CHAPTER V

DECADENCE OF AMERICAN SOCIETY

I see thy glory like a shooting star
Fall to the base earth from the firmament.
The sun sets weeping in the lowly west.
(William Shakespeare)
CHAPTER V
Decadence of American Society

Fitzgerald's novelistic concern had changed from mere dramatization of moments and situations to a closer scrutiny of the moral transformation of an era, of society and moral transformation in the West. The result was Tender Is the Night, a psychological novel. However, it is not only a witness to an era but something more; it is an intense exploration of the human situation at a momentous juncture, the turning point in a nation's cultural and moral change.

Though the novel was rewritten several times between 1925 and 1934, and the titles too underwent several changes (Our Type, The Boy Who Killed His Mother, The Malarkey Case, The World's Fair, The Drunkard's Holiday, Doctor Diver's Holiday), there is a consistent thematic pattern which unfolds itself through various episodic scenes of action, vivid and vibrant as movie stills, and which have been invariable and constant through all the changes in plot and character, deletions and recreations of scenes and moments. This is the social high life of expatriate Americans in Europe and is the expose of all the major scenes and actions in the novel, the brilliant social life of the French and Italian Rivieras during the summers in the Twenties that finds their graphic description in Fitzgerald's own words:
The gay elements of society divided into two main streams, one flowing toward Palm Beach and Deauville, and the other, much smaller, toward the summer Riviera, and whatever happened seemed to have something to do with art. From 1926 to 1929, the great years of Cap d'Antibes, this corner of France was dominated by a group quite distinct from that American society which is dominated by Europeans.¹

These were years of compulsive wasteful expenditure of moral and material resources, leading eventually to the crack-up and depletion of his spiritual energy, of economic and emotional sustenance. On 12th June, 1940 he wrote to Scottie:

I am [crippled] by my inability to handle money, or my self-indulgence of the past .... What little I've accomplished has been by the most laborious and uphill work, and I wish

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I'd never relaxed back -- but said
...'I've found my line -- from now on
this comes first. This is my immediate
duty'.

In December, 1940 he again wrote to her, and we find the
same despair and disillusionment at his failure:

I am still in bed.... You have got two
beautiful bad examples for parents. Just
do everything we didn't do and you will
be perfectly safe. But be sweet to your
mother at X'mas. Her letters are
tragically brilliant on all matters
except... those of central importance.
How strange to have failed as a social
creature -- even criminals do not fail
that way.... But the insane are mere
guests on earth, eternal strangers
carrying around broken decalogues that
they cannot read.

2 The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Andrew
Turnbull, p.95.
3 Ibid., p.117.
The superficial vitality of Furo-American life is recreated and presented as, "the flashing world of 'broken decalogues' most likely to unhinge and undo the innocent seeker or whatever is left of the responsible, polite personage in a society in which the old virtues and graces no longer defined people, success or social life itself".\(^4\) The corrosion of values had led to the disintegration of the personage in a destructively acquisitive and exploitative society. This is what he referred to when he wrote to Scottie in July, 1938:

> Often I have encouraged [your being an old fashioned girl] because my generation of radicals and breakers down never found anything to take place of old virtues of work and courage and the old graces of courtesy and politeness.\(^5\)

It was this social heritage, essentially which led to the emotional collapse of Nicole -- Zelda, and provided the main focus of the novel in its final form. The stench of ruin was all over and unmistakable in the first mental breakdown of Zelda in the Spring of 1930. Fitzgerald could realise how the novel must grow out of his own floundering life, tossed

on the sea of the unrepentant alcoholism and Zelda's recurring nervous disorders. In *The Beautiful and Damned* the voice of failure had been sounded in the slow but inevitable disintegration of Anthony Patch. By 1932, with Zelda's second and more severe emotional collapse, a more dense character of the psychiatrist, Dick Diver had emerged and the incarnation of "the authority of failure" was complete.

What remains constant and unchanged through all the versions that *Tender Is The Night* went through is the high life of elegance, ease and irresponsibility as in *The Beautiful and Damned*, and more. The novel's essential focus is on "the leisure class... at the truly most brilliant and glamorous", the life of the Americans on the Riviera and the larger "glittering- golden world in its effect on the yearning, searching American, on the bitter arrivist .... the strong and callous more appropriately what Fitzgerald himself, had given in the brief final plan of the book:

The novel should do this. Show a man who is a natural idealist, a spoiled priest, giving in for various causes to the ideas of the *haute bourgeoisie*, and in his rise to the top of the social world losing his idealism, his talent and turning to drink and dissipation.
Background one in which the leisure class is at their truly most brilliant and glamorous such as the Murphys.6

For Fitzgerald the most representative American in Europe who would belong to the sparkling "leisure class" with all the virtues and graces of the old and charming, now vanished, world of politeness, courage and courtesy with a premium on work and responsibility were Gerald Murphy and his wife, Sarah. But equally, the Murphys were a product of the new American world that had emerged in the wake of the crumbling barriers of the old order after World War I, the era of gorgeously rich metropolitan gaudiness resultant upon inordinate predatory wealth that devastated and ruined the old, gracious way of life.

Gerald and Sarah Murphy became prototypes of the composite that formed the characters of Dick Diver and Nicole Warren. Their world, in more sense than one, epitomised the glamour, charm and graciousness of a lost past that the gaudiness of wealth would recapture as the new promise of American life. Such a charmed possibility had so much captivated Fitzgerald that he wanted an imaginative re-possession of that life of golden moments recreated in the pages of the novel. It was in such a world that Fitzgerald's "strenuous social

appetites" could find their gratification at their fullest and could sustain his appetite for imaginative splendour. But the touch of disaster and ruin implicit in the hidden recesses of the world of money and social advantages and cultural accomplishments, of independence and gaiety, was something as part of reality of personal and universal experience, of limitations imposed on human actuality, as Dick Diver was to realise "that the price of his intactness was incompleteness". Dick's veritable immersion in self-ruin too had a touch of Murphy's private misfortunes but Dick too is a composite of Fitzgerald's own sense of personal failure and ostracism, the private chaos, confusion, great disaster and moral let-down.

The one single overt fact of Dick's ruin is his excessive and deliberate dissipation. Such tensions and ambivalences as might be incumbent on a bacchanal sensibility was the very identity of self that Fitzgerald was constrained to impose on the character of Dick. His fictional self was immersed in the unreality of alcoholic haze and was expressive of Fitzgerald's deep intoxication by wealth and the power and privileges it conferred. Fitzgerald had understood the nature of this new world for wealth as being more deprived of spiritual and cultural values, and different from the "safe, beautiful world" of Dick's dream. The old world of grace and virtue, charm and passion, hope
and promise now relegated to an older America that the pioneers had dreamed of now forever lost and buried with the dead dreams and heroes. Fitzgerald was thus preoccupied with the double vision of wealth; one, predatory, exploitative, rapacious and corrupt, and the other promising fulfilment and a life of virtue, grace and unlimited possibilities. In the novel he chose a "philosophical" attitude to enforce his perspective of two Americas; one of the past and forever buried, the other, new, emergent, quickened with energies of acquisitive wealth and attendant complexities of its material actuality unlike what was past and had faded like a dream, what Fitzgerald had portrayed in The Great Gatsby. In Dick Diver, Fitzgerald had chosen the true representative of both the Americas, "the spoiled priest" who was destroyed by intemperance, and yet the doctor psychiatrist who was a self-proclaimed redeemer of the world, ruined by his own responses to court love and social approval as his deepest spiritual need, and what could well cure the spiritual malaise of an ailing world. It was Scott Fitzgerald that he was imaginatively recreating in his fictional characters, as he admitted to Laura Guthrie, his one-time secretary:

My stories get truer and truer, I can't keep the truth out of them. I am part of the race consciousness and so have influenced the language of youth and
youth itself.... [My characters are] not any single person but a melange of the characteristics of several people interpreted through my eyes.... I am an intuitive introvert. I take people to me and change my conception of them and then write them out again. My characters are all Scott Fitzgerald.7

It was the same with Dick who restored to people their essential identity by recreating them: "It was themselves he gave back to them, blurred by the compromises of how many years". So neat was Dick's blending of his character with others whom he knew and loved that:

for the remainder of his life.... [He] was condemned to carry with him the egos of certain people, early met and early loved, and so be only as complete as they were complete themselves.8

What Fitzgerald was trying to recreate in Dick was his own self and his talent to make "goodness" survive in the genuine creation of art. He believed Tender Is The Night to

7. Quoted, Andrew Turnbull, Scott Fitzgerald, p.263.
8. Tender Is The Night, p.263.
be an effort in that direction and thus his most thorough and profound though complex attempt in creating possibility for goodness. It was a personal "confession of faith" as he wrote to his friend Elizabeth Leemmon, to whom he inscribed a copy of the novel. He was putting all that he had experienced and learnt about life, his hard earned beliefs in the book:

That work was the only dignity; that it didn't help a serious man to be too much flattered and loved; that money and beauty were treacherous aids; that honour, courtesy and courage -- the old fashioned virtues -- were the best guides after all.  

Art was the only possible discipline to create the ambience of operative goodness:

I've got to be good and I can be in my work. I must be loved. I tip heavily to be loved. I have so many faults that I must be approved of in other ways... I create a world for others. Because of this women want to go away with me, they

think the world of delight I make for them will last forever. I make them seem brilliant to themselves and most important.\(^\text{10}\)

It is the same urge to create a world for others pleasure that prompts Dick Diver to put all his talent into it, to project his dream of goodness into it, and in doing so to be destroyed by it. His own goodness proves the key to his self-ruination, for goodness in his case becomes a self-destructive impulse. It is always Dick's longing for a "fulfilled future and the wistful past" that become the acute impulse with the increased awareness of the destructive present and the charmed way of life that vanished into it. Somehow all these random ideas, gathered from his own experiences, came to acquire a relevance in terms of the specific milieu and the moment in his personal history as well as the history and culture of his nation. The Murphys had the same relevance for him; writing to Sarah Murphy, Fitzgerald declared:

I am too moved by what I am saying [about you] to write it as well as I'd like. You are part of our times, part of the history of our race. The people

10. Ibid., p.265.
whose lives you've touched directly and indirectly have reacted to the corporate bundle of atom that's you in a good way. I have seen you again and again at a time of confusion take the hard course almost blindly because long after your powers of ratiocination were exhausted you clung to the idea of dauntless courage".11

After all, Dick’s personal heritage is one of the lost past of America, and its virtues of honesty, politeness, courage and courtesy were a veritable guarantee against the destructive wastefulness of money, talent, social manner or lives. His sense of values that can sustain the burden of self-destructive impulses had changed; he wrote to an old-school conservative, Mrs Bayard Turnbull:

For me the test of human value is conformity to the strictest and most unflinching rationality, while in your case it is based on the standards of conduct. I don't mean that because Rousseau's life was disordered, an intellectual should use that to justify

11. Letters, p. 443-44.
his own weakness, nor that my criteria necessarily subsumes yours, but I must think, they do even though I continually check up by seeing the lives of "orderly" people, judging what's fake and what's real.¹²

The sense of personal failure and ruin had given him a kind of early romantic maturity of emotional consciousness, something that kept the illusion intact for him and gave his life and his highly excitable imagination a magical glory for his mind possessed an exhilarating quality of delightful excitement of bewildering curiosity and wonder, and unlimited hopeful, expectations. But it was always "felt experience", the keen sensibility and nostalgic memories that counted in his judgement of values rather than cold bare rationality. In this sense maturity was equivalent to goodness, albeit a rational responsibility.

The ability to clean up the mess of one's life through a rational order that Nick Carraway had achieved in The Great Gatsby, the Buchanans could never manage in the same novel, nor could the Warrens in Tender Is The Night. for Fitzgerald, in being able to impose that rational order upon his characters, could make possible romantic creativity

¹². Ibid., p.456.
through romantic consciousness that kept in check the invariable impulse to destruction. In *Tender Is The Night*, Fitzgerald made an arduous effort in asserting goodness against what could effectively destroy his ability to create. This was his test of a first rate intelligence that would be "the ability to hold opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function". But the hold of rational maturity upon romantic sensibility and temperament to keep the above destructive impulses under check is extremely fragile, Dr. Dick Diver loses his self control and rational discipline, both what he wished to preserve Nicole against, and what his own need for love was.

There is a double focus of scenes and events in meaningful co-relation: The external one being on the inevitable disruption of the older order yielding place to the new, the break-down of all moral and social barriers of grace, virtue and responsibility, the internal one is on the disintegration of the self. The disciplined romantic idealism corrupted by material actuality or the appurtenances of wealth. The loss is of the rational order that could make the goodness prevail over the rampant destructive forces. But it is also the loss of the good that Fitzgerald hoped to achieve in writing the book and effacing

the blurring distinction between himself and Richard Diver, for Dicks fall from grace provided, the fictional statement of Fitzgerald's autobiographical pieces in The Crack-up articles of 1936 Dicks fall is a form of symbolic disintegration of the social world of post-war America in particular and the collapse of Western Civilization in general that found its most terrifying articulation in Oswald Spengler's The Decline of The West.

In a poignant reminiscence of what he thought had been the loss of charm and grace of friendship and all that summed up the image of Dick having "dived" from grace and promise into the chaos and confusion of his self, Fitzgerald in great pain, yearning for lost youth and hope, wrote to Zelda a few months before his death:

Twenty years ago This Side of Paradise was a best seller and we were settled in West port. Ten years ago Paris was having almost its last great American Season but we quit the gay parade and you were gone to Switzerland. Five years ago I had my first bad stroke of illness and went to Ashville. Cards began falling badly for us too early. The world has certainly caught up in the
last four weeks [Nazi invasion of Holland, Belgium and France in 1940]. I hope the atmosphere in Montgomery is tranquil and not too full of war talk.\textsuperscript{14}

For Fitzgerald the sense of disaster and impending ruin was not simply an exercise in literary convention as it was for some of his contemporaries, but it formed the very inner milieu of his innate, tragic imagination and found its legitimate expression in the exploration of human destiny in war-torn Europe and how such individual destinies were crippled and ruined by the designs of a world gone wild and demented by something which was drained of all sanity and humanity, blurred by the new unreal reality. The European years of Fitzgerald between 1924 and 1929 were largely responsible for the kind of attitudes that eventually shaped the social and political realities of those European years into coherent symbols of desolation and decline of a generation. The novel was crowded with such scenes and events set in post-war Europe with changed realities and a general air of poisonous stench of spiritual disintegration and decay of civilization and way of life. Many characters in the novel have real human contours that crowded Fitzgerald's memories. Thus a new insight, value and meaning was added to facts giving imaginative significance to the

\textsuperscript{14} Letters, pp.137-38.
truth. Abe North in his essential Americanness has the tragic predicament of Abraham Lincoln: "His voice was slow and shy; he had one of the saddest faces Rosemary had ever seen, the high cheek bone of an Indian, a long upper lip, and enormous deepest golden eyes."15 Such a parallel has larger symbolic import since in the pervasive metaphorical use of war Fitzgerald makes World War I a telescopic enlargement of the American Civil War. This finds credence in the general meaning of the novel which has the consistent motif of war being the instrument of the end of innocence, the end of the older America and its graces and virtues made dissolute by corruption linked to the image of General Grant who was, nevertheless, the apogee of great future promises of the American vision. The debauchery and corruption of that promise is the typical American dilemma. Dick too stands in symbolic association with Grant in his early promise as well as the betrayal of that promise. He is "Grant lolling in his general store in Galena ... ready to be called to an intricate destiny". Dick ends his early promise not very unlike the General, in the utter oblivion of dissolution, irrevocable and certain ruin. Nicole, with the hindsights of history, has a speck of hope even in the irreparable loss of old confidence in Dick who, as she thought, "must be" biding its time again like Grant's in Galena. She turns full circle in Abe North's eyes "bloodshot

15. Tender Is The Night, p.64.
from sun and wine", and her incestuous father Devereaux Warren's "sun-veined" eyed red with whisky. It is this world of Buchanan, Warren and Barban whose "sun" leaves its blinding impact on the Lincoln and Grant image of the American promise. The eyes have the symbolic distortions of the internal moral collapse; the increased desire followed by a retreat into the irresponsibility of wealth makes Abe North wish about prolonging his state of irresponsibility. It is a moral paralysis that destroys the early promise of Dick Diver. He courts death in drink and dissolution. Fitzgerald indicts his American generation in the fate of Dick Diver, and enhances the meaning of its American national identity by associating historical parallels with his personal foibles of incurable alcoholism and consequent self-deprecating death-wish which is pernicious, not only in abusing the resources of the great talent and promise Fitzgerald saw as a possibility of the American dream, but also denying fulfilment to the immense reach of that promise as the apex of national aspiration.

In as much as Nicole is the fictional portrait of Zelda, the association gains in importance in the merging specifics of the personality of Zelda through her mental illness. Nicole's schizophrenia provides the central symbol of the novel. But what underscores the deeper significance of this relationship, the fictional representation of the facts of a
living reality, is the increasing complexity of sexual motifs in a world of blurring distinction of personal identity where values have been submerged in the nightmare holocaust of moral dissipation and dissolution, the same sun-strong world of moral and rapacious lust as is the world of The Great Gatsby. Tom Buchanan and Tommy Barban are the end in view of that sun-drenched world. The strong stench of their physical power and arrogance, their arrogance of money, their existential ennui of pointless drifting through life, their fretful lives of feverish ambition having no imaginative direction or goal. Tommy Barban:

was tall and his body was hard but overspare, save for the bunched force gathered in his shoulder and upper arms.... There was a faint disgust always in his face which marred the full fierce luster of his brown eyes. Yet one remembered them afterward, when one had forgotten the inability of the mouth to endure boredom and the young forehead with its furrows of fretful and unprofitable pain.16

16. Ibid., p.74.
Tommy Barban is a type Fitzgerald had always despaired of being. He was insensitive and unaccommodating to the world of men:" He did not like any man very much or feel men's presence with much intensity -- he was all relaxed for combat".\textsuperscript{17} His values are the ones that require and evoke admiration for physical immediacy. He is devoid of all human sophistication and sensibility for this is not the code of values he respects. His strength lies in the power of the hard world of money and hard actualities. For him there is no female sympathy or moonlight dreams; he is out to combat and conquer. He and Tom Buchanan represent the simplified hard values of money culture, of barbarism, and are opponents of what Dick Diver and Jay Gatsby are supposed to represent, the complex but polite contours of imaginative civilisation which appeals to modern sensibility, the graces and virtues of by-gone days that the Murphys also represent. Such intricate autobiographical links of memories and associations in the composite material of his characters illuminates the larger meaning that emanates from the inner life of these characters, but more importantly of the author himself.

Fitzgerald's insistence upon these virtues and graces seems to be his search for the only weapon that could combat and challenge "the world of intensifying disintegration" which

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., pp.213-14.
was predictably the moral and material consequence of the European aftermath of war. Milton Stern feels that the novel is about "break-downs" of human relationships, of marriages and individuals but, more significantly, of the Western World in the aftermath of the war. What was happening around Fitzgerald had, in varying degrees, a relevance to his own past and self; his crack-up symbolised the disintegration of a generation. Thus he could impose a discipline upon himself and his generation only through his art and talent for creating imaginative, albeit real sympathy for the rebellion of his flaming youth. This was his strategy of reconstructing his own past as also the past of his generation. Goodness was the key to enter that bygone world. A year after the publication of the novel he repeated the same theme to a friend in a letter:

Your charm and heightened womanliness that makes you so attractive to men depends upon what Ernest Hemingway called "grace under pressure". The luxuriance of your emotions under the strict discipline, which you habitually impose on makes that tensity in you that is the secret of all charm.
-- You have got to be good.
-- Your sense of superiority depends upon the picture of yourself as being good, of being large and generous and all comprehending, and just and brave and all forgiving. But if you are not good, if you don't preserve a sense of comparative values, those qualities turn against you -- and your love is a mess and your courage is a slaughter. 18

Doctor Diver was supposed to have learned and comprehended the meaning of goodness as a trained psychiatrist who could trust and be good to a patient like Nicole Warren. Even Dick would bring up his daughter to be a woman, not a wife, and as Fitzgerald wrote to Helen Hays:

The human machinery which controls the sense of right, duty, self-respect etc. must have conscious exercise before adolescence you don't have much time to think of anything. 19

Richard Diver had been uncertain and "uneasy about what he had to give the ever-climbing, ever-clinging, breast

19. Ibid., p.575.
searching young" though he would make his daughter responsible in her social allegiances.

Fitzgerald continued to be obsessed by his own misgiving as he expressed to John O'Hara in a letter:

Again and again in my books I have tried to imagine my regret that I have never been as good as I intended to be (and you must know that what I mean by good is a personal conscience, and meaning by the personal yourself stripped in white midnight before your own God). 20

Dick Diver too, in the end, when he cracks under the agonising pressure of professional defeat and personal failure, in a morally sick world he knows to be incurable, has no choice but to draw upon moral and emotional resources which are all but exhausted and bankrupt. He turns to the one safe niche of the old lost world and the possibility of its retrieval, "We must all try to be good". Dick believed in the possibility of total fulfilment through discipline, hard-work, courage, courtesy and grace. Similarly, America too could be cured of disintegration through the application of these old-world truths. However, Dick becomes a victim of

20. Ibid., p.558.
of his intricate destiny that his brave new world destroyed. With him declines the older, saner America, the hope and dream of his innocent Youth. Dick was destroyed by the romantic charm when he dissipated his talents and his precious possession of self-discipline and cultivation of old virtues and graces in pandering them to satisfying the egos of Nicole Warren and others of his charmed circle who came within the spell of his magic. This was a drift into inanity, pointless and irresponsible like the aimless drift of the Buchanans like the dog biscuit which "decomposed apathetically in a saucer of milk all afternoon". It is destructive of everything, friendship, self, personal exuberance and charm. He realises how deep has been his alcoholic dissipation and slow but mercilessly inevitable disintegration: "I guess I'm the Black Death.... I don't seem to bring people happiness anymore". Before his own death, Fitzgerald too mourned the long years his ordeal of destruction and ruin:

Once I believed in friendship, believed I could (if I didn't always) make people happy and it was more fun than anything. Now even that seems like a vaude-villain's cheap dream of heaven, a vast
minstrel show in which one is the perpetual Bones.21

Such a tension and conflict between two opposed forces is his double vision. His indictment of the flaming youth of his generation was essentially a critique of his own conception of the golden girl myth which contained his own vain-glorying impulsive destructiveness. The golden girl's desire to triumph over the youth of that generation is in fact the triumph of selfishness, lust, vanity, impulsive action, irresponsibility, carelessness and everything that leads to emotional and moral emaciation.

The sexual identities of the male and female seem to break the barrier of socially recognisable norms and represent a vaster collapse. In the world of the golden girl and her vain self-indulgence each loses his identity: men in pursuit of wealth, brutish and exacting, pander to the female whim and fancy; women use up all the energies of men which destroys both. Nicole's gorgeous, interminable shopping forays and inessential buying are symbolic of her wasting male energies:

Nicole bought from a great list that ran two pages and bought the things in the

21. Ibid., p.308.
everything she didn’t possibly use herself, she bought as a present for a friend. She bought colored beds, folding beach cushions, artificial flowers, honey, a guest bed, bags, scarfs, lovebirds, miniatures for a doll’s house, three yards of some fine new cloth the color of prawns. She bought a dozen bathing suits a rubber alligator, a travelling chess set of gold and ivory — bought all these things not a bit like a high class courtesan buying underwear and jewels, which were afterall professional equipment, but with an entirely different point of view. What Nicole does with her apparently innocuous spending becomes essentially what Fitzgerald saw the entire national effort being geared toward pandering to the "bitch-goodness" of moneyed success. The entire nation was bewitched by the corruption of the rich as if the American promise of good life was simply an enticement to the blandishments of the new woman, the golden girl:

Nicole was the product of much ingenuity and toil. For her sake trains began their run at Chicago and traversed the round belly of the Continent to California; chicle factories fumed and link belts grew link by link in factories; men mixed tooth-paste in vats and drew mouth-wash out of copper hogsheads; girls canned tomatoes quickly in August or worked rudely at the Five-and-Tens on Christmas Eve... These were some of the people who gave tithe to Nicole and, as the whole system swayed and thundered onward, it lent a feverish bloom to such processes of hers as wholesale buyings, like the flush of a fireman's face holding his post before a spreading blaze. She illustrated very simple principles, containing in herself her own doom, but illustrated them so accurately that there was a grace in the procedure and presently Rosemary would try to imitate it.23

23. Ibid., pp.113-14.
Nicole is the symbolic incarnation of the splendid gorgeousness of what the American civilization prizes as its epic creation. Rosemary, the innocent, still unspoilt girl, too, in time, imitates and becomes the very being the very personage who contains all the destructiveness concealed within the surface gloss of glittering fascinating life of the American rich, something that everyone hungers for despite its implicit destructiveness. It is the perfect beatitude, the gorgeous beauty of the American moneyed imagination, alluring and attractive, brutish and energetic, voluptuously enticing but what simultaneously destroys and ruins; the female who destroys, be it Daisy or Nicole, is no less predatory than the male, be he Tom or Gatsby, who had exhausted his energies for accumulating predatory wealth.

In *Tender Is The Night* these relationships become intertwined in the blurring identities, in their sexual, economic and national aspects for everyone owes his existence and place in that world of predatory pursuits of uniform goals, the golden girls and the golden moments. They all seem to pursue the goals set for them by Dick and Nicole, the world of intermingling nationalities of the Riviera beaches. But Dick has laboured to restore Nicole to her normal social life, and in the process his energies are completely sapped and consumed by her. The same American
creative energy is symbolised in Abe North and that too Nicole uses up. Such an impulsive self-indulgent world exhausts spiritual resources and Dick cracks; Abe North too is tired and exclaims, "Tired of women's worlds". It costs Dick his self-discipline and courage; they are sacrificed to the dreams of Nicole, and his "goodness" is exhausted; this is similar to Gatsby being destroyed by his faithful devotion to his "single gorgeous dream", Daisy. What Nicole possibly struggles against is her release from Dick's elaborate self-discipline and goodness to find her impulsive sexual gratification in her liberated moments with Tommy Barban at "this taming of women"; he had "brutalised men into shape" but he wouldn't try that with women. However, "her heart leaped up and then sank faintly with a sense of what she owed Dick" because she owed her sanity and health to Dick and his qualities. Once she is restored to normality she becomes the golden girl with her hot-cat pursuits, behind her is also the sun-male world and her voice too jingles like money.

Tommy Barban is aware of this freedom of money that Nicole has. When she tells him what she owed Dick, he corrects her, "You've got too much money, that's the crux of the matter. Dick can't beat that". This is a similar situation to what Gatsby had faced. Dick loses Nicole in the end, and his male superiority disappears as symbolised in the Aquaplane scene;
his energy has deserted him and all that is left is the empty gesture without moral authority. Meanwhile Nicole's new freedom makes her relapse into irresponsible naked primitivism; she finds unrestricted female sexual identity, unguided and uncontrolled by her husband. Tommy's assertion seemed to absolve her from all blame or responsibility and she had a thrill of delight in thinking of herself in a new way. New vistas appeared ahead, peopled with the faces of many men, none of whom she had, she need obey or even love. She drew in her breath, hunched her shoulder's with a wriggle, and turned to Tommy.

"Have we got to go all the way to your hotel at Monte Carlo?"

Deliberately she pealed off the veneer of virtue and discipline that Dick had wrapped round her to protect her against anarchic self-indulgence and self destroying sexual gratification. In doing this she passes into another kind of madness:

24. Ibid., p.312.
Moment by moment all that Dick had taught her fell away and she was ever nearer to what she had been in the beginning [the golden girl of the Warren -- American identity], prototype of that obscure yielding up of swords that was going on in the work around her. Tangled with love in the moonlight she welcomed the anarchy of her lover.25

Nicole cuts herself free from Dick's moral shackles, and, paradoxically, arrives at a moment of personal decision where she is more bound than free. However she has used Dick and destroyed him, but she can't forget him.

Rosemary Hoyt seems another interchangeable form of Nicole. She is advised and encouraged by her mother in her affair with Dick. Her youthful innocence permits her to be gay and careless, free and irresponsible. She is not burdened with what might be the possible consequence of the Dick-Nicole relationship. She can, and does it under the guidance of her mother:

You were brought up to work -- not especially to marry. Now you've found

your first nut to crack, and its a good nut -- go ahead and put whatever happens down to experience. Wound yourself or him -- whatever happens it can't spoil you, because economically you're a boy, not a girl.26

Those who plunge into Dick's world have their own sanity restored but fail to gain an understanding of his redemptive powers; hard realities curtain off Dick's own disciplined self-sacrifice and indirectly spells his doom. The surface glitter blinds everyone to Dick's inner depths. Like others, Rosemary too responds:

whole heartedly to the expensive simplicity of the Divers, unaware of its complexity and its lack of innocence, unaware that it was all a selection of quality from the run of the world's bazaar; and that the simplicity of behaviour also, the nursery like peace and goodwill, the emphasis on the simpler virtues, was part of a desperate bargain with the gods and had been attained through struggles she could not

26. Ibid., p.98.
have guessed at. At that moment the Divers represented externally the exact further-most evolution of a class, so that most people seemed awkward beside them -- in reality a qualitative change had already set in that was not at all apparent to Rosemary.27

Though Dick, among all the Fitzgerald heroes, has the qualities and talent of the complete hero, what he endeavours to nurse back to health, sanity and civilization has a quality of doomed epical strain. The world that awaits the cured is one of relapse into chaos, corruption, irresponsibility and near-madness. Nicole's adolescent incest repeats itself once her released and liberated ego finds itself bound to Tommy Barban. The kind of freedom that Dick envisaged for Nicole was prohibited by the new world of the Buchanans, Warrens and Barbans. Security and an extension of the self are not guaranteed by wealth or sexual liberation but by responsibility born of shared discipline and dependable personal identities.

But Dick is owned, and his "pretense of independence" is futile. It is the "emergent Amazons" that own him for he has been made vulnerable through his pride. He can't keep up

27. Ibid., p.77.
pretenses and manners; the frilliest social artificialities cannot last after the morale has cracked. He is constrained to tell Baby Warren:

Good manners are the admission that everybody is so tender that they have to be handled with gloves. Now human respect -- you don't call a man a coward or liar lightly, but if you spend your life sparing people's feelings and feeding their vanity, you get so you can't distinguish what should be respected in them.28

Dick becomes naturally embittered when he sees the futility of his sacrifice to make Nicole human. Her humanity turns against him, turns her freedom loose, sinking in the bog of harsh and rotten reality beneath the surface glitter of appearances. However, she too, far from living a full new life in her new freedom in the brave new world, fails to survive in her new identity for its like all the battle, either you "win a pyrrhic victory" or face wreck and ruin -- either way it is a self-defeat and destruction. She knows she is there "as a symbol of something" that Dick should understand. Her so-called cure by the psychiatrist is simply

her finding of "a greater sickness", though she is sure that something ought to come out of it. Dick knows, "He stooped and kissed her forehead", and he whispered, "We must all try to be good".

It is then Rosemary who, while Nicole sinks and promise fades, reminds Dick of the future that could be redeemed in the imagined youthful past that she promises for she retains a child's innocence, and as Dick tells her, "you're the only girl I've seen for a long time that actually did look like something blooming". Her very name, "dew of the sea" recalls nostalgia of youth, past hopes, memories and dreams, the rejuvenescence of that golden moment that Isabelle evoked in This Side of Paradise. She reminds one of the effervescence of the movie world of Hollywood, unreal and dream-like, a symbol of what is tawdry, shallow, inane, almost dehumanised yet having the radiance of a gorgeous illusion, perfect but brittle at the touch of reality as Fitzgerald would depict in The Last Tycoon. But youth in Dick's world of imagination is an object elusive and of wistful longing, the symbol of insubstantial and intangible yearning that must elude realisation and fulfilment. It does not endure, and maturity and age overtake it. Rosemary too must face her enemy, the corrupted world of commercialised glitter and pretence of love that people on the Riviera beaches represent. Once that happens, Dick, who has been desperate in seeking the
restoratives of spiritual energy seeks out Rosemary now mature and of lost youth. He hunts her in his mad pursuits and at last grasps the moment that had long eluded him: "She wanted to be taken and she was, and what had begun with a childish infatuation on a beach was accomplished at last." With that surrender to lust, Dick and Rosemary, as Nicole and Tommy, destroy for themselves what a dependable relationship might have been in nursing old dreams of life in a new world full of promise and wondrous possibilities. Only hard-skinned sun-drenched and desensitized people like Tom Buchanan and Tommy can survive in such an ethos.

Nicole throws away her chances of cure and survival like that rare and unavailable camphor-rub which she gives to Tommy for his cold. Symbolically, the gesture is one where she acts defiantly and irresponsibly and throws Dick for Tommy. Dick, the Doctor who with patient care and self sacrifice had enhanced her life is tossed away as are the graces he and their life stood for. It is the harshness of reality that smashes "the illusions of eternal strength and health... the essential goodness of people". Dick had once imagined his goodness to be his sheet anchor: "He used to think that he wanted to be good, he wanted to be kind, he wanted to be brave and wise... he wanted, wanted to be

29. Ibid., p.231.
loved".  

But he ultimately realised the futility of it all; life was essentially the surface smear of glided corruption, selfish irresponsible where each squanders his chances and fortunes in meaningless pursuits. Nicole can't be saved because she doesn't wish to be saved, and goes back to the incurable, incestuous Warren world where she feels she belongs:

If my eyes have changed its because I'm well again. And being well again perhaps I've gone back to my true self -- I suppose my grandfather was a crook and I'm a crook by heritage, so there we are.  

The white crook's eyes, indeed, reflect her true self.

Nicole, Rosemary and Mary North, all three have a resemblance and differ from many American women in that

They were happy, to exist in a man's world -- preserved their individuality through men and through opposition to them. They would all three have made

30. Ibid., p.23.
31. Ibid., p.311.
alternatively good courtesans or good wives not by the accident of birth through the greater accident of finding their man or not finding him.\textsuperscript{32}

Such women, Gausse confesses "have never [been] seen before". Gatsby, Dick and North follow the green light, stake all they have only to be bankrupted and broken forever. But Dick and North are different:

Dick Diver came and brought with him a fine glowing surface on which the three women sprang like monkeys with cries of relief, perching on his shoulders, on the beautiful crown of his hat or the gold head of his cane. Now for a moment, they could disregard the spectacle of Abe's gigantic obscenity.\textsuperscript{33}

Mary North altogether changes after the controlling brakes have been removed, once her husband dies. Her symbolic role can be seen in her relationship with Lady Caroline, who, is the liberated young woman with the strength of evil.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p.111-12.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p.145.
incarnate of the new gilded world of hot pursuits. It is moneyed smugness whether with Lady Caroline or Baby Warren.

Baby Warren knows how far they can "use" Dick for Nicole's illness. She must "buy her a nice young doctor" with whom Nicole could fall in love, and then the rest of the mess of her life could be left to his care; in this way Nicole could "get out of the atmosphere of sickness and live in the world among the 'right' people"; the proper world envisaged by Baby Warren is the English society. She wants to have her responsibility shifted on other people who can be used at will; when she bails Dick out of the jail in Italy, she

had the satisfaction of feeling that whatever Dick's previous record was, they [the Warrens -- crooks, mess-makers, incestuous, responsible for Nicole's breakdown] now possessed a moral superiority over him for as long as he proved of any use.\(^3\)

It was her moment of moral triumph since it gave her a sense of socially acceptable appearance which was her conception of morality. Money consciousness makes her attitude harden into a cool, calculating experimental gesture, almost like

\(^3\) Ibid., p.253.
her grand-father; she conceived human relations only in terms of "usefulness". She acts like her grand-father who was a founder of the great American predatory wealth. She knows of Dick's usefulness to her and Nicole, but she is completely imperceptible to his graces, virtues and self sacrifice; she is unaware of all that extra he had put into his marriage with Nicole just as she is unaware of the cause of her sister's schizophrenia. When Dick mulls over what it cost him in the transference needed to cure Nicole, he tells Baby Warren:

"Its possible I was the wrong person for Nicole.... Still, she would probably have married someone of my type, someone she thought she could rely on -- indefinitely".

"You think she'd be happier with somebody else?" Baby thought aloud suddenly. "Ofcourse, it could be arranged".

Only as she saw Dick bend forward with helpless laughter did she realise the preposterousness of her remark.

"Oh, you understand", she assured him. "Don't think for a moment that we're [the Warren pride] not grateful
for all you've done. And we know you've had a hard time".  

When, in the end, Nicole decides to leave Dick, she makes it clear to her sister that he can't simply be discarded as something insignificant; he had meant alot and she owed him her six years of health, sanity and protection atleast. But Baby Warren's response is cool, hard and impersonal, "That's what he was educated for". The clean-sweeping, irrational temper "that had broken the moral back of a race and made a nursery out of a continent" had defeated Dick and all that he stood for. The war was over and he had lost. When he refused to seduce Rosemary, he had said, "So many people are going to love you and it might be nice to meet your first love all intact, emotionally too." This not only was an old fashioned idea, but what "healthy" men expected; perhaps someone like Tommy Barban wouldn't have had such scruples. Rosemary symbolised what growing up meant for the new post-war generation; she too hardens and matures, "Do you mind if I pull down the curtain?" "Please do. Its too light in here".  

Baby Warren's rescue of Dick is his moment of his final defeat. The metaphor of "Daddy's Girl" for her is  

35. Ibid., p.233-34.  
36. Ibid., p.374.
Fitzgerald's symbolic dramatisation of the American national aspirations for adolescent culture and values during the twenties. It was adult abnegating of moral responsibility. Nicole's 'white crook's eyes', ironically noticed by Tommy Barban, tend to simplify the moral complexity of the dilemma: "So I have white crook's eyes, have I? Very well then better a sane crook than a mad puritan". It sums up the two worlds, the old and dying, outmoded puritan morality and the emerging, eager, youthful, new generation. However, in the novel, the basic issues are beyond the surface themes of sexual freedom and national solidarity just as in The Great Gatsby bootlegging is far from the major concern.

The symbolic implications of names and characters pertain to dissolving of national identities in terms of moral evaluations as was the co-mingling of sexual identities, male and female. In the intentional conglomeration of the European Riviera, there is a confusion of one's origin, name and character. They have symbolic, even allegorical function as the novel itself is prophetic, even a apocalyptical. Almost like the names in their confused order in Nick's old railway time-table of those who came to Gatsby's parties, here it is Tommy Barban's copy of the New York Herald in the American-Parisian paper. The names are hilariously amusing with ironic undertones:
"Well, what nationality are these people?" demands the half American Tommy, reading with a slight French into-nation. "Registered at the Hotel Palace at Vevey are Mr. Pandely Vlasco, Mme Bonneasse -- I don't exaggerate -- Corinna Mendoca, Mme Pache Seraphim Tullio, Maria Amelia, Roto Mais Moises Teubel, Mme Paragois, Apostle Alexandre, Yolanda Yosfugli and Geneveva do Momus".  

Nicole adds Mrs Evelyn Oyster and Mr. S. Flooh; Mary North becomes Contessa di Minghetti; Conti di Minghetti though Italian enough in its association is ruler owner of manganese deposits in south-western Asia; he was the Kabyle-Berber-Sabaean-Hindustrain that beats across North Africa; yet the name of this Hindu is only a "papal title". Names are also deliberate insertions to indicate certain characteristics: Barban for Barbarian, Campion for Camp which in American slang means pretentious gesture flaunting homosexuality and proclaims Campion's surreptitious activities. Altogether the Riviera atmosphere blurs cultural-national-linguistic segregations and distinctions. Not only that, it symbolises draining out of humanity from

37. Ibid., p.73-74.
the human substratum in this new golden world of gilded corruption: "Here and there figures spotted the twilight, turning up ashen faces to her like souls in Purgatory watching the passage of a mortal through;" 38 The 'her' is Rosemary Hoyt and she is co-starring with a French actor in a film directed by an English director, Farl Brady; McKisco sounds like "a substitute for gasoline or butter"; Abe North as Mr. Afghan North is a queer twist of personal identity; the French Negro restauranteur is confused with an American Negro, introduced as one Mr. Jules Paterson of Stockholm.

A boat is a typical Fitzgerald symbol for exploitative and rapacious wealth of the American rich, be it Dan Cody's yacht or the "Margin" on which Lady Caroline is introduced to Golding. Appropriately enough, the news broken to Rosemary of Dick's disgrace and defeat is from some State Department people on the boat -- Europeanised Americans who had reached a position where they could scarcely have been said to belong to any nation at all. In the new post-war dispensation, all old inherited dependabilities are discarded or have minimal distinguishable recognition.

The metaphor of war provides the continuing motif in the novel, summing up the broken lacerated sexual and national identities in sweeping moral and spiritual disintegration.

38. Ibid., p.79.
War has been the barrier between the old vanished world of Dick's idealistic vision destroyed by the new lust and greed for sexuality and money. Money and sex are the explosives unleashed by war, and are all pervasive. Rosemary's hair is "an armorial shield of love - locks and gold". Tommy Barban's speech is ridden with war talk. Though the most denationalised of all characters, he is associated with war, uniforms and going to war (which side he fights on is not significant); war is mentioned in his conversation in the most careless and irresponsible manner. The Negroes in their deadly fiasco are referred to as a tracking war party of "hostile and friendly Indians". The new woman is the "emergent Amazon". Thus the war with its brooding, undulating quality permeates the very background of the novel. The old order of established mores, manners and dependable identities succumbs to the birth of a new generation in the convulsions of World War I when things fall apart and the centre cannot hold. When Dick visits the battle fields with Rosemary and Abe North, he deeply regrets the irretrievable loss while he is able to comprehend the meaning of terrible death:

All my beautiful, lovely safe world blew itself up here with a great gust of high explosive love... This Western Front business couldn't be done again, not for
a long time.... This took religion and years of plenty and tremendous sureties and the exact relation that existed between the classes... You had to have a whole-souled sentimental equipment going back further than you could remember. You had to remember Christmas, and postcards of the crown Prince and his finance, and little cafes in valence and beer gardens in Unter din Linden and weddings at Mairie, and going to the Derby, and your grandfather's whiskers... This kind of battle was invented by Lewis Carroll and Jules Verne and whoever wrote Undine, and country deacons bowling and marines in Marseilles and girls seduced in the back lanes of Wurttemberg and Westphalia. Why this was a love battle -- there was a century of middle class love spent here. This was the last love battle.\(^\text{39}\)

Dick's romantic notions are understandably what he does not clearly comprehend but he knows what has vanished with war forever:

"I couldn't kid here", he said rather apologetically. "The silver cord is cut and the golden bowl is broken and all that but an old romantic like me can't do anything about it".

Perhaps his romanticism compels him to believe in the unlimited possibilities of the new promise since the bleakness of the past has not yet clouded the future hopes.

In the restaurant with Nicole and Rosemary, Dick sees "the goldstar muzzers" come to visit their son's graves:

Over his wine Dick looked at them again; in their happy faces the dignity that surrounded and pervaded the party, he perceived all the maturity of an older America. For a while the sobered women who had come to mourn for their dead, for something they could not repair, made the room beautiful. Momentarily, he, sat again on his fathers knee, riding the Mosby while the old loyalties and devotions fought on around him.

40. Ibid., p.118.
Almost with an effort he turned back to his two women at the table and faced the whole new world in which he believed.41

The pathos of this nostalgia for the past is almost a summation of what was emerging on the horizon in the aftermath of World War I. He could visualise the past; what he needed was a little ruin. However, the nostalgia of the ruined battle fields almost bore a faint resemblance to one of his own parties; his war continues between the old world values and the forces of disintegration; his own parties acquire the mood and moment of war; with their flotsam of cosmopolitans they resemble the irremediable sick world bent on annihilating its saviour and redeemer; he now becomes increasingly aware of sacrificing his energies to the futile amusement of the younger generation:

The reaction came when he realised the waste and extravagance involved. He sometimes looked back with awe at the carnivals of affection he had given, as a general might gaze upon a massacre he had ordered to satisfy an impersonal blood lust.42

41. Ibid., p.162.
42. Ibid., p.84.
This is almost like Gatsby who had tried to turn his dream into reality. It is, in fact, a war of attrition. In the scene where the woman shoots down her man, Dick reports that "she shot him through his identification card". This is identifying his own disintegration and externalising it; till now it had been concealed within his mind. His defeat, helplessness and weakened energy become manifested in his vague unassertive poses and impotent attitudes.

As Dick becomes psychologically incapacitated and ineffectual, Nicole takes over; even his old armament with which he had combatted the onslaught of the new value system had become futile. She too had sucked him dry because "that was what he was educated for". However he remained firm in service though he unconsciously bid goodbye to his visions, dreams and ideals; he confirmed this when he bade farewell to Mrs. Elsie Speers, Rosemary's mother, and said, "My politeness is a trick of the heart".

In curing Nicole, he has lost his identity and is defeated because after all she is the "emergent Amazon" and cannot be educated in the graces of the old world. She:

began to feel the old hypnotism of his intelligence, sometimes exercised
without power but always with substrata of truth under truth which she could not break or even crack. Again she struggled with it, fighting him with her small, fine eyes, with the plush arrogance of a top dog, with her nascent transfer to another man, with the accumulated resentment of years; she fought him with her money and her faith that her sister disliked him ... her health and beauty against his moralities -- for this inner battle and courageously with .... the empty receptacles of her expiated sins, outrages, mistakes. And suddenly, in the space of two minutes she achieved her victory and justified herself to herself without lie or subterfuge, cut the cord forever. Then she walked weak in the legs and sobbing coolly, toward the household that was hers at last.

Dick waited until she was out of sight. Then he leaned his head forward on the parapet. The case was finished. Doctor Diver was at liberty.43

43. Ibid., p.319-20.
Both were free; she retreated into her money, but he became a non-person; he was no Lazarus that could resurrect himself from the dead. The ending of the novel, Dick's fading out into insignificance in America "in that section of the country, in one town or another", is exceedingly moving and tactful.

The suggestions of a breakdown on a vaster scale arise out of the failures and compromises of the individuals, and not the other way round. So it is right that the book should close anticlimactically with the reports of Dick's return to America, their distancing effect suggesting his tired emptiness of ambition and vitality, his being at the lowest curve of his brilliant boom. 44

It is Dick's "intricate destiny" to represent through his own progressive decline and degradation, the painful loss of his personal self and that of the nation and humanity. It is because he began with a period of colossal illusions like Gatsby, "the illusions of a nation" that his romantic hopes

were sustained and strengthened. Besides, he was equally gifted with the trained and ordered intelligence of a psychiatrist, and had an enormous faith in the indestructibility of his self against any odds, even marrying Nicole, his one continuing liability for life. His belief in his capacity to redeem and cure the irremediable is part of his illusion for he is oblivious of the destructive element concealed in his dream.

Nicole symbolises the decay and death implicit in Dick's illusions that keep him forever hoping and bringing him "the essence of a continent". The imperative need that he feels in serving to heal her to the extent of sacrificing his happiness in marrying her is a typically American response to the fascination of the challenge to overcome the insurmountable; metaphorically, the frontiers were not receding but assuming different connotations; it was the fascination of the overwhelming American past that evoked such appeal for the promise of the hopeful future in Dick: "The post-war months in France, and the lavish liquidations taking place under the aegis of American splendour, had effected Dick's outlook". If Dick symbolises the creative vision of America's expectant romantic hopefulness, Nicole is the symbolic representation of the utmost corruption of the American wealth and its lavish splendour, the other more

45. Tender Is The Night, p.23.
cogent meaning of America, the brave new world. Like Dick, the Warrens too stand for America, but an America predatory and rapacious in its commercialism, the emergent America, different and indistinguishable from Europe that still cherished older values and cultures. American wealth is not immune to incestuous corruption as represented in Devereaux Warren for whom money is no object but is aligned to his basic irresponsibility and acquisition of power. He is responsible for the mess of Nicole's life, yet not only does he run away and shirk his responsibility, he even makes Baby Warren buy a doctor for Nicole while he, the father-lover of his daughter can retreat into his money. Later, at fifty when due to alcoholism his liver stops functioning, he gets into a religious and resigned mood. He comes to Europe but doesn't want anyone to know about it; however, with the "greatest fervour" he wishes to see his daughter, Nicole. He tells Dick:

I've been a bad man. You must know how little right I have to see Nicole again, yet a Bigger Man than either of us says to forgive and pity... If I could see Nicole for ten minutes I would go happy out of the world.... Let me tell you my debt to you is so large---"46

46. Ibid., p. 266.
How large we come to know only in Book III though there are hints and indications right from the beginning to the end. Rosemary comes upon a scene that Violet McKisco had encountered earlier and over which her husband and Tommy Barban had a duel:

Nicole knelt beside the tub swaying sidewise and sidewise. "It's you!" she cried, "---it's you come to intrude on the only privacy I have in the world -- with your spread with red blood on it. I'll wear it for you -- I'm not ashamed, though it was such a pity. On All Fools Day we had a party on the Zurichsee, and all the fools were there, and I wanted to come dressed in a spread but they wouldn't let me -- so I sat in the bathroom and they brought me a domino and said wear that. I did. What else could I do? I never expected you to love me -- it was too late -- only don't come in the bathroom, the only place I can go for privacy, dragging spreads with red
blood on them and asking me to fix them". 47

At the time, no doubt she had frozen and repeated, "Never mind Daddy" but it was not all that casual.

It is American wealth that vitiates the values of older Europe as of America too. Hardly had the war in Europe come to an end than it was made into a mound of debris by American wealth. American money feeding European greed with its intense mobility and flux of life. In the novel, people are constantly on the move, "promenading insouciantly upon the national prosperity". Fitzgerald depicted his America as going on the "greatest gaudiest spree in history... its splendid generosities, its outrageous corruptions and the tortuous death struggle of the old America .... [all] had a touch of disaster in them". 48

Nicole's adulterous liaison in the hotel with Tommy Rarban, that liberates her from Dick, recalls scenes and images that pertain to gross materiality and power of corruption lurking underneath the decay and death of unfulfilled promise, the haunting American sounds that herald Nicole's emergence into

47. Ibid., p.174.

the new world of hot cat life; the air seems rent with a cacophony of turmoil and confusion, the result of elemental abusive noises of violent squabbles. Nicole whose voice was full of money stood stripped of the golden glitter of golden girls and appeared a whore. While she is inside with Tommy Barban in a room "almost ascetic, almost clean.... simplest of places", sailors and whores are outside; their moral identity of sexual laxity and fornication has no difference but for the kind of noises that proclaimed their appearances, the national heritage of predacious wealth of Dan Codys, Buchanans, Demains, Warrens is unmistaken:

One of the girls hoisted her skirt suddenly, pulled and ripped at her pink step-ins, and tore them to a sizeable flag; then screaming "Ben! Ben!" she waved it wildly. As Tommy and Nicole left the room it fluttered against the blue sky. Oh, say can you see the tender color of remembered flesh? -- While at the stern of the battleship rose in rivalry the star spangled Banner.49

It is the whorish betrayal of the promise of the American dream. Wealth, leisure, restlessness, all lead to different

experiments in pleasure, be it incest, homosexuality lesbianism. Towards the end Mary Minghetti and Lady Caroline were in custody for a serious offence; the latter explains:

It was merely a lark.... We were pretending to be sailors on leave and we picked up two silly girls".50

Everyone was greatly embarrassed, and Gausse sighed forth:

I have never seen this sort of women. I have known many of the great courtesans of the world, and for them I have much respect often, but women like these women I have never seen before.51

In such an ethos, when no relationship is sacred, Nicole hasn't learnt her lesson; when she wasn't safe under her father's roof, could her children be safe in their step father's house? She was too naive and selfish to think of that; she only thought of herself:

Nicole did not want any vague spiritual romance -- she wanted an "affair"; she

50. Ibid., p.322.
51. Ibid., p.325.
wanted a change.... All summer she had been stimulated by watching people do exactly what they were tempted to do and pay no penalty for it ..... She began to slight [Dick's] love, so that it seemed to have been tinged with sentimental habit from the first.52

In the early part of the novel, Nicole is the representation of the American need for fulfilment which Dick who symbolises the past, archetypal aspect of America, helps to achieve. But it almost seems impossible because the America had been hideously raped and its innocence destroyed by rapacious wealth. Nicole is to be redeemed by Doctor Diver who accepts her for her "hopeful and normally hungry for life" eagerness which seemed rather romantic. The adolescence, youth and excitement are typically American traits whereas the practical maturity adapted to a tired, conventional and limited aspect is the European legacy. Both are part of what constitutes Fitzgerald's evaluation of the deep, unwavering fascination for what elevates and corrupts at the same time i.e. American wealth at the service of realising the American dream.

52. Ibid., p.310.
America in its youthful expectations, possesses an imaginative daring which a maturer and exhausted Europe fears and squirms about for the latter is the old, grabbing, plundering materialism that has acquired social sanction and respectability, and dreads and envies America for its opulence. Europe puts constraints upon its youth in trying to consolidate the past and its conventional limitations. America is "a willingness of the heart" creative and vibrant with youthful adolescent urges and its vast candid imagination which is incomprehensible disreputable and ugly to the Europeans. America was the land of the hopeful, youthful, innocent past now become subject to irresponsible and irresistible enticements of materialistic possessions and power. However, all this began to have an allurement for Europe that began submerging its quiet, maturer past in the glittering abandon of the "silly, happy age".

Fitzgerald had taken nine years to write *Tender Is The Night* and had gone to debt to work on it. It was modelled on *Vanity Fair* and had all that he had gone through "in different layers, like the nine buried cities of Troy". He hoped it would be "good, good, good" but in 1934 that was not how the public reacted. The new fashion was for novels about destitution and revolt, and it dealt with fashionable life in the 1920s; people wanted to forget that they had ever been concerned with frivolities. However, it stayed in
people's mind like a regret or an unanswered question; Ernest Hemingway said, "A strange thing is that in retrospect [it] gets better and better". It has lasting emotion and vitality, and was revised and rearranged to give a better constructed and more effective presentation. Earlier it was not chronological and there was uncertainty of focus. The final version is in five parts or books: Book I, Case History: 1917-1919; Book II, Rosemary's Angle: 1919-1925; Book III, Casualties: 1925; Book IV, Escape: 1925-1929; Book V, The Way Home: 1929-30. Malcolm Cowley further says that the move is about Dick Diver and it is psychological:

Its social meanings are obtained by extension or synecdoche. Dick is the part that stands for the whole. He stands for other Americans on the Riviera, he stands for all the smart men who played too close to the line, he even stands for the age that was ending with the Wall Street Crash, but first he stands for himself. The other characters are grouped around him in their subordinate roles: Rosemary sets in

operation the forces waiting to destroy him, Abe North announces his fate, and Tommy Barban is his stronger and less talented successor. From beginning to end Dick is the centre of the novel. 54

Fitzgerald himself had drawn up a plan for the novel:

A natural idealist, a spoiled priest, giving in for various reasons to the ideas of the haute bourgeois, and in his rise to the top of the social world losing his idealism, his talent and turning to drink and dissipation. Background one in which the leisure class is at their truly most brilliant and glamorous.... 55

Dick goes from "obscurity to obscurity", but the reason for that decline is not clearly stated: was it the standards of the leisure class that had corrupted him or the strain of curing a psychotic wife who gains strength as he loses it by a mysterious transfer of vitality, or a form of emotional exhaustion "like a man overdrawing at his bank" or even

54. Ibid., p.xv.

55. Ibid., p.xvi.
something far back in his childhood. What ever, it may be we see him at the end swaying a little as he stands on a high terrace and makes a papal cross over the beach that he had found and peopled and that has now rejected him, his fate is accomplished and the circle closed. At such a point in his life the stanza from Keats' "Ode To A Nightingale" which prefaces the novel becomes an apposite summation:

Already with thee! tender is the night,

But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with breezes blown

Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.