you're really humble at heart. You sink to the third hell of depression when you think you've been slighted. In fact, you haven't much self-respect"(135). In addition to the help that he receives from Darcy and Clara, Amory seems to know himself very well. He knows that he is painfully conceited; he knows that he uses others as mirrors for himself, to "do that posing absolutely essential to him"(33). He shows enough insight into himself

to know that his popularity is built upon "shifting sands." And he even knows himself well enough to detest himself at times:

> Probably more than any concrete vice or failing Amory despised his own personality—he loathed knowing that tomorrow and the thousand days after he would swell pompously at a compliment and sulk at an ill word like a third-rate musician or a first-class actor. He was ashamed of the fact that very simple and honest people usually distrusted him; that he had been cruel, often, to those who had sunk their personalities in him—several girls, and a man here and there through college, that he had been an evil influence on; people who had followed him here and there into mental adventures from which he alone rebounded unscathed. (234)

These introspective moments add weight to the contention that Amory has made progress by the end of the novel, that a form of negative knowledge will now allow him to recognize his past mistakes and do the right thing. There is, however, one thing that Amory has failed to take into account, "the fundamental Amory:" "St Regis's had very painfully drilled Beatrice out of him, and begun to lay down new and more conventional planking on the fundamental Amory. But both St Regis's and Amory were unconscious of the fact that this fundamental Amory had not in himself changed"(37). Later it is "Amory plus St Regis's plus Princeton"(95) that try to lay down more planking over "the fundamental Amory:"

> That had been his nearest approach to success through conformity. The fundamental Amory, idle, imaginative, rebellious, had been nearly snowed under. He had conformed, he had succeeded, but as his imagination was neither satisfied nor grasped by its own success, he had listlessly, half-accidentally chucked the whole thing and become again [...] the fundamental Amory. (96)

The concept of the "fundamental Amory" parallels exactly Kohut's conception of the archaically splintered structures that dominate the ego of the narcissistically injured individual. The grandiosity and idealizing tendencies of the archaic structures also exactly parallel the described characteristics of the fundamental

Amory: "his moodiness, his tendency to pose, his laziness"(37) and his "imaginative[ness], [and] rebellious[ness]"(96). The fundamental Amory, his archaically splintered narcissistic structures, will remain forever hidden from him. He may recognize some of its symptoms, his vanity and his lack of empathy, but he will never be rid of what lies at the unconscious centre of his psyche.

One of the effects of a narcissistic personality disorder that we have not yet mentioned is the domination of the individual's conscious ego by the unintegrated archaic structures. The reasoning functions of the narcissist are used to protect feelings of grandiosity by rationalizing failures so that they do not interfere with the individual's sense of grandiosity. This process is apparent in Amory's character at several points in the novel. After he fails his math course (out of pure disinterest and laziness) and thus loses any chance of becoming chairman of the *Princetonian*, Amory blames not himself but fate for his misfortune: "I've begun to feel that I was meant to lose this chance [...] My own idleness was quite in accord with the system, but the luck broke"(95). Later he will come to equate beauty (women) with evil, thus accounting for his bad luck with them: "Eleanor was, say, the last time that evil crept close to Amory under the mask of beauty, the last weird mystery that held him with wild fascination and pounded his soul to flakes"(200). It is with these considerations in mind that I interpret the last line of the novel as sadly ironic. As Amory goes through life forever seeking merger with an ideal selfobject we must question his motives for advocating socialist positions. Do his sympathies lie with the oppressed masses in America, or is Amory looking for another another group with which to identify? Is his dominated ego rationalizing his failure by making him believe that all of his troubles stem from his association with a corrupt upper class? It is even possible that Amory is arguing so passionately for socialism, something that he has never done before, because he enjoys the attention that he receives from Mr. Ferrenby.

Whatever the reason for his new found belief, it is clear that, as long as Amory's narcissism remains unaddressed, he will always be searching for the ideal selfobject. As the title of the novel implies, he will always be found on this side of Paradise.

II.

> Both were walking alone in a dispassionate garden with a ghost found in a dream. (*The Beautiful and Damned* 116)

In the preceding chapter we saw how profoundly narcissistic Amory Blaine's perception of the world is. *This Side of Paradise* presents an outstanding opportunity for psychological criticism. The actions of the protagonist are again and again manifestly motivated by narcissistic self-interest. This is also the case with Fitzgerald's second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*. Anthony and Gloria, seemingly perfect for each other, are both excellent examples of individuals suffering from narcissistic personality disorders. All of their various activities and inactivities are performed to further their own self-interests. And each shows a constant need for the approving mirroring responses of narcissistically perceived others. It is ultimately their shared inability to fulfill the other's narcissistic requirements that leads to the breakdown of their relationship. It is perhaps this intensely expressed selfishness that is the basis for continued critical aversion towards this novel. K. G. W. Cross finds *The Beautiful and Damned* "both trite and repugnant"(38). Brian Way, in *F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Art of Social Fiction* states that the novel "can be seen only as an unfortunate aberration. It is an extremely bad novel by any standard, but what makes it especially disturbing is that it seems to cancel out all the gains Fitzgerald had made so far"(64). Arthur Mizener identifies the "trouble" with the novel in the fact "that Anthony is not

real as the sensitive and intelligent man; what is real is the Anthony who is weak, drifting, and full of self-pity"(32).

On a different note, Robert Roulston, in his article "*The Beautiful and Damned*: The Alcoholic's Revenge," notes that

> Throughout 1920 and 1921, when [Fitzgerald] wrote most of *The Beautiful and Damned*, he was experiencing a psychological crisis of a sort likely to confound the most disciplined intellect [...] in the early 1920's Fitzgerald acquired the things he had most fervently desired—success and a beautiful glamorous wife. Instead of finding satisfaction, however, he was awash in marital and professional tribulations which were exacerbated by his growing dependence upon alcohol. (156-7)

This seemingly inexplicable "psychological crisis" Roulston identifies as emanating from "a sense of betrayal" rooted deep within the young and successful author:

> That Fitzgerald carried from childhood such a sense of betrayal should be self-evident to anyone who has read much of his fiction where a recurring theme is that of the young romantic disillusioned—a pattern that prevailed throughout his own youth from at least as early as his sixth birthday when none of the guests appeared for the party which he had anticipated so eagerly. Similar betrayals were to befall him in school, in love, and even in war when his desire to fight overseas was frustrated by the advent of the Armistice. But by the time he wrote *The Beautiful and Damned*, the most recent such disappointment—the disillusionment he felt in the wake of his ardently sought rise to fame and his no less intensely desired marriage to Zelda Sayre—must have seemed to epitomize all such previous experiences. (157)

These observations, written about F. Scott Fitzgerald, may also be applied without losing any accuracy to the protagonist of *The Beautiful and Damned*, Anthony Patch. He also experiences life as a series of betrayals and disappointments over which he seems to exert no control, regardless of his efforts to change his circumstances. Anthony also undergoes an increasingly frustrating "psychological crisis" which, in his case, results in complete psychological breakdown. Although

Roulston does not explore the consistent nature of the betrayals experienced by both Fitzgerald and Anthony Patch, he goes as far as identifying the novel as a "kind of literary parricide"(158) and explores the way in which Fitzgerald refigures his past so as to "[demolish] his own childhood and adolescence"(158). Roulston concludes by stating that

> As parents go, Edward and Mollie Fitzgerald were not especially bad. And as American decades go, the two at the beginning of our century were hardly among the worst. Yet the very existence of the neurosis which was making Fitzgerald ever more dependent upon alcohol indicates that he had legitimate complaints against his parents, just as conditions during in the United States during the Prohibition era suggest that he and his contemporaries had valid complaints against pre-war America for having engendered those conditions. (162)

As this passage implies, the origins of this sense of betrayal are not to be found entirely in the willfully malicious actions of other actors in Fitzgerald's life, but in the manner in which the author perceived the world[1]. This statement is also true for the character of Anthony Patch.

Anthony Patch, we are told on the first page of the novel, "thinks himself rather an exceptional young man, thoroughly sophisticated, well adjusted to his environment, and somewhat more significant than anyone else he knows"(9). On all accounts he is "an exceptional young man." He is the grandson of Adam J. Patch, who is seventy-five times a millionaire and a well recognized public figure. His grandfather is a "reformer among reformers"(10) who has "levelled a varied assortment of uppercuts and body-blows at liquor, literature, vice, art, patent

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[1]As I have already stated, I feel that the "sense of betrayal" that Roulston identifies in Fitzgerald applies equally to the character of Anthony Patch. Having stated this I will limit my remarks from now on to the character of Anthony Patch, as the focus of this chapter is *The Beautiful and Damned*. I would like to add that I feel that a biography of Fitzgerald employing Kohut's self psychology would be a very interesting and rewarding endeavor.

medicines, and Sunday theatres"(10). Both of Anthony's parents are famous Boston society people, his mother a singer and his father a man of leisure. Anthony himself attends Harvard on the recommendation of his private tutor. But despite his privileged upbringing it is evident that Anthony is anything but "well adjusted to his environment"(9). It becomes obvious that has suffered from severe and traumatic selfobject failure, severe and traumatic enough to permanently impair his later psychological functioning.

The first of these selfobject failures occurs in the realm of the empathic selfobject. His mother's death, which happens when Anthony is five years old, takes away Anthony's primary source of environmental empathic responses. More importantly, it is questionable whether or not Anthony's mother ever fulfilled her function as an empathic selfobject. For what little information that we are given about her seems to indicate that she may also have been narcissistically fixated:

> She was a lady who sang, sang, sang, in the music-room of their house on Washington Square—sometimes with guests scattered all about her, the men with their arms folded, balanced breathlessly on the edges of sofas, the women with their hands in their laps, occasionally making little whispers to the men and always clapping very briskly and uttering cooing cries after each song. (11)

She is reminiscent of Beatrice Blaine in her ability, her need, to perform for approving and mirroring others—the men who "balanced breathlessly" and the women who "clapp[ed] very briskly." Indeed, this need to perform extends into her relationship with Anthony: "often she sang to Anthony alone, in Italian or French or in a strange and terrible dialect which she imagined to be the speech of the Southern Negro"(11). One obtains the impression that, rather than existing in any sort of empathic harmony with Anthony, she is using him as another audience from which she can derive narcissistic sustenance.

Anthony's relationship with his father, Adam Ulysses Patch, is another empathically dysfunctional one:

> His recollections of the gallant Ulysses, the first man in America to roll the lapels of his coat, were much more vivid. After Henriette Lebrune Patch had "joined another choir," as her widower huskily remarked from time to time, father and son lived up at grampa's in Tarrytown, and Ulysses came daily to Anthony's nursery and expelled pleasant thick-smelling words for sometimes as much as an hour. He was continually promising Anthony hunting trips and fishing trips and excursions to Atlantic city, "oh, some time soon now;" but none of them ever materialized. (11)

It is apparent from this passage that Anthony's father also failed in his role as a selfobject. The particular nature of his empathic failure is especially damaging to Anthony's developing psyche. The cyclical nature of the selfobject failures, the "promises" of empathic union and the subsequent disappointment over their failure to materialize, would lead, after a period of repeated letdowns, to an inability to trust others, i.e., an inability to invest narcissistic libido in idealizable selfobjects. It would lead, in other words, to the sense of betrayal mentioned above. And while his dysfunctional selfobject relationships would result in the non-integration of the narcissistically cathected archaic structures, Anthony's mistrust of potentially idealizable selfobjects would prevent him from seeking out alternative empathic relationships. Any chance for normal childhood development, already impaired by his mother's death, ends with the death of Anthony's father on their trip to Lucerne. The significance of this event should not be overlooked. The one time that Anthony's selfobject is responsive to his needs results in the death of that person. And afterwards, as Fitzgerald tells us, "to Anthony life was a struggle against death, that waited at every corner"(12). This incident "wedded [Anthony] to a vague melancholy that was to stay beside him through the rest of his life"(12). This "vague melancholy" is a result of

Anthony's simultaneous need to idealize significant others (who can perform the functions of the missing selfobjects) and his reluctance to trust those individuals that could potentially fulfill this need.

Kohut grants the developing child a strong resiliency against permanent psychological damage. In *How Does Analysis Cure?*, he speaks of the child's "enduring wish to complete his development and thereby realize the nuclear program of his self"(148), despite massive childhood selfobject failures. Inadequate empathic responses from the primary caregivers may force the child to derive approving mirroring responses from alternative ideal selfobjects[2]. Or other methods may be used to gain the recognition and acceptance of unresponsive ideal selfobjects. This process is apparent in the imitative role-playing of developing children and adolescents. Having seen that both of Anthony's parents were unable to provide the empathic mirroring responses with which Anthony would have been able to form a cohesive sense of self (the one picture that he kept of his parents "had acquired the impersonality of furniture"(11)) we must also see that Anthony is unable to find any alternative childhood selfobjects. His grandfather, described as "a rabid monomaniac, an unqualified nuisance, and an intolerable bore"(10) whose mind is "under the influence of that insidious mildew which eventually forms on all but the few"(10), demonstrates throughout the novel a complete lack of empathy for Anthony and his way of life.

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[2]By far the best example of this process in Fitzgerald's novels is found in *The Great Gatsby*, in which James Gatz, ashamed of his "shiftless and unsuccessful" parents, attempts to complete his nuclear development by idealizing the wealthy and successful Dan Cody.

Evidence of a narcissistic personality disorder appears early in Anthony's adolescence. We are told that "his favourite diversion until he was fourteen was his stamp collection"(12):

> Anthony kept up a correspondence with a half-dozen "Stamp and Coin" companies and it was rare that the mail failed to bring him new stampbooks or packages of glittering approval sheets—there was a mysterious fascination in transferring his acquisitions interminably from one book to another. His stamps were his greatest happiness and he bestowed impatient frowns on any one who interrupted him at play with them; they devoured his allowance every month, and he lay awake at night musing untiringly on their variety and many-coloured splendour. (12)

The key to understanding the importance of Anthony's stamp collection is in the realization that it is for him an environment over which he has complete control. In the manipulation of his stamps, adding them or changing their places within books, Anthony finds confirmation of his narcissistic belief in his omnipotence. And it is also clear that any threat to the narcissistic harmony of this world results in a narcissistic injury to Anthony, for he responds to interruptions of his play with "impatient frowns." In the size of his collection, Anthony finds a means of expressing his unintegrated grandiosity; his collection is "enormous, as nearly exhaustive as a boy's could be"(12).

As late as sixteen Anthony is still lacking the healthy and mature selfobject milieu that Kohut considers so necessary to psychological survival[3]. He is described as having "lived almost entirely within himself, an inarticulate boy, thoroughly un-American, and politely bewildered by his contemporaries"(12). At

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[3]On the importance of selfobjects to primary psychological development and later psychological cohesiveness, Kohut provides us with this analogy: "The child that is to survive psychologically is born into an empathic-responsive human milieu (of selfobjects) just as he is born into an atmosphere that contains an optimal amount of oxygen if he is to survive physically"(RS 85).

Harvard this reclusiveness continues and he remains "oblivious to the social system"(13) for much of his time there. And, as in the case of the stamp collection, it is only through private activities, collecting and secretly exhibiting, that Anthony is able to express his grandiosity and exhibitionism. At Harvard "he laid the foundations for a library by purchasing from a wandering bibliophile first editions of Swinburne, Meredith, and Hardy, and a yellowed illegible autograph letter of Keats's"(13). Also at Harvard

> He became an exquisite dandy, amassed a rather pathetic collection of silk pyjamas, brocaded dressing-gowns, and neckties too flamboyant to wear; in this secret finery he would parade before a mirror in his room or lie stretched in satin along his window-seat. (13)

Kohut, in his article "Thoughts on Narcissism and Narcissistic Rage," identifies self-stimulation through mirror gazing as a method by which the narcissistically injured individual may attempt to maintain self-cohesion (633). It is in this context that we must interpret Anthony's private exhibitionistic activities. Lacking sufficient mirroring responses from his environment he is attempting to satisfy his own psychological needs.

It is only during his last year at Harvard that Anthony begins to realize that others are able to mirror his archaic grandiosity and omnipotence:

> Curiously enough he found in senior year that he had acquired a position in his class. He learned that he was looked upon as a rather romantic figure, a scholar, a recluse, a tower of erudition. *This amused him but secretly pleased him*—he began going out, at first a little but then a great deal. (13, emphasis added)

Self-stimulation gives way to something more rewarding, recognition by significant others. But what makes these relationships significant is that, as a result of the vicissitudes of his childhood, Anthony maintains an archaic perception of his environment. Others become replacements for incompletely

developed psychological structure; they are used as a means of self-esteem maintenance. Before long Anthony has overcome his childhood distrust of others, but he is now entirely dependent upon them for his sense of self-esteem: "he who had grown up alone had lately learned to avoid solitude. During the past several months he had been careful, when he had no engagement for the evening, to hurry to one of his clubs and find some one"(28).

The closest relationships that he forms are with Maury Noble and Richard Caramel. Maury, who is described as "godlike"(41), provides Anthony with an idealizable selfobject against which to measure his achievements and failures (and thus to regulate his self-esteem). Upon learning unexpectedly one night that Maury had not left for Philadelphia as planned, Anthony's "spirits soared faster than the flying elevator. This was so good, so extremely good, to be able to talk to Maury—who would be equally happy at seeing him"(41). Maury "is the man whom Anthony considers his best friend. This is the only man of all his acquaintances whom he admires and, to a bigger extent than he likes to admit to himself, envies"(22). Anthony's reasons for admiring Maury are readily apparent: "during Anthony's time at Harvard [Maury] had been considered the most unique figure in his class, the most brilliant, the most original—smart, quiet and among the saved"(22). He represents, like Burne Holiday and Dick Humbird did for Amory Blaine, all that Anthony wishes to be, universally admired. Anthony's reasons for envying Maury are equally apparent. Envy is among the disintegration products identified by Kohut as indicators of a weak self. And Anthony's envy is a function of his desire to possess that popularity and self-stability which he sees in Maury.

Dick Caramel is used by both Maury and Anthony in order to bolster their own self-esteem. In the episode entitled "Three Men," Maury and Anthony discuss Dick's potential as a writer, deciding before his arrival that he "doesn't

necessarily see more than anyone else. He merely can put down a larger proportion of what he sees"(23). Upon his arrival the two take a cynical attitude towards Dick's ambitions as a novelist, concluding that he is "playing before a grandstand peopled with ghosts"(25). The results of this episode are twofold: Anthony remains allied in cynicism with an idealized selfobject (Maury), and he derives narcissistic satisfaction from this alliance.

Within this milieu of relationships Anthony's sense of self appears relatively stable. He seems to exert enough control over his environment to satisfy his sense of omnipotence and his grandiosity appears to be sufficiently mirrored in his relationships with Maury, Dick and the countless others at the various clubs to which he belongs. His life seems to meander along without any other purpose than to be lived:

> In justification of his manner of living there was first, of course, The Meaninglessness of Life. As aides and ministers, pages and squires, butlers and lackeys to this great Khan there were a thousand books glowing on his shelves, there was his apartment and all the money that was to be his when the old man up the river should choke on his last morality. (49)

Yet, despite living under the aegis of "The Meaninglessness of Life," Anthony is vaguely dissatisfied with his condition. He is envious of Maury's position and also finds himself envious of Dick's literary progress. Alone, he wonders:

> If I am essentially weak, he thought, I need work to do, work to do. It worried him to think that he was, after all, a facile mediocrity, with neither the poise of Maury nor the enthusiasm of Dick. It seemed a tragedy to want nothing—and yet he wanted something, something. (49)

Evidence that he is lacking something comes in the form of Anthony's self-doubts. His self-esteem is waning: "he found in himself a growing horror and loneliness. The idea of eating alone frightened him; in preference he dined often

with men he detested"(49). Anthony's grandiosity and omnipotence remain unsatisfied. In comparison with his "waking dreams" of political and popular success the life he leads is without purpose:

> Lord Verulam—he? The very thought was bitter. Anthony Patch with no record of achievement, without courage, without strength to be satisfied with truth when it was given him. Oh, he was a pretentious fool, making careers out of cocktails and meanwhile regretting, weakly and secretly, the collapse of an insufficient and wretched idealism. He had garnished his soul in the subtlest taste and now he longed for the old rubbish. He was empty, it seemed, empty as an old bottle. (51)

For Anthony, Gloria is a much needed new source of empathic mirroring responses. Precisely at the moment that his self-esteem reaches its nadir, "back in his apartment the greyness returned"(50), Anthony is introduced to Gloria Gilbert. In the ensuing conversation they prove to be excellent mirrors for each other's grandiosity and exhibitionism. He finds her beautiful. She approves of lazy men. They both detest reformers. In a short while Anthony

> Wondered that his apartment had ever seemed grey—so warm and friendly were the books and pictures on the walls and the good Bounds offering tea from a respectful shadow and the three nice people giving out waves of interest and laughter back and forth across the happy fire. (55)

The lasting relationship that they form is a direct result of their mirroring capacity for each other. But she too, like Anthony, is a narcissistically injured individual. Although we are not given a childhood history of Gloria, her narcissistic fixation can be deduced from her displayed grandiosity and exhibitionism. When Maury describes their meeting to Anthony, he states that they talked mostly about legs and skin, her legs and her skin (44-5). We are told that "she was disposed to like many men, preferably those who gave her frank homage and unfailing entertainment"(194).

Within Anthony and Gloria's relationship the two find periods "of an unhoped-for serenity"(150):

> Close together on the porch they would wait for the moon to stream across the silver acres of farmland, jump a thick wood and tumble waves of radiance at their feet. In such a moonlight Gloria's face was a pervading, reminiscent white, and with a modicum of effort they would slip off the blinders of custom and each would find in the other almost the quintessential romance of the vanished June. (150)

Gloria describes the two of them as "twins"(111). Together they participate in the unrealistic fantasies characteristic of unintegrated grandiosity: "it was vaguely understood between them that on some misty day [Anthony] would enter a sort of glorified diplomatic service and be envied by princes and prime ministers for his beautiful wife"(143). Kohut has stated that "there is no love relationship without mutual (self-esteem enhancing) mirroring and idealization"(RS 122n), but what makes a mature love relationship between two narcissists difficult, if not impossible, is their mutual susceptibility to narcissistic injuries. Within the narcissist's archaic perception of the world the significant other is not a maturely perceived love object (distinct and independent), but a narcissistically perceived selfobject. And from that selfobject the narcissist expects perfection, perfect empathic responsiveness and perfect responsiveness to the injured individual's desire to merge. Any non-empathic response from the idealized selfobject would result in a narcissistic injury to the vulnerable self.

And because of this, their relationship, while at times supportive, is most often antagonistic. Their most intensely felt passions are always narcissistic reactions to one or the other's expression of archaic omnipotence. One of Anthony's happiest moments occurs when Gloria agrees to break a date in order to see him, when she mirrors his omnipotence:

> "Couldn't I come tonight?" He dared anything in the glory and revelation of that almost whispered "yes."
> "I have a date."
> "Oh—"
> "But I might—I might be able to break it."
> "Oh!" a sheer cry, a rhapsody. "Gloria?"
> "What?"
> "I love you." (108)

After Anthony's expression of omnipotence is responded to positively his self-esteem soars:

> His dark eyes were gleaming—around his mouth were lines it was a kindness to see. He was handsome then if never before, bound for one of those immortal moments which come so radiantly that their remembered light is enough to see by for years. (109)

And one of Anthony's worst moments comes when Gloria refuses to obey his will:

> Anthony pulled her quickly to her feet and held her helpless, without breath in a kiss that was neither a game nor a tribute.
> Her arms fell to her side. In an instant she was free.
> "Don't!" she said quietly. "I don't want that."
> She sat down on the far side of the lounge and gazed straight before her. A frown had gathered between her eyes. Anthony sank down beside her and closed his hand over hers. It was lifeless and *unresponsive*. (97, emphasis added)

Gloria continues to be "unresponsive" to Anthony's desires to kiss her and to hold her. Severely injured, his rage increases with each rejection, progressing from "impatience" to "annoyance" and ultimately to "anger." When he leaves Gloria still refuses to recognize him: "looking again at the couch he perceived that she had not turned, not even moved. With a shaken, immediately regretted 'good-bye' he went quickly but without dignity from the room"(98). Because of this encounter

> The man had had the hardest blow of his life [...] He reached home in misery, dropped into an armchair without even removing his overcoat,

> and sat there for over an hour, his mind racing the paths of fruitless and wretched self-absorption. She had sent him away! That was the reiterated burden of his despair. Instead of seizing the girl and holding her by sheer strength until she became passive to his desire, instead of beating down her will by the force of his own, he had walked, defeated and powerless, from her door, with the corners of his mouth drooping and what force there might have been in his grief and rage hidden behind the manner of a whipped school-boy [...] He must own that strength that could send him away. (98-9)

Their relationship continues to be a battle of wills, with each partner attempting to dominate the other. One of the least appealing scenes of the novel occurs when Anthony, drunk and disturbed that Gloria had forced their unceremonious departure from the company of the Merriams, insists that they visit the Barneses. But far from any desire to be with friends he has other objectives: "then Anthony knew what he wanted—to assert his will against this cool and impervious girl, to obtain with one magnificent effort a mastery that seemed infinitely desirable"(164).

It is clear that their relationship, initially formed because of their ability to mirror each other's archaic grandiosity, soon starts to disintegrate as a consequence of each partner's unintegrated omnipotence. Their need to express this archaic omnipotence ultimately interferes with their ability and desire to mirror the other's grandiosity. Each is more concerned with maintaining his or her own self-esteem than with giving to the other. It seems strange then that their relationship lasts as long as it does. Without the empathic mirroring responses that brought them together what is it that holds them together? Robert Roulston has pointed out that "Anthony's love for Gloria, indeed, often seems, no less than his craving for alcohol, an addiction which saps his will as it intoxicates him"(159). Once Anthony has experienced Gloria's approving mirroring smile: "she turned to him and smiled, and as he saw her smile every rag of anger and hurt vanity dropped from him"(95), it is "as though his very

moods were but the outer ripples of her own, as though emotion rose no longer in his breast unless she saw fit to pull an omnipotent controlling thread"(96). After having experienced empathic closeness to Gloria "he no longer craved the warmth and security of Maury's society which had cheered him no further back than November. Only Gloria could give that now and no one else ever again"(103). His "love" for Gloria is a psychological addiction that is formed within days of having met her:

> He was in love—he cried it passionately to himself. The things that a week before would have seemed insuperable obstacles, his limited income, his desire to be irresponsible and independent, had in this forty hours become the merest chaff before the wind of his infatuation. If he did not marry her his life would be a feeble parody on his own adolescence. To be able to face people and to endure the constant reminder of Gloria that all existence had become, it was necessary for him to have hope. So he built hope desperately and tenaciously out of the stuff of his dream, a hope flimsy enough, to be sure, a hope that was cracked and dissipated a dozen times a day, a hope mothered by mockery, but, nevertheless, a hope that would be brawn and sinew to his self-respect. (101)

What Anthony falls in love with is a dream, a product of his own narcissistic perception of his environment and a mirror of his own grandiosity. She becomes the "brawn and sinew" of his self-esteem. As his idealized selfobject, Anthony's sense of self is contingent upon her reactions to him. Gloria too, has fallen in love with a dream:

> All she wanted was to be a little girl, to be efficiently taken care of by some yielding yet superior power, stupider yet steadier than herself. It seemed that the only lover that she had ever wanted was a lover in a dream. (320)

She too invests narcissistic libido in this "dream" that is Anthony. As her idealized selfobject her self-esteem is bound to Anthony's perception of her. She

states: "I value my body because you think it's beautiful. And this body of mine—of yours—to have it grow ugly and shapeless? It's simply intolerable"(169).

As their relationship deteriorates, as they discover how much of a "waking dream" that their marriage really is, they are forced to return to other sources of narcissistic sustenance. They now find themselves almost entirely incapable of mirroring each other: "[Anthony] hated to be alone, as has been said he often dreaded being alone with Gloria"(234). External stimulus, for the most part derived from excessive partying, becomes one of the only means through which they can maintain their identities. There can be no thought of a weekend, or even weekday, without friends and alcohol. On the subject of addiction Kohut has written that:

> In the realm of narcissism very early traumatic disturbances in the relationship to the archaic idealized self-object and, especially, traumatic disappointments in it may broadly interfere with the development of the basic capacity of the psyche to maintain, on its own, the narcissistic equilibrium of the personality (or to re-establish it after it has been disturbed). Such is, for example, the case in personalities who become addicts. The trauma which they suffered is most frequently the severe disappointment in a mother who, because of her defective empathy with the child's needs (or for other reasons), did not appropriately fulfill the functions (as a stimulus barrier; as an optimal provider of needed stimuli; as a supplier of tension-relieving gratification, etc.) which the mature psychic apparatus should later be able to perform (or initiate) predominantly on its own. Traumatic disappointments suffered during these archaic stages of the development of the idealized self-object deprive the child of the gradual internalization of early experiences of being optimally soothed, or of being aided in going to sleep. Such individuals remain thus fixated on aspects of archaic objects and they find them, for example, in the form of drugs. The drug, however, serves not as a substitute for loved or loving objects, but as a replacement for a defect in the psychological structure. (AS 46)

Initially predisposed towards alcoholism because of their deficiencies in the psychological realm, it becomes increasingly harder for them, especially Anthony, to enjoy themselves unless they are drinking. Now incapable of supporting each other's grandiosity, other sources of narcissistic sustenance become increasingly important.

And while there is always someone with which to drink, the money needed to support this lifestyle is steadily diminishing. Money, more than anything else, is used by Anthony and Gloria as a means of maintaining their self-esteem. It is the basis for their self-image. Spending money has always been a way of expressing grandiosity and omnipotence for Anthony. At first it was his collections—stamps, books, silk pyjamas—that formed the basis of his identity. But in each case these collections are amassed only through the free spending of money. Stamp collecting "devoured his allowance every month"(12). And it is his "liberal" allowance at Harvard that makes it possible for him to become "an exquisite dandy." Later in life more and more money is needed to support their constant partying. Anthony takes pride in being able to invite friends to dinner and a club and then pay for the entire evening. Gloria, while more obsessed with her beauty as a measure of her self-esteem, also depends in part on money for the maintenance of her sense of self. She wants to be seen in the latest fashions, and late in their relationship the fact that they cannot afford a grey squirrel coat becomes a significant injury to her self-esteem.

Anthony's self-fragmentation at the end of the novel comes about as the result of massive and traumatic narcissistic injuries. Gloria is incapable of mirroring his grandiosity. Maury, once an important selfobject, refuses to recognize him anymore. As far as he knows his money is gone and alcohol no longer serves as a suitable substitute for his missing psychological structure. And, as a final injury, Dot suddenly appears at his doorstep in New York. While he is in

the army Dot is used by Anthony solely as a mirror for his own grandiosity. Away from Gloria and his friends, his only sources of narcissistic sustenance, his self-esteem drops. Fitzgerald tells us that

> Anthony's affair with Dorothy Raycroft was an inevitable result of his increasing carelessness about himself. He did not go to her desiring to possess the desirable, nor did he fall before a personality more vital, more compelling than his own, as he had done with Gloria four years before [...] *The particular weakness he indulged on this occasion was his need for excitement and stimulus from without.* (264, emphasis added)

Once he has returned to New York, Dot is no longer needed and he forgets her shortly afterward. Her appearance in New York is interpreted by Anthony as an injury because she becomes one more element in a narcissistically perceived environment over which Anthony expects to but cannot exert control. The mere fact of her being there is an affront to his sense of omnipotence. He reacts with characteristic narcissistic rage, becoming violently angry and attempting to kill her.

Anthony's already weak self, his incompletely formed reality ego, fragments under the pressure of these various injuries. When Dick and Gloria return to the apartment his archaic structures have re-exerted their dominance and returned Anthony to a time of relative narcissistic equilibrium: the time when, as a child, he could exercise complete control over his stamp collection. His archaic structures, refusing to recognize any imperfections within their narcissistic realm, now blame a vaguely perceived external world for his condition:

> He was thinking of the hardships, the insufferable tribulations he had gone through. They had tried to penalize him for the mistakes of his youth. He had been exposed to ruthless misery, his very craving for romance had been punished, his friends had deserted him—even Gloria had turned against him. He had been alone, alone—facing it all.
>
> Only a few months before people had been urging him to give in, to submit to mediocrity, to go to work. But he had known that he was

> justified in his way of life—and he had stuck it out staunchly [...] "I showed them," he was saying. "It was a hard fight, but I didn't give up and I came through!" (363-4)

The sense of betrayal that Anthony experienced as a child and later overcame in order to be able to trust others is now pervasive. It is now doubtful whether he will ever be able to enter again into any form of empathic relationship with an other.

III.

> He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled under the night. (*The Great Gatsby* 182)

F. Scott Fitzgerald's third novel, *The Great Gatsby*, is by far the most popular with his critics. It is almost universally seen as the pinnacle of Fitzgerald's achievement as an author; it is seen as stylistically his best written novel, structurally his most sound novel and thematically his most important one. And like all well-written texts, *The Great Gatsby* is able to sustain a variety of critical approaches. It has most often been discussed as a masterpiece of social criticism, in which the novel's conflicts are understood as revealing the essential fallacy of the notion of "American dream." One of the first articles in this vein is Marius Bewley's "Scott Fitzgerald's Criticism of America," in which the author states that "*The Great Gatsby* embodies a criticism of American experience—not of manners, but of a basic historic attitude to life—more radical than anything in James's own assessment of the deficiencies of his country"(263-4). Others, such as Thomas Hanzo, also see the novel as a commentary on American life, but from a somewhat different angle. Hanzo states:

> *The Great Gatsby* is not a melodrama about Jay Gatsby, but a definition of the senses in which Nick understands the word "great." Its subject is American morality. It is explored historically through the conflict

> between the surviving Puritan morality of the West and the post-war hedonism of the East; topically, through characteristic manifestations of American money values; formally and most significantly, through the personal history of a young American provincial whose moral intelligence is the proper source of our understanding and whose career, in the passage from innocence to revaluation, dramatizes the possibility and mode of a moral sanction in contemporary America. (68-9)

The novel becomes a "dramatization" of the rites of passage of a young American. And because the young American idealist is prevented from achieving what he desires the novel is thus seen as demonstrating the illusory quality of the American dream. John Henry Raleigh tells us that "F. Scott Fitzgerald's character Gatsby, as has often been said, represents the irony of American history and the corruption of the American dream"(99) and that "*The Great Gatsby* dramatizes this continuing ambiguity directly in the life of Gatsby and retrospectively by a glance at history at the end of the novel"(99-100). While maintaining their focus on the novel as dramatizing rites of passage other critics have looked for its allegorical significance elsewhere. Some find it similar in style to classical quest narratives. Bryce Christensen finds Gatsby's importance in his close resemblance to Christ:

> In developing and, even more, in resolving the sense of mystery in *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald creates parallels between Gatsby and Jesus, drawing particularly upon the scriptural language which defines the doctrine of Incarnation. (154)

But under the weight of these allegorical interpretations, Fitzgerald's characters tend to become flattened. Jay Gatsby and Tom Buchanan become merely representative of different positions and, by observing the interplay of these characters, critics are able to decide whether it is the "Puritan morality of the West" or the "post-war hedonism of the East" that is ultimately more dominant. And considering the amount of descriptive detail that Fitzgerald provides for each

character, especially Jay Gatsby and Tom Buchanan, it would seem that to reduce them to mere representatives of particular ideas would be to do them a disservice.

The Great Gatsby is only obliquely about what many critics have interpreted it as being about: "the withering of the American dream." The most prevalent theme of the novel is, as is the case with Fitzgerald's two previous ones, the narcissistically injured individual's desire for empathic merger with an idealized selfobject. Gatsby's entire life is directed towards a single purpose, to regain that state of empathic merger that he once had with Daisy Fay. And, as much as this is the case, Jay Gatsby is the most profoundly narcissistically injured character yet in Fitzgerald's corpus. Amory Blaine, as we have seen, is able to adapt to his social surrounding, and because of this he will never lack, except for brief periods of readjustment, the mirroring responses he needs. Anthony Patch, much worse off than Amory, is unable to withdraw himself from his relationship with Gloria. But even he is able to adapt to a certain extent. When he is drafted and forced to leave Gloria and all of his other selfobject relationships, he is able to cope by forming a sustaining relationship with Dorothy Raycroft. Gatsby, because of the severity of his narcissistic personality disorder is, during the time frame of the novel, only briefly able to enter into any form of empathic relationship with any selfobject. He has, as far as we can tell, only experienced an empathic selfobject relationship twice before in his lifetime, once with Dan Cody and once with Daisy Fay. And now he struggles to return to that state of empathic merger which he had enjoyed five years earlier.

Although stylistically different from Fitzgerald's first two novels, enough narration is provided that we may trace the development of Jay Gatsby's personality disorder. We are told that James Gatz was born amidst humble surroundings: "his parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people"(99).

This working-class background soon became an embarrassment to the young James Gatz: "his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all"(99). As Nick Carraway states: "the truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself [...] he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent"(99). The fact that his parents were "shiftless and unsuccessful" may or may not be indicative of a sort of *careless* attitude towards life and a non-empathic relationship with their son. What is important is that, from the perspective of Jay Gatsby, they were never "accepted" as his parents, thus making an empathic relationship impossible. The unsuccessful integration (or, at best, partially successful integration) of Jay Gatsby's archaic structures is apparent in his intense need for approving mirroring responses from others and in his feelings of intense shame over his relatively poor beginnings. His unintegrated archaic structures demand the constant attention, i.e. the narcissistic sustenance, that seemed to be available only to the incredibly wealthy. Dan Cody provides the model for the lifestyle that James Gatz wishes to create for himself:

> James Gatz—that was really, or at least legally, his name. He had changed it at the age of seventeen and at the specific moment that witnessed the beginning of his career—when he saw Dan Cody's yacht drop anchor over the most insidious flat on Lake Superior. It was James Gatz who had been loafing along the beach that afternoon in a torn green jersey and a pair of canvas pants, but it was already Jay Gatsby who borrowed a rowboat, pulled out to the *Tuolumne,* and informed Cody that a wind might catch him and break him up in half an hour. (98)

The two are together for five years, with Cody "reposing more and more trust in Gatsby"(101). Although having been cheated out of his inherited money, we are told that "he was left with his singularly appropriate education; the vague contour of Jay Gatsby had filled out to the substantiality of a man"(102). Thus it was that

James Gatz came to formulate at this early age his "Platonic conception of himself"(99), a state in which he would have unending recognition from others.

Nick Carraway tells us that during this formative period

> His heart was in a constant, turbulent riot. The most grotesque and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at night. A universe of ineffable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain while the clock ticked on the washstand and the moon soaked with wet light his tangled clothes upon the floor. Each night he added to the pattern of his fancies until drowsiness closed down upon some vivid scene with an oblivious embrace. For a while these reveries provided an outlet for his imagination. (99-100)

These dreams of "ineffable gaudiness" and "fantastic conceits" literally plague him, "haunt[ing]" his sleep with "vivid scenes" of his "future glory"(100). This "instinct toward his future glory"(100) will not be satisfied with starting at the bottom and working up[1]. At college in Minnesota James Gatz found himself "despising the janitor's work with which he was to pay his way through"(100). His main complaint against the college is levelled at "its ferocious indifference to the drums of his destiny"(100). As a result of his unintegrated grandiosity and omnipotence, James Gatz is driven to achieve wealth, by whatever means necessary, as a means of achieving the recognition that he needed. His climb up the social ladder, to a place where he could literally buy attention, is fuelled by the discrepancy between his archaic grandiose conception of himself and the humble reality in which he exists.

After Dan Cody, the only other truly empathic relationship that Gatsby has is with Daisy: "she was the first 'nice' girl he had ever known"(148). What had been up until now a relatively vague objective, to become rich and receive the attention

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[1]A trait that we have seen well-represented in Anthony Patch.

of others, now takes on a much more limited focus: to maintain the attention given to him by Daisy by whatever means possible. Kohut tells us that

> The most intense experiences of shame and the most violent forms of narcissistic rage arise in those individuals for whom a sense of absolute control over an archaic environment is indispensable because the maintenance of self-esteem—and indeed of the self—depends on the unconditional availability of the approving mirroring selfobject or of the merger permitting idealized one. (SS 2:645)

In the case of Jay Gatsby, Daisy fulfills both these functions, that of the approving mirroring selfobject and the merger permitting idealized one. It is in the character of Daisy that Jay Gatsby finds the ultimate in self-fulfillment; but, as Kohut tells us, without the close proximity, "the unconditional availability", of his idealized selfobject, Gatsby is subject to "the most intense experiences of shame and the most violent forms of narcissistic rage[2]." Unfortunately for Gatsby, he is not the omnipotent, grandiose figure that he desires to be. He is, in fact, relatively powerless:

> But he knew that he was in Daisy's house by a colossal accident. However glorious might be his future as Jay Gatsby, he was at present a penniless young man without a past, and at any moment the invisible cloak of his uniform might slip from his shoulders [...] and he was liable at the whim of an impersonal government to be blown anywhere about the world. (149)

He is once again ashamed of his past and present condition, so ashamed in fact that he hides it from her: "he let her believe that he was a person from much the same stratum as herself—that he was fully able to take care of her"(149). But despite his embarrassment over his past, Gatsby and Daisy form a strongly empathic relationship:

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[2]For Gatsby, already a shame-prone individual, we would expect him to tend towards experiencing shame as opposed to rage.

> On the last afternoon before he went abroad, he sat with Daisy in his arms for a long, silent time. It was a cold fall day, with fire in the room and her cheeks flushed. Now and then she moved and he changed his arms a little, and once he kissed her dark shining hair. The afternoon had made them tranquil for a while, as if to give them a deep memory for the long parting the next day promised. They had never been closer in their month of love, nor communicated more profoundly one with another, than when she brushed silent lips against his coat's shoulder or when he touched the end of her fingers, gently, as though she were asleep. (150)

That his sense of self-esteem comes to depend completely on her mirroring responses is not in doubt. After sensing that Daisy did not enjoy herself at one of his grandiose parties, Gatsby's response is to stop hosting them. Nick Carraway tells us that "the whole caravansary had fallen in like a card house at the disapproval in her eyes"(114).

After going to Europe during World War One Gatsby loses Daisy to Tom Buchanan, someone "enormously wealthy"(6) who *is* from the same stratum as herself and who *is* able to take care of her. This is a devastating narcissistic injury to Jay Gatsby's sense of self. However, it did not become an injury that turned him away from Daisy Buchanan, but one that separated him from reality even more profoundly. Instead of making him realize the impossibility of attaining his dream, it made him pursue his goals with all that much more intensity. So much intensity in fact, that somewhere between his service in the war and nineteen twenty-two, Jay Gatsby acquired an incredibly large sum of money. Although the reader is never told exactly how this came about, there are many passages in the book that suggest it was acquired illegally (through gambling, bootlegging and/or fraud). The means with which he is willing to acquire wealth is indicative of his overriding desire to become rich, and thus able to support Daisy.

Considering all of this together it is not difficult to understand Gatsby's present situation. His unintegrated exhibitionistic urges are nowhere more apparent than in the house that Gatsby occupies and the parties that he throws:

> The one on my right was a colossal affair by any standard—it was a factual imitation of some Hôtel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool, and more than forty acres of lawn and garden. (5)

> On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains [...] Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York [...] On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors d'œuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salads of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. (39-40)

These parties are indicative of Gatsby's need for recognition. He flaunts his wealth to whoever comes by, regardless of whether on not he or she is invited: "people were not invited—they went there"(41). This show of wealth leads to speculation by his guests about his past; something, the reader is told, that Gatsby enjoys: "these inventions were a source of satisfaction to [him]"(98). But even as this occurs, the reader senses that Gatsby's need for recognition is not being adequately satisfied. When the parties are over "a sudden emptiness seemed to flow [then] from the windows and the great doors, endowing with complete isolation the figure of the host"(56). Even during his own parties Gatsby remains aloof from the guests: "sometimes they came and went without having met Gatsby at all"(41). He is characterized physically as being restless:

> This [resourcefulness of movement] was continually breaking through his punctilious manner in the shape of restlessness. He was never quite still; there was always a tapping foot somewhere or the impatient opening and closing of a hand. (64)

This quality of dissatisfaction in his apparently fulfilling lifestyle is revealed to be symptomatic of his still unsatisfied narcissistic structures. Jordan Baker discovers that "he had waited five years and bought a mansion"(80) "across the bay"(79) just to be near Daisy. The reader learns that

> He wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was. (111-2)

What is missing from Jay Gatsby's life is the sense of fulfillment that he had when in merger with Daisy. This is the part of himself that he wants to recover. The last five years of his life have been lived in pursuit of this goal. He speaks of the loss of Daisy as "the sad thing that happened to me"(67). The irrational quality of this pursuit is evident in the fact that it has been entirely unilateral. Gatsby has not spoken to Daisy for five years yet he firmly believes that she will return to him. He refuses to believe that Daisy loves Tom. Because of his unintegrated grandiosity and omnipotence he believes that he will be able to "fix everything just the way it was before"(111).

The only person to stop him from achieving his goal is Tom Buchanan. He, like Gatsby, is a severely narcissistically injured individual. But unlike Gatsby, who feels intense shame because of his humble past, Tom Buchanan is an excellent example of a *chronically narcissistically enraged individual.* He has suffered enough narcissistic injury to permanently impair his perception of the world. On the subject of chronic narcissistic rage Kohut has written that

> The secondary processes tend to be pulled increasingly into the domain of the archaic aggressions seeking to re-establish control over a narcissistically experienced world. Conscious and pre-conscious ideation, particularly as it concerns the aims and goals of the personality, becomes more and more subserviant to the pervasive rage. The ego, furthermore, increasingly surrenders its reasoning capacity to

> the task of rationalizing the persisting insistence on the limitlessness of the power of the grandiose self: it does not acknowledge the inherent limitations of the power of the self, but attributes its failures to the malevolence and corruption of the uncooperative archaic object. (SS 2:657)

Buchanan's sense of his own omnipotence is without bounds. We are told that at New Haven he "had been one of the most powerful ends that ever played football"(6). While playing football his grandiosity and omnipotence were mirrored by the recognition he received: he was "a national figure"(6). Now, after his career is over "everything afterward savors of anticlimax [...] Tom would drift on forever seeking, a little wistfully, for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game"(6). The loss of the stature that football provided him is an injury to Tom's sense of his own omnipotence. Now he must seek confirmation of his limitless power by bullying and intimidating others. He is described as "powerful"(6), as having "arrogant eyes"(7) and as having "the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward"(7). He expects to assert control in every situation. He takes Nick Carraway out of his house "as though he were moving a checker to another square"(12). He feels that his position, his self, is constantly threatened. Evidence of the rationalizing process that Kohut mentions is seen in his racist beliefs: "it's up to us, who are the dominant race, to watch out or these other races will have control of things"(13). He is an intimidating man who delights in inflicting narcissistic injury upon others. He takes constant delight in tormenting George Wilson, reminding Wilson that he is dependent upon Buchanan. When injured himself he reacts swiftly and violently by reasserting his omnipotence:

> Some time toward midnight Tom Buchanan and Mrs. Wilson stood face to face, discussing in impassioned tones whether Mrs. Wilson had any right to mention Daisy's name.

> "Daisy! Daisy! Daisy!" shouted Mrs. Wilson. "I'll say it whenever I want to! Daisy! Dai—"
>
> Making a short deft movement, Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand. (37)

When he realizes that Daisy is somehow involved with Gatsby he responds in the only way that he knows how—by asserting control:

> She had told him that she loved him, and Tom Buchanan saw. He was astounded. His mouth opened a little, and he looked at Gatsby, and then back at Daisy as if he had just recognized her as someone he knew a long time ago.
>
> "You resemble the advertisement of the man," she went on innocently. "You know the advertisement of the man—"
>
> "All right," broke in Tom quickly, "I'm perfectly willing to go to town. Come on—we're all going to town."
>
> He got up, his eyes still flashing between Gatsby and his wife. No one moved.
>
> "Come on!" His temper cracked a little. "What's the matter, anyhow? If we're going to town, let's start." (119)

He refuses to relinquish control over any aspect of his narcissistically perceived environment, even those aspects with which he has a non-empathic relationship (e.g., Daisy) or those aspects which would normally seem insignificant (e.g., making the decision about going to town).

In the confrontation between Buchanan and Gatsby, Buchanan, feeling threatened, attacks Gatsby. He scorns him, calling him a "common swindler who'd have to steal the ring he put on her finger"(134). He psychologically overpowers Gatsby by assaulting his sense of self: "Who are you, anyhow?"(134), and by probing his mysterious and, for Gatsby, embarrassing past:

> I found out what your "drug-stores" were [...] He and this Wolfsheim bought up a lot of side-street drug-stores here and in Chicago and sold grain alcohol over the counter. That's one of his little stunts. I picked him for a bootlegger the first time I saw him, and I wasn't far wrong. (134)

Gatsby, already sensitive to such shame-provoking incidents, is severely narcissistically injured: "the words seemed to bite physically into Gatsby"(133). As Nick Carraway later puts it: "'Jay Gatsby' had broken up like glass against Tom's hard malice"(148). But from the perspective of Kohut's self psychology Nick Carraway is only half right. It is important to note that Tom Buchanan's attack on Gatsby's sense of self is not entirely responsible for his break-up. It is Daisy's rejection of Gatsby that completes the damage done to his already fragile sense of self. Only while he is in empathic merger with Daisy is Gatsby able to confront Tom. It is Gatsby, not Tom, who initiates the confrontation. Tom does ask the question "What kind of a row are you trying to cause in my house anyhow?"(130), but it is Gatsby who responds by promptly asserting that "Your wife doesn't love you. She's never loved you. She loves me"(131). While he is in empathic merger with Daisy his own sense of omnipotence is mirrored. And it is this sense of omnipotence that gives him the strength to face Tom[3]. But when Daisy begins to falter in her support of Gatsby, when she fails to respond with the words that he needs to hear, it is then that his breakdown intensifies. When she states that "Even alone I can't say I never loved Tom"(133), Gatsby's next words are spoken "with a touch of panic"(134). The subsequent physical death of Jay Gatsby at the hands of George Wilson is, at this point, only a formality. For all intents and purposes, "Jay Gatsby" had ceased to be, he "had broken up" *psychologically,* sometime during the confrontation in the hotel room.

Giles Mitchell, in his article "The Great Narcissist: A Study of Fitzgerald's Jay Gatsby," makes note of the psychological *inevitability* of Gatsby's break-up. Mitchell states that

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[3]In this context we can understand why, earlier in the novel and before he had contacted Daisy, Gatsby is unable to face Tom in the restaurant and, "embarrassed," promptly disappears from sight.

> To Gatsby the [green] light [at the end of Daisy's dock] has symbolized an ideal of perfection that has never before been tested—and threatened—because immediately after he and Daisy fell in love, the army sent him overseas, and he has not seen her for five years [...] He dimly realizes, but does not yet admit, that the real Daisy is unsuitably imperfect. (389)

Nick Carraway speculates on this point:

> As I went over to say good-by I saw that the expression of bewilderment had come back into Gatsby's face, as though a faint doubt had occurred to him as to the quality of his present happiness. Almost five years! There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. (97)

Like Anthony Patch in *The Beautiful and Damned*, Jay Gatsby has fallen in love with a dream. At the beginning he may have been in love with a person named Daisy Fay, but after five years of separation and wild idealization, Jay Gatsby is in love with an unrealistically idealized selfobject. And the inevitable realization that this ideal does not exist, the loss of this idealized selfobject and the mirroring responses which he had been expecting from it, is the narcissistic injury that "kills" Jay Gatsby.

When reading about the sheer decadence of characters like Tom and Daisy Buchanan, and Jay Gatsby, the reader is forced to confront the excess that was reality for many wealthy people in American society of the nineteen twenties. Fitzgerald describes a lifestyle in which every day's decisions involve little more than choosing between the station wagon and the coupé, the horses and the hydroplane, whiskey and scotch. In short, he describes a world very distinct from the hard economic reality of the everyday life of the ordinary American. Yet as much as upper class America is isolated and unreachable, it is to this day held up as the ideal, the dream state to which every young American can aspire. Jay Gatsby

aspired to this state. He tried to fit into a class that valued selfishness and materialism over his unwavering idealism. And in the confrontation between this idealism and the Buchanan's materialism and carelessness we are able to see, through the eyes of Nick Carraway, how much of a myth that the American dream really is. Using Kohut's theory of narcissistic personality disorders, it is possible to understand the psychological development and eventual fragmentation of Jay Gatsby. But the one question that has not been answered is why James Gatz developed into such an intensely shame-prone individual. That is, out of all of the reactions that are possible—rage, shame, greed and envy—why did Jay Gatsby tend towards shame? It is at this point that we can begin to understand the novel as a work of social fiction, but only within the context of the psychological criticism that we have already completed. Only in relation to the riches of others can one feel ashamed of one's own meagre portion. Early in his life James Gatz resolved to "get ahead," to put himself in a position in which he would no longer have to feel embarrassed by his past. But there is at work in Fitzgerald's America a strong class system, and this system continued to exclude Jay Gatsby despite his wealth. Thus he lived at West Egg, not the "fashionable" East Egg. Nick Carraway is aware of these class distinctions. He calls the contrast between East and West Egg "bizarre and not a little sinister"(5). But even though he detests these distinctions he lives by them. Himself a member of a "prominent, well-to-do"(2) family from the Mid-West, he nevertheless serves as our mediator, and it is by his rejection of upper-class selfishness and materialism, "everything for which [he] has an unaffected scorn"(2), that we may recognize Gatsby's unique qualities. Gatsby, carrying with him "his incorruptible dream" of belonging, of merging with his idealized selfobject, refuses to recognize the barriers and is destroyed for his transgressions. Herein lies the power of Fitzgerald's social criticism.

IV.

> He sometimes looked back with awe at the carnivals of affection he had given as a general might gaze upon a massacre he had ordered to satisfy an impersonal blood lust. (*Tender is the Night* 36-7)

Fitzgerald's fourth novel, *Tender is the Night*, is in many ways his most complex one. It is second in length only to *The Beautiful and Damned*, but employs more characters and more character relationships over a longer time period using more than one point of view. And although nine years in the writing, Fitzgerald himself remained dissatisfied with the novel to the end, pleading with Scribners to delay publication of *Tender is the Night* until he could revise it once more. There are, in fact, *two* editions of the novel. On the basis of the author's dissatisfaction with his novel and tentative notes he made towards a new revision in 1938 (four years after its publication), editor Malcolm Cowley rearranged the novel into a continuous chronological order for the 1951 Scribners edition. Understandably then, *Tender is the Night* has generated a tremendous amount of critical interest. There are those who interpret the novel as a success and those who see it as a total failure. Those who regard it as a success speak of the novel's completeness of theme, or of "Fitzgerald's consummate skill in fusing personality and history"(Grenberg 107). Bruce Grenberg interprets the novel as a carefully crafted historical allegory which outlines America's loss of national innocence during and following World War One. From a psychological point of view, interpretations such as this tend to

flatten out the characters in the novel, refiguring personal circumstances into matters of national interest. For instance, Grenberg writes:

> The effect of the rape upon Nicole is most clearly and directly expressed in her letters (1918-1919) to Captain Dick Diver, written while she is a patient at Dohmler's Clinic and while Dick serves his military duty in a psychiatric unit at Bar-sur-Aube. And though these letters are of considerable psychiatric interest, their more comprehensive purpose lies in their identification of Nicole's personal trauma with the broader cultural trauma of the war. (109)

Within this allegorical context events lose their personal significance, becoming instead representative of wider cultural phenomena. Grenberg's argument is comprehensive and cogent, but my focus will remain on the material that Grenberg himself identifies as "of considerable psychological interest."

Within this context, it is the character of Dick Diver *qua* psychiatrist around which much of the critical debate exists. For as a psychiatrist his character has come under considerable fire. Henry Dan Piper writes that, while "it is easy to excuse minor inaccuracies like Fitzgerald's misuse of 'Cheyne-Stokes tendencies,' 'cervicle of the brain,' and other technical terms," it is "more difficult to overlook is his assumption that anyone with Dick's careful training would so cavalierly disregard well-established professional ethics and marry someone as ill as Nicole, with whom a doctor-patient relationship already existed"(223). Brian Way, in a passage from his book *F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Art of Social Fiction*, responds to such criticisms by maintaining that they are oversimplifications of an inexplicable situation:

> The most important thing to notice about Dick's deterioration is that it is not a simple process. The general failure to recognize that fact has had serious consequences for the reputation of *Tender is the Night*: it has been subjected to a great deal of adverse criticism—most of it singularly inept—and to almost as much half-hearted praise [...] The conviction that it should be possible to isolate a single cause for so

> complex a change in personality, while it is intellectually absurd, faithfully reflects twentieth-century habits of thought. The rise of psychology and the social sciences has tended to give us a false sense of assurance in approaching human situations. Emboldened by spurious notions of scientific certainty, we are often led to claim for a single traumatic, environmental or historical factor the status of a complete explanation. The effect of these new sciences has been the contrary of what their greatest thinkers presumably intended: they have not refined our notions of human motivation but made them cruder. To be specific, they have created a climate of thought in which it is more difficult to read novels like *Tender is the Night* intelligently. (121-2)

Way believes that all great novelists have "recognized that a multiplicity of factors contribute to the ruin of a human life and, in addition, [...] [great novels] contain an element of mystery—beyond a certain point they are inexplicable"(122). Besides the fact that Way's position is fundamentally anti-rational, he finds himself unable to work within the parameters of his own argument. For shortly thereafter Way writes that, "through his marriage, Dick condemns himself to a process of exhaustion. He gives himself extravagantly, and he is exploited"(128). Here, Way is essentially contradicting himself by providing a relatively simple explanation for Dick Diver's decline.

Within Kohut's psychological framework, I believe that it is possible to account for the various actions of the protagonist. For what Henry Piper has made us aware of, that Dick Diver is not a convincing psychiatrist, is essentially true. By initially marrying Nicole he breaks his professional code of ethics. And within the duration of the novel he fails to deal effectively with any of the few patients that he sees. His manner of handling his patient Von Cohn Morris and the events after Morris' departure is most unprofessional and unethical. But beyond identifying in which ways Dick is a poor psychiatrist few have tried to explain *why* Dick acts as he does. Piper points out Diver's unprofessional behaviors, but does not go beyond this. Instead these inconsistencies become

the basis for his criticism of the novel. Brian Way proposes that such things are inexplicable. In relation to these articles, Jeffrey Berman's "*Tender is the Night*: Fitzgerald's *A Psychology for Psychiatrists*" is a positive step towards answering some of the issues with which we are concerned. He too begins with the question "Why does Dick catastrophically disregard the medical ethics of the situation by becoming romantically involved with his schizophrenic patient?"(35). But the answer for Berman is not to be found in Fitzgerald's incompetence but in Dick's own psychological profile:

> What are Dick's motives for becoming a psychiatrist? Fitzgerald offers a few intriguing clues here. In the beginning of Part II he develops Dick's apparent good health and invulnerability, but the language becomes increasingly discordant, suggesting the hidden weaknesses and tensions that may have shaped his decision to become a psychiatrist. (36)

Berman concludes that "the pattern [of Dick's behavior] recalls the pre-Oedipal stage of the mother-child relationship, when the form of nurturing creates the future archetypes of identification, the basis of human interaction"(39). According to Berman, Dick holds within himself "a desire to love so intensely as to both engulf and be engulfed"(39) and it is this "insatiable quest for love [that] paradoxically drains him, heightens his loneliness and incompletion"(39). Having identified Dick's "overwhelming need to love and be loved"(42) Berman suggests that the root cause of this need is to be found in Dick's own unconscious fantasies:

> At the core of his unconscious feelings towards psychotherapy resides a rescue fantasy, in which he desires to cure his patients through the expression of his love for them rather than the expansion of their self-awareness. (42)

But what has to be made clear is that this explanation, Dick's "rescue fantasy," is not the cause of Dick's needs but yet another *symptom* of his damaged psyche.

Fitzgerald's previous novels provided us with the convenience of relatively complete biographical detail, which allowed us to trace the development and exact causes of the various characters' personality disorders. In this case the structure of *Tender is the Night* makes such a longitudinal study impossible. Of Dick Diver's past we learn very little and of his childhood we learn nothing. All that the reader really knows is that he is a graduate of Yale and Johns Hopkins and that he was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. One thing that we are told about Dick upon his initial arrival at Zurich is that he "got up to Zurich on less Achilles' heels than would be required to equip a centipede, but with plenty—the illusions of eternal strength and health, and of the essential goodness of people"(132). This clue provides us with a very clear-cut indication that Dick is a narcissistically injured individual. His "illusions of eternal strength and health" are derived from unintegrated archaic omnipotence and grandiosity. Still early in his career and before he has become involved with Nicole, Dick tells his fellow psychiatrist Franz Gregorovious that he has only one plan for his life: "to be a good psychologist—maybe to be the greatest one that ever lived"(147). Franz thinks that this is funny but sees "that this time Dick wasn't joking"(147). This desire to be the "greatest [psychologist] that ever lived" also reflects unintegrated omnipotence and grandiosity.

But these characteristics initially seem at odds with the Dick Diver that appears in Book I of *Tender is the Night*. Here he is described as having "the power of arousing a fascinated and uncritical love"(36) from all people except "a few of the tough-minded and perennially suspicious"(36). We are told that

> To be included in Dick diver's world for a while was a remarkable experience: people believed he made special reservations about them, recognizing the proud uniqueness of their destinies, buried under the compromises of how many years. He won everyone quickly with an

> exquisite consideration and a politeness that moved so fast and intuitively that it could be examined only in its effect. (37)

Dick's popularity arises from an understanding of the subtleties of those around him, his ability to mirror other people's psychological needs. As Fitzgerald tells us: at Dick's party "it was themselves he gave back to [his guests]"(63). Dick displays an ability to give that we might at first consider atypical of the narcissistically injured individual. His psychological insight allows him to understand and respond to the needs of others with a dexterity described as "intuitive." It is this insight which permits him to become a highly regarded psychiatrist. But co-existing with this ability to give is the necessity of *taking* from those that surround him. Fitzgerald continues his description of "Dick Diver's world" by telling us that:

> So long as they subscribed to it completely, their happiness was his preoccupation, but at the first flicker of doubt as to its all-inclusiveness he evaporated before their eyes, leaving little communicable memory of what he had said or done. (37)

Dick Diver does not give unconditionally. From his guests he demands their attention. Nicole is the only character in the novel who is able to recognize this facet of his personality:

> He went back into his house and Nicole saw that one of his most characteristic moods was upon him, the excitement that swept everyone up into it and was inevitably followed by his own form of melancholy, which he never displayed but at which she guessed. This excitement about things reached an intensity out of proportion to their importance, generating a really extraordinary virtuosity with people [...] The reaction came when he realized the waste and extravagance involved. He sometimes looked back with awe at the carnivals of affection he had given as a general might gaze upon a massacre he had ordered to satisfy an impersonal blood lust. (36-7)

The need that Dick must satisfy, his "impersonal blood lust", is his need for recognition from others. The guests that he invites to his parties become the

audience in front of which he performs in return for their approving mirroring responses. His "characteristic moods" follow the pattern that we would expect of an injured individual. During the height of his party, his performance, he reaches a state of intensely felt excitement. Afterwards, when the guests have left, this excitement is replaced by melancholy; he suffers from a lack of stimulation. The sense of "waste and extravagance" that he later feels arises from a recognition of his own psychological incompleteness, a recognition of the lengths to which he must go to attain adequate self-stimulation.

While sharing certain basic psychological characteristics with Fitzgerald's other protagonists, Dick Diver is essentially unlike any of them in one significant way: he is a charismatic personality. According to Kohut, charismatic and messianic personalities constitute a distinct sub-group of narcissistic personality disorders. In the normal course of development the ego-ideal, the successfully integrated idealized selfobject, embodies the realistic standards against which an individual may measure his or her successes and failures, and thus maintain a healthy sense of self-esteem, while the successfully integrated grandiose self provides the individual with realistic ambitions. Without the successful integration of these structures, the individual will have no realistic sense of self-esteem or ambitions. Instead, the unintegrated archaic structures will assert their archaic claims of perfection and omnipotence. In the case of the charismatic personality "his self and the idealized structure have become one"("Creativeness, Charisma, Group Psychology" 826). The charismatic person has, in his or her eyes, achieved the ideal. Instead of depending upon the mirroring approving responses of narcissistically perceived others, he or she "[performs] functions the selfobject was supposed to perform"(831): "In many instances it appears that such charismatic and messianic personalities have fully identified themselves with

either their grandiose self or their idealized superego[1]"(826). The recognizable characteristics of charismatic personalities are "an apparently unshakable self-confidence"(825) and a tendency to "voice their opinions with absolute certainty"(825):

> The maintenance of their self-esteem depends on the incessant use of certain mental functions: they are continually judging others—usually pointing up the moral flaws in other people's personalities and behavior—and, without shame or hesitation, they set themselves up as the guides and leaders and gods of those who are in need of guidance, of leadership, and of a target for their reverence. (825-6)

Charismatic personalities are able to manipulate their environmental circumstances so that they remain the centre of attention. This is accomplished through "their keen grasp of even the subtlest reactions in other people that are related to their own narcissistic requirements." Neither Anthony Patch, Amory Blaine or Jay Gatsby were able to exert influence over the behavior of those around them. Gatsby and Anthony Patch were both oblivious to the social systems around them and, as a result of this, both suffer severe self-trauma. Amory Blaine is intelligent enough to analyze and understand Princeton's and St. Regis' societies to the extent that he is able to become popular; but he is unable to achieve lasting popularity and self-esteem, and thus we see him moving quickly from one relationship to another. In contrast, Dick Diver, as a result of the particular vicissitudes of his childhood has become "superempathic with

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[1]The archaic structure with which the individual has identified, the grandiose self or the ego-ideal, will determine whether he or she will be a charismatic (grandiose self) or messianic (ego-ideal) personality.

[himself] and [his] needs"(831), allowing him to manipulate situations to his advantage[2].

The difficulty of diagnosing such personalities, especially those which are not extreme cases, is that they "are not likely to offer themselves to the scrutiny of the psychoanalyst. They do not feel ill and their self-esteem is high"(825). It is necessary to study their reactions to certain self threatening situations. For, as Kohut has told us, charismatic personalities "display an *apparently* unshakable self-confidence"(825, emphasis added). We have already seen how Dick has come to dominate his surroundings in order to regulate his sense of self. He is himself attractive; he is a famous psychiatrist; he has a beautiful wife; and he is constantly surrounded by friends. But this novel is about decline, the gradual deterioration of Dick Diver; and by studying the various relationships that Dick Diver maintains we will be better able to understand exactly how and why this charismatic personality comes to ruin.

Nicole Diver is herself an injured personality. She seems to have suffered traumatic selfobject failure on the part of both of her primary caregivers. Although we do not know anything about her relationship with her mother, we do know that she died when Nicole was eleven (141). And whether their relationship was good or bad makes little difference. If it was good, then the mother's death must have been a traumatic selfobject failure for Nicole; if bad, then selfobject failure must have already occurred. The incestuous relationship that develops between

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[2]Some might argue that Jay Gatsby is also a charismatic personality, but I feel that this is incorrect for several reasons. It is readily apparent from the intensity of his pursuit that his self and his ideal are not merged. His self-esteem is maintained throughout the novel entirely from his relationship to Daisy. Only in her approving presence does he display "an apparently unshakable self-confidence." Before merging with Daisy he is characteristically nervous and unsure of himself. Also, unlike Dick Diver, he does not participate in his own parties; but rather, he maintains a safe distance from his guests, preferring anonymity to recognition.

her and her father also results in trauma for Nicole. The close and empathic relationship that had developed between the two since the death of her mother ends all at once: "she seemed to freeze up right away. She'd just say, 'Never mind, never mind, Daddy. It doesn't matter. Never mind'"(145). The narcissistic injuries sustained during this time were severe enough to result in permanent psychological damage.

The correspondence between Dick Diver and Nicole Warren begins during a time when each is under a great deal of stress: he is a captain in the army during World War One and she is undergoing treatment for her psychological problems. During her loneliest moments at Dohmler's clinic she is able to write to Dick and, most importantly, receive an empathic response:

> I write to you because there is no one else to whom I can turn and it seems to me if this farcicle [sic] situation is apparent to one as sick as me it should be apparent to you. The mental trouble is all over and besides that I am completely broken and humiliated, if that was what they wanted. My family have shamefully neglected me, there's no use asking them for help or pity. I have had enough and it is simply ruining my health and wasting my time pretending that what is the matter with my head is curable. (138)

And elsewhere she writes that "I wish someone were in love with me like boys were ages ago before I was sick"(139). We are told that "when Dick's answer was delayed for any reason, there was a fluttering burst of worry—like a worry of a lover"(140).

Within the letters that Nicole writes to Dick are many flattering remarks about him:

> I thought when I saw you in your uniform that you were so handsome. (136)

> It was fine to have your postcard. I am so glad you take such interest in disqualifying nurses. (139)

> How kind you have been! You must be very wise behind your face like a white cat. (139)

Dr. Gregorovious is correct in his assessment of the value of their correspondence: "It was the best thing that could have happened to her [...] a transference of the most fortuitous kind"(134). Kohut tells us that the essence of the psychoanalytic cure lies in successfully establishing a clinical transference and then helping the patient complete his or her psychological development through the psychoanalyst's selective and empathic mirroring responses to the patient's narcissistic needs. That a transference is established is apparent from one of her letters. Nicole states: "Come back to me some day, for I will be here always on this green hill. Unless they will let me write my father, whom I loved dearly"(136). This detail allows us to conclude that Nicole is unconsciously reenacting her childhood psychosexual development. It is now possible to cure Nicole by reworking her early traumatic experiences within this empathic selfobject relationship. During this time the analyzing psychiatrist must recognize the nature of the transference relationship, that it is not true love, and use it as a means to an end, the successful integration of the archaic structures into the patient's psyche.

Fitzgerald makes us aware that beneath Dick's promising and professional exterior there are many self-doubts:

> The truth was that for some months he had been going through that partitioning of the things of youth wherein it is decided whether or not to die for what one no longer believes. In the dead white hours of Zurich staring into a stranger's pantry across the upshine of a street-lamp, he used to think that he wanted to be good, he wanted to be kind, he wanted to be brave and wise, but it was all pretty difficult. He wanted to be loved, too, if he could fit it in. (149)

Because of his own vulnerabilities he is unable to maintain distance from Nicole Warren. Her beauty and her ability to mirror his own grandiosity result in his professional transgression. "With deliberate indifference"(158), the harshest injury for someone narcissistically injured, Dick makes one attempt to break the relationship between himself and Nicole. As expected "Nicole's world [falls] to pieces"(159) as she loses her only source of mirroring responses. The difficulty arises when Dick himself becomes "too upset to say any more"(159) and "during the next weeks Dick experience[s] a vast dissatisfaction"(161). In breaking his relationship with Nicole he too has lost an important source of mirroring responses.

The relationship that they form is similar to that of Anthony and Gloria Patch. Each has come to rely on the other for his or her narcissistic sustenance. And like the Patches their relationship is bound to fail. The fact that Nicole and Dick are constantly surrounded by friends and guests suggests that each is incapable of adequately mirroring the other; thus the constant need for outside stimulation. Inevitably, each one's unintegrated grandiosity attempts to exert its superiority:

> It was not so much fun. His work became confused with Nicole's problems; in addition, her income had increased so fast of late that it seemed to belittle his work. Also, for the purpose of her cure, he had for many years pretended to a rigid domesticity from which he was drifting away, and this pretense became more arduous in this effortless immobility, in which he was inevitably subjected to microscopic examination. When Dick could no longer play what he wanted to on the piano [for fear of alerting Nicole to his indiscretions], it was an indication that life was being refined down to a point. (188)

Dick's own identity as a respected psychiatrist, as well as his psychological and financial independence, are being sacrificed for Nicole. Fitzgerald tells us that "living rather ascetically, travelling third-class when he was alone, with the

cheapest wine, and good care of his clothes, and penalizing himself for any extravagances, he maintained a qualified financial independence"(187). But because of the vast discrepancy between their incomes Dick's "qualified financial independence" becomes token: "It was hard to know where to go. He glanced about the house that Nicole had made, that Nicole's grandfather had paid for"(187). In Dick's eyes, Nicole, with the help of her sister Baby Warren (who has never regarded Dick as anything more that a convenient possession), is encouraging the dissolution of his independence: "Nicole, wanting to own him, wanting him to stand still forever, encouraged any slackness on his part, and in multiplying ways he was constantly inundated by a trickling of goods and money"(187).

Dick's relationship with Rosemary Hoyt is formed essentially out of his growing need for mirroring responses. And Rosemary, who, as Berman remarks, "sees life from a rose-colored point of view"(44), instantly idealizes Dick: "But Dick Diver—he was all complete there. Silently she admired him"(28). It is his charisma to which she is instantly attracted, his ability to subtly manipulate:

> He seemed kind and charming—his voice promised that he would take care of her, and that a little later he would open up whole new worlds for her, unroll an endless succession of magnificent possibilities. He managed the introduction so that her name wasn't mentioned and then let her know easily that everyone knew who she was but was respecting the completeness of her private life—a courtesy that Rosemary had not met with save from professional people since her success. (25)

Rosemary provides him with unqualified mirroring responses and Dick, "realizing that he never had a better *audience*"(62, emphasis added), is eager to perform. At the train station during a shooting, Dick takes charge partly out of a sense of responsibility and partly because "he was showing off for Rosemary"(96). Their relationship continues to develop because each is able to provide the other with

the responses that he or she needs for continued psychological survival. That their relationship is not a mature love relationship is readily apparent: "They were still in the happier stage of love. They were full of brave illusions about each other, tremendous illusions"(86). Fitzgerald tells us that, when Rosemary kisses Dick, she "laid her lips to the beautiful cold image she had created"(118):

> For three years Dick had been the ideal by which Rosemary measured other men and inevitably his stature had increased to heroic size. She did not want him to be like other men, yet here were the same exigent demands, as if he wanted to take some of herself away, carry it off in his pocket. (231)

The breakdown of these "tremendous illusions" results in the eventual breakdown of their relationship. Dick cannot bear the thought that there has ever been another man in Rosemary's life, i.e., that she is not perfect and he is not unique, and when he hears of her former suitor Bill Hillis he is severely injured: "Only the image of a third person, even a vanished one, entering into his relation with Rosemary was needed to throw him off his balance and send through him waves of pain, misery, desire, desperation"(101). After their first sexual encounter Dick again becomes enraged and "frantic with jealousy"(238) upon hearing about another suitor. This time he abruptly leaves, swearing that "if he had to bring all the bitterness and hatred of the world into his heart, he was not going to be in love with her again"(239). For the normally level-headed Dick Diver, the presence of these disintegration products, jealousy and narcissistic rage, indicate that Dick's psyche is under severe duress; it is approaching fragmentation.

Nicole also is having trouble maintaining self-cohesion. Far from being cured by her marriage to Dick, her psychological troubles are simply prolonged. Any initial happiness that she may have had has now disappeared from their stale relationship:

> She had come out of her first illness alive with new hopes, expecting so much, yet deprived of any subsistence except Dick, bringing up children she could only pretend gently to love, guided orphans. The people she liked, rebels mostly, disturbed her and were bad for her—she sought in them the vitality that had made them independent or creative or rugged, sought in vain—for their secrets were buried deep in childhood struggles they had forgotten. They were more interested in Nicole's exterior harmony and charm, the other face of her illness. She led a lonely life owning Dick who did not want to be owned. (198)

It is immediately apparent that she was never cured. She may have "come out of her first illness alive with new hopes" but she still exists within an archaic world of selfobject relationships. Dick is now her only source of psychological "subsistence;" although, as we read, she seeks in others "the vitality that had made them independent or creative or rugged." Evidence of her growing dissatisfactions comes in the form of the three distinct breakdowns that she experiences during the novel. Two are fits of hysteria suffered in times of stress. The third is more dangerous; while Dick is driving the Diver family home, Nicole grabs the wheel and intentionally crashes the car. Inasmuch as "the most unhappy aspect of their relations was Dick's growing *indifference*"(301, emphasis added), then the last incident, and perhaps the first two, can be interpreted as a way for Nicole to attract attention to herself. It is also possible that the last episode is an unqualified expression of Nicole's narcissistic rage at Dick's growing indifference. As we read, even after the car has crashed "Nicole was screaming and cursing and trying to tear at Dick's face"(211).

Her eventual turn to Tommy Barban fulfills the same needs in her as Rosemary had for Dick. He is one of those individuals with "the vitality that had made [him] independent" that Nicole admires. Thinking about Tommy,

> Nicole relaxed and felt new and happy; her thoughts were clear as good bells—she had a sense of being cured and in a new way. Her ego

> began blooming like a great rich rose as she scrambled back along the labyrinths in which she had wandered for years. (310)

With Tommy she feels "cured." But in what way does she feel cured? As her thoughts reveal—"How good to have things like this, to be worshipped again"(312)—Nicole is far from being cured. She has simply found another source of the narcissistic sustenance that she needs for her psychological stability. Not having received adequate stimulation from Dick for some time now she has replaced him with someone more attentive. As Tommy tells her: "I'm going to look at you a great deal from now on"(313). Nicole remains dependent upon another for her sense of self-esteem.

Dick is almost eager to let Nicole go when confronted by Tommy Barban. We have already seen that he too is dissatisfied with his marriage to Nicole. He has always been treated as a possession by Baby Warren: "he had been swallowed up like a gigolo, and somehow permitted his arsenal to be locked up in the Warren safety-deposit vaults"(220). And, within the time frame of *Tender is the Night,* his own narcissistic needs have not been met by Nicole. His decline into obscurity in the last paragraphs of the novel indicates that his professional career is still hampered by the same problems. He has left psychiatry, something for which he has always been temperamentally unsuited[3], and turned to general

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[3]Being a narcissistically injured individual, Dick's ability to empathize with others is limited. On this point Berman is correct when he states that

> There is no ambiguity, however, surrounding Dick's preference for the theoretical over the clinical side of psychiatry. As opposed to the capable but unimaginative resident pathologist Franz Gregorovious, Dick is the brilliant theoretician [...] and even when Franz persuades Dick to open a clinic with him, he uses the enticing argument that the experience will be good for his writing. (36)

Writing—and the favorable acceptance that his writing brings—allows Dick to express and have mirrored his unintegrated grandiosity.

medicine. His charisma prevails—we read that he "was much admired by the ladies"(338) and "considered to have fine manners"(338)—but so does his narcissism—"he became entangled with a girl who worked in a grocery store, and he was also involved in a lawsuit about some medical question"(338). He remains unable to maintain a professional distance from his patients.

As we have seen, Dick's own narcissism is a subtle aspect of his character, but it becomes increasingly apparent as the novel progresses and his marriage deteriorates. His narcissistic fixations affect every aspect of all of his relationships within the novel, including those relationships with his friends, his wife Nicole and Rosemary Hoyt. As Fitzgerald tells us:

> His love for Nicole and Rosemary, his friendship with Abe North, with Tommy Barban in the broken universe of the war's ending—in such contacts the personalities had seemed to press up so close to him that he became the personality itself—there seemed some necessity of taking all or nothing; it was as if for the remainder of his life he was condemned to carry with him the egos of certain people, early met and early loved, and to be only as complete as they were complete themselves. There was some element of loneliness involved—so easy to be loved—so hard to love. (265-6)

Dick Diver depends on others for the regulation of his self-esteem: he can "be only as complete as they were themselves." Far from being an incompetent study of an unconvincing psychiatrist, *Tender is the Night* is a very fine study of the psychological deterioration of a narcissistically injured individual: "The weakness of this profession is its attraction for the man a little crippled and broken"(153).

V.

> Winding down the hill, 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. (*The Last Tycoon* 95)

Most critics agree that F. Scott Fitzgerald's last novel, *The Last Tycoon*, would have been a masterpiece, surpassing even *The Great Gatsby*, had the author lived to complete it. Two early reviewers are both sure of this possibility. Stephen Vincent Benét states that "had Fitzgerald been permitted to finish the book, I think there is no doubt that it would have added a major character and a major novel to American fiction"(131). Edmund Wilson writes in his 1941 introduction to the novel that "*The Last Tycoon* is thus, even in its imperfect state, Fitzgerald's most mature piece of work"(vii). This positive trend has persisted throughout the twentieth century, often focussing on Fitzgerald's protagonist. Robert Giddings writes that

> Monroe Stahr is a Prince, an aristocrat among robber barons and warlords. He seems to stand for a particular set of values which include personal courage, skills and expertise, professionalism and ambition combined, but buffed and polished with sophistication, delicacy and refinement. He has all the American virtues, but they are refined to an almost aristocratic essence. (83)

Praise abounds for the character of Monroe Stahr. He has been interpreted as the last bastion of American individualism against the developing corporations that

came to dominate the American economic landscape. Within an industry that is rapidly declining into unabashed bureaucratic commercialism and greed he is the last tycoon, still willing to release a picture that he is sure will be a financial flop because he believes in its artistic merit. He is "a paternalistic employer," running his company as a father would run his family, demanding absolute loyalty from his staff but returning that same loyalty to his employees.

Monroe Stahr is, like Dick Diver, a charismatic personality. He commands the same ability to influence and manipulate others that Dick Diver enjoys. Yet at the same time Monroe Stahr is a much more stable personality than Dick. For while Dick had identified himself with his own ideal it is apparent from the events of *Tender is the Night* that this identification is imperfect, he had formed only a tenuous bond between his self and his ideal, one that was still dependent on the approving mirroring responses of his audience. The eventual breakdown of this fragile bond results in a corresponding breakdown of Dick Diver's control over his own self-esteem. The various events of the novel are indicative of his gradual deterioration (e.g., his affair with Rosemary Hoyt, his increased drinking and his total failure as a psychiatrist). Monroe Stahr, despite the fact that he is dying or, perhaps, *because of this fact,* is able to stay true to his profession to the end (to the projected end of the novel, as supplied in the synopsis by Edmund Wilson based on Fitzgerald's notes that follow the text). He is able to perform his daily functions without regard for the reactions, the mirroring responses, that he provokes within the Hollywood community, however disapproving they may be. The fact that Dick Diver is never able to relinquish completely his need for the approving responses of others allows us to conclude that the union between his self and his ideal is imperfect. But Monroe Stahr is, much more completely that Dick Diver, a charismatic personality.

The charismatic individual may be at the extreme end of personality types in terms of self-righteousness, but Kohut, in the same article ("Charisma, Creativity, Group Psychology") reminds us that

> The social effects of messianic and charismatic personalities are not necessarily deleterious. A figure of the kind required in times of grave crisis cannot be of the more modest, self-relativistic personality type to which those chosen to positions of leadership during quiescent historical periods generally belong. (827)

The example that Kohut provides in this context is that of the relationship between the British people and Winston Churchill before, during and after World War Two:

> Winston Churchill [...] who was unacceptable before the crisis, filled his role to perfection during the crisis and was the unquestioned leader of the nation. Yet he was discarded after the crisis had subsided. The British people identified themselves with him and with his unshakable belief in his and, by extension, the nation's strength so long as their selves felt weak in the face of the serious danger; as soon as victory had been attained, however, the need for a merger with an omnipotent figure subsided, and they were able to turn from him to other (noncharismatic) leaders. (827-8)

The example used here may at first seem inappropriate. Fitzgerald's Hollywood is, after all, hardly a nation facing imminent destruction. But the comparison may not be as improper as it might initially seem.

In an unpublished essay, "Narcissism in the Dream Factory: The Hollywood Self in *The Last Tycoon,*" Jerry Carson has explored the psychological environment of the novel using the self psychology of Heinz Kohut. This essay makes a convincing case for the existence of a state of intense psychological tension within the Hollywood movie industry of Fitzgerald's novel. At the heart of Carson's argument is his observation that Fitzgerald's Hollywood community is an *unempathic* one: it refuses to supply the approving mirroring responses

essential to psychological survival. And what is peculiar to Fitzgerald's Hollywood is that it is "an entire community of narcissistically vulnerable individuals." Every character in *The Last Tycoon* is very concerned with his or her *status* in the eyes of others. No one is regarded as inherently valuable; but rather, all self-esteem is relative in this community. This social system is especially traumatic for those individuals new to its operation. Carson argues that this is a result of the Hollywood community's immediate rejection of all newcomers' claims to grandiosity. As Carson states: "The crippling loss of status experienced by the newcomer to Hollywood is best illustrated by Wylie White's memory of his first Hollywood party." Fitzgerald's text reads:

> I went to a garden party the first day. My host shook hands and left me. It was all there—the swimming pool, green moss at two dollars an inch, beautiful felines having drinks and fun—and nobody spoke to me. Not a soul. I spoke to half a dozen people but they didn't answer. That continued for an hour, two hours—then I got up from where I was sitting and ran out at a dog trot like a crazy man. I didn't feel I had any rightful identity until I got back to the hotel and the clerk handed me a letter addressed to me in my name. (11)

Carson concludes that "such an alienating experience would be traumatic to any self as it represents an immediate loss of status. This loss results in a reshuffling of the self." This "reshuffling" is of the same form that Kohut writes about in his article "Thoughts On Narcissism and Narcissistic Rage:"

> Just as the period of pubertal drive increase, for example, or the time when a marriage partner is chosen constitute emotional situations in which a dormant Oedipus is prone to be reactivated, so do certain periods of transition which demand from us a reshuffling of the self, its change, and its rebuilding, constitute emotional situations that reactivate the period of the formation of the self. The replacement of one long term self-representation by another endangers a self whose earlier, nuclear establishment was faulty; and the vicissitudes of early pathology are experienced as repeated by the new situation. (623)

In general, a strongly cohesive self, what we might call a healthy self, will not be narcissistically vulnerable during times of psychological stress. But as we have seen with the example of Wylie White, the psychological trauma that any one individual is likely to experience during his or her initiation into Fitzgerald's Hollywood is immense. And because of the severity of the trauma it is practically impossible for anyone to avoid becoming narcissistically vulnerable, regardless of his or her degree of self-cohesion before joining Hollywood's community. After this initial rejection the individual may regain the respect, the recognition, of others by achieving celebrity status. Or the individual may be welcomed as a celebrity without having to experience this rejection. But even this is no guarantee of psychological safety, for this community is a chronically unstable one, and having status on one day does not ensure status the next day. Pete Zavras, a cameraman whom Monroe Stahr holds in high regard, attempts suicide because his career is apparently destroyed by a rumor that he is going blind.

Within this fickle community cohesion is maintained by identification with a charismatic leader figure. In Fitzgerald's Hollywood this role is fulfilled by Monroe Stahr. Only through his unfailing belief in his own righteousness does the community derive psychological stability. As Fitzgerald states: "The oracle had spoken. There was nothing to question or argue. Stahr must be right always, not most of the time, but always—or the structure would melt down like gradual butter"(56). Within this community each member is able to measure his or her relative stature by the reaction of Stahr to his or her work. And, as the head of this hierarchy, he "must be right" or the community risks chaos. When discussing his potentially disruptive practices, Stahr responds to the question, "But what does make the—the unity?"(58), by simply stating, "I'm the unity"(58). Stahr enjoys his position as head of this studio. But more than that, he *needs* this position for his psychological survival. Even more so than Dick Diver,

Monroe Stahr fits Kohut's description of charismatic personalities, who are always ready to "set themselves up as the guides and leaders and gods of those who are in need of guidance, of leadership, and of a target for their reverence"(826).

The maintenance of his self-esteem is also more dependent than Dick Diver's on what Kohut describes as "the incessant use of certain mental functions"(826). The charismatic personality is "continually judging others—usually pointing up the moral flaws in other people's personalities"(826). Stahr involves himself in every aspect of his studio's productions and has the final say in every important decision. One of the best examples that *The Last Tycoon* provides occurs in Chapter IV, in Stahr's private screening room. In this room Stahr reviews the day's rushes, every length of film shot since the last day's screening. He provides critical commentary on each scene, pointing out its faults and strengths, and pointing out exactly how he wants each scene to be shot and reshot. The numerous decisions that he makes *are* his source of narcissistic sustenance ("their self-esteem depends on the incessant use of certain mental functions") not the reactions that these decisions elicit from others. More often than not his decisions meet with implicit or explicit disapproval; but in the successful exercising of his power, when his wishes are obeyed, he is able to maintain his belief in his own omnipotence and grandiosity. Witness his decision to radically alter the style and structure of a film that is well into production. Explaining his decision he states that

> You ought to have understood from the casting, Reiny, what kind of a picture I wanted. I started marking the lines that Corliss and McKelway couldn't say and got tired of it. Remember this in the future—if I order a limousine, I want that kind of car. And the fastest midget racer you ever saw wouldn't do. (39)

Stahr is like Hemingway's bullfighter Pedro Romero in *The Sun Also Rises*, who "had the old thing, the holding of his purity of line through the maximum of

exposure"(168). His decision is made on the basis of his unshakable self-confidence in his own judgment—in the purity of his own line. As Stahr tells one production supervisor: "I've told you many times that the first thing I decide is the *kind* of story I want. We change in every other regard, but once that is set we've got to work toward it with every line and movement"(39).

Sometimes it seems as if decisions are made solely for the sake of exercising power, despite and even purposely against the prevailing opinion. His decision to release a film that is sure to lose money seems to have been made on this basis: "It would be a bigger miracle than *Hell's Angels* if it broke even"(48). It is also in this area that his only vulnerability lies. Inasmuch as he believes himself to be the ideal, inasmuch as he "must be right", so must his films be perfect. Carson is careful to point out that Stahr "seems to take flawed film-making as a personal slight." He watches the daily rushes with "a savage tensity"(53). With each scene that disappoints him Stahr "rage[s]"(54). A very significant injury to his sense of self occurs when an outsider to Hollywood, someone who does understand Stahr's position, criticizes the film industry. The negro on the beach admits to Stahr that "[He] never go[es] to the movies"(92) nor does he "let [his] children go"(92). This angers Stahr and for some time afterwards the negro on the beach occupies his thoughts:

> He was waiting at home for Stahr, with his pails of silver fish, and he would be waiting at the studio in the morning. He had said that he did not allow his children to listen to Stahr's story. He was prejudiced and wrong, and he must be shown somehow, some way. A picture, many pictures, a decade of pictures, must be made to show him he was wrong. (95)

But this negative feedback also spurs Stahr on, forcing him to reconsider and raise his own already stellar expectations:

> Since he had spoken, Stahr had thrown four pictures out of his plans—one that was going into production this week. They were borderline pictures in point of interest, but at least he submitted the borderline pictures to the negro and found them trash. And he put back on his list a difficult picture that he had tossed to the wolves, to Brady and Marcus and the rest, to get his way on something else. He rescued it for the negro man. (95)

Evidence of early self-pathology in Monroe Stahr is provided in this passage from *The Last Tycoon*:

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

Early on in life Stahr's empathic capacity has been stunted. The consequence is someone who grows up "dead cold," but who learns to display emotion as a means to an end. Charismatic personalities are essentially unempathic and without guilt:

> These persons appear to have no dynamically effective guilt feelings and never suffer any pangs of conscience about what they are doing. They are sensitive to the injustices done to them, quick to accuse others—and very persuasive in the expression of their accusations—and thus are able to evoke guilt feelings in others, who tend to respond by becoming submissive to them and by allowing themselves to be treated tyrannically by them. [...] The dynamic essence of their current behavior appears to me to lie in a stunting of their empathic capacity: they understand neither the wishes nor the frustrations and disappointments of other people. (830)

Both of these qualities appear in Monroe Stahr. When discussing his technique of assigning multiple writers to a single project, and the disruptive competition that it creates between writers, Stahr states: "The system was a shame, he

admitted—gross, commercial, to be deplored. He had originated it—a fact that he did not mention"(58). After he has become dissatisfied with the performance of a particular director Stahr assigns another director to the project before informing the first one of the change. When the time comes to tell the original director of the switch, Stahr handles the situation with ruthless brevity:

> "You can't handle her," [Stahr] said. "I told you what I wanted. I wanted her *mean*—and she comes out bored. I'm afraid we'll have to call it off, Red."
>
> "The picture?"
>
> "No. I'm putting Harley on it."
>
> "All right, Monroe."
>
> "I'm sorry, Red. We'll try something else another time."
>
> The car drew up in front of Stahr's office.
>
> "Shall I finish this take?" said Red.
>
> "It's being done now," said Stahr grimly. "Harley's in there."
>
> "What the hell—"
>
> "He went in when we came out. I had him read the script last night."
>
> "Now listen, Monroe—"
>
> "It's my busy day, Red," said Stahr, tersely. "You lost interest about three days ago." (52)

Having seen how ruthlessly Stahr is capable of acting, we must also realize that any empathy he displays is contrived to suit a purpose. After having inspired George Boxley to work in a particular direction, Stahr leaves a group of writers, "touching Boxley on the shoulder"(107). But far from being a genuine expression of affection this move is calculated to achieve a particular effect. As Fitzgerald tells us, this gesture is "a deliberate accolade—[Stahr] didn't want [the other writers] to gang up on [Boxley] and break his spirit in an hour"(107). Stahr becomes involved with the writers long enough to make sure that they are working in the right direction, the direction in which he wishes them to work. And having achieved this, he guarantees that they will not change direction by

making his wishes apparent to all present. When the actor Roderiguez comes to see Stahr about a personal problem, the producer has "an impish temptation to tell him to go to Brady about it"(35). And while Roderiguez is explaining his problem, Stahr is making private jokes: "Brady handled all matters of public relations. Or was this private relations. He turned away a moment, got his face in control, turned back"(35).

Stahr's lack of any guilt over the consequences of his actions, as well as his ability to evoke guilt in others, is demonstrated by Manny Schwartz's suicide. Stahr's charisma, his ability to manipulate others, is so great that Manny Schwartz, in his suicide note, does not blame Stahr for his misfortune; but rather, he accepts his rejection as unquestionably valid:

> Dear Monroe, You are the best of them all I have always admired your mentality so when you turn against me I know it's no use! I must be no good and am not going to continue the journey let me warn you once again look out! I know.
>
> Your friend
>
> Manny. (16)

Not only does Schwartz consider his career, and his life, over because Stahr has turned against him, but he still considers Monroe a friend. At this point Stahr does not yet know that Schwartz has committed suicide, but even so his reaction to his "friend's" departure is without affect: "There's nothing to be done—absolutely nothing. I'm sorry I was short with him—but I don't like a man to approach me telling me it's for *my* sake"(16).

Having seen the degree of Stahr's self-righteousness we must now consider Kohut's words concerning charismatic personalities: "they display an *apparently* unshakable self-confidence"(825, emphasis added). As we have seen, within the Hollywood community Stahr's word is akin to the word of God; he is unquestionable. Within this Hollywood community Stahr's self-esteem is

guaranteed by his central position. This is why the film industry has become so important to him. But, as we have also seen, removed from this community he is vulnerable. Inside the Hollywood community no one would dare question his judgment, but outside this group, where he is relatively unknown, he is open to injury. The words of the negro on the beach become a personal affront to Stahr's sense of his own omnipotence and grandiosity. Stahr's immediate interest in Kathleen Moore can also be interpreted as indicative of his vulnerability, his need for archaic selfobjects. But what we must try to establish is whether or not Stahr is unrealistically idealizing Kathleen Moore, i.e., do his unintegrated archaic structures form a selfobject relationship with Kathleen typical of the narcissistically injured? Or is their relationship one of mature and empathic understanding between two essentially stable selves? In answering these questions we will be able to determine if Monroe Stahr is a character typical of Fitzgerald's fiction, the narcissistically injured individual in search of the idealized selfobject, or if he represents a break from Fitzgerald's norm, as his apparent stability might suggest.

Stahr's initial fascination with Kathleen Moore is a direct result of her resemblance to his deceased wife, Minna Davis:

> Stahr did not answer. 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. (26)

Stahr immediately puts his secretary to work trying to find out the identity of this woman, even though "he did not know what he wanted"(58). When told that "the lady with the belt is on the phone"(58) Stahr experiences "a great sinking of his stomach"(58) and a "feeling of terror [begins] to steal over him"(59). From his

initial reactions it is apparent that, because of her resemblance to Minna Davis, this woman has reactivated in Stahr a traumatic experience from his past, the loss of his wife. But the nature of Stahr's loss now becomes important. It may be so traumatic for Stahr because the loss of his wife may have been interpreted by him as a massive narcissistic injury, an injury to his own omnipotent self. If this were so we would expect Kathleen Moore to be idealized by Stahr as a replacement for Minna Davis. We would expect her to be valued for her ability to replace the selfobject functions that Minna had originally performed. The novel appears to provide contradictory evidence. At one point Stahr is able to admit that "other lights shone in Hollywood since Minna's death"(62). And unlike other Fitzgerald characters, notably Dick Diver, he does not expect Kathleen Moore to be perfect: "It would have been a waste if she had not loved and been loved"(81). However, at other times it is clear that Stahr has strongly idealized Kathleen:

> He had started toward the Brady party when he saw Kathleen sitting in the middle of a long white table alone.
>
> Immediately things changed. As he walked toward her, the people shrank back against the walls till they were only murals; the white table lengthened and became an altar where the priestess sat alone. Vitality welled up in him, and he could have stood a long time across the table from her, looking and smiling. (73)

The fact that "vitality welled up in him" indicates that he is deriving narcissistic sustenance from her as he once did from his relationship with Minna: "Once we had—we had a house with a pool and all—and people came on Sunday. I played tennis and swam. I don't swim any more"(79). Indeed, for her Stahr is willing to skip work: "I've got everything to do tomorrow, but I won't do any of it. We can start at four and get there by afternoon"(115). Work has been, to this point, his primary source of self-satisfaction, and his ability to give up work for her strongly

suggests that he is deriving needed responses from her. These incidences indicate that, for him, she is performing selfobject functions.

Stahr himself asserts that he is not idealizing Kathleen Moore, nor had he idealized Minna:

> He was proud of resisting his first impulse to open the letter. It seemed to prove that he was not "losing his head." He had never lost his head about Minna, even in the beginning. (96)

But even Kathleen is aware that Stahr's imagination is at work. She tells him early in their relationship that "You've fallen for me—completely. You've got me in your dreams"(75). Upon leaving her one night

> He felt again that it was impossible to leave her, even for a few hours. There were only ten years between them, but he felt that madness about it akin to the love of an aging man for a young girl. It was a deep and desperate time-need, a clock ticking with his heart, and it urged him, against the whole logic of his life, to walk past her into the house now and say, "This is forever." (116)

His initial reaction to her "Dear John" letter indicates that Stahr has formed a selfobject relationship typical of the narcissistically injured personality: "He went upstairs. Minna died again on the first landing, and he forgot her lingeringly and miserably again, step by step to the top"(98). Stahr reacts to this disappointment and the sudden news that she is married by engaging in behavior atypical for him: he gets drunk and picks a fight during a business meeting. His first words upon regaining consciousness indicate that his aggression is directed not at his associate but at Kathleen: "That American. Why in hell did you have to marry him, you damn fool?"(127). This aggression is clearly narcissistic in nature; it is the rage associated with a self traumatically disappointed by the loss of an archaic selfobject.

Unfortunately, at this point the novel ends. Edmund Wilson provides a summary of the remainder of the novel using Fitzgerald's notes, indicating that Stahr and Kathleen would eventually reunite(130). But without the details provided by actual conversations and descriptive passages it is impossible to predict the nature of their resumed relationship. From what we have seen it is possible to conclude with a strong degree of certainty that Monroe Stahr has idealized Kathleen Moore in a fashion similar to Fitzgerald's other protagonists. Although Stahr is a relatively stable personality because of the position that he holds, it can be argued that he has thrown himself so completely into film making precisely because of his narcissistic vulnerability. His work is an escape from an otherwise unpredictable world of personal relationships. The question might be asked, "If the Hollywood community provides him with so much stability then why would he need to pursue other sources of narcissistic sustenance?" The answer is twofold. We get the distinct impression from his initial reactions to Kathleen Moore that the loss of Minna was an extremely traumatic event in his life. And, like Jay Gatsby, perhaps he is trying to regain something from those former times. Another important factor is his knowledge of his impending death:

> He wanted the pattern of his life broken. If he was going to die soon, like the two doctors said, he wanted to stop being Stahr for awhile and hunt for love like men who had no gifts to give. (90)

It seems that for the narcissistically injured Monroe Stahr complete psychological stability is not possible. He too, despite his apparent strong sense of self-esteem, remains vulnerable to his tendency to idealize others as replacements for insufficiently integrated selfobjects.

What should be clear now is the consistent nature of the psychological profiles of Fitzgerald's five protagonists. Each, because of traumatic selfobject failure on the part of both parents, is narcissistically vulnerable. And as a result of these childhood circumstances, each is unable to maintain a healthy sense of self-esteem without using others as mirrors for his own grandiosity. All of them seek but do not find perfection in selfobject relationships with narcissistically perceived others. Each searches for the ideal selfobject, that projection of the archaic sector of the psyche which retains in unaltered form its original narcissistic cathexis. The ideal selfobject, if it could be found, would be the perfect mirror for each character's unintegrated grandiosity. The relationships that they do form are always severely strained by the demands that they place upon the other, as each protagonist's archaic perception of the world expects compliance from all aspects of his environment. Their tendencies to idealize the other make it questionable whether they love a living, breathing person or a projection of their own ideal imago. In each novel the protagonist knows no genuine happiness. Unable to exert the expected control over his environment nor able to merge with the ideal selfobject, each remains dissatisfied. The outcome, in two of Fitzgerald's novels, is the complete fragmentation of the protagonist's already unstable self. In the others we see partial fragmentation and continued disillusionment.

Also remarkable are the sheer numbers of narcissistically injured individuals in Fitzgerald's novels. Every major character is vulnerable to attacks on his or her self. With the exception of Monroe Stahr, all of the protagonist's form relationships with narcissistically fixated women. Gloria Patch, Nicole Diver, Daisy Buchanan and the various women that Amory Blaine encounters are all unable to give back the approving mirroring responses that their partners need because they themselves are seeking the same sort of self-confirmation. Their vulnerabilities make mature and lasting love relationships impossible. In other, more minor characters we also encounter narcissists. Tom Buchanan is an excellent example of an individual in a state of chronic narcissistic rage, and Fitzgerald's depiction of Hollywood in *The Last Tycoon* is of a whole community of narcissistically vulnerable individuals.

It is through the insights provided by the self psychology of Heinz Kohut that we are able to identify the consistent psychological nature of Fitzgerald's characters. What before may have seemed to be isolated and distinct phenomena: Amory's self-centredness, Anthony's weakness, Gatsby's vision, Dick's indulgences, and Monroe's charisma, can now be understood as variations of an essentially identical psychological condition. This, I think, is the greatest benefit of using Kohut's theory. Without the aid of the self psychology of Heinz Kohut the connections between the often dismissed early Fitzgerald and the more praised later Fitzgerald would remain unclear.

Those familiar with Fitzgerald's work and life know that much of what he wrote is overtly autobiographical. Entire episodes from the life of Amory Blaine mirror the author's own history. Other novels, notably *Tender is the Night,* are reworkings of personal experiences. His own story is not so different from those of his protagonists. It is one of consistent and constant disappointments: a troubled marriage, alcoholism, and both financial and health problems.

Fitzgerald's unique ability to write about a narcissistically perceived environment comes from having lived in one himself. Robert Roulston identifies "a sense of betrayal" within Fitzgerald that he carried from childhood:

> That Fitzgerald carried from childhood such a sense of betrayal should be self-evident to anyone who has read much of his fiction where a recurring theme is that of the young romantic disillusioned—a pattern that prevailed throughout his own youth from at least as early as his sixth birthday when none of the guests appeared for the party which he had anticipated so eagerly. Similar betrayals were to befall him in school, in love, and even in war when his desire to fight overseas was frustrated by the advent of the Armistice. (157)

Alfred Kazin, in "An American Confession," writes that "what he had wanted so long no longer had any real value for him when he could get it, but nothing in his life or work had prepared him to be superior to those instinctive goals"(179). There is a certain poignancy in Fitzgerald's remark that "Ernest talks with the authority of success, I with the authority of failure."[1] Fitzgerald seems to have recognized that, like his restless and troubled protagonists, he had spent his life chasing an empty dream, wildly idealizing but never realizing his own future success.

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[1]Quoted in William Troy's "Scott Fitzgerald—The Authority of Failure," page 24.

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