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A Comparative Study of the Cinematic and Serial Adaptations of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Last Tycoon*

Masteroppgave i Lektorutdanning i språkfag - masterstudium (5-
årig)

Veileder: Eli Løfaldli

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ABSTRACT

The thesis discusses F. Scott Fitzgerald's final and unfinished novel *The Last Tycoon* and two of its adaptations: the 1976 film and the 2016 Amazon series. A comparative analysis of three of *The Last Tycoon*'s most notable themes in both the novel and its adaptations is provided, and the thesis discusses how the themes of success, romance and ideology find expression in each of the versions of *The Last Tycoon* and which methods the two adaptations have applied in their handling of the novel's thematic commentary.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: THE UNFINISHED NOVEL	7
The principles for success	7
The Tragedy of love	11
The ideologic commentary of the unfinished novel	13
Conclusion	15
CHAPTER 2: THE FILM ADAPTATION	17
The moderate changes in the film adaptation	17
Diminishing Stahr's leadership	19
Stahr's heartbreak and Cecelia's resentment	22
An anti-capitalist stance	24
Conclusion	26
CHAPTER 3: THE SERIAL ADAPTATION	28
The ambitious approach of the serial adaptation	28
The importance of the American Dream	30
Two opposite portrayals of romance	33
Distinguishing the positives and negatives of capitalism	35
Conclusion	38
CONCLUSION	40
WORKS CITED	42
THE THESIS'S RELEVANCE FOR TEACHING	46

INTRODUCTION

The American novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald has produced several iconic works throughout his lifetime. From 1936 Fitzgerald had begun writing a novel about his recently deceased acquaintance Irving Thalberg under several titles such as *The Last Tycoon*. However, before Fitzgerald had the chance to complete his novel, he died suddenly of a heart attack in 1940 (Brucoli, “Introduction” ix-xi). As a result, the novel he worked on at the time never saw full completion, but it was later published as an unfinished work in 1941. Despite the novel’s incomplete status, several creators have attempted to adapt it into different mediums, ranging from films, series and plays. Two of the most prominent adaptations of *The Last Tycoon* are the 1976 film adaptation by Elia Kazan and the 2016 Amazon TV series, both under the same name as Fitzgerald’s novel. These are the adaptations that will be discussed in this thesis.

The Last Tycoon has been published twice, first in 1941 by his friend Edmund Wilson and again by Matthew J. Brucoli in 1993 under the title *The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western* (Brucoli, “Introduction” xiii). However, several scholars have argued that there are a few differences between the two publications, as the most recent edition arguably presents Fitzgerald’s novel with the least alterations made from subjective interpretations by the editor (Frye 1). This is summarized in Brucoli’s thoughts on Wilson’s publication, as he argues that its foreword appears misleading by presenting the unfinished drafts of Fitzgerald’s novel as more finished than they actually were (Brucoli, “Introduction” xiii). In comparison, Brucoli’s own publication shows a greater deal of transparency in its status as an unfinished novel and frequently includes notes from Fitzgerald himself to substantiate the interpretations of his work (Brucoli, “Introduction” xviii). Despite the differences between these versions being minor, I have decided to use Brucoli’s version when referring to Fitzgerald’s novel apart from one paragraph, as it is deemed a more objective presentation of Fitzgerald’s unfinished novel. Additionally, both versions of Fitzgerald’s unfinished novel will be referred to as *The Last Tycoon* throughout this thesis, where Brucoli’s publication is referenced in-text without its year of publication, while Wilson’s version is.

The minute differences in Edmund Wilson’s publication of *The Last Tycoon* are seen in its language and structure. The language is nearly identical between the two works, showcasing minor differences in the spelling of words, such as a sentence from Wilson’s version detailing how “Miss Doolan’s assistant, Katy, took a paper bag, blew it open” (Fitzgerald 1941, 41), while Brucoli’s version states “Miss Doolan’s assistant, Katie, took a

paper bag, blew it open” (Fitzgerald 33). Wilson’s version of *The Last Tycoon* also combines several of the “episodes” that Fitzgerald detailed in his notes into fully fledged chapters, an example of this is episodes 4, 5 and 7 from Fitzgerald’s notes being combined into chapter 2 in Wilson’s version (27). His version also moves the position of a few scenes from Fitzgerald’s notes, such as Stahr mistakenly receiving a phone call from New York prior to his meeting with the executives, rather than after, as it appears in Fitzgerald’s notes and Brucoli’s publication (Fitzgerald 1941, 53-54).

The plot of *The Last Tycoon* centers on the life of Monroe Stahr, a prolific movie manager within 1930’s Hollywood, whose health is rapidly declining. Stahr spends nearly all his time managing a film studio alongside his fellow producer Pat Brady, whose daughter Cecelia Brady is hopelessly in love with him. Stahr suddenly gets a new focus in his life when he comes across a mysterious woman named Kathleen Moore, who reminds him of his deceased wife Minna Davis. This encounter leads to a hectic relationship between the two, as Stahr chases after Kathleen while overworking himself at the studio. However, their relationship takes turn for the worse once Kathleen informs him that she is betrothed to another man. This revelation leaves Stahr heartbroken and sends him into a downward spiral that ends in him drunkenly lashing out against a union representative named Brimmer. This violent encounter signifies the climax of Stahr’s self-destructive behavior; he has injured himself and must be cared for by Cecelia. Once Stahr’s has recovered, they decide to leave on a two-week trip which results in the two marrying (Fitzgerald 155). This event marks the is the last chronological event that had reached a sufficient degree of completion before Fitzgerald’s death in 1940 (Brucoli, “Introduction” xiii). Thus, Fitzgerald’s novel ends on a mellow note, as a complete version never saw the light of day.

Fitzgerald’s unfinished novel is presented through its two narrators: Monroe Stahr and Cecelia Brady. Stahr’s narration is done entirely through the restricted consciousness approach (McFarlane 19), which includes third person narration and creates a sense of disconnectedness between Stahr’s actions and his inner thoughts. In contrast, Cecelia’s narration is done in the first person and takes on a more introspective view. Both narratives are auto diegetic, as Stahr and Cecelia generate and tell their own stories (Stam, “Introduction: The Theory and Practice” 37). However, Cecelia’s narration can be argued as being homodiegetic, as one could consider Stahr to be the only protagonist within the story. Regarding the temporal standpoint of the narrative, Stahr’s story is told simultaneously with narrative events as they are taking place, while Cecelia’s story is told through retrospective

narration, taking place after the events of the novel, as she reminisces on her time in Hollywood (Stam, "Introduction: The Theory and Practice" 36). As such, her narration can also be considered omniscient, as she foreshadows certain narrative events before they take place, like mentioning the earthquake at the studio before it occurs (Fitzgerald 21-22).

While *The Last Tycoon* remains unfinished, there is still a significant amount of scrapped material in the form of notes from F. Scott Fitzgerald that gives insight into his plans for narrative events and characterizations. However, this material must be treated with caution, as Bruccoli states there is no evidence as to what material Fitzgerald was going to include in his novel, as he had not even settled on a definitive ending to his novel prior to his death (Bruccoli, "Introduction" xiii). Thus, these notes only showcase possible outcomes and sources of inspiration for *The Last Tycoon*, whose depictions must not be considered definitive regarding Fitzgerald's plans for the novel. Regardless, Bruccoli (*Last of the Novelists* 102) states that it is possible to make educated guesses on how *The Last Tycoon* would have unfolded by using these notes to construct a narrative that concludes the novel. Some events from the serial adaptation also share similarities with Fitzgerald's notes, indicating a possibility of the Amazon series taking inspiration on how the story might have continued.

Fitzgerald's plan for the rest of the novel as it can be deciphered from his notes, appears to be that Wylie White was to relay his dissatisfaction with Stahr's attempt at blocking the writer's guild. This would signify a change in Stahr's position at the studio, as the writers would no longer trust him (Bruccoli, *Last of the Novelists* 103). During this time, Stahr and Pat Brady would threaten to expose each other's crimes to the public. This argument was intended to result in Stahr no longer making pictures at the studio. In his absence, Brady would create a class division in the studio by tricking the directors, writers and supervisors into accepting a pay cut, something Stahr would have strongly opposed (Bruccoli, *Last of the Novelists* 104). The notes further suggest that Stahr and Brady was to get into a legal battle, which would have resulted in Stahr losing control of the studio to Brady.

Due to this turn of events, Stahr was planned to fly out to meet the stockholders in New York to clarify his position after Brady's take-over. However, while traveling towards its destination, Stahr's plane would suddenly crash, leaving him and the other passengers dead. This event might have had several outcomes, and it is uncertain which one Fitzgerald

would have used to conclude his novel (Fitzgerald xiv). In the first one, a group of children were to uncover the remains of the plane crash in an Oklahoma mountainside. The second one would have taken place in Stahr's funeral, where the has-been cowboy actor Johnny Swanson would mistakenly be asked to carry Stahr's casket (Brucoli, *Last of the Novelists* 111-112). The plan for the final ending was to showcase Kathleen visiting Stahr's movie studio after his death, indicating that she was going to be fine despite Stahr's passing. Thus, Brucoli's collection of notes provides valuable insight into probable outlines of how the novel may have concluded.

To analyse the unfinished novel and its adaptations, this thesis will use terminology from both the literary field and the school of film theory with an overall focus on literary studies. This includes terms from adaptation theory, such as Roland Barthes' narrative functions, which consist of cardinal functions, the most crucial actions in the narrative that can alternate the development of the story, and catalysers, the smaller actions that root the larger cardinal functions in a particular kind of reality (McFarlane 13-14). Additionally, Terrence Hawkes story and plot distinction is employed, where "story" is referred to as the basic succession of events within a work, and "plot" as the way the story is made strange and defamiliarized (McFarlane 23). Vladimir Propp's character functions are also referred to, which entails the part a character plays in the plot (McFarlane 24). These terms are used in addition to assessments from Brian McFarlane, who refers to Barthes, Hawkes and Propp in his work *Novel to Film*. General denotations about cinematography in this text are derived from Bill Nichols' work *Engaging Cinema* and includes its descriptions of matters such as camera shots, lighting and *mise-en-scène*.

When adapting novels into films or series, a choice must be made regarding which generic conventions are transposable into the new medium, and which need to be discarded or replaced (Stam, *Literature Through Film* 6). Additional elements of pictures and sound also make adaptations differ from their source materials, as themes and characterizations may be developed through other means than language (Parrill 10). Adapting novels into serials also has notable consequences from film adaptations, as the serial form can span much longer than the two hours that films are usually limited to, enabling a series to retain more of the source material's narrative at the cost of lower financial support that films are afforded (Cardwell 187).

When assessing the adaptation process from novel to either film or series, this thesis will use a methodical framework consisting of methods from Richard Hand, and John M. Desmond and Peter Hawkes. These will be used to assess the consequences of what has been changed from the source material to each respective adaptation. Hand's five creative strategies of adaptation are useful for analysing what has been changed in the creation of a new work for a different medium. These first of these methods are "omission", which denotes when narrative and textual material from the source material is removed in an adaptation (Hand 27). The second is "addition", where the adaptation introduces narrative and textual material. The third method is "alteration", where modifications to the source text's themes, textual style, narrative events are made in the adaptation. The fourth is "expansion", which denotes when thematic issues from the source text is given more prominence in an adaptation. The final is "marginalization", which indicates that thematic issues are given less prominence in the adaptation.

Desmond and Hawkes' three methods of adaptation will be used to measure how much the adaptations deviate from the source text. Labels such as "close" adaptations are used denote when most narrative elements from the source material are kept in the adaptation, "intermediate" adaptations indicate that some elements of the story are kept, while other elements are dropped, and "loose" adaptations show that most of the narrative elements from the literary text are either dropped, substituted or added in the adaptation (Minier 27). Desmond and Hawkes also emphasise that it is futile to discussing the criterion of fidelity in a comparison between source material and adaptation, as they will never be identical nor structurally alike (Minier 22). Furthermore, Christopher Orr argues that talk of equivalency between adaptations and their source material uses "unreal terms which merely designate an imaginary effect" that the critic misinterprets as being of concern for its audience (Kline 71). Thus, this thesis will not discuss the fidelity in the adaptations of *The Last Tycoon*. Through the use of this terminology and methods, this thesis will discuss what the most prominent themes of Fitzgerald's unfinished novel are, and how two separate adaptations of it compare in their approaches to the source material most prominent themes: success, romance and ideology. While scholars like Brucoli (*Last of the Novelists* 8-9) also note that the unfinished novel has a strong presidential theme, this thesis will not discuss the adaptation of this theme, as it is largely absent from the film and serial adaptations of *The Last Tycoon*.

This thesis will be structured into three main chapters, each dedicated to analysing the unfinished novel, film and series respectively. The first chapter, “THE UNFINISHED NOVEL”, is centred on F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Last Tycoon* and aims to identify and analyse the three most prominent themes within the unfinished work. The first theme is success, which will be discussed in relation to Stahr’s leadership at the film studio. The second theme, love, is seen in Stahr’s relationships to Kathleen and Cecelia. The final theme of ideology is discussed in relation to the dynamics between capitalism and communism. The second chapter, “THE FILM ADAPTATION”, analyses the thematic consequences of the changes made by Elia Kazan’s film adaptation of *The Last Tycoon*. This chapter employs a methodical framework that incorporates methods by Hand, and Desmond and Hawkes to discuss the changes made in the adaptation. When analysing the film, this thesis will discuss whether Stahr is a visionary leader, and how its portrayals of romantic relationships and capitalist leadership are increasingly negative. The third chapter, “THE SERIAL ADAPTATION”, focuses on Amazon’s serial adaptation of *The Last Tycoon* and includes an analysis that is reminiscent of the one employed in the previous chapter. In this instance, the focus is on the synonymy between Stahr and the American Dream, the way Minna Davis influences Stahr’s relationship with Kathleen and how the series portrays capitalism through a black-and-white lens. The thesis then finishes with a concluding section that summarizes its most important findings, in addition to relaying the relevance this thesis will have for my future as an English teacher.

CHAPTER 1: THE UNFINISHED NOVEL

The principles for success

Throughout Fitzgerald's unfinished novel, Monroe Stahr is presented as an extraordinary figure that has achieved remarkable success. One of Cecelia's early descriptions of Stahr provides noticeable insight into his peculiar nature. While he is physically attractive, being delicate and slender with boyish looks, he still possesses a sense of ruggedness from his days in a street gang during his adolescence (Fitzgerald 16). Furthermore, he comes across as both charming and understanding towards his peers, yet maintains a sense of authority over them, as he is reminiscent of a leader who never tires. Stahr's leadership and talent are emphasized in one of Cecelia's monologues where she reminisces about his extraordinary mindset:

... He had flown up very high to see, on strong wings when he was young. And while he was up there he had looked on all the kingdoms, with the kind of eyes that can stare straight into the sun. Beating his wings tenaciously – finally frantically – and keeping on beating them he had stayed up there longer than most of us, and then, remembering all he had seen from his height of how things were, he had settled gradually to earth. ... this was where Stahr had come to earth after that extraordinary illuminating flight where he saw which way we were going, and how we looked doing it, and how much it mattered. You could say that this was where an accidental wind blew him but I don't think so. I would rather think that in a "long shot" he saw a new way of measuring our jerky hopes and graceful rogueries and awkward sorrows, and that he came here from choice to be with us to the end. (Fitzgerald 20-21)

As discussed by Cecelia, Stahr possesses a talent that elevates his mental fortitude and allows him to achieve remarkable feats. Despite his only formal credentials being a course in stenography, he has become extremely successful (Fitzgerald 18). When reflecting on what constitutes the essence of Stahr's ability to succeed, Cecelia seemingly believes he was born with a talent for having insight into the public conscious. Through this knowledge, he has concluded that the film industry holds a key importance in discussing matters that concern the American people (Fitzgerald 20). The devotion he shows towards his film studio and employees is indicative of commitment to his ideals. This gives Stahr the qualities of a visionary, which is compounded when Stahr's presence at the studio is compared to an

oracle, whose decisions are unquestioned as he knows what will resonate with audiences (Fitzgerald 56). Thus, Cecelia's description of Stahr gives insight to the scope of his talents and the magnitude of his leadership.

The rise of Monroe Stahr is indicative of the American Dream. The drive behind men like him is something that had always allured Fitzgerald, as the author held a life-long respect towards the achievements of great men (Brucoli, *Last of the Novelists* 5). In particular, he believed in the principles such as honor, courage, integrity and personal responsibility, and the possibilities that America held for those who were willing to go above and beyond. According to Brucoli (*Last of the Novelists* 9) Stahr embodies such principles, being "a 1935 incarnation of the nineteenth-century American hero—the self-made man who embodies the principles of integrity and responsibility". As such, Stahr's synonymity with these principles alongside his visionary talents has let him achieve notable success.

The qualities of personal responsibility and integrity are showcased in Stahr's leadership at the film studio, which forms several of the catalysers in the novel. When Stahr tells his workers that they must reshoot an entire ending scene to not spoil the potential of a movie, he takes on monumental responsibility. Stahr's certainty in his own words reassures everyone on set to such a degree that there is seemingly no doubt of his assessment (Fitzgerald 56). In his conversation with the writer Boxley, he manages to reassure the writer of the capabilities of cinema by come up with an intriguing idea for a scene, featuring a mystery surrounding a woman and a pair of black gloves (Fitzgerald 32). This emphasizes the personal responsibility of Stahr further, as he takes time to form personal connections with his workers. Stahr showcases notable integrity when convinces a board of executives to do the following to picture: "It's time we made a picture that'll lose some money. Write it off as good will – this will bring in new customers" (Fitzgerald 48). Stahr willingness to turn down profits showcases both artistic integrity and insight into the public conscious, two things his fellow executives seemingly lack. This is also compounded by a notion from Brucoli (*Last of the Novelists* 9), stating that Stahr rose to a position of enormous responsibility without losing his humane qualities. Thus, Stahr's leadership at the movie studio emphasizes his responsibility over the studio and his integrity when making films.

Throughout Fitzgerald's novel, Monroe Stahr appears quite extraordinary. Brucoli (*Last of the Novelists* 4) even argues that Stahr does not possess any significant flaws in his character, which is an anomaly when compared to elsewhere in Fitzgerald's corpus. It has

also been argued that the character Monroe Stahr is based on a real-life precedent (Bruccoli, *Last of the Novelists* 11). The inception for *The Last Tycoon* occurred sometime before the death of real-life movie producer Irving Thalberg, whom Fitzgerald was acquainted with during his time in Hollywood. Fitzgerald held a great deal of admiration towards him and gave hints to his editor Maxwell Perkins about possibly writing a novel based on Thalberg (Bruccoli, *Last of the Novelists* 11-12). Like Stahr, Thalberg was a leading film producer during time and his leadership was arguably reminiscent of the principles of personal responsibility and integrity. For Fitzgerald, Thalberg showcased these qualities from their first meeting in Hollywood, as he was immediately impressed by his leadership (Bruccoli, *Last of the Novelists* 16). There is a possibility that these qualities made their way onto Stahr, whose role as the titular “Last Tycoon” represents the author’s appreciation for extraordinary individuals.

However, the apparent real-life parallels to Stahr are not entirely straight-forward. Despite having a great deal of admiration towards Thalberg and his accomplishments, Fitzgerald still felt a certain kind of distain towards him, which Kenneth. G Johnston (215) argues has been expressed in previous works like “Crazy Sunday”. This notion is compounded further with the knowledge that Fitzgerald held ambiguous feelings about Hollywood (Margolies 208). Therefore, these implications reveal that there might be more to Fitzgerald’s depictions of Stahr’s success than initially meets the eye, which becomes apparent when viewed through the viewpoints of other characters.

The nuance of Fitzgerald’s depictions of Stahr’s success is showcased through his implementation of a well-known aesthetic principle in his writing style, namely what writer Malcolm Cowley has dubbed “double Vision” (Johnston 251). In his novels, Fitzgerald engages extensively with tropes such as: youth and potential, and their contrasts: age and squandered potential (Mangum 956). An emblematic part of his writing is how he subverts these trends of characterization and adds depth to his characters through external viewpoints. Implementing “Double Vision” can aid in achieving this purpose, as it involves viewing characters through a dualistic lens, where the reader is invited to explore events through the eyes of several characters. Johnston (215) describes the process as presenting an event from both the viewpoints of a person who took the prettiest girl to the ball and a young worker who stood outside the venue, peeking through a window in awe while witnessing the people inside. Through double vision, Fitzgerald presented events and characters in a manner that lets his readers interpret and reflect on what is being presented beneath the surface.

Most events in *The Last Tycoon* where Fitzgerald implements double vision are done by filtering its cardinal functions and catalysers through Cecelia Brady, whose viewpoint presents a different side to Stahr. By witnessing the paternalistic manner in which Stahr controls his workers, it becomes apparent that Stahr has an arrogant side. This dynamic first surfaces during Cecelia's conversations with Wiley White during the first chapter of the novel, and it appears whenever Monroe Stahr is mentioned. White seems to hold a grudge against Stahr, as he mocks the working environment Stahr has created, since he feels that it trivializes his work at the studio (Fitzgerald 19). This resentment finds its way into most of Cecelia's encounters with White, as he finds several opportunities to take jabs at the way Stahr runs the studio. The behavior of people like White later becomes the focal point of the meeting Cecelia oversees between Stahr and the union organizer Brimmer, which quickly turns sour. In the beginning of their exchange, Brimmer is quick to mention that the writers view Stahr as their main source of complaints, a point which Stahr does not refute. In response, Stahr tells him that he thinks "they are not equipped for authority" (Fitzgerald 122). Brimmer's arguments highlight a flaw within Stahr's personal responsibility, which is that his need for creative control within the studio runs contrary to his belief that anyone with ability can succeed (Bruccoli, *Last of the Novelists* 8). This becomes apparent as their conversation goes on, where Stahr gets progressively more drunk and speaks to Brimmer and Cecelia of how he has put directors in their place for straying away from his creative vision (Fitzgerald 125). As the meeting reaches its climax in Stahr's drunken outburst, it has become apparent that he is unable to justify the way he treats his workers.

Bruccoli states that Stahr remains morally pure throughout the story, and that his attempted beating of Brimmer is ultimately sympathetic, due to the devastating loss of Kathleen (Bruccoli, *Last of the Novelists* 7). Additionally, Bruccoli (*Last of the Novelists* 7-8) argues that Stahr's treatment of writers is justified, as his responsibilities necessitates him having full control at the studio. I would argue that contrary to what Bruccoli says, what is shown through Cecelia's viewpoint is a flaw in Stahr that should not be overlooked. Cecelia witnessing Stahr's problematic side goes against these notions from Bruccoli, as they provide detailed portrayals of the negative consequences of Stahr's actions. While Stahr's falling out with Kathleen is important in his decision to beat Brimmer, the way their meeting is framed by Cecelia's narration indicates that Stahr's growing frustration comes from his inability to justify his position at the studio to Brimmer. Thus, Cecelia's view of events indicates that there are problems beyond the romantic alone that leads to Stahr's confrontation. Stahr even

acknowledges that he is aware of the writer's dissatisfaction with his system, which adds onto his previously established negligence, as he ignores their complaints (Fitzgerald 58).

Additionally, Cecelia may even have changed her perception of Stahr after witnessing these events, as she states, "I was head over heels in love with him then and you can take what I say for what it's worth" (Fitzgerald 67). Framing her affection for Stahr through the past tense "was" indicates a possibility that she has changed her opinion on him during her present retelling of the story. This change compounds onto the existence of Stahr's flaws, as her infatuation towards him could have dissipated after witnessing a side of him that is willing to disregard his workers. Another instance of Stahr's paternalism is also showcased outside of Cecelia's perspective when Stahr encounters a man during his walk on the beach. The man tells Stahr that he does not allow his children to watch films, as says "there's no profit" in them (Fitzgerald 93). According to James Stamant (233), this shakes Stahr's confidence in his own work, as he insists that the man's opinion is wrong, underlining his inconsideration for others' viewpoints. Thus, Cecelia's interactions with Stahr and those he encounters showcases his paternalistic behavior as a producer. In turn, this revelation highlights the negative aspects of success, as Stahr has taken the principle of personal responsibility to its extreme.

The Tragedy of love

Another notable aspect of *The Last Tycoon* is its commentary on love, and how romantic relationships will end in tragedy. This topic manifests itself in the two romantic relationships that are centered around Monroe Stahr. The first is his relation to Cecelia Brady, a college student and daughter of his colleague Pat Brady. The dynamic in their relationship is predominantly one-sided, as the Cecelia's romantic feelings are not reciprocated in the way she desires. Cecelia has seemingly felt this way about Stahr from when she was a little girl and is painfully aware of her slim chances of romancing him successfully (Fitzgerald 18). Throughout the novel, a notable part of Cecelia's character function is focused on romancing Stahr (McFarlane 13-14), but most of her efforts bare no results. Their relationship only goes the way Cecelia desires once Stahr is left heartbroken and marries Cecelia in a rash manner. The other woman of interest for Stahr is Kathleen Moore, an Irish immigrant who bears a striking resemblance to Stahr's deceased wife Minna Davis. Once Stahr notices Kathleen he immediately becomes attracted to her and they pursue a relationship rather quickly. However,

their affair ends abruptly once Kathleen reveals that she is betrothed to another man and abandons Stahr to be with him.

The screenwriter's ball is a cardinal function that gives insight to the nature of the romantic relationships in the unfinished novel. This section is told through double vision, as the narrative switches between Stahr and Cecelia's perspectives. The evening starts from Cecelia's point of view, as she notices a lonesome Kathleen being approached by Stahr in the dance hall. The perspective then switches to Stahr, who feels a new sense of life flowing into him as he comes closer to Kathleen (Fitzgerald 73). After dancing together, Kathleen announces that she must depart and subsequently leaves. Stahr comes after her and attempts to arrange a new meeting between the two. While she feels attracted to him, Kathleen still thinks it is best if they do not meet again. As they continue to talk, Stahr suddenly notices how different Hollywood has become, and how long it has been since his wife passed away (Fitzgerald 76). Stahr ultimately convinces Kathleen to meet him again, but he still feels a sense of emptiness after their encounter. As Stahr returns to the ball, the perspective switches to Cecelia, who cannot help feeling discouraged after noticing Stahr's despair.

The hopelessness of romance is underlined in the aftermath of Kathleen's departure, as Cecelia's expresses that "... it was lonely – lonelier than before the girl had gone. For me as well as for Stahr, she took the evening with her, took along the stabbing pain I had felt – left the great ball-room empty and without emotion" (Fitzgerald 77). For Cecelia this loneliness is devastating, as Stahr's emotional absence during their dance showcases his infatuation with Kathleen and lack of romantic interest in her. This exacerbates her previous fears about not being worthy of Stahr's love (Fitzgerald 18). Stahr is also filled with despair, as Kathleen nearly rejecting him evokes the loneliness he felt at after the passing of his wife. Thus, the emotional dread Stahr expresses in this instance showcases the emotional damage he has received in the wake of his previous romantic relationship.

Despite the grim depictions of love in *The Last Tycoon*, there are remnants of the novel that give life to more hopeful possibilities of love, especially through the inclusion of the fact that Stahr believes that a future with Kathleen could bring life back to him (Fitzgerald 117). Fitzgerald notes on the novel compound this notion, as they state that the two possess some special quality makes them attracted to each other (Brucoli, *Last of the Novelists* 135). John F. Callahan (380) also supports this notion, as he argues that Stahr's pursuit of love is reminiscent of Fitzgerald's criteria for achieving happiness in life. However, despite

believing in the hopeful connotations of romance, Callahan (391) does submit to the possibility that Stahr's relationship with Kathleen was not meant to end happily, as Stahr decides to prolong his decision to run away with Kathleen for some unknown reason. As a result, the redemption Kathleen could give Stahr is ultimately taken from him, as she departs with her husband in Stahr's moment of doubt. This adds onto the notions of tragic romance within the novel, as Stahr's misery is compounded by his hesitance to commit to a new relationship. By portraying several instances of romantic loss, the novel's hopeless portrayal of love becomes apparent.

The ideologic commentary of the unfinished novel

In *The Last Tycoon*, the ideologies communism and capitalism have important roles in the narrative. The former is mostly referred to in a spiteful manner, which is evident in Cecelia's trip to her father's office, where she runs into Jaques La Borwits. Cecelia views him in a spiteful manner and refers to him as "something like a commissar" who is compared to a parasite (Fitzgerald 23). Another discussion on communism is present in Stahr's plans for a picture based on Russia. Stahr has planned this picture for a long time, but he is struggling to present it in a way he seems appropriate, as he is afraid that the picture will open "unpleasant possibilities and problems" (Fitzgerald 60). This struggle within Stahr hints at him possessing a skepticism towards communism. This is later compounded in his meeting with Brimmer, where he treats the ideology with hostility. In their meeting, Stahr relays that he views the influence Brimmer has on his workers negatively, as Stahr feels the wishes of the writers goes against the best interests of the movie studio, which is placing most responsibilities on him (Fitzgerald 121). Stahr's protectiveness of his own position gives an indication that he feels threatened by the implications of communism. Brimmer adds onto the criticism against Stahr by employing a metaphor that is reminiscent of Communist ideology, where he tells Stahr that he is working against the best interests of his workers by underlining how the writers "... grow the grain but they're not in at the feast. Their feeling toward the producer is like the farmers' resentment of the city fellow" (Fitzgerald 121). Therefore, Brimmer believes the critique against Stahr is justified, as the producer is cheating his writers out of their rights. Later on, a drunken Stahr tells Brimmer that he fears a communist take-over of the government, which Brimmer responds to by relaying that the communists fear similar action

from people like Stahr (Fitzgerald 121-122). Thus, Stahr's views on communism is shared amongst most of the novel's characters.

Other characters in the novel are representative of capitalism, as is seen in the presence of Stahr, whose success is indicative of the positives of the ideology. By embodying the principles of integrity and personal responsibility alongside hard work, he has achieved the American Dream for himself. Brucoli (*Last of the Novelists* 7) compounds this notion, by arguing that Stahr's devotion to hard work is "a refutation of all the cliches about movie executives". However, there are also descriptions of capitalism that presents the ideology in a negative light. This is seen in Cecelia referring to her father's female secretaries as "devout capitalists", that have created a rule to prevent the other studio workers from uniting against Mr. Brady by having them scolded if they are caught eating lunch together (Fitzgerald 22). A notable part of Brady's character function is conveying the negative sides of capitalism, as seen in the meeting between him and Cecelia about the "discarded flowers" of Hollywood that are abandoned and exploited by people like Brady (Fitzgerald 102-103). As Cecelia attempts to reason with her father on how they can help people like Martha Dodd and Johnny Swanson by finding them employment, she becomes pleasantly surprised by his agreement to her propositions. However, she soon discovers that her father's open-mindedness is a ploy to hide his affair with one of his secretaries from Cecelia.

Cecelia's view of this event seemingly reaffirms her thoughts of her father exploiting his workers, as he is caught in the act of doing this very thing. Stahr himself is also exemplary of these aspects of capitalism, as Brimmer tells him "Frankly we do find you difficult, Mr. Stahr – precisely because you are a paternalistic employer and your influence is very great" (Fitzgerald 126). This statement is later compounded by Stahr, who expresses that he feels some type of ownership over his workers as he tells Brimmer "I never thought that I had more brains than a writer has. But I always thought that his brains belonged to me – because I knew how to use them" (Fitzgerald 126). A similar position on writers is also shown in Cecelia's reflections on them, as she does look down on writers by not thinking of them as authentic people (Fitzgerald 12).

By interpreting the relationship between the characters who represent capitalism and communism, it is evident that *The Last Tycoon* presents a nuanced ideological picture. There arguably exists an ideological split between several characters in Fitzgerald's novel, where businessmen like Stahr and Pat Brady represent capitalism and writers like Brimmer and

Whiley White represent communism. Frye (136-137) argues that this dynamic results in *The Last Tycoon* featuring both sympathy and criticism towards capitalism. This is particularly seen in Stahr representing both the positive and negative aspects of the ideology, in addition to Cecelia sympathizing with both Stahr and Brimmer's arguments during their meeting.

However, the novel arguably leans towards presenting a negative view of capitalism, as seen its criticism of the actions of Stahr and Brady. Frances Kroll holds such a position on the novel, as he argues that Stahr sees communism as something that prevents people from achieving the American Dream like he did (Frye 10). Stahr resents beliefs of communism, as thinks they diminish the importance of personal responsibility and integrity in attaining success. Thus, the annotations of communism can be interpreted as a personal attack against Stahr, as it threatens his essential beliefs. The presence of conflict between capitalism and communism in *The Last Tycoon* is also reminiscent of previous works of Fitzgerald. Ross Posnock argues that the author has showcased ideas that are supportive of communist ideology, such as depictions of the commodity fetishism, where capitalistic employers are exploiting their workers for their personal gain (Donaldson 199-200). This remnant of capitalism can be perceived in the way Monroe Stahr and Pat Brady mistreat their workers, as the former undermines them to maintain his creative vision, while the latter exploits them for various favors (Fitzgerald 102-126). Thus, *The Last Tycoon* presents a nuanced view of ideology, by portraying the positive and negative sides of capitalism, emphasizing the latter slightly more.

Conclusion

The Last Tycoon by F. Scott Fitzgerald will forever remain unfinished, but it still manages to provide notable commentary on several themes. It expresses the synonymity great men of achievement like Monroe Stahr have with the American Dream, showcasing the principles of personal responsibility and integrity. However, it also brings to light how the vision of one man can prevent others from expressing their self-autonomy. It portrays romantic relationships as having tragic conclusions, as seen in the way Stahr is left devastated after being abandoned by his new romantic interests. Cecelia Brady's relationship to Stahr compounds this notion, as she is also hurt by losing out on her chance for romance. Finally, it also discusses the ideologies of capitalism and communism, both praising and criticizing the

actions of capitalist leadership. Thus, Fitzgerald's final unfinished novel showcases great potential for thematic commentary.

CHAPTER 2: THE FILM ADAPTATION

The moderate changes in the film adaptation

The film adaptation of Fitzgerald's *The Last Tycoon* makes few, but notable changes to its source material. Analysing the changes of the novel through Richard Hand's five creative strategies of adaptation, shows several findings. Such is seen in the omission of the novel's opening chapter, most of Cecelia's presence and several minor characters. The film introduces narrative and textual material, as seen in the addition of minor characters like Didi and Rodriguez, and the ending it adds to Fitzgerald's unfinished novel. The film also expands on negative connotations that are present in the novel's themes (Hand 27), which is seen in the changes made to Stahr and Cecelia's characterizations from the novel, among others. The consequence of these changes results in certain aspects of the film's thematic commentary differing from the novel and makes the film adaptation distinct from its source material.

Eliza Kahn's film adaptation of *The Last Tycoon* was released in 1976 by Paramount Pictures, and feature performances by Robert DeNiro and Robert Mitchum (Cunningham 188). The film was adapted from Edmund Wilson's publication of *The Last Tycoon* (Michaels 110). The film received overtly negative reviews upon release, as critics had issues with the way it handled various aspects of its source material (Matterson 50). Despite the film's critical reception, several critics such as Frank E. Cunningham (188) believes that it can be considered one of the better adaptations of Fitzgerald's works, due to its handling of the novel's themes.

The film opens with Stahr at work in his projection room, directing his staff to make changes to several films (*Last Tycoon, The Film*, 00:01:41-00:02:01). The action then shifts to a group of tourists at the movie sets, who are guided through Minna Davis' dressing room and told that this is the place she passed away. Cecelia Brady enters her father's office to greet him, but suddenly an earthquake hits the movie studio. After Stahr heads down to the studio lot in the wake of the earthquake, he comes across a woman who reminds him of his deceased wife. Subsequently, Stahr spends his time attempting to find the woman, and eventually discovers that her name is Kathleen Moore. After becoming acquainted with each other after some time, Kathleen reveals to Stahr that she is betrothed to another man (01:26:20-01:26:29). Eventually, Kathleen leaves Stahr to be with her husband, which leads

to Stahr getting in trouble at the studio for lashing out at a union representative during a drunken stupor. The film ends with Stahr recalling his words to Kathleen “I don’t want to lose you” as he slowly walks into the darkness of a studio lot, his ultimate fate being unknown (02:00:00-02:00:49).

The film makes some changes to the cardinal functions and catalysers from the source material. The most prominent changes to the former are seen in the additions to the film’s opening and ending, as they include narrative material not included in the unfinished novel. The film adaptation omits the airplane journey at the story’s outset and instead begins during Stahr’s daily routine at the studio. In the novel, the narrative ends abruptly after Cecelia mentions she has married Stahr, while the film adds a conclusion to the narrative by having Stahr melancholically wander the studio lot. The adaptation also alters the novels’ narrative sequence, which is seen in how Cecelia asks Stahr out to the screenwriter’s ball before Stahr is asked to help an actor with his infertility. Foreshadowing of some narrative events are also added, such as a brief mention of Stahr scheduling a meeting with Brimmer early in the film (00:21.28-00:21.54). Several changes are additionally made to the list of characters from the novel, like the omission of Schwartze and Jack La Borwitz, and the addition of new characters like Didi. Additionally, some characters are altered, such as the nameless actor struggling with infertility in the novel becoming the character “Rodriguez” in the film.

A notable deviation from the novel is seen in the way the film treats the supplementary elements of its narrative. This is seen in Cecelia Brady’s (spelled as “Cecilia” in the film) presence, as she seemingly has been demoted to a secondary character who only appears in a handful of scenes throughout the film. This change is evident from the film’s outset, as Cecelia does not make an appearance until the earthquake hits the studio, in contrast to her narration beginning the story of the novel (00:08.22-00:08.40). This can be seen as an alteration to Cecelia’s character function in the film (Hand 27), which impacts the film’s narrative, as her viewpoint contributed to establishing several of the catalysers in the novel. This is seen in the way her perspective contributes to the novel’s plot, as she provides much of its commentary on the treatment of writers and doomed romance, but not much in the overall development of the narrative and story. While her counterpart in the adaptation does provide insight to the film’s portrayal of romance, information regarding Stahr’s origins and the treatment of writers is provided via other methods, meaning that she plays a smaller part in the film’s plot. Therefore, the film establishes a similar world to the novel, albeit through different catalysers where it transfers the implications of the novel’s double vision

through new scenes. Steven Goldleaf (239) also shares this notion, as he argues that the film eliminates her explicitly narrative function, leaving Cecelia little to do other than pursuing Stahr. Therefore, the changes made to Cecelia's character function causes the film's narrative to differ from novel (McFarlane 24).

Furthermore, the film also omits the first-person narration of Cecelia from the novel, as it maintains a narration throughout that is reminiscent of the "restricted consciousness" approach from Stahr's perspective in the novel (McFarlane 19). This is seen in a comparison between the novel and film's depiction of Cecelia discovering her father's secretary in his closet, as the former employs a first-person perspective to relay this: "How I was brave enough I don't know, but I ran across to it and opened it, and Father's secretary, Birdy Peters tumbled out stark naked – just like a corpse in the movies" (Fitzgerald 104). In the film, this action is portrayed with a camera-pan from Cecelia's face to the door (Nichols 56), as she slowly approaches the closet (01:18:28-01:18:50). While the effect of using such a cinematic code cannot be determined with true certainty (McFarlane 28), one interpretation of it could be that it shows Cecelia's perspective on events. This is compounded by McFarlane's (19) thoughts on adapting narratives, as he states that such a shot can invoke the ramifications of the restricted consciousness-approach, which gives the viewer the perspective of a character without relaying too much information to them. Thus, the film presents a narrative that alters the way information is relayed, yet is reminiscent of its source material.

Diminishing Stahr's leadership

The film alters Stahr's characterization from the source material, as it arguably refrains from presenting Stahr as a visionary. This is particularly evident due to the film's omission of the first chapter of the novel, which relays several aspects of Stahr's character and his path to success. In their absence, the film attempts to add narrative events that relays this information about Stahr. In his talk with Rodriguez for instance, the actor tells Stahr that "they both came from nothing to success", implying that they have both achieved the American Dream for themselves (00:19:02-00:19:23). Another instance of this is when Stahr talks to Kathleen during the screenwriter's ball, as Kathleen mentions someone referring to Stahr as "the boy wonder", suggesting he became successful at a young age (00:48:56-00:49:02).

Lloyd Michaels (114) argues that the first scene between Stahr and the writer Boxley is important to showing Stahr's unique talent. The film makes this encounter spectacular, having Stahr get up and charismatically act out a scene in his head, which engulfs Boxley in Stahr's brilliance (00:38:29-00:40:40). On the one hand, I agree with Michaels' (114) assessment of this scene, as it does convey some understanding of films within Stahr. On the other, however, I disagree with the latter part of his statement, as Michaels (114) believes that the existence of this scene eliminates the necessity of the descriptive passages from Cecelia's point of view. Cecelia's narration is actually crucial for Stahr's characterization, as the omission of the airplane scene from plot, along with the reduction of Cecelia's character function, results in the depictions of Stahr's visionary talent being absent in the film (McFarlane 23-25). Cunningham (190) holds a similar view, stating that the film adaptation reduces Stahr's role as a visionary by omitting Cecelia's mediations on him. Notions from Goldleaf (236) can compound this argument further, as he states that the film's own opening sequence fails to convince the audience of Stahr's role as a visionary filmmaker. In this scene, Stahr is overseeing his edits to a fictional film depicting a melodrama, which is supposed to underline Stahr's genius by showcasing his talents on screen. However, the opposite ends up being the case, as the less than stellar quality of the film Stahr has created ends up undermining this notion about him. Some films must omit certain narrative actions to fit into the length of a film (Parrill 43), but Elia Kazan's reasoning for not including the airplane scene stems from his desire to have the entire narrative take place in Hollywood (Whitman). The consequence of this alteration makes Stahr less synonymous with the qualities of a visionary in the film (Hand 27), in addition to creating a disconnect between Stahr and his success, as it seems unclear as to how he achieved the American Dream for himself.

While the film does not portray the visionary aspects of Stahr's personality, it nevertheless expands the paternalistic nature that accompanies his responsibilities as a producer. This is evident in the addition of a scene that is exclusive to the film (Hand 27), which showcases Stahr's tumultuous relationship with his writers. A confrontation between Whiley White and Stahr takes place early in the film, where the former relays that he is aware that Stahr has enlisted other writers to work on the same script as him and that none of them knew about Stahr's system (00:25:15-00:26:56). Stahr looks away from White as he is spoken to, and seemingly ignores his remark by telling White that it is simply how the system works. In response, White informs Stahr of his own guilt in creating the system, which is

reminiscent of what Stahr's tells Prince Agge in the novel (Fitzgerald 58). As their conversation goes on, Stahr tells White that he is displeased with the way he has written a female character, as she originally represented vitality and health, but White's writing has distorted her. Stahr then threatens to remove White from the project if he is unwilling to cooperate further. This scene expands on Stahr's paternalistic nature, as his willingness to dispose of White seems to indicate a lack of integrity towards his workers. Stahr's reaction to one of White's rebuttals compounds this notion further, as Stahr suddenly changes the topic and averts his gaze from White after hearing him complain of his working conditions (00:25:37-00:25:50). This results in Stahr appearing to lack integrity and personal responsibility, due to him refusing to accept the consequences of his actions in his dismissal of White rebuttal.

Another scene between Stahr and director Red Ridingwood compounds this further, where Stahr inform Ridingwood that he is being replaced, as he has been unable to harness the potential of the actress Didi in their upcoming film (00:29:34-00:30:29). Afterwards, Stahr hands the director his coat from a car that has been following them during their talk. Stephen Matterson (52) argues that this scene showcases a key difference between Stahr's behaviour in the novel and film, as he comes off as insincere in the latter. In the novel, Stahr seems considerate when relaying the news to Ridingwood, as the inner narration of the director states that "It meant he would have a slight, very slight loss in position". Stahr is also trying so hard to be charitable about Ridingwood's mistakes that he nearly forgets to give the director his coat before he leaves (Fitzgerald 52). In comparison, the film alters Ridingwood's response, having him angrily refer to Stahr as a "bastard" after being told the news. According to Seymour Chatman (170), the film can either choose to use a stereotypic response or voice-over to convey Ridingwood's inner narration from the novel, where it chooses the former to do so. The alteration to Ridingwood's response makes Stahr's decision seem dire for the director and causes Stahr to come across as insensitive in the film. This notion is compounded further by the cinematic codes that are shown in the scene. As Stahr and Ridingwood exit the frame of the shot, the camera lingers on a car that starts driving after the men (Nichols 56). This action makes it appear as though Stahr is hiding something from the director, which contributes to the slickness Stahr displays in the scene, a point made by Matterson (52) as well. Through his immoral actions at the film studio, Stahr becomes separated from the principle of integrity. This results in an expansion of Stahr's paternalistic attitude from the novel and makes him a negative representation of being successful.

Stahr's heartbreak and Cecelia's resentment

Like the unfinished novel, the film adaptation showcases several instances of sombre romance. This is evident in Stahr's emotional reaction upon reading a letter from Kathleen, where he realizes that he is competing against another man for her affection. In the novel, Stahr is distraught after reading Kathleen's letter and feels an impending sense of hopelessness as he walks the steps up to his bedroom (Fitzgerald 99). To relay the turmoil of Stahr's emotional response to the letter, the film applies three signifiers to expand on Stahr's despair. The first of these is an extra-diegetic soundtrack (Nichols 65), which looms in the background as Stahr is reading the letter from Kathleen (01:11:52-01:12:23). The melody that is playing in this scene incorporates a leitmotif that is present in two prior scenes, as it plays after he sees Kathleen for the first time (00:12:53-00:13:54) and when he relates his relationship with Minna to Kathleen at his beach house (01:02:26-01:03:36). The scenes where the leitmotif is present are seemingly derived from two separate events in the novel where Stahr experiences a severe loneliness by being reminded of the death of his wife upon entering his home (Fitzgerald 67-99). As such, the leitmotif in these scenes holds a symbolic function (Brown 65), as it represents the loneliness Stahr harbours in the wake of his wife passing. By incorporating this section of the soundtrack, the film underlines the despair Stahr feels upon realizing his fleeting chances with Kathleen by evoking the depression he felt after his wife's passing.

The second method that is applied in the film are visual representations that adds onto the effects of the soundtrack. The film expands on Stahr's loneliness through the use of two key visual representations in the *mise-en-scène* (McFarlane 27). The first is the location of Stahr's room, as it is placed remotely from the rest of his living room, being segregated by a long flight of stairs as shown through a long shot (Nichols 50). The second is the low-key lighting that is used to frame Stahr's room through a doorway (Nichols 58), where the contents of his room are shrouded so heavily in shadows that it is impossible to make out the details within it (01:12:25-01:13:09). These visual representations symbolise the dread that Stahr feels in the novel, as the solitude of his bedroom is indicative of his loneliness after the death of his wife, while the uncertainty of his fleeting relationship with Kathleen is showcased in the bitter darkness of his room. The signifiers may also hint at Stahr's possible

demise at the end of the film, where he similarly walks into a dark room after being heartbroken.

The third method is through Kathleen's voiceover narration, which takes place as Stahr ascends the stairs to his bedroom after having read her letter (01:12:25-01:13:09). Thomas Leitch (151) argues that the use of a descriptive and assertive voiceover in this manner can be effective in conveying the emotional connotations of a scene. This is seen in the efficiency it brings to the scene, by underlining Stahr's heartbreak in unison with the other signifiers that are applied in the scene. Thus, the voiceover is necessary to provide context to usage the leitmotif and present the source of Stahr's dread after reading Kathleen's letter. By combining visual and aural signifiers, the film expands on Stahr's despair from the novel (Hand 27). This results in the film's thematic commentary on love being more focused on its tragic elements, as it efficiently evokes the loss of his wife alongside his tragic future following a heartbreak.

Unlike the novel, Stahr's relationship with Cecelia has a tragic conclusion in the film. This becomes apparent in the aftermath of the screenwriter's ball, where the dynamic of their relationship quickly changes. After entering his office, Stahr is enthusiastically greeted by Cecelia who informs him that he forgot to dance with her at the ball. Stahr responds by lying about having a conversation with a man he had not seen for some time, where he expresses that he feels Hollywood has changed in recent times (01:14:52-01:15:20). Stahr does not hide the fact that he is preoccupied and barely participates in their conversation, which evidently annoys Cecelia. She then asks Stahr while hiding that she is crying if the man had changed as well, in which Stahr answers with a smile that he was exactly the same. After Stahr realizes that Cecelia is upset with his answers, she storms out of his office. This scene indicates Cecelia's awareness of Stahr's lack of affection towards her, which is reminiscent of how she is said to feel during her dance with Stahr during the screenwriter's ball in the novel (Fitzgerald 77). However, the repercussion of this realization alters her character function from the novel, as Cecelia adapts a chilling attitude towards Stahr which remains throughout the rest of the film (McFarlane 25). This is apparent during her and Stahr's meeting with Brimmer, where she is noticeably upset with Stahr's behaviour. When Cecelia remarks to Stahr that "now I know you've been disappointed in love" upon seeing him drinking excessively, a spiteful expression is present on her face, indicating her changed attitude towards him (01:44:17-01:44:35). This contrasts with her behaviour in the novel's depiction of this scene, as she there expresses concern upon seeing Stahr's behaviour (Fitzgerald 124).

By having Cecelia grow resentful towards Stahr in the latter half of the story, the film alters her character function from the novel (Hand 27). In turn, this expands on the novels' tragic aspect of love, as it adds a new dimension to Cecelia's heartbreak and presents the all major relationships in the narrative as being devoid of hope.

An anti-capitalist stance

The film adds to the novel's ideologic commentary by expanding the ruthless behaviour of the capitalists Pat Brady and Monroe Stahr. Regarding the former, the film adds two scenes that showcases this aspect of his character. The first scene is between Brady and a lawyer discussing his position in the movie-making business. Brady says that Stahr has been given too much credit for the studio's success and desires more recognition for himself, claiming to be the foundation that Stahr built his career upon (00:07:36-00:07:42). The men also discuss writers, where Brady is upset that Cecelia is dating a writer, while the lawyer is displeased with the rate at which the writers are working. These sentiments contrast strongly with a later scene between Whiley White and Stahr, where the former says he considers the other writers at the studio as his friends. This underlines a sense of community between writers that is seemingly absent amongst executives like Brady, who are willing to sacrifice their own colleagues to further their own position. The second scene features Brady's reaction towards seeing an editor sitting motionless during a film screening, where he mutters that the film lacks excitement and "even puts editors to sleep" (00:41:35-00:42:12). Another worker soon points out that the editor has died during the screening and speculates that the man did not cause a distraction as to not disturb the screening. Brady's initial response to this revelation is to berate the worker who just inferred the news to him, and afterwards begins to deflect blame for not noticing what has happened during the screening. Brady's lack of emotional compassion to seeing one of his workers dead in front of him is reminiscent of how employers exploit their subordinates in a capitalist system (Donaldson 191).

The film also employs visual representations to expand on Brady's cruelty. This is evident when comparing the interior of Brady's office in the film to the one in the novel. In the latter, Brady's office is decorated with pictures of various people, such as the actor Will Rogers, a signed photograph of Minna Davis and big chalk drawings of Cecelia and her mother (Fitzgerald 22). In the film, the only picture to be found within Brady's office is a large portrait of himself centred behind his desk (00:07:35-00:07:42). The framing of himself

a centrepiece of his office shows how the film uses its *mise-en-scène* to symbolize Brady's values and priorities as a film studio-executive, which is also reinforced as Brady shifts the focus of their conversation towards himself (McFarlane 132). This interpretation can also be found in Cunningham (188-189), which highlights the unforgiving environment of Hollywood by emphasising how the tiger skin rug in Brady's office represents a lack of morality within his leadership. The tiger motif is also visually present in the meeting between Stahr and Brimmer, where the deep focus cinematography shows a picture of a tiger in the background between the two men (Nichols 62). Cunningham (189) argues that the placement of the picture implies both their careers are preyed upon by the capitalist forces of Hollywood, which expands on the cruel nature of men like Brady. This results in the ideologic commentary on the novel having increased focus on the negative aspects of capitalism, as the cruelty that Brady is indicative of permeates through the world of the film.

In the film, Stahr is antagonizing towards communism than in the unfinished novel, as seen in his meeting with Brimmer. When Stahr questions Brimmer's belief in communism, Brimmer reassures Stahr that he truly does so (01:42:02-01:42:19). In the novel, Brimmer returns this sentiment back to Stahr by telling him that he knows his assessment on Communism is wrong (Fitzgerald 123). The omission of this response from Brimmer makes the antagonism of their meeting one-sided in the film, as Stahr is seen as the sole aggressor in this instance. Another departure from the novel occurs during their dinner at a restaurant, as Stahr uses a photographer to humiliate Brimmer by walking over to him, laying his arms over Brimmer and Cecelia while flashing a large smile to seemingly mock Brimmer as their photograph is being taken. Brimmer hides his face from being photographed and is then asked by Stahr how his fellow communists back in New York would feel if they saw a picture of him enjoying himself at a dinner with a movie producer and the daughter of a wealthy Hollywood elite (01:42:59-01:43:22). This adds onto the antagonism from the previous scene, as Stahr wants to make Brimmer feel uncomfortable. Lastly, Brimmer's reaction to Stahr's remark of him exclaiming that "he knew how to use the brains of writers better than themselves" seemingly infuriates Stahr (01:43:43-01:44:07). In the novel, this remark revitalizes Brimmer's interest in his conversation with Stahr, whereas his counterpart in the film reacts with distaste upon hearing this. By reinforcing Stahr's role as the aggressor in his meeting with Brimmer, the film expands on the negative presentation of capitalist leaders (Hand 27), as Stahr acts hostile towards Brimmer by feeling threatened by his ideals. This adds onto the negative portrayal of capitalism in the film, as Stahr's synonymity with its

positives are overshadowed in the focus on its wrongdoings. Stahr defence of his actions also appear one-sided, he is overtly focused on defending his responsibility at the studio, rather than defending the principles he believes are best for his workers, resulting in capitalists appearing selfish in the film.

Conclusion

The film adaptation of Fitzgerald's unfinished novel changes certain aspects of its source material. To summarize the changes within the film adaptation, one can use Desmond and Hawkes' three methods of adaptation to assess the overall changes. Within this set of criteria, the film adaptation of *The Last Tycoon* can be classified as a "close" adaptation, as it maintains most of the novel's narrative elements, in addition to excluding and adding few elements (Minier 27). This classification aids in contextualizing the overall results of the changes made in Kazan's film, as its themes has some differences from those of the unfinished novel. The omission of narrative elements such as Cecelia's narration and the opening airplane scene has important thematic consequences. This is seen regarding the theme of success, as Monroe Stahr's visionary qualities are not emphasized in the film. The lessened importance of personal responsibility and integrity alters Stahr's characterization further, which results in the negative connotations of success being expanded in the film. In a similar fashion to Fitzgerald's unfinished novel, Kazan's film also presents romance as a tragic affair by using cinematic signifiers to expand on Stahr's despair. Stahr's relationship with Cecelia becomes altered in the adaptation as well, as she begins to resent him for not being taken seriously. This change reinforces the tragic undertones of the theme of romance from the novel. The film also differs slightly in its ideologic commentary through added narrative events that expand on the cruelty of capitalism that is represented by Brady and Stahr. These changes results in the ideologic commentary of the film being focused on the wrongdoings of capitalism, as the ideology encourages individuals to lash out at each other.

By analysing the changes Kazan's' film adaptation makes to the source material, it becomes evident that the 1976 film deviates slightly from the novel's plot and themes, as it sees notable deviations regarding certain aspects of its narrative. Unlike the novel's portrayal of Stahr as visionary, the changes made in the film results in a protagonist that does possess such qualities, as he appears shrewd towards his workers and values his artistic vision over their careers. It presents romantic relationships as futile, as nearly all parties involved end up

heartbroken and resentful towards those around them. This marks a minor departure from the novel, as Cecelia remains affectionate towards Stahr for the remaining sections of the novel. The capitalistic world of Hollywood appears quite hostile as well, as individuals prioritize their own potential for advancement and antagonizes those that hold different beliefs. This differs slightly from the world of the novel, where capitalism is portrayed in a neutral light, by showing its positive and negative sides. Thus, the film adaptation of *The Last Tycoon* takes a few departures from the thematic commentary of its source material.

CHAPTER 3: THE SERIAL ADAPTATION

The ambitious approach of the serial adaptation

Like the film adaptation of *The Last Tycoon*, the series under the same name takes several departures from its source material. The series deviates from the novel in several regards, as several cardinal functions are absent in the adaptation and both major and minor characters have different functions. This is emblematic of series' approach to adapting the source material, as its creators took the novel's premise, setting, characters and relationship dynamics and added new elements onto the world (Jurgensen). The series also expands its thematic commentary, as Stahr and Brady's respective connections to capitalism are given more prominence in the narrative (Hand 27). The series also marginalizes some themes from the novel, as aspects like communism are given less prominence in the adaptation (Hand 27). Therefore, the changes in the serial adaptation result in a myriad of differences in comparison to the source material.

The TV series *The Last Tycoon* first debuted as a single pilot episode in 2016 and later premiered its first season on the streaming service Amazon in 2017, consisting of nine episodes in total. It was created by screenwriter and director Billy Ray and features performances from Mat Boomer, Kelsey Grammar and Lily Collins. In terms of adapting Fitzgerald's unfinished novel, the series' writers expressed that they took its core setting, characters and relationship dynamics and then added new elements onto its world, such as new locations and storylines (Jurgensen). The shows' creators additionally worked alongside Fitzgerald expert A. Scott Berg, who consulted them on the novel's original structure. It is unclear whether this adaptation was based on Edmund Wilson or Matthew J. Bruccoli's publication of *The Last Tycoon*. Upon its release, the series was met with mixed reviews as critics stated that it did not live up to the potential of its source material ("Bingeworthy: Amazon's 'the Last Tycoon'"). The series was ultimately cancelled in 2017 after its one and only season.

The series centres on Monroe Stahr, an eccentric film producer who works for the studio Brady American during the Great Depression in 1936. He often comes into conflict with his boss Pat Brady over creative decisions, as the latter is concerned with the financial stability of the studio, in addition to his reputation to outsiders. Brady's daughter Cecelia is

visiting from college and seeks to romance Stahr, despite a heart illness limiting the time he has left alive. Stahr's life changes suddenly once he meets a waitress named Kathleen Moore, whom he begins to pursue romantically while being in the dark of a secret she is keeping from him. Cecelia later manages to convince Stahr to help her produce a film that is critical of the Nazi government which the studio is constantly forced to pander to (*Last Tycoon, The Series, Episode 1*, 00:21:33-00:22:12). Throughout the series, several struggles befall the Brady American studio, as competition from rivalling studios and inner tension amongst the managers and workers become problematic. The series also features minor characters' stories, such as Rose Brady, Pat's wife who wants to pursue a life of self-realization and Max Miner, a young worker who seeks to provide for his two younger siblings. The series turns increasingly dramatic once Stahr learns that Kathleen's false identity was set up to advance the careers of herself and her manager Rupert Vajna (7, 00:23:08-00:23:57). Stahr and Vajna end up in a violent conflict which leads to the accidental death of the latter. This forces Stahr and Kathleen to be at the mercy of Pat Brady, who has secured evidence of their involvement in Vajna's death. Later, tensions between Stahr and Pat Brady reaches a climax, as Stahr betrays Brady by selling their film criticizing the Nazi's to an opposing studio. The series ends with Monroe collapsing to the ground in his office, his ultimate fate being unknown (9, 00:53.41-00:54:46).

Goldleaf (236) argues that the serial adaptation of *The Last Tycoon* takes on a more ambitious approach to adapting Fitzgerald's unfinished novel in comparison to Elia Kazan's adaptation of the same name. This is evident in the different characterizations present in the series, as they create a different plot from the source material. Such is seen in the omission of minor characters like Schwartze and Jaques La Borwits from the narrative, and the addition of characters like Max Miner and Margot Thaft, whose respective stories provide catalysers that help underline the series' thematic elements (McFarlane 13-14). Prominent characters from the novel, such as Monroe Stahr, Cecelia Brady and Kathleen Moore have altered characterizations from their counterparts in the source material, such as Cecelia being more prominent in the story's narrative (Goldleaf 239). Cecelia's parents, Pat and Rose Brady have added narrative material that give them new character functions, which is most notable for the latter, who is only seen in a photograph in the novel (Fitzgerald 22). Pat Brady is additionally Stahr's boss in the series, which alters the power-dynamic between the two men (Goldleaf 237). Minor characters from the novel like Whiley White and Brimmer have significantly smaller roles on the plot, both only being present in a few scenes each.

Ultimately, these changes result in the series having a noticeably different plot compared to its source material.

Like the plot, the structure of the series' story deviates from the novel as well. This is evident in the events that takes place, as the series' first episode condenses several of the cardinal functions from the novel in its first episode, such as Stahr meeting Kathleen and the screenwriters' ball (McFarlane 13-14). These events, amongst others, are altered by occurring in a different succession or containing a similar premise. Several narrative events are added to the story as well, such as the interference from the Nazi government in the film studio's production, Pat Brady seeking recognition and Cecelia developing her own film for the studio. However, the series also modifies certain cardinal functions from the novel, such as Stahr's meeting with Brimmer occurring under a different premise. These alterations to the novel's events, along with the changes to the series' plot, serve to further distance this adaptation from Fitzgerald's unfinished novel thematically. Similarly, to Elia Kazan's film adaptation of *The Last Tycoon*, the series also forgoes implementing the novel's double vision and likewise uses a narration that is reminiscent of the "restricted consciousness" approach of Stahr's perspective in the novel throughout (McFarlane 19). Thus, the series' story takes a notable departure from the one in the novel.

The importance of the American Dream

In a similar fashion to his counterpart in Fitzgerald's unfinished novel, Monroe Stahr as portrayed in the series, underlines the connection between being a visionary and successful. This is evident throughout the first episode of the series, where Stahr displays a unique talent. When Stahr wanders the studio lot, he catches the writer Caldecott Riddle following him from behind. Upon asking the writer why he is doing this, Riddle confesses that he is studying Stahr to grasp what makes him capable of positively influencing those around him (1, 00:07:56-00:02:52). This notion later present in a conversation Brady and Cecelia have on Stahr, as the former says that Stahr believes in things that no longer exist (1, 00:31:54-00:32:00). These scenes are reminiscent of Cecelia's thoughts on seeing Stahr talking to two pilots in first chapter of the novel. When remembering this event, Cecelia recalls she once talked with one of the pilots about Stahr at a later occasion, where he wanted to know what made Stahr the person he is (Fitzgerald 20).

By invoking similar notions to this scene, the series indicates that Stahr possesses a unique talent. Like the unfinished novel, this seems to be his insight into the public conscious. However, the series expands on Stahr's ability by underlining the importance the American Dream has in relation to this talent. Such is seen in a flashback between Stahr and his deceased wife Minna that temporarily alters the sequentially of the novel (Stam, "Introduction: The Theory and Practice" 32). In this scene, Stahr expresses a strong desire of making a film about Minna, as he believes her story embodies the promise of America (1, 00:22:54-00:24:20). This notion is later continued when Stahr convinces Brady of including an opening shot of Minna arriving in New York, feeling it will resonate with Americans who came to the country for similar reasons as her (1, 00:06:40-00:07:27). Thomas Doherty (232-233) thoughts on the series echo this notion as well, as he argues that Stahr matches his visionary qualities in the novel by knowing what will sit well with American audiences. By making Stahr's talent synonymous with the notions of the American Dream, the series expands on the novel's portrayal of success (Hand 27), as it specifies the thing that connects Stahr to his audience. This results in the importance of the ethos being underlined in the adaptation and reinforces Stahr's rise to success.

Like his incarnation in Fitzgerald's unfinished novel, Stahr also possesses notable flaws in the series. Unlike the novel, Stahr does not showcase a paternalistic nature towards his writers. This is notable in his speech about taking criticism personally, as he does not demean his writers about them "asking to be kicked around" like in the novel (Fitzgerald 17). Additionally, the writer-system that Stahr subjects his workers to in the novel is less present in the series, although they still tell him that he overworks them from time to time (1, 00:43:21-00:44:14). Regardless, the bond Stahr has with his with is writers is solid, which is affirmed when Hackett tells Stahr that all the writers are willing to depart from Brady's studio with him (9, 00:26:50-00:27:07). Stahr's greatest flaw in the adaptation is becoming a murderer, as he accidentally kills Kathleen's manager Rupert Vajya in a bout of anger (8, 00:47:40-00:47:53). This addition to Stahr's characterization is a potential departure from the novel, as Bruccoli (*Last of the Novelists* 106) states that Fitzgerald ultimately decided to either omit or alter Stahr committing a murder in the novel, as he believes this action would contrast to much with Fitzgerald's vision for the character. However, due to the unfinished nature of Fitzgerald's novel, it its ultimately unknown whether Stahr was to commit such actions or not. Ultimately, these alterations to Stahr's characterization remedies him of his most notable flaw from the source material, while simultaneously providing him a new one

(Hand 27). This alteration results in Stahr's leadership at the studio providing a positive representation of personal responsibility, as he gives his writers a substantial degree of self-autonomy. Furthermore, it also alters his character function in a narrative event that is reminiscent of the novel, as Brimmer does not chastise Stahr for his mistreatment of the studio's writers during their meeting (7, 00:42:04-00:42:32). This results in a positive portrayal of Stahr's integrity in the series, which underlines the differences in Stahr's characterization from Fitzgerald's unfinished novel, as he possesses a different set of flaws that are less synonymous with the negative aspects of success.

Pat Brady's failing leadership plays a prominent role in the series' thematic commentary, as his lack of synonymy with the principles of personal responsibility and integrity impairs his success. Despite claiming to be in the film business as a means of providing work for himself and others, Brady hides his true desires from his workers (1, 00:36:02). As the series progresses, it becomes evident that Brady seeks the same creative recognition as Stahr, as he wants to be known in the business as a "Movie Man" (2, 00:35:53-00:35:56). This is seen in the emotional investment in his film "The Bells of Boston", which initially shows signs of flopping and must be saved by creative decisions from Stahr to turn out successfully (2, 00:24:03-00:25:48). Brady's reliance on Stahr ultimately gets him in trouble with his financiers, as they accuse him of being deadweight for the studio and suspect Stahr of being the catalyst for its success (7, 00:38:12-00:38:49). In response, Brady cancels Stahr and Cecelia's film "An Enemy Among Us" to underline his role as a creative leader for the studio, despite Stahr being responsible for the Oscar nomination of his film now titled "Angels on the Avenue". These actions show a lack of personal responsibility on Brady's part, as he is entirely dependent on Stahr's talents to achieve success.

In a later scene, Brady and Stahr discuss the cancellation of the film about Minna, where Stahr pleads to Brady to keep the film alive, while Brady wants to comply with the Germans' demands to release the film to a wider market. When Brady tells Stahr that "You cannot have art without commerce, Monroe" it underlines his lack of integrity, as Brady prioritizes finances over creating meaningful art (1, 00:21:33-00:22:12). This sentiment is indicative of Cecelia's thoughts on her father in the novel, as she believes he does not know a thing about making movies, nor possess a "feel" for what America entails (Fitzgerald 28). Brady's struggle for personal success embodies Fitzgerald's saying that "... achievement rarely matches aspiration", as he is unable to reach the same recognition as Stahr due to his lack of talent (Brucoli, *Last of the Novelists* 10). As a result of these changes, Brady

becomes the series' representation for the negative sides of success, due to his lack of synonymy with the principles which made Stahr successful.

Two opposite portrayals of romance

Like Kazan's film adaptation, the serial adaptation of *The Last Tycoon* expands on the tragic relationship between Stahr and Kathleen. In series, Stahr seems quite impacted by the death of his wife, as he often reminisces on their time together throughout the series (1, 00:18:01-00:18:10). Stahr often recalls the two embarking on a drive, where an extreme-close-up of Minna's eyes are used to emphasize Stahr's sense of longing for her (Nichols 51). These catalysers serve to emphasize the tragic undertones of Stahr's loss, which is compounded further when Stahr reveals to Kathleen that he was responsible for her death (7, 00:03:08-00:04:48). These scenes underline the tragedy of Stahr's past and are later used to contextualize his relationship with Kathleen. Like the novel, the series establishes several connections between Kathleen and Minna. This is seen in the first meeting between Stahr and Kathleen, where Stahr tells her that he used to be familiar with Ireland (1, 00:27:23-00:27:57). The similarities between Stahr's past and his current love-interest are acknowledged several times, such as when Kathleen confesses to Stahr that she cannot be a stand-in for Minna in his life (2, 00:32:15-00:33:09). The amount of times this comparison is brought up expands on the similarity between Kathleen and Minna (Hand 27), as they emphasize the impact Minna's death still has on Stahr. This connection unfolds in the fallout of Stahr's relationship to Kathleen, as he discovers Kathleen only mimicked Minna's characteristics to take advantage of him. The tragic notions of this revelation are expanded further by Kathleen's change of heart, who reveals that she truly has fallen for Stahr. Despite this, Stahr immediately start to resent Kathleen, but is forced to keep up their relationship to the public. This event alters their relationship from the source material, where Kathleen is the one to end their relationship (Fitzgerald 117-118). Thus, the series expands on the tragic elements of Stahr relationship with Kathleen by invoking the connotations of his past relationship to Minna to a greater extent.

The tragic undertones of Stahr's romantic life are also expanded upon with the symbolism of the *mise-en-scène* in his office (Hand 27). The black vase from Minna in Stahr's office seems to represent the possibility of love in his life, as its condition varies alongside the narrative events of the series (Leitch 157). The vase is first broken by Cecelia

who drops it after seeing Minna's photograph in Stahr's office, indicating his current despair in the wake of wife's death. In the scene prior to Stahr and Kathleen's first meeting, a secretary who is repairing the vase tells Stahr that there is still hope of it being fixed, indicating that Stahr could find happiness with Kathleen (1, 00:22:20-00:22:35). This sentiment is reminiscent of Stahr's thoughts on Kathleen in the novel, where he sees her as someone who can "bring life back into him" (Fitzgerald 117). As Stahr's relationship with Kathleen falls apart towards the end of the series, Stahr becomes angry at the sight of the vase, but hesitates when he is about to break it (9, 00:53:52-00:54:16). Stahr's hesitance in this moment could be an indication of hope not having left him or him considering reconciling with Kathleen. However, this possibility is tragically stripped away from him, as he suddenly falls to the ground as his heart gives out due to his condition. Therefore, the implication of the vase in Stahr's office expands on the series' tragic portrayal of love, by having Stahr's final heartbreak remain unresolved. The emphasis on Stahr's loss of Minna also results in the aspect of tragic love having an overarching presence throughout the series, as Stahr is still aching from her death during the final episode. Therefore, the series expands on the unfinished novel's tragic love by increasing the presence of Minna's death in Stahr's new relationship.

The series alters Cecelia's romance from the novel, as she goes from adoring Stahr to searching for a future with another man. In the early episodes of the series, Cecelia's relationship with Stahr is quite reminiscent of the one in the novel, as the former's feelings for the latter are never returned. A close-up of Cecelia seeing her own reflection in a picture of Minna resonates this notion, as it indicates her desire to become the new woman in Stahr's life (Nichols 51). When Cecelia later asks Stahr to go with her to the Screenwriter's ball, the events turn out similarly to the novel, as he does not take her advances seriously (1, 00:41:00-00:42:10). Noticing Stahr's connection with Kathleen throughout the series hurts Cecelia in a similar manner to the novel, as her diminishing chances with Stahr cause her to feel despair (Fitzgerald 77). However, the addition of the character Max Miner circumvents Cecelia from this fate, as they quickly fall for each other. Their relationship marks a notable point of hope in the series, as the two promise to stay together while the studio faces turbulent times (7, 00:36:49-00:37:24). The series also alters Cecelia's character function, as her romantic feelings for Stahr become less central in her characterization. Such is seen when Cecelia returns the handkerchief Stahr had given her at a previous occasion and expresses gratitude for his mentorship, establishing a new connection between the two where they stand on an

equal footing (9, 00:52:01-00:53:35). These additions to the narrative marks the series altering the novel's sombre depictions of romance (Hand 27). As a result, Cecelia overcoming her affection towards Stahr showcases a positive conclusion of love in the series, as she has circumvented the tragedy that befalls Stahr by finding happiness in love for herself.

Distinguishing the positives and negatives of capitalism

Like Fitzgerald's unfinished novel, the serial adaptation both vilifies and praises capitalism. The former is evident in Pat Brady's actions, which is first seen in his studio's partnership with the Nazi-government. Upon entering Brady's office, Stahr notices the insignia of the Nazi Government on a bag in Brady's office (1, 00:15:00-00:15:14). When seeing the insignia, an extra-diegetic sound is produced, which foreshadows the negative influence the studio's partnership with the Nazis will have on their filmmaking (Nichols 65). Later in their meeting, the German representatives relay that all films released by the studio must comply with their demands of not offending the racial sensibilities of the German people (1, 00:15:43-00:15:52). Stahr does not seem surprised that the other major studios in Hollywood have complied with their demands, but is taken aback when Brady shows an unwillingness to contest them. The addition of the Studio's partnership with the Nazi-government is an early example of the immorality that is present in both Brady's characterization and capitalism (Hand 27).

Brady's mistreatment of his own workers is another notable aspect of his immoral behaviour. Near the end of the series Brady slashes his worker's salaries by thirty percent to pay off Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (7, 00:20:50-00:20:55). This event, which is reminiscent of a planned event in Fitzgerald's novel (Brucoli, *Last of the Novelists* 104), upsets his workers and causes a strike at the studio that ends up humiliating Brady in front of his investors (Brucoli, *Last of the Novelists* 105). The resentment Brady receives in response to his leadership is reminiscent of the way writers act towards Stahr in the novel, as they resent Stahr from limiting their self-autonomy. Brady's willingness to sacrifice the well-being of his workers for profit is indicative of earlier criticisms of capitalism by Fitzgerald, as the author has previously depicted capitalistic employers exploiting their workers for their personal gain (Donaldson 199-200). The exploitation inherent in capitalism is also seen in the addition of Max Miner, who is forced to accept immoral work in order to provide for both himself and

his siblings through their increasingly dire financial situation (9, 00:04:49-00:06:00). By adding narrative events that focus on the immoral actions of the capitalist leader Brady, the series expands on the ideologic commentary from the novel (Hand 27). This results in Brady's characterization becoming altered in the series, as he arguably becomes the character that is most synonymous with the negative connotations of capitalism. The series further underlines these aspects of capitalism by showing how much it can jeopardize the lives of workers, compared to the novel, where the ideology only results in worker negligence.

The series defines Cecelia as anti-capitalist to a greater extent than the novel. This comes as a result of contrasting her actions with those of her father, as she expresses concern for the workers of the Brady American studio. Early in the series, Cecelia is adamant of convincing her father to let his workers unionize, in addition to questioning Brady on whether he is aware of the poor working conditions he subjects his staff to (2, 00:38:47-00:39:33). She later confronts her father for the salary-cut he forced upon the studio, in which he does not acknowledge any wrong-doing (7, 00:34:21-00:34:42). Her actions as they are shown in these events serve to criticize the capitalist behaviour of her father. Cecelia showcases similar beliefs the novel, as she criticizes the actions of her father in several instances, such as when she asks him to help the struggling actors of his studio (Fitzgerald 103). However, Cecelia's counterpart in the novel also seems to share Stahr's negative perspective on writers, as she arguably looks down on them. Such is seen in her demeaning perspective on her friend Rose Melony, a writer for Brady's studio, where she explains that the building she works is filled with "the dull moans of cloistered hacks and bums", in addition to believing that neither writers nor playwrights belong in the white-collar class (Fitzgerald 100). The series omits this anti-worker sentiment, which in turn alters her characterization in comparison to the unfinished novel (Hand 27). This results in Cecelia's resistance towards capitalism being solidified in the series, as she wholly opposes the immoral actions of her father and desires better working conditions for her father's employees.

On the whole, Monroe Stahr showcases the positive sides of capitalism to a greater extent than in the novel. This comes from the series altering several events to separate him from the likes of Pat Brady. For the studio Brady American, Stahr represents the ideals of capitalism in his integrity and his ability to endure a great deal of personal responsibility (Brucoli, *Last of the Novelists* 5). The former is evident in his meeting with the German representative, where Stahr resists their partnership (1, 00:15:43-00:15:52). Stahr's willingness to release a film with meaning at the cost of financial success mirrors his speech

at the board meeting in the novel, where Stahr convinces the board of executives of releasing a film that will earn the studio positive reception at the drawback of losing money (Fitzgerald 48). However, Stahr does contribute to some of the negative actions of capitalism in the series, namely through his compliance with Brady's wrongdoings. This is first seen when Stahr's asks the writers to not speak ill of Brady's leadership during the screenwriter's ball (1, 00:44:13-00:44:21). Later in their meeting with the writer's representative Brimmer, Stahr defends Brady when he tells Brimmer and Hackett that if the writers return, they can get the back to releasing films and restoring everyone's salaries (7, 00:31:42-00:33:47). As Brady takes hold of their conversation and demandingly tells his workers to come back to work, the camera-shot places Stahr out of focus behind Brady (7, 00:33:12-00:33:33). A possible explanation behind this deep focus cinematography could be that Stahr is conflicted, due to his loyalty to Brady overshadowing his sense of morality. This notion is compounded further when he breaks eye contact with the writers as Brady berates them, seemingly out of shame for his actions (Nichols 62).

The series' depiction of the meeting with Brimmer also lessens Stahr's association with the negative aspects of capitalism. This stems from the alterations to Stahr's characterization, as he does not showcase a paternalistic attitude towards his writers in the series, as Stahr tells Brimmer that he is concerned of the consequences the strike can have on the reputation of the writers (7, 00:32:40-00:32:48). Stahr also does not showcase any resentment towards Brimmer during the meeting, which contrasts his belief of Brimmer being misguided in the source material (Fitzgerald 121-122). The omission of communism in the serial adaptation is notable as well, as the presence of the ideology is only seen vaguely in scenes such as Brady referring to his writers as "lefties" (7, 00:30:46-00:30:59). In turn, this omission marginalizes Brimmer's criticisms towards capitalism, as Brimmer tells Stahr that someone like him can revolutionize the way other studios treat their employees, rather than antagonizing him over their ideological differences like in the novel (7, 00:42:04-00:42:32). Thus, Stahr characterization is altered in the series, as he is not indicative of the negative aspects of capitalism. His association with its negatives only stems from his defence of Brady, which can be dismissed due to Stahr defending him out of loyalty, rather than his overt beliefs in capitalism or rejection of ideas the criticize it. Such is also seen in Stahr's conflict with Brimmer, which is less personal and ends in the two men finding common ground. Regardless, the series portrayal of capitalism still alludes to the trends within Fitzgerald's writing, as Frye (136) believes Fitzgerald featured both sympathy and criticisms

of capitalism throughout his literary corpus, which is evident in the characterizations of Stahr, Brady and Cecelia in the series.

Conclusion

The serial adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Last Tycoon* makes several changes to its source material. Categorizing the film through Desmond and Hawkes' three methods arguably places the series in the "loose" category (Minier 27). This describes the overall result of the changes made by Amazon series, as its altered characterizations, omissions and additions of narrative elements noticeably distinguishes this adaptation from its source material. The Amazon series alters its commentary on success in its expansion of Stahr's connection to the American Dream, by making the ethos more prominent in the work he produces for the studio. The series also alters Stahr's flaws from the novel, omitting him of his paternalistic attitude and reinforcing the positive notions of the personal responsibility and integrity he displays. Instead, the series uses Pat Brady's leadership to represent the negative connotations of attaining success, due to his lack of synonymy with the principles Stahr embodies. The Amazon series expands on the novel's depiction of romance by evoking Stahr's loss of Minna in his relationship with Kathleen more often. This exacerbates the tragedy of love in the series, as the end of Stahr's relationship with Kathleen is made worse by her taking advantage of the death of his wife. The final scene of the series compounds this, as Stahr's last opportunity to find love is seemingly taken away from him due to his illness. However, the series also departs from the novel's tragic love through the addition of the relationship between Cecelia and Max Miner, which showcases a hopeful portrayal of romance. Regarding the theme of ideology, the series maintains the source material's commentary on capitalism by altering several characterizations to present the positive and negative connotations of it differently. This results in a different portrayal of capitalism, as Stahr and Cecelia become juxtapositions to Pat Brady, which highlights the immorality of the latter's capitalist actions. However, some of this criticism is alleviated, as the omission of both communism and Stahr's paternalistic results in him being a near-ideal representation of its positive sides.

Considering the changes in the serial adaptation of *The Last Tycoon*, it appears to be merely influenced by Fitzgerald's unfinished novel. The Amazon series takes the novel's premise, setting, characters and themes, but changes narratives and characterizations to create

an adaptation that deviates noticeably from its source material. Like the novel, Monroe Stahr appears as a visionary who embodies the American Dream. However, the absence of his paternalistic attitude from the novel results in a near flawless presentation of both him and the ethos. In a similar fashion to Kazan's film adaptation, the Amazon series expands on the tragic nature of love from the novel. However, this is achieved by altering Stahr and Kathleen's relationship, rather than the one between Stahr and Cecelia like in the film. The latter's romantic conclusion is also distinct from the other two versions of *The Last Tycoon*, as it is the only one to portray a relationship that is wholly hopeful. The series also presents similar dynamics of capitalism to the novel, but conveys them through a black-and-white perspective that presents Stahr as a positive representation of capitalism, and Brady as its opposite. Therefore, the thematic commentary present in the series, has several differences from that of its source material.

CONCLUSION:

Having analysed F. Scott Fitzgerald 's final novel *The Last Tycoon*, there are three notable thematic trends that stand out. First is the synonymity it establishes between personal success and showcasing the principles of personal responsibility and integrity. Such is shown in the career of Monroe Stahr, who showcases a remarkable talent in his leadership of a film studio. However, a downside of Stahr's leadership is that it limits the autonomy of his writers, as his ambitions are prioritized over theirs. The second notable theme is the tragedy of romance, as the novel showcases tragic developments in the relationships between Stahr and both the women in his life. The third theme is the theme of ideology, where Brady portrays the negative sides of capitalism, while Stahr showcases both positives and negatives of the ideology.

When it comes to the film's adaptation of these themes it makes some changes to the source material's themes and characters. In Kazan's adaptation, Stahr is less synonymous with the visionary qualities he possesses in the novel, which takes away from the magnitude of his success. Stahr is also made increasingly paternalistic, which distances him from the principles of personal responsibility and integrity. The film continues the novel's sombre view of romance, portraying Stahr's falling out with Kathleen in a manner that is reminiscent of the emotional devastation Stahr feels in the novel. It additionally sours the relationship between Stahr and Cecelia, further underlining the tragic outcomes of romance in the film. Regarding the theme of ideology, the film increases the cruelty of capitalists Stahr and Brady showcase in the novel.

The serial adaptation of *The Last Tycoon* makes Stahr synonymous with the principles of the American Dream by showing how the ethos influences his work at the studio. The Amazon series also compounds the importance of personal responsibility and integrity by showing how the poor leadership by Pat Brady comes from not embodying these principles. Regarding the theme of romance, the series invokes the loss of Minna Davis to a greater extent in Stahr's relationship with Kathleen, which adds onto the fallout between them. Unlike the film, the series gives Cecelia a more positive romantic development, having her get over her heartbreak from Stahr by romancing Max Miner. The series compounds Brady's association with the negative sides of capitalism by increasing his cruelty and shrewdness towards his workers. It also presents Cecelia as wholly anti-capitalist, in addition to making Stahr a representation of capitalism's positives by altering the flaws in his characterization.

The Last Tycoon has great potential despite its incomplete status. This is showcased in two of its most prominent adaptations, as they use the novel to present their individual takes on F. Scott Fitzgerald's unfinished novel. The consequences of the thematic changes made in Elia Kazan's film adaptation results in a version of *The Last Tycoon* that differs in some respects from the novel. It is unclear what abilities has made Monroe Stahr successful and he appears shrewd towards his workers, due to his poor leadership. It portrays romance as doomed, as Stahr is left heartbroken in the wake of his fading relationship with Kathleen, in addition to Cecelia's growing resentment resulting from Stahr dismissing her advances. The film's portrayal of the capitalistic landscape of Hollywood is ruthless, as its inhabitants scramble to serve their own interests, while dismissing other methods of maintaining the industry.

The changes to the novel's themes in Amazon's serial adaptation of *The Last Tycoon* results in a version that differs in several regards from Fitzgerald's unfinished novel. Monroe Stahr implements his knowledge of the American Dream implements in his work at the film studio, while Brady struggles to achieve success for himself, due to his poor leadership of the studio. The series portrayal of romance is two-sided, as Stahr and Kathleen's romance ends tragically, while Cecelia finds a hopeful bond with Max Miner. Capitalism has its champion in Stahr, as he showcases how the ideology can cause good, while Brady's actions at the studio are emblematic of its negative impact on Hollywood. Both adaptations of *The Last Tycoon* are distinct from Fitzgerald's novel, as their changes to its characters and narrative are indicative of how malleable the themes of success, romance and ideology are for those that are willing to adapt such a notorious work of literature.

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THE THESIS'S RELEVANCE FOR TEACHING

The work that has gone into this thesis has notable relevance regarding my education in the teacher's programme at NTNU. Throughout my five years at the university, the field of literary analysis has been an important focus in several courses and has become more complex each year. This thesis serves as a culmination of sorts to this progression, as it requires me to use the analytical mindset I have developed from my time at the teacher's programme. Therefore, I believe this will aid in my analysis of the themes in Fitzgerald's unfinished novel, and discussing the thematic consequences of the changes in the film and serial adaptations.

I also believe that the analysis in this thesis will aid in my coming career as an English teacher, as I can use what I have learned to teach literature and film analysis. This is evident in one of the competence aims in the English curriculum, which states that students should be able to discuss and elaborate on English language films ("English subject curriculum"). As my thesis assesses how a film and serial adaptation handle the themes from a novel, I believe I have gained a thorough understanding to teach students how to discuss themes within different mediums. Additionally, as I have used a theoretical lens to write the analysis in this thesis, I believe I can teach students to do the same in their own analyses of films, although on a level that is more appropriate for them. Another competence aim for upper-secondary level states that students should be able to evaluate and use suitable reading and writing strategies adapted for the purpose and type of text ("English subject curriculum"). Having read through *The Last Tycoon* several times has shown me the importance of close-reading in regards to finding information, which is an important skill to teach in the classroom, as extracting information out from a text is useful in several disciplines. I also believe teaching close-readings will also aid students in analysing texts, as it lets them see smaller events in a larger narrative, which aids them in identifying and discussing themes. Therefore, I believe that my thesis holds an important value in my future as an English teacher.

I also believe *The Last Tycoon* and other works within Fitzgerald's bibliography can be used in classes pertaining to upper secondary level, as the author's works are at an appropriate level of difficulty for this group. F. Scott Fitzgerald is also regarded as one of the greatest American authors of the 21st century, and encouraging students to read his well-regarded and known works can aid in improving reading comprehension and incentivise a general interest in literature.

