

THE REASONS OF DICK DIVER'S RUINED LIFE IN THE *TENDER IS THE NIGHT*

TENDER IS THE NIGHT ESERİNDE DICK DIVER'İN HAYATININ MAHVOLMASININ SEBEPLERİ

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Abstract

Tender is the Night, a popular novel of F. Scott Fitzgerald, is about ruined life of an ambitious psychiatrist, Dick Diver, the protagonist of the novel. Dick had an aim of being a world widely known psychiatrist and he forged ahead for his target; however, he had some frailties in his character which restrained him from his goal. Fitzgerald did not clearly depict the reasons of Dick's diving; thus, many articles were handled about the reasons of the protagonist's collapsing life. This article put forward three causes of Dick's devastation which are about his character. Firstly, Dick was ambitious to earn a lot of money and to have a delicate life; that is why he married with one of his young patient, Nicole, just for her inherited richness. Additionally, Dick was fascinated by teenager girls and flirted with some young ladies using his attractiveness and handsomeness, so he cheated on her wife many times. Finally, after getting money, he got used to living luxuriously, drinking and partying which caused him to lose the discipline of working and kept him away from his job.

Keywords: Fitzgerald, Dick Diver, Tender is the Night

Özet

F. Scott Fitzgerald'ın popüler romanı *Tender is the Night*, hırslı bir psikiyatrist olan romanın ana kahramanı Dick Diver'in harap olan hayatıyla ilgilidir. Dick dünya çapında bilinen bir psikiyatrist olmayı hedefler ve bu hedefine doğru hızla ilerler, fakat onu amacından alıkoyan bazı karakter bozuklukları vardır. Fitzgerald, Dick'in bu çöküşünün nedenlerini eserinde açık bir şekilde ifade etmiyor, bu yüzden birçok makale ana karakterin çöküşüyle ilgili farklı nedenler ortaya koyar. Bu çalışma Dick'in hayatının mahvolmasının karakteriyle ilgili olan üç temel nedenini ortaya koyar. İlk olarak Dick para kazanmaya ve lüks bir hayata sahip olamaya hevesliydi, bu nedendir ki sırf babasından kalmış zenginliğe sahip olan geç hastası, Nicole ile evlendi. Ayrıca Dick küçük kızlara düşkünlü ve karizma ve yakışıklılığını kullanarak bazı yaş küçük kızlarla flört hayatı yaşamıştı, dolayısıyla karısını defalarca aldatmıştı. Son olarak, paraya ulaşır, lüks yaşamaya, alkole ve partilere alışmak iş disiplinini kaybetmesine sebep oldu ve onu işinden uzak tuttu.

Anahtar kelimeler: Fitzgerald, Dick Diver, Tender is the Night.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tender is the Night, written in 1933 by F. Scott Fitzgerald, has been a highly appreciated novel. Compared to the writer's masterpiece, *The Great Gatsby*, this book was not so popular at the beginning because its topic was ambiguous for readers as stated by Crowley (1953): "We weren't quite sure in reading it whether author had intended to write about a whole group of American on Riviera . . . or whether he had intended to write a psychological novel about the glory and decline of Richard Diver as a person" (p. v). Even if the book included much information about the lifestyles of Americans, the main focus was on Dick Diver, the protagonist of the novel, and how he became very popular initially but bitched up his life later. *Tender is the Night* was written with a new plot set in Europe about an American psychiatrist who is ruined by his marriage to a wealthy mental patient (Brucoli, 1996). Even if it is clear that the writer displayed the ruined life of the main character, Fitzgerald did not clearly express the cause of the Dick's falling:

Ever since 1934, readers of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night* have had difficulty in perceiving a cause adequate to its hero's catastrophe. It is not, as Henry Seidel Canby remarked when he reviewed the book, that there are no reasons provided for Dick Diver's fate, but rather that there are too many reasons, no one of which is dominant. (Murphy, 1973, p. 314)

As Murphy states, there are a lot of different reasons of Dick's collapse; that is why many articles were written about the causes, and most of them have referred different occasions for the downfall of the protagonist. However, none of these studies can strongly defend their point of view as the unerring answer to the downfall of Dick Diver. Murao (2012) pointed out that it is confusing for readers to ascertain any specific, understandable reasons for Dick catastrophic collapse. Fitzgerald put some blanks for this point and wanted the readers to complete it. "The author is motivated to create the novel by depicting his protagonist's collapse, but the causes remain 'blank' and are unmentioned throughout the novel" (Murao, 2012, p. 60). Since it is charged to the readers to find the causes, many different ideas were put forward in this point.

As there are many reasons of Dick's falling, this article argues for the dominant reasons that were related to his character. Dick had some weaknesses, flaws, and frailties in his character which were the dominant reasons of his downfall. The most tragic fall is chucking down from a high place or statues as Dick, who was a golden boy whose education was perfect and was walking in the way of famous psychiatrists like Freud and Jung. "He is most certainly a serious man and a brilliant man. Of all the men who have recently taken their degrees in neuropathology in Zurich, Dick has been regarded as the most brilliant—more brilliant than I could ever be" (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 352). This study focuses on three causes for his falling: loving money and richness, being fond of young girls, and being out of discipline.

1.1. A short glance at the protagonist, Dick Diver

Tender is the Night is a semibiographical book, hence before passing to the reasons of Dick's falling, one should have knowledge about the similarity between Dick and the Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald finished the book while her wife, Zelda, was being treated for her schizophrenia, so he reflected his tiring experiences in real life in the book. Fitzgerald learned a lot about psychology while talking with Zelda's doctors; thus, "the author's wide knowledge of psychiatry enhances the fruitful depiction of the working life of Diver, and by making his hero a psychiatrist..." (Bui, 2012, p. 31). Additionally, the relation between Dick and Nicole, wife of the protagonist, is parallel to the relation between Zelda and Fitzgerald. Both Zelda and Nicole were ambitious characters and both of them were schizophrenic. Dick and Fitzgerald resembled each other in some points as both of them were dealing with psychology and both of them were brilliant characters. Moreover, like Dick Diver, who had a relationship with Rosemary, a film star who was young enough to be Dick's daughter, in his marriage process, Fitzgerald had a relation with a young lady while he was married with Zelda.

Dick Diver was a changeable character in the novel, that is, his role in the book was not fixed. Whether he was a brilliant psychiatrist, a father, a husband, a pervert, or a madman was ambiguous. When one look at his life, he was a polite and fascinating person who could easily attract people around him. He could amuse and entertained people and also struggled to help people for their every need. In addition, his being physically captivating and handsome made ladies quickly take the fancy of him. Dick could easily socialize with people around him and attract and enchain them to himself. However, he had a handicap that he could not keep the limit of his relations in balance and it was resulted with a fault or an uncontrollable event. He was a brilliant doctor, but he could not act well and got married with one of his young schizophrenic patient for her money. In addition, he was like a father to Rosemary at the beginning, yet he had a sexual affair with her later. “There was a pleasingness about him that simply had to be used—those who possessed that pleasingness had to keep their hands in, and go along attaching people that they had no use to make of” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 130).

2. REASONS OF DICK’S COLLAPSE

Dick Diver, who wanted to be the best psychologists, “maybe to be the greatest one that ever lived” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 195) and studied in the best universities like Oxford and John Hopkins to reach his goal, bowed down in front of the money of a schizophrenic girl, Nicole. Dick aimed to be a doctor but not for curing patients, but to earn a lot of money and when he had the chance of getting money in a short way, he seized the opportunity. Dick got down off his high horse for Warren’s wealth and marketed himself to marry the sick lady giving up and forgetting his life aim.

Dick Diver might be a renowned doctor and might earn enough money to have a modest life, but he spurned it and opted to an ill girl for her limitless fortune. Marrying with Nicole, who was abused by her father in her childhood and brought to the hospital for her schizophrenic behaviors, was a chance for him to get money in a short way and effortlessly. “As he trudged up to his hotel in a borrowed raincoat he kept laughing derisively in his throat. ‘BIG chance—oh, yes. My God!—they decided to buy a doctor? Well, they better stick to whoever they’ve got in Chicago” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 230). He had a goal of being a famous doctor, but it was for money not something else, so catching the opportunity was very important for him. When Nicole’s sister, Baby Warren, wrote a message to Dick for going to Zurich with Nicole, he got furious but also became happy because it was an opportunity for him to be a step closer to his real goal. “Dick was furious—Miss Warren had known he had a bicycle with him; yet she had so phrased her note that it was impossible to refuse. Throw us together! Sweet propinquity and the Warren money!” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 231).

Although he could successfully conceal his hunger for a comfortable and luxurious life, Dick was weak for money; “therefore, the daughter of the wealthy Warrens, Nicole, seems to him a symbolic figure of the charms and possibilities that wealth can provide” (Murao, 2012, p. 66). To be a millionaire in a sudden was attractive to him; thus, he struggled for it. Marriage with Nicole, whose family was one the most popular and wealthy families in US, was like gaining the lottery for Dick Diver, so it was foolishness not struggling for it. “They were an American ducal family without a title—the very name written in a hotel register, signed to an introduction, used in a difficult situation, caused a psychological metamorphosis in people ...”(Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 234). Rather than getting money in a respective way, Dick marketed himself to get the money. “I’m a doctor of medicine,’ he said. ‘My father is a clergyman, now retired. We lived in Buffalo and my past is open to investigation. I went to New Haven; afterward I was a Rhodes Scholar” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 233).

In this way, he could do whatever he wanted with money like having grandeur houses, spendy cars and squandering his life in parties every night without having to work. When Dick and Baby Warren had a tea in Zurich, he rejected being an adventurer of Nicole’s money but could not keep himself asking “how much money has she got?” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 233). Even if he tried to hide it, he was a subtle adventurer of Warren’s money because it was a frailty of his character. Dick

exerted to show that he was not an adventurer of Nicole's money as he stated "Nicole's rich, but that doesn't make me an adventurer." (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 233). However, he had a weakness for a luxuries life, so after getting married with Nicole, he changed his life style in a few years forgetting his father's words: "nothing could be superior to 'good instincts,' honor, courtesy, and courage" (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 301). Nicole's richness became a serious deterrent from his career and values because everything related to his life was determined by Nicole's money. His friends, social ties, location to live were specified by Nicole; in a way he became a slave of Warren's money. "The old values that Dick, as a son of a poor clergyman, held have changed a lot due to his stay in France for a few months after the war and America's economic growth" (Murao, 2012, p. 66). Living a modest life was hard any more for him, so he had to start to use Nicole's money:

Living rather ascetically, travelling third-class when he was alone, with the cheapest wine, and good care of his clothes, and penalizing himself for any extravagances, he maintained a qualified financial independence. After a certain point, though, it was difficult— again and again it was necessary to decide together as to the uses to which Nicole's money should be put. ((Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 251)

Dick Diver was tempted by Nicole's wealth and money became an impediment for him to reach his main goal.

The second weakness for Dick's falling is his fondness of young girls or beauty. In addition to her wealth, her youth was also one of the reasons why Dick Diver was interested in Nicole. Nicole, an ill lady who was eighteen and nearly ten years younger than him, attracted him, so he decided to marry her. He was appealing for young ladies because his social relations and behaviors were very charming, and since he was a psychologist and knew how to attract people, he could tempt young girls around him. When Dick was speaking with Franz at Dohmler's clinic about the situation of Nicole, and it would be the first meeting of Nicole and Dick, Franz warned Dick for keeping his relation with the girl under control because he was aware of Dick's attractiveness:

"Of course, I understand your position exactly, and I express our gratitude once again. That was why I wanted to see you before you see her."

Dick laughed.

'You think she's going to make a flying leap at my person?'

'No, not that. But I want to ask you to go very gently. You are attractive to women, Dick.'

'Then God help me! Well, I'll be gentle and repulsive—I'll chew garlic whenever I'm going to see her and wear a stubble beard. I'll drive her to cover.'

(Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 195)

Indeed, before Dick met with Nicole, she had sent him many letters and some photos which attracted Dick, who had some fantasies about the teenager girls. When Franz and Dick was talking to Nicole's father for settling of Nicole for five years in clinic for her treatment, "Dick sighed. 'She was such a pretty thing—she enclosed a lot of snapshots of herself'" (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 193).

Marrying with Nicole would meet his soul's thirstiness for different fantasies, because Nicole had not grown yet and was ill, so this situation made Dick hold many different roles: a doctor, a father who helps growing up of a teenager, and a spouse. "His 'shadow' or weaknesses, which cannot be incorporated into his privileged identity of patient's husband/doctor, are repressed into his unconscious" (Murao, 2012, p. 67). Even if it would be really difficult to take the responsibility of different occupations, Dick wished to marry her because the situation satisfied his fantasies. "As a psychiatrist he was well aware of the expected difficulties of a mental patient. Warned by two of Europe's best psychiatrists that his marriage was doomed to failure because he would become husband, doctor and father to Nicole" (Berezovskaia, para. 7).

Dick applied the same method in his affair with Rosemary, who was eighteen and nearly seventeen years younger than him. Initially he acted like a compassionate father helping Rosemary in some bad situations, but later he fell in love with her and had a sexual affair with her by using the advantage of his charisma.

“Although he eventually comes to the realisation that Rosemary is too young and immature for him, Dick’s inability to balance his lust for youth and innocence has ruined his ideal self and his marriage with Nicole” (Katya, par.3). Dick’s subconscious feelings and frailties were so dominant that it was not possible for him to keep them under control.

He is attracted to young women like Nicole and Rosemary because they are inexperienced, uncritical, admiring, and worshipful. Yet as his internal hunger for vitality overpowers him, he accepts the young and naive love of Rosemary Hoyt, infatuated with Dick from the beginning, and upsets the balance. Old enough to be the father of this fatherless daughter, Dick is intelligent enough - and had been trained - to know that Rosemary’s love for him is merely “childish infatuation”...Yes despite this awareness; he is not immune to her externally persistent charms. (Berezovskaia, para. 3)

Freud stated that “unconscious fantasies have either been unconscious all along and have been formed in the unconscious; or – as is more often the case – they were once conscious fantasies, day-dreams, and have since been purposely forgotten and have become unconscious through ‘repression’” (Freud, 2001, p. 161). It was clear that Dick had such dreams or fantasies for young ladies or even small children. This subconscious mind displayed itself in traumatic situations. When Dick departed from Rosemary and was beaten by Rome police, he was drinking a lot, and “he was in love with every pretty woman he saw now, their forms at a distance, their shadows on a wall” (Fitzgerald 297). In a party, while Dick was flirting with a young girl, “-a child, not more than fifteen” (Fitzgerald 279), Nicole “detected his growing tendency to randomly fall for any pretty girl, and his faculty for self-control slackening” (Asaba, n.d., p. 14).

After being judged for fighting with a cop and leaving the court-room, he got angry and cried “I want to explain to these people how I raped a five-year-old girl. Maybe I did” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 347). Even if he did not do it, it was clear that he had such a fantasy, as Freud states “unconscious fantasies are the immediate psychological precursors of a whole number of hysterical symptoms [and] hysterical symptoms are nothing other than unconscious fantasies brought into view through ‘conversion’” (Freud, 2001, pp. 161-162). Another situation which proves that Dick was obsessed with such fantasies is an event occurred when he opened an office in Zurich and was practicing there. A lady sent a letter about Dick’s raping her daughter which caused a big problem among the family. After leaving Nicole and going to Rome to forget everything and to have a new life, Dick could not control himself and “became entangled with a girl who worked in a grocery store” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 459). Having such kind of fantasies and being obsessed with them, it was not easy for Dick to rescue from this situation because it became a kind of addiction.

The last reason of Dick’s downfall is his losing the discipline of working. After getting money by marrying Nicole, his life style changed and he started to pass his time in partying, entertaining and drinking. Even if Dick tried to work in discipline two times, he could not sustain his job. He was drinking alcohol excessively, so he was losing his control sometimes as one of his friend said “Your friends still like you, Dick. But you say awful things to people when you’ve been drinking. I’ve spent most of my time defending you this summer” (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 455). Being unable to keep his self-indulgence under control, Dick also had problems at work as once a parent quarrel with him for his drinking:

‘My son is here for alcoholism, and he told us he smelt liquor on your breath. ...‘Not once, but twice Von Cohn says he has smelt liquor on your breath. I and my lady have never touched a drop of it in our lives. We hand Von Cohn to you to be cured, and within a month he twice smells liquor on your breath! What kind of cure is that there? (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 369).

Drinking a lot and being a self-indulgent person ruined life of Dick Diver and he could not practice his job any more.

3. CONCLUSION

Dick Diver, who was in the way of being a famous psychiatrist, ruined his life due to some weaknesses in his character. First of his weaknesses was his will for a luxuries life which he could reach by marrying a young ill girl. However, since he got marry with Nicole for her money, he started to act according to her wishes and forgot his values. The second reason was that he had some fantasizes for young pretty girls in his subconscious mind and he put these illicit fantasies into practice. Lastly, his losing his ability of discipline and not controlling his self-indulgence due to the excess drinking of alcohol collapsed Dick Diver.

4. REFERENCES

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