CHAPTER TWO

PROTAGONIST UNDER PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS
CHAPTER TWO

PROTAGONIST UNDER PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS

Fitzgerald made Americans become aware of the change in the post-war adolescence. He brilliantly depicts the speed, the dreams, the ambitions and utter rootlessness of the youth. Fitzgerald makes his protagonists realize the romantic attitude, in which all the romantic’s sensuous and emotional responses are disciplined by his awareness of the good and the evil of human experience. He has a kind of instinct for the tragic view of life and remembers it at the beginning of his career. Fitzgerald in this regard, writes in his book The Crack-Up: “All the stories that came into my head had a touch of disaster in them – the lovely young creatures in my novels went to ruin... my millionaires were as beautiful and damned as Thomas Hardy’s peasants” (87).

Fitzgerald, through his protagonist, is tracing the glamorous flapper, social eminence and money postulating a wise and tragic sense of life. His protagonist cracks up prematurely failing to realize their potentialities. They are often self-indulgent, usually the victim of cruel and careless people. Fitzgerald depicts the idealist in conflict with the materialist and conveys his sense of loss at the hands of heartless people.

In the earlier days of his career Fitzgerald was sustained by the illusion that life was a romantic business. But the sterner voice of his puritanical self admonished that the price of self-indulgence was self-destruction. So, he stepped back from the fictive world to re-evaluate his position to formulate a metaphysical attitude toward the conditions of life.
Hence, Edwin Fussel states thus:

Fitzgerald begins by exposing the corruption of American dream in Industrial America, he ends by discovering that the pursuit is universally seductive and perpetually damned. Driven by inner forces that compel him towards the personal realization of romantic wonder, the materials, which the American experience offers as objects and criteria of passion destroy the Fitzgerald’s hero; or, at best, he is purged of these unholy flies, chastened and reduced. (English Literary History 292).

Fitzgerald was tormented by the conflict between the seduction of the American dream and his belief in the value of the traditional virtues-- honor, courtesy and courage. His relation to American culture further complicated this struggle. America implies a naive, but not deterministic belief in the limitless possibilities of American life, which forms a background for Fitzgerald’s protagonists. His motivations of the characters have a common basis, the malaise caused by the war. In the narrow circle of the world of wealth and adolescence, Fitzgerald chose to describe themes, which embody man’s eternal struggle to achieve selfhood and reconcile him with the world. He also embraced dream and myth, which allowed for individualism, heroism and optimism yet his heroes fail from this expression of individualism. He criticized the failure of sentiment in the modern world, but he found comfort for himself only in destruction and memory. Fitzgerald represented a contradictory movement, a desire for success and the sureness of failure. His flappers and philosophers reveal the fragility of their capacity for living, the
precariousness of their careless and challenging attitudes. Their psychological background has left them ill equipped to succeed at work and intimacy.

In love, again, the Fitzgerald hero experiences the same failure. Each hero searches out a woman who will leave him dejected, emasculated or even dead. James Tuttleton asserts “Fitzgerald’s memorable heroes suffer at the hands of rich, bored, sophisticated, insincere women” (Critical Essays on F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Tender Is the Night 240).

The woman, in Fitzgerald, plays the double role of the creator as well as the destroyer. She is both pure and evil--death, either spiritual or physical, coming through her. Fitzgerald emphasizes the return to a feminine paradise of which death is an emblem. Woman is only the reflective symbol of the hero’s quest. The feminine universe is crossed by the masculine concern. Thus Fitzgerald’s combination of woman and death and their rapport with the masculine hero, is the expression of a veritable humanism, which goes beyond the desire for absolute purity. Fitzgerald roots these various failures both in the weakness of the individuals and in a more fundamental weakness in the American belief in unlimited possibility. This chapter aims to focus on the protagonist’s personal and psychological conflicts to attain an identity and selfhood.

The Side of Paradise is Amory Blaine’s, intellectual as well as spiritual pilgrimage. Fitzgerald sets forth Amory’s quest for selfhood and discovery that the world is not altogether his oyster, but hardly the stuff of high tragedy. In his cynicism, world-weariness and regret for his vanished youth Amory is the archetypal hero of the twenties. For Fitzgerald, like T.S.Eliot in The
Wasteland, gives expression to a generation’s illusion being disillusioned. The novel is an attempt to arrive at an understanding of Amory’s transformation from Egotist to personage.

Fitzgerald’s treatment of Amory’s parents reflects an important shift in American parental authority with debilitating effects upon offspring. The portrait of Amory’s father, Stephen Blaine, is sparse. His influence upon Amory will cause much more psychological harm than good. Stephen has abdicated his position of authority within the family in favour of his aggressive wife Beatrice O’Hara. He has failed to form with her a bond of loving alliance necessary for the healthy growth of his son. Since his father is passive, Amory turns towards his mother for a model to imitate. The spoilt darling of a wealthy mother, Amory spends most of his early childhood receiving “a highly specialized education from his mother” (3), listening to her stories about her exciting past, serving as her sole travelling companion and calling her by her first name. While Amory attends boarding school he fantasizes women as beautiful, and worldly as his mother was in her youth.

Beatrice consistently coddles Amory and reminds him of the precious value of his physical health: “Dear, don’t think of getting out of bed yet. I’ve always suspected that early rising in early life makes one nervous” (5). When he suffers from the scarlet fever, fourteen specialists are called in. Such a magnificent overprotection puts Amory into a psychologically ambiguous situation. He feels proud and happy to be the centre of attention, motherly care and love. He heard her tell a room full of awestruck, admiring women one day, “This son of mine is entirely sophisticated and quite charming – but delicate – we’re all delicate” (5).
Along with her excessive preoccupation with Amory’s health, Beatrice completely spoils him. There are no ordered ways on the part of the Blaines to guide their growing boy by means of prohibitions and permissions. When Amory does anything wrong, Beatrice is superficially horrified. She casually dismisses any idea of discipline. Thus Amory, though insecure because of his mother’s over control, is introduced very young in life to expectations of almost complete freedom with no limits. His mother’s scrupulous preoccupation with his well being leads to a fundamental lack of self-possession. Amory finds it difficult, to will anything for himself and breeds a strong inclination to feelings of doubt and shame. During his adolescence his negative counterparts appear, causing him doubt about his capacity for independence. Feelings of shame and doubt do not allow him to get away with anything and causes him great anguish and travail. But Amory does not trace his loss of self-esteem to his mother’s over control and his later incorporation of the standards of others as the best guides to personal success and happiness.

Since Amory is a victim of the intense affections of a neurotic mother and a passive father, he has to bear with the defective formation of character, especially with a guilt, which evolves into an acute state of narcissism. According to Karen Horney the neo-Freudian, narcissism involves:

Vanity, Conceit craving for prestige and admiration, a desire to be loved in connection with an incapacity to love others, withdrawal from others, normal self-esteem, ideals, creative desires, anxious concern about health, appearance, intellectual faculties (The Collected Works of Karen Horney 88).
This ambivalent state of mind afflicts Amory’s adolescence. When Amory is thirteen years old Beatrice suffers a nervous breakdown. It destines Amory to spend two years in Minnesota with his aunt and uncle apart from his mother. Amory encounters a hostility and rejection that make the sense of work almost impossible:

He was resentful against all those in authority over him and this, combined with a lazy indifference toward his work, exasperated every master in school. He grew discouraged and imagined himself a pariah, took to sulking in corners and reading after lights (27).

At Princeton, Amory’s constant preoccupations are the quickest ways toward fame, popularity and power—football clubs, the Princetonian Triangle club. When Amory does think of the primary aim of the university, the proper communication of knowledge, learning and technology, he feels guilty because of his laziness and lack of effort. But he still satirizes Princeton’s antiquated pedagogical methods and looks upon his teachers as gargoyles. He does little work and finally fails in mathematics. Driven by feelings of narcissism, his inferiority continues his pattern of life, which is another form of Amory’s self-punishment. Even when Beatrice is miles away, her education of Amory remains essentially in tact, dictating the substance and style of her son’s thoughts.

Amory’s abnormal closeness and identification with his mother compels Amory to treat every female he gets close to as his mother. The Oedipal
conflict in Amory is clearly seen in his meeting with Myra St.Clara, one of the wealthiest and most beautiful thirteen-year-old girls in Minnesota. While moving to the country club, Amory romances with Myra in the back seat of the car. Since Myra thinks Amory is the quintessence of romance, she seems to be an easy prey for Amory, who believes a kiss, is a sign of masculine superiority. But feelings of attraction and revulsion seize Amory when he kisses Myra because he sees the image of his mother in Myra. Amory being flooded with negative feelings retreats to narcissism: “wanted to creep out of his body and hide somewhere safe out of sight, up in the corner of his mind” (14). But he fails because his narcissism depends upon external praise and Myra, after he has refused her, turns upon Amory and threatens him. Her reaction renders him helpless. His mother had given him nothing but love and Amory expects this from all women. The angry, unloving Myra becomes for Amory “a new animal of whose presence on earth he had not heretofore been aware” (15). Sex, beauty and evil are represented by the awkwardly seductive, golden-haired Myra. This scene foreshadows his future mental organisation. In this context Erikson’s words are worth quoting:

From the middle of the second decade, the capacity to think and the power to imagine reach beyond the persons and personalities in which youth can immense itself so deeply. Youth loves and hates in people what they stand for and chooses them for a significant encounter involving issues that often indeed, are bigger than you and I (Identity: Youth and Crisis 246).
These words illuminate Amory Blaine’s responses to Monsignor Darcy, and two significant male peers, Dick Humbrid and Burne Holiday. In different ways they provide necessary conditions and the background for his psychological struggles to define his experience and goals.

Monsignor Darcy stands for security to Amory, the effect of sunlight upon a maturing mind desiring something definite. He had been one of Beatrice’s suitors, a pagan, Swinburnian youngman. He does wonder for the young Amory. Darcy opens a romantic and sophisticated world through his knowledge and diversified experience. They construct a warm father-son relationship. It helps Amory to fill the void created by the ineffective Stephen Blaine. It also initiates Amory to overcome his psychological dependency upon his mother. After Amory returns to Princeton University, he receives several letters from his spiritual father. It helps him learn more about himself as he searches for a meaningful code of life. It is Darcy, who explains to Amory the distinction between a socially conforming personality and an inner directed personage:

Personality is a physical matter almost entirely; it lowers the people it acts - on I’ve seen it vanish in a long sickness. But while a personality is active, it overrides ‘the next thing.’ Now a personage, on the other hand gathers. He is never thought of apart from what he’s done. He’s a bar on which a thousand things have been hung-glittering things sometimes, as ours are, but he uses those things with a cold mentality back of them ... when you feel that your garnered prestige and talents and all that are hung out,
you need never bother about anybody; you can cope with them without difficulty (104).

Amory, the quester who hovers between a personality and a personage must shed his undesirable personality traits—his overweening self-concern and his insatiable ambition.

Dick Humbrid, one of Amory’s Princeton friends is the ideal, aristocratic young gentleman and people imitate his dress and behaviour. The popularity and prominence that Amory desires comes to Humbrid almost as a kind of divine gift. The fact that Humbrid’s father is a grocery clerk, who made a fortune in Tacoma real estate and came to New York ten years earlier does not dispel Amory’s adoration of Humbrid’s life style. For someone of Amory’s age, trust in an attractive figure like Humbrid and problems with the meaning of work are not unusual. They are a part of his search for selfhood. The theme of death enters forcefully into Amory’s consciousness with Humbrid’s death in a senseless car accident. His death fractures Amory’s illusion that youth, popularity and power as indestructible compared to the harsh realities of life. Amory is no longer attracted by success through the Princeton social system and other extra-curricular activities. Fitzgerald also agrees that “the fundamental Amory, ideal imaginative, rebellious, had been nearly snowed under” (99).

After Humbrid’s death, Amory slowly realizes that true success depends upon self-knowledge and constructive struggle. The activation of these spiritual potentialities becomes his goal during his last two years at Princeton. Fitzgerald almost immediately provides Amory with a new human model,
Burne Holiday. Amory soon discovers in him the deeper virtues, which Humbrid lacked. Burne suggests to Amory a new conception of moral and intellectual superiority. To be precise, the power of his integrity radiates “an immediate impression of bigness and security” (122). Amory is loyal to his new revolutionary model, who courageously asserts his own inner beliefs, even at the cost of popularity. Finally, they disagree over the question of good and evil of the war. Amory thinks that the war “is the great protest against the superman” (152). Burne’s response is to sell all his possessions and leave Princeton in order to “preach peace as a subjective idea” (148). Amory now believes that his model has become a fanatic, a cheap pacifist, a pawn in the hands of the enemy. Yet, Amory cannot help but envy Burne’s courageous action. It is Burne who furnishes an imaginative and concrete focus for Amory’s stirring sense that true success lies only within a person.

Fitzgerald makes the relationships of Amory with Humbrid and Burne Holiday parallel to those with Isabella Borge and Clara, two women who “stand for Amory’s changing set of values while an undergraduate” (68). Amory’s first meeting with Isabella is a fine example of two narcissistic youths jousting for romantic dominance. Both are truly ‘Babes in the woods,’ as the subtitle of this section suggests. Their thoughts and words are almost preoccupied with his or her own image. Amory as a victim of deep and inferior feelings wants to know from Isabella how she thinks of him. But her concern is her own popularity. The identity of the boy is insignificant compared to her image as attractive and the number of men who make her the object of their love. Amory tries to shut out the strain of desperate self-seeking, the basis of their relationship. This destroys the idealized image of himself and his attempt
to construct dreams on surface talk and tender glances. When they first intend to kiss each other, Amory’s shirt stud rubs against Isabella’s neck and leaves a small mark. This is unintentional, an innocuous incident which has the power to fracture their dreamy illusions. Amory’s image of himself as a conqueror demands that he pushes her to kiss him. She asserts herself by pulling him back saying “You’re a nervous strain” (93). Amory thinks that the more he pushes her for a kiss she owes him. When this fails, Amory leaves Isabella taking sombre satisfaction in the insight “that perhaps all along she had been nothing except what he had read into her” (94). Amory emerges with a badly bruised ego from his first attempt at courtship with a young woman.

After his relationship with the beautiful Isabelle, Amory’s hidden struggles with sex take the form of an evil force that has the power to overwhelm, perhaps even destroy him; later it is Amory’s fear of the destructive forces in himself. Clinton S.Burhans makes this point clear when he writes:

Amory’s sense of evil is thus more than a particular or even generalized guilt; rather, it is his deepening fear that without informing goals and moral restraints, his desires and passions, his feelings and emotions, could run out of control in several directions and destroy him and those he influences (Journal of English and Germanic Philology 608).

Such awareness is not the product of the fear of sex and women rather than Amory’s fear of the destructive forces in him. Darcy also accepts that it is that half miraculous sixth sense by which you detect evil, its half realized fear of
God in your heart” (106). To reinforce the atmosphere of evil, Fitzgerald shows Amory’s sexual situations connected with the devil. As a Princeton undergraduate when Amory is with his friend, Sloane and two chorus girls, he sees a figure in a case suggesting the evil. He smiles faintly at him. Shortly afterwards, when Amory moves to Axi's apartment for sexual reasons, he sees the devil with all its frightening traits sitting on a divan. Amory runs out of the apartment with fear and turns into an alley seeking escape from the terror. He sees,

Like a low gone struct at a distance and before his eyes a face flashed over the two feet, a face pale and distorted with a sort of infinite evil that twisted it like flame in the wind; but he knew for the half instance that the gong tanged and hummed, that it was the face of Dick Humbrid (116).

In Amory’s mind his aristocratic hero, Dick Humbrid, after his futile death has been condemned to Hell because of his glorified power and popularity. The connections between sex, beauty, evil, death and Amory’s fears of what he might become are immediately obvious to him. This is his experience “to which he never succeeded in giving an appropriate value but which nevertheless haunted him for three years afterward” (109).

After this traumatic experience, Burne’s female counterpart Clara Page, a young widow assumes a part in Amory’s life through Darcy, who sends him to visit her. Just as Burne helps Amory to put away his past goals of power and popularity, Clara helps him clarify his attitudes towards women by becoming a sanctified Madonna figure for romantic idealism. Amory discovers in Clara, a
woman in whom sex has been translated into intelligence and vitality. Amory does not use her to mirror his images, but seeks her mature opinions about his character. She makes it very clear to Amory in one critical conversation:

You're a slave, a bound helpless slave to one thing in the world, your imagination ... You let your imagination shine on the side of your desire for a few hours and then you decide ... so your decision when it comes isn't true. It's biased (143).

Amory proposes to Clara who declines it saying “I've got my two children and I want myself for them” (145). Fitzgerald interweaves with Clara, references to motherhood, Mary-worship to establish a significant difference between Clara and the other women in Amory’s world.

The approach of First World War provides Amory a welcome distraction. He goes off to fight against Germany. Fitzgerald presents the events that will affect Amory’s future, the death of Beatrice and the melting away of the family fortune. Amory, restless and horrified, returns from the war to carry on his quest: "Amory tries to fit into the conventional social moulds of job, and marriage but once again disappointed and withdraws into a semi-lethargic search for some basic purpose in life" (Burhans 611).

Again a new Isabelle appears called Rosalind, a sort of Vampire, who childishly treats men terribly and still possesses an “endless faith in the inexhaustibility of romance” (171). Amory immediately falls a victim to her charms. “He loved Rosalind – as he had never in the world loved anyone else” (189). After five emotion filled weeks, Rosalind’s materialistic self strongly emerges. Although Rosalind genuinely reciprocates Amory’s romantic
devotion, she becomes aware of the personal sacrifices marriage would demand of her. She breaks the engagement with Amory because he will never be able to give the style of life she wishes. She tells Amory: “you’d hate me in a narrow atmosphere. I’d make you hate me.” (195) Amory becomes a foolish and impotent victim before the power of money and a beautiful woman.

Amory undergoes an intense attack of inferiority after his affair with Rosalind. Amory searches for another Clara, but finds Mrs. Lawrence, a very dignified lady and a great devotee of Monsignor Darcy. She becomes a father and mother figure to him. While she reminds him of Darcy, she is similar to Beatrice: “not in temperament but in her perfect grace and dignity” (211). Through her conversations Amory finds that “existence had settled back to an ambitionless normality” (212). Amory cannot block out the thought of love and work. He demanded: “How’ll I fit in? What am I for?” (215). Amory is still confused about the power of sex in his life. His obsession with sex and beauty surfaces again when he is confronted by evil in the form of Eleanor Savage “the last time that evil crept close to Amory under the mask of beauty” (222).

Eleanor represents everything Amory has feared and rejected—Sex, the unfettered romantic will, materialism, uncontrolled passion. Her attitude towards life is hedonistic. She claims to have killed her conscience and no longer believes in God. Fitzgerald presents Eleanor as the emotional and evil force latent in Amory’s soul. She leads him for a time to a life of sensuous drifting. Eleanor knows that real love is ninety percent passion and one little soupcon of jealousy. Amory and Eleanor believe that sex is not merely a spiritual or romantic aspiration that can never be consummated. But Eleanor’s
blasphemous denial of the existence of God makes him react coldly towards her mainly for the reason that she is really a mirror to one dominant facet of his own personage. She is, in fact, his psyche, his soul. Amory questions her sincerity of avowed atheism “like most intellectuals who don’t find faith convenient.... You’ll yell loudly for a priest on your death – bed” (240). She announces that she will prove herself by riding her horse over a cliff. Ten feet from the edge she jumps from the horse. It plunges over the cliff to its death. This makes Amory to rip away his thin protective cloak of materialism to reveal a basically religious spirit. He now sees that the atheistic romantic will, as Robert Sklar explains “leads to its negation, belief in nothing, prostration before crude material power; and one step beyond lies madness” (F.Scott Fitzgerald: The Last Laocoon 111). Amory realizes his love waning slowly with the moon. All the same Amory’s vanity cannot co-exist harmoniously with Eleanor’s. Their individual identities could shatter miserably with their love-relationship, which transforms quickly into a love-hate relationship.

On his way to getting educated as a personage, Amory pauses to consider a view: According to the American novels we are led to believe that the healthy American boy from nineteen to twenty five is an entirely sexless animal. As a matter of fact, the healthier he is the less that’s true (195).

Fitzgerald dramatizes this truth by creating Amory, exploding a fictional myth, typical of the earlier American literature. The source of Amory’s psychological tensions lies in his discursive intellect in conflict with the conventional. The range of Amory’s experience goes beyond the mere romantic yearnings of an immature preserver of innocence. Each of his
relationships with the opposite sex unravels a different facet of his personality. In fact it gives him the scope to realize the various aspects of his self and to live a fuller life.

In his subconscious attempt to repeat a portion of his happy past at Princeton, Amory travels to Atlantic city. At this time of weakness the devil chooses to confront Amory in a hotel room, which he has occupied as a favour of Rosalind’s brother Alec Connage. During the night, the house detectives discover Alec together with Jill: “a gaudy Vermillion – lipped blond” (244). Alec will be liable under the Mann Act if caught. So Amory must decide whether he should help the brother of the woman, who has rejected his love. Amory realised that “there were other things in the room besides people” (247). Amory is caught between two forces. One is evil tempting him not to save Alec from illegal act as it surrounds Jill, an embodiment of sex. The other force advocates self-sacrifice, which he finds out in Darcy. The words of Christ while carrying his cross comes into his thought: “Weep not for me but for thy children” (248), and from Christ’s sacrifice came resurrection and glory. Amory decides to perform the act of sacrifice by declaring that Jill is his guest. With this act of personage, “Amory felt a sudden surge of joy and then like a face in a motion picture the aura over the bed faded out” (248). Darcy in one of his letters explains “Often through life you will really be at your worst when you seem to think best of yourself” (105).

When Amory learns that Rosalind, centre of his painful memories, has been engaged to a wealthy Dawson Ryder and the death of Monsignor Darcy causes more anxiety because they intensify the problems of life, sex, evil and
death which have preoccupied him so long. It forms the centre of his thoughts while Amory is thinking about the lives of people passing on the street:

He pictured the rooms where these people lived... where even love dressed as seduction – a sordid murder around the corner, illicit motherhood in the flat above... dirty restaurants where careless, tired people helped themselves to sugar with this own used coffee spoons leaving hard brown deposits in the bowl (275).

Amory is afraid and disdainful of the poor people because he sees an image of himself forced to live as they do. He believes that “it’s essentially cleaner to be corrupt and rich than it is to be innocent and poor” (256). Amory allows his thoughts to flow out and speculates whether Beatrice is able to purchase heaven as Dawson Ryder has purchased Rosalind Chastened by loneliness and disillusion the fundamental Amory is prepared to begin once again his search for the true self, springs from his unique being. He realizes what Darcy meant to him by saying that “people felt safe when he was near” (266). This insight is the chief source of Amory’s renewed vitality:

Life opened up in one of its amazing bursts of radiance and Amory suddenly and permanently rejected an old epigram that had been playing listlessly in his mind, ‘Very few things matters and nothing matters very much.’ On the contrary, Amory felt an immense desire to give people a sense of security (266).

In order to give a sense of security to other people Amory must struggle to become a person controlled by reason and must remain a spiritually unmarried
man. His quest is still before him, but this time the results will be different to Amory. Robert Sklar is right when he says:

Amory Blaine does not know himself in a classic sense. He has arrived at his new form of individualism through a reversal of the Cartesian reasoning. ‘I think, therefore I am.’ He had knocked away all his props of social place and social convention and found himself still standing. Therefore he could say, ‘I am.’ But what he was to think had not yet come to him (F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Last Laocoon 57).

As with Amory the story of Anthony Patch also is developed as a moral parable. The parable is precisely that of the youthful dreams and illusions that gradually become lethargy and then a nightmare and are involved in an inevitable ruin.

The Beautiful and Damned is the dissipation and deterioration of the protagonist’s inner self. Anthony Patch, the protagonist, is guilty of excessive indulgence in illusions and dreams. Anthony is a victim of a romantic conception of the world. His ruin is the result of an apparent, but deceptive material victory. His victory only serves to make the feeling of incurable defeat the more terrible—‘The Victor belongs to the spoils.’ Anthony is broken both physically, and mentally: “It is a tragedy, the tragedy of a poor-spirited, worthless badly educated and over sophisticated man” (The Literary Digest 53).
Anthony, while waiting to inherit his grandfather’s millions, leads an idle and purposeless life of debauchery. He justifies his way of living, his doing nothing by his characteristic philosophy of ‘Meaninglessness of life.’ He is a sophisticated aesthete living in a comfortable ivory tower in a New York apartment. More mature than Amory, he is independent and rich, and has his future assured by the prospect of a big inheritance. His real desire is to perpetuate his pleasant life. He is content to contemplate his own image, and there is a touch of Narcissus in him, in the golden mirrors and polished surfaces of his house. His favourite retreat is the bathtub. There he weaves immaterial dreams, builds castles in the air and reveries of himself contemplating sensual beauties or playing imaginary violins: "He felt that if he had a love he would have hung her picture just facing the tub so that, lost in the soothing streaming of the hot water, he might lie and look up at her and muse warmly and sensuously on her beauty" (11-12).

Anthony is unable to distinguish clearly between reality and illusion, the spiritual and the material. He is “a Faustian hero – a man of longing – whose very desires are self-destructive" (Lehan 38). The reality in Anthony’s attitude is a dimension of the spirit, an intense, but poorly understood faith in the possibilities of life. The illusion lies in the limitless enlarging of material possibilities. Fitzgerald depicts Anthony’s yearnings as a romantic flight from reality doomed to failure. Anthony and his wife Gloria Gilbert search for an impossible ideal world beyond time where natural and moral laws do not exist. The hero’s quest is obsessive, in spite of many obstacles and a pattern of realization that time alone gives beauty and youth meaning. In Fitzgerald’s mind Anthony’s romantic longing for timeless beauty and his desire to write
fulfill the general requirements of an artist. Robert Sklar describes Anthony as “the man pathetically torn between creativity and passive cynicism” (F.Scott Fitzgerald: The Last Laocoon 96). The strong influence of John Keats who felt so deeply the sense of loss, and the enchanting effect of death upon beauty may be seen in Anthony and his wife Gloria. Shortly after their marriage Gloria tells Anthony:

Beautiful things grow to a certain height and then they fail and fade off breathing out memories as they decay. ... There is no beauty without poignancy and there's no poignancy without the feeling that it's going, men, names, books, houses bound for dust mortal (166).

Anthony confirms his wife's belief later when he says: “Intolerably unmoved they all seemed, removed from any romantic immanency of action. Even Gloria's beauty needed wild emotions, needed poignancy, needed death” (214).

Although Amory recognizes the ultimate power of time and death, he remains a staunch romantic, irrevocably committed to the attainment of his ideal world of leisure. The force of this aspiration pervades the empty world of Anthony and gives significance to its apparently weak and passive hero. It is clear that Anthony has an immature grasp of human and social values. He lacks self-knowledge, unaware that Gloria, money and social success are projections of his uncritical romantic vision.

The roots of Anthony's character and development are embedded in the primary communication between mother and child. The insufficiencies of this relationship, and his whole childhood hinder Anthony from forming mature
attitudes towards the world and establishing adult intimacies. Anthony lies with his parents as a small boy. His mother, Henrietta, an opera singer, dies when he is five. Very little is said about his mother. His memories of her are faint and nebulous. Anthony’s father, Adam Ulysses Patch, is often drunk and generally negligent in the case of his son: “He was continually promising Anthony hunting trips, and fishing – trips and excursions to Atlantic city, ‘Oh, sometime soon now,’ but none ever materialized” (6). On one trip to Europe when Anthony was eleven, his father dies amid much sweating and grunting, crying aloud for as in the best hotel in Lucerne: “At eleven he had a horror of death… So to Anthony, life was a struggle against death, that waited at every corner” (67).

Anthony soon finds himself under the guidance of the fatuous Adam Cross Patch, his paternal grandfather. Fortunately for Anthony, his grandfather does not want much to do with him and he goes abroad for studies. Only occasionally does he pay a visit to this doddering benefactor, when he has known since the age of eleven. During a conversation with Anthony, Adam Patch demonstrates his lack of cordiality and understanding. His mind appears to be as mired in its own narrow conception of life confined in his gloomy Tarrytown estate, surrounded by a “veritable maze of walls and wire fences” (13). Adam Patch has been a solid moral influence on Anthony and emerges as a burlesque of the values and wisdom associated with the traditional image of fatherhood. His laughable sententiousness and overzealous chauvinism tend to encourage Anthony’s life style. Anthony chooses to disregard totally his grandfather’s presence, and live a youth of moral orphancy. Vanity, lust for
money and pleasure, idleness and lethargy are the obvious contributing factors to Anthony’s mental stress.

Anthony spends his time visiting his friends and slumming with his mental inferiors rather than perusing any of the “thousand books glowing on his shelves” (49). Anthony evokes our pity by his depressed state of falling from a height by his wasted potential. Anthony suffers a basic uncertainty of his real stature and accomplishments. It is stated so in his relationship with his friends. Anthony enjoys superiority over Maury Noble and Richard Caramel. Noble, in spite of his nihilistic trade in the middle of the book succumbs to a respectable, middle-class marriage. Caramel undertakes a brilliant career as a commercial novelist—a career, which gives him fame and fortune, but does not redeem him from the limitations of his talent and the meanness of his compromises. Still, Anthony does not do any better than his friends. But by using these two figures Fitzgerald apparently wished to set off in relief the purity, the exquisite perfection and the inaccessibility of Anthony, who remains true to his initial ideals without ever descending to a vulgar compromise. Fitzgerald represents the struggle of Anthony to win back his inheritance and he is not one who yields and wins, but one who resists and fails.

Adam Patch is Victorianism personified and a reformer among reformers, who disinherits his grandson because he chances upon a drunken party Anthony and his wife Gloria giving in his house. Deprived of the millions of dollars he had so long awaited, Anthony spends his days and nights drinking, while waiting for the court to make a decision about the will. At Harvard where Anthony “was looked upon as a rather romantic figure, a scholar, a recluse, a tower of erudition. He drank – guilty and in the proper
tradition” (8). After returning from Europe to await idly his grandfather’s death and money, Anthony “found in himself a growing horror and loneliness” (54). His drinking, now a proper stimulant increased a great deal. This habit is obvious to Geraldine Burks, a faintly intimate girl friend Anthony dates whenever he feels a need for company. The magic of his love and marriage to Gloria replaces drinking for a short while. This glow soon passes, apathy setting in and Anthony finds himself “inclined to quicken only under the stimulus of several high-bills” (192). Heavy drinking becomes the necessary condition for the string of ruinous and self-destructive acts that bring about Anthony’s final disintegration and mental agony. To put it a nutshell, his hamartia is determined by his own weakness.

Anthony tries to alleviate the discomfort by indulging in a dim, but universal nostalgia for a lost paradise. What he actually longs for is an identity, which will heal his divided self. Lacking a sense of his individuality and driven by a doomed nostalgia, Anthony’s search for identity becomes a series of efforts to unite with some larger identity—money, beauty and youth, marriage—that will make him whole. In spite of his education at Harvard and in Europe, the sense of his concrete individuality never penetrated those defenses he started to construct firmly as an infant. Anthony’s development is based on his pathological childhood. The infantile disposition guides Anthony’s movement through the various stages of early development and motivates his experiences. A feeling of safety shapes his development: “not in the sense of ‘go and get’ but in that of receiving and accepting what is given” (Erikson 99). He is constantly retorted by a powerful inclination to passivity.
Priding himself upon being a dandy, Anthony questions the whole concept of work:

I want to know just why it's impossible for an American to be gracefully idle – his words gathered conviction – it astonishes me. I don't understand why people think that every man ought to go down – town and work ten hours a day for the best twenty years of his life at dull, unimaginative work, certainly not altruistic work (65).

Gloria is sufficient enough to put the serenity of Anthony's life in jeopardy. Gloria is a new, more dangerous incarnation of the flapper, both careless and fascinating. She is represented as the main cause of Anthony's deterioration and ruin. Gloria, with her amorous nonchalance, challenges Anthony's narcissistic male – complacency: “He wanted to pose. He wanted to appear suddenly to her in novel and heroic colours. He wanted to stir her from that casualness she showed towards everything except herself” (63).

Fitzgerald gives significance to those moments where revulsion against women and sex on the part of the protagonist, assumes a sense of an overpowering evil alive and beyond human capacity for control. During the night before his wedding to Gloria, a union that is to bring more disaster to him than to her, Anthony is feeling quite happy when he hears the noise of a woman’s laughter, which intrudes 'jarringly' on the rest of the city's noises. It starts low and whining, then becomes high-pitched and hysterical. Starting again, it sounds coarse and then strangely terrible. It reaches the point almost of being a scream, and then it stops, impressing its animal quality on Anthony. This experience of terror has to act as a kind of premonition, a warning to
Anthony of what is to follow the marriage ceremony. Anthony is greatly upset by his experience, and full of: “his old aversion and horror toward all the business of life .... Life was that sound out here, that ghastly reiterated female sound” (125-126). Gloria is viewed as being without mercy, La belle dam sans merci, the familiar Keatsian figure who persistently recurs in Fitzgerald’s work. Gloria lulls Anthony’s mind to a perpetual lethargy. Idlers both, they endeavour to extract all gaiety out of their transient youthfulness. The appalling degeneration of the Patches is their unwillingness to have children. Primary refusal is seen to be Gloria’s. She is appalled when she believes she is pregnant and when she is informed that she is not, she sleeps untroubled nursing a child’s doll. Pregnancy is an indignity for Gloria and an outrage to her narcissistic love of her own body. The love cocoon that they built around themselves gets the first quakes when financial difficulties threaten their carefree mode of living. Her tremendous nervous tension contrasts with his utter cowardice. But Adam Patch is not so eager to die and he disapproves of their fast spending and reckless living. Anthony tries in vain with his book and fruitless work experience. Gloria plays with the idea of becoming a film actress, but her husband objects to it. Their dream becomes an inexcusable form of lethargy, and it kills even the illusion of eternal love. Gloria realizes that Anthony has become capable of utter indifference towards her. The lethargy turns into a nightmare when Adam Patch disinherits him on seeing their drunken party. Anthony realises that he had been futile in longing to drift and dream; no one drifted except to maelstroms, no one dreamed without his dreams becoming fantastic nightmares of indecision and regret.
They have now to contest the will, because their inner tensions break the remaining ties of love and destroy all their serenity. Anthony welcomes the diversion offered by the war and enlists to escape his own self and his contradictions. At the military camp, Anthony ends up by getting himself entangled in a sordid love affair with Dorothy Raycroft which is represented as "an inevitable result of his increasing carelessness about himself ... He merely slid into the matter through his inability to make definite judgements" (375). This same inability is the cause for his breaking bounds to go and see his new girl, with the inevitable result of being stripped of his rank. His self-respect is ruined and he plunges again into a nightmare of helpless impotence and dissatisfaction.

Back from the military camp, Anthony spends his time in the house turning his back on every human or worldly contact. The aesthetic recluse has become the melancholy hermit of indigence and helplessness. He reverts to the dream of his past youth and he discovers that he is unfit for the present. Even his drinking as a habit aims at recreating an equivocal atmosphere of dreamy sentimentalism and decadent aestheticism:

There was a kindliness about intoxication – there was that indescribable gloss and glamour it gave, like the memories of ephemeral and faded evenings. .... The fruit of youth or of the grape, the transitory magic of the brief passage from darkness to darkness the old illusion that truth and beauty were in some way entwined (417).

Anthony comes to realize that it is an illusion, but it is a devastating realization.
Anthony and Gloria separated for sometime by the war are remitted only
to meet ecstatically once again. It is as though the phoenix of love rises again
from its ashes. Their ecstasy is short-lived since it once again feeds on the
illusion of love. Their relationship is not found on a note of compatibility and
their flighty romance crumbles down the moment it approaches reality. Old
age, practical domestic problems and financial crisis puncture the elusive
happiness of their romance. Both of them degenerate into a state of
uncleanliness. They fall into a state, which Gloria had abhorred in the days of
her youthful glory. “Uncleanliness represented for her a lack of pride, a
sickness in fibre and most of all, the unmistakable aura of promiscuity” (209).
Towards the close of the novel, the pretty girl in yellow should say of Gloria:
“I can’t stand her, you know. She seems sort of dyed and unclean” (363). The
helpless waiting for Adam Patch’s legacy with all the litigation that it involves,
exhausts the exuberant couple into a miserable fate and they are incapable of
preserving their best for it anymore.

Anthony is stained by the thought of winning old Adam’s money. He
thinks of Italy and the romance of Italian women. But a minute later he differs
with himself:

All the distress that he had ever known, the sorrow and the pain,
had been because of woman. It was something that in different
ways they did to him, unconsciously, almost casually perhaps
finding him tender – minded and afraid, they killed the things in
him that menaced their absolute way (388).
The encounter with Dorothy is in fact Anthony’s final encounter with women. After this he recedes into his blissful childhood. His relapse into innocence nullifies all his accumulated experience and he ends in a sexual quarantine.

Anthony wins the suit. The bountiful money they inherit is now of no use to them. Anthony and Gloria: “had become like players who had lost their costumes” (354). The performance is over with the disappearance of youth and beauty. Anthony is “concerned with a series of reminiscences, much as a general might look upon a successful campaign and analyse his victories” (392). He is after all the Troilus, who escapes and comes through a hard fight victoriously. He cannot reconcile himself to his emotional agitation, his romantic agonies and his exclusive extremity of experience after he has been through it.

Fitzgerald is concerned with exposing the inner meaning of life through Anthony’s experiences. Fitzgerald is concerned with suffering and the bitter aspects of experience, not with its playful manifestations: “I guess I am too much a moralist at heart and really want to preach at people in some acceptable form, rather than to entertain them” (The Crack Up 70). This inclination is conspicuous in his protagonist Anthony Patch. As in the case of Anthony, perpetual youth and beauty of the body and spirit are essential requirements of Jay Gatsby’s belief in the infinite possibilities of American life in Fitzgerald’s novel The Great Gatsby.

Gatsby is the most clearly projected Fitzgerald’s protagonist in pursuit of an elusive dream. Fitzgerald makes Gatsby tower over his heroes in the greater magnitude of his glittering illusion and the single mind with which he
tries to make it a reality. He has lived not for himself, but for his dream, inspired by a lovely rich girl Daisy Fay. Gatsby’s impossible dream, to win back Daisy from her husband Tom Buchanan, is trampled down by a world of moral corruption and carelessness. His failure is pathetic because Tom and Daisy’s organized forces thwart his attempts. Gatsby may die of “a love for which there is no worthy object” (Bewley New York Review of Books 23), but the grandeur of his vision remains. It manifests in his faith in the goodness of creation and refusal to compromise with the colossal vitality of his dream. He defects himself internally because he lacks moral standards to judge the limitations of his quest for love: “What foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams”(2).

Gatsby never sees through the ultimate limitations of his aspirations. He strives on earth for an ideal world of youth and beauty that is beyond time and he is both overwhelmed and damned. One could never arrest the passage of youth, sustain an idealized moment of love forever or repeat the past. Gatsby, failing to realize the destructiveness of time, tries to live in a world where past, present and future are all one. The ultimate result of his effort is “unutterable depression and failure - a walk up and down a desolate path of fruit rinds and discarded favors and crushed flowers” (111).

Gatsby’s vision also suffers from a moral myopia. He does not recognize the speciousness of the world of the rich where he searched for fulfillment. He fails to see that the Buchanans, representatives of a class with its origins and ways of life nourished by wealth, are sordid and spiritually barren, yet extremely powerful. The root of Gatsby’s distorted view is the failure of a traditional sense of self-knowledge and human imperfection and
mortality. Jay Gatsby, whom Fitzgerald labelled a ‘crook’ and a ‘parvenu’ seems to be aware that he is as ruthless and amoral with his vision as the Buchanans are with their money. Early in life he succeeds in creating a glittering new identity. But in the process Jay Gatsby abandons the fundamental moral heritage, based on the perception of man’s imperfection, and mortality, which might have saved him from the emotional extremes of his idealizing self and the careless world of the Buchanans. Fitzgerald bestows this heritage upon the narrator Nick Carraway. He possesses a sturdy set of ethical norms based upon an awareness of death. It manifests itself in the ability to be “within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the in exhaustible variety of life” (36). This enables Nick to sympathize deeply with Gatsby and at the same time judge the moral value of Gatsby’s goals and methods. Nick only knows the motive for Gatsby’s generosity and elaborate display of wealth in his parties.

People are thrilled to weave unreliable stories about Gatsby. Among such rumours there is one factual story about Gatsby’s notorious generosity recounted by Lucille, a frequent inviter to parties:

When I was here last I tore my gown on a chair, and he asked me my name and address – inside of a week I got a package from croirier’s with a new evening gown in it .... It was gas blue with lavender beads (43).

It is the unrealistic hope that Daisy will somehow appear at one of his parties, be pleased by the pageant she sees and may wish to renew her love affair with
him. Gatsby thinks of his material possessions as the most powerful means of regaining Daisy.

When Gatsby is an Army officer, he meets Daisy. Gatsby found himself committed “to the following of a grail” (149) because Daisy was an extraordinary girl. She lived a rich, full life and could vanish into a rich house depriving him. But, Gatsby is handsome, but a poor young man in love and inner security. It is a traditional American cultural conviction that the possession of a beautiful woman is one of the signs of personal fulfillment. Richard Lehan indicates that “his conception of beauty was fixed and his will yearned eternally for that beauty” (F.Scott Fitzgerald and the Craft of Fiction 95). Daisy is no longer a flapper but with a far greater power of offence like Gloria, she has chosen security and wealth. Four years with Tom have hardened her character and made her careless in her malice. Gatsby’s dreamy attachment has no chance with her. He asks too much of her, far more than she could actually give him. Tom is the dramatic anti-thesis of Gatsby. He is opposed to Gatsby as a rich man by birth and tradition, hates and holds in contempt the lack of taste and manners of the newly rich. He cares only for himself and his possessions (including Daisy, not so much as a wife but as something that belongs to him.) He makes almost a natural right of his constitutional corruption. He has so successfully shaped Daisy’s mind that she accepts his values and can even tolerate his frequent and open infidelities. At the crucial moment only in Tom can she find a support for her weakness and her cowardice.

The deeper source of Gatsby’s transcendent longings for Daisy is his insecure, love-starved childhood. Fitzgerald makes no mention of Gatsby’s
mother and does not introduce his father until after Gatsby’s death, when Henry Gatz arrives from a town in Minnesota. He is proud of his son. The splendour of Gatsby’s huge house fills him with an awed pride. Mr. Gatz, like his son, believes that money and notoriety are the gauges of success. He pulls out a ragged old copy of a book called *Hopalong Cassidy* and shows Nick the back cover where there appears young Gatsby’s schedule for success. A rigid formula, reminiscent of the writings of Benjamin Franklin’s *Poor Richard’s Almanac*, which often stressed the importance of self-improvement and hard work if one, is to succeed in America. In his own way Henry Gatz, who journeyed East for Gatsby’s funeral, is as morally blind as his son and could not possibly have provided Gatsby any solid moral vision. When at seventeen Jimmie Gatsby sees “Dan Cody’s Yacht drop anchor over the most insidious flat on Lake Superior” (98). There he assumes the position of steward and guardian of Dan Cody for five years. During this time Gatsby matures in the ways of the material world. However, he retains the belief “that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy’s wing” (100), because his career began with his decision to change his name. When he was eleven years old he decided to commit himself to the moral world of his own imagination, a world where he could be safe from God. With this decision, Gatz had already stripped himself of the past and given birth to a new romantic self, viz., Jay Gatsby. He is not linked with his parents, but he is linked with Dan Cody and he shares the basic assumptions of Dan Cody’s ethics. He can be faithful to his dream but to fulfill it he has to revert to questionable means, renounce his scruples, compromise with the world and its evil ways. He is a grown up man who knows how to attain his practical aim. For this reason, the purity of his motivation is compromised by an acceptance of the ways of capitalist society.
Fitzgerald recognized both the inadequacy of Gatsby’s goal, and the grandeur of his romantic vision and pursuit. Our first glimpse of Gatsby is related to the green light at the end of Daisy’s dock: “The whole being of Gatsby exists only in relation to what the green light symbolizes” (Bewley New York Review of Books 280). The green light against the background of a vast, formless body of water represents a beautiful woman, an embodiment of the glamour of wealth, whose possession will be the vital source of Gatsby’s meaning in life. The “green light” (94) symbolizes the idealized Daisy. On the afternoon that Gatsby and Daisy are reunited, he says to her: “You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock” (94). Gatsby seemed absorbed in what he had just said, because believing in the dream light of the grail is much easier than believing in Daisy herself: “There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams.” (97)

His face shows an “expression of bewilderment” (97) because his “dreams had gone far beyond her, beyond everything” (97), beyond mutability and linear time. He dimly realizes that the real Daisy is unsuitably imperfect. Daisy fails to give Gatsby hope because she knows she cannot live up to the needs of Gatsby’s vast and rapacious idealism. He has wanted “too much” (135). Daisy rejects Gatsby because she is aware of his uncompromising demand that she would obliterate an irremediable imperfection, the last four years of her life. When her frightened eyes tell Gatsby that she will not marry him, he is left with nothing but a dead dream. Early in the summer, Nick observes Gatsby standing on his lawn looking across the bay at the green, grail light that symbolizes his spiritualized Daisy. When Daisy repudiates him and disappears behind the barricade of Buchanan wealth, the grail light also disappears, for it is Daisy’s symbol.
Gatsby is a narcissist who feels entitled to have what he wants just because he wants it. Gatsby’s entitlement justifies his grandiosity. The most extreme expression of his grandiosity has to do with his parentage which “his imagination had never really accepted” (99). The blasphemous and deific quality in Gatsby has a specific grandiose focus: “his Father’s business, the service of a vast, vulgar and meretricious beauty” (99). This narcissistically inflated religious theme is elaborated in the statement that “to this conception he was faithful to the end” (99) Gatsby bears important resemblances to the traditional Christ and is ‘the archetypal scapegoat.’

When Gatsby tells Nick it is “goods truth that he had been educated at Oxford” (65) like all his ancestors. The point is that when he tells Nick about it, he is planning to use Nick as an intermediary to see Daisy again. Also he doesn’t want Nick to think he is “just some nobody” (67). He wants Daisy to see his house, where, he tells her, he keeps “special objects in his universe of ineffable gaudiness” (99). Grandiosity is a major motive force in his idealizations of Daisy. He projects onto her a kind of royal status. To him, she is “high in a white palace the king’s daughter, the golden girl” (120).

Gatsby never fully realized the psychological complexity and limitless thrust of his aspirations. They soared beyond material possessions and the acquisition of Daisy. Gatsby’s quest for Daisy replicated his childhood pattern of behaviour. He compulsively amassed material possessions by working hard, and taking daring and dangerous gambles. Yet, the concrete expressions and methods Gatsby employed to reach the success, that he believed would guarantee Daisy’s return, was controlled by his unqualified belief in the power of material possessions to satisfy every person’s deepest desires. Gatsby
becomes the typical Fitzgerald hero “a man of longing – whose very desires are self-destructive” (Lehan 38). To return to a certain starting place is precisely Gatsby’s ambition to fight back through time and make a fresh start in order to correct history and suspend the steady dissipation of the universe. He says that he wanted to “live the past all over again. And I don’t want to start by running away .... I want to turn the whole world upside down and give people something to think about” (154). His intention is to alter reality in order to bring it in line with his dream that Gatsby would obliterate Daisy’s marriage and her motherhood. He would restore her virginity. It is the supreme test of his Platonic will and of his faith in the human capacity for renewal.

The scene of failure is the confrontation between Gatsby and Tom Buchanan that takes place in the Plaza Hotel. Gatsby assures Daisy that her unhappy relationship with Tom is all over now, and insists to “tell him the truth that you never loved him-and it’s all wiped forever” (132). The irreversibility of human experience asserts itself as Tom-brutish and self-indulgent and sure of his instincts – breaks Daisy’s spirit of rebellion by showing that it rests on a lie. She cries to Gatsby: “I love you now – isn’t that enough? I can’t help what’s past. I did love him once but I loved you too” (133). This marks the end of Gatsby’s hope for the future: “Jay Gatsby had broken up like glass against Tom’s hard malice and the long secret extravaganza was played out” (148). The truth is that the gorgeous illusion fashioned by James Gatz on the shores of Lake Superior and enhanced by his vision of Daisy was destined almost from its inception to break up against the hard realities of human experience. Forced by Tom’s very density, his bulking obtuseness Gatsby senses that the certainties around which his life has been so patiently organized have deserted
him altogether. As Nick put it “he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream” (162).

Abused by Tom and wounded by Daisy, Gatsby has already lost his battle. The automobile accident that happens under the spectral eyes of Dr. Eckleburg in the valley of ashes – on the ground that brings together both victors and the vanguished merely seals Gatsby’s defeat. Daisy runs over Myrtle, Tom’s mistress, who had rushed toward the car believing it to be Tom’s. Gatsby takes upon himself the whole responsibility for it. Daisy, shaken by these events, hides behind the protection of her husband, while Gatsby is left standing in the moonlight watching nothing. The parties for Daisy are over and Gatsby has lost all interest in time, past or present. He has wanted too much for too long. Now he is apparently unable to want anything including Daisy. She is irretrievably imperfect. The price he pays for his dream is a form of emotional suicide.

Tom puts Myrtle’s husband on the track of Gatsby, who is murdered in the swimming pool. The murder might even seem superfluous, since Gatsby has already completed the cycle of his destiny. But fate is so cruel to him that it has in store the final humiliation, only Nick and a chance visitor attend his funeral and the latter recites a disconsolate epitaph on Gatsby: ‘The poor son-of-a bitch.’ Nick has learned a personal lesson and he is now qualified to see the tragic and symbolic dimensions of the story, to living forth its moral and universal significance as a latter day Horatio over Hamlet’s body.

Nick is the only person who sees Gatsby for what he really is and Gatsby represented everything for which he has an unaffected scorn. He alone
possessed: “some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life .... It was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again” (2).

Nick sees that it is the tension between the incessant diminution of energy in an entropic universe, and the perennial thrust of human expectations, which gives life meaning. Nick acknowledges with gratitude man’s gift for hope while he accepts with equanimity the disillusionment that often precipitates:

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that’s no matter – tomorrow we will run faster, stretch our arms farther. And one fine morning – so we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past (182).

According to Fitzgerald, man lives successfully only in a state of equilibrium between resistance to the current and surrender to its flow. He must accommodate the lessons of his past to his visions of the future, in order to stand poised for happiness or disappointment in the present.

In his last completed novel Tender is the Night the protagonist Dick Diver has been termed a spoiled priest, who lost his idealism and was finally corrupted by his flock. Gatsby was a tour de force, but Dick’s is a confession of faith. At the end of the novel he is “ruined and spent, an emotional bankrupt ... lacking the energy to be a charlatan” (Bruccoli 83-84). He has been seen as pandering his vitality to rich expatriates, only to fall victim “to the comfort that corrupts the will and destroys ambition” (Goldhurst 206). He is viewed as
struggling to make good by playing the priestly role of father, confessor to a crowd of rich, spoiled Americans.

Dick’s fall on the sophisticated cannibalism of the fabulous Warren world, so careless of other people’s lives or on the magnetic attraction of the fresh, young world of Rosemary Hoyt. But Dick’s sickness lies hidden in lower depths than these. Yet to say, as James Miller does that it is “a sinister kind of innocence that is debilitating in the face of evil” (F. Scott Fitzgerald: His Art and His Technique 141). The self he loses is firmly anchored in the shifting shallow sands of his being. The trouble with the world is that it is filled with wolves and the most terrible truth of all is the wolf within. His innocence, blind to the deceptions of the world and self, is a constant flirtation with disaster.

A more probing investigation of Dick’s psychological state must be made to understand his sudden collapse. Dick hopes to live by his father’s idealistic moral code and yet belongs to a social class to which that code is alien. Dick, a superman in possibilities, is the son of a Protestant minister from Virginia and the great-grandson of the governor of North Carolina. From his father Dick learned his idealism, a code of morality and a set of manners:

Dick loved his father .... He told Dick all he knew about life, not much but most of it true, simple things, matters of behaviour that came within his clergyman’s range. .... His father had been sure of what he was ... believe that nothing could be superior to good instincts, honor, courtesy and courage (220).
These are the older American values of Dick’s childhood that have made him a spoiled priest. They are the source of Dick’s tensile strength: “the layer of hardness in him, of self-control and of self-discipline” (75). It made him think that “he wanted to be good, he wanted to be kind, he wanted to be brave and wise, but it was all pretty difficult. He wanted to be loved, too, if he could fit it in” (23). As a child he watched his father’s daily struggles to exist, and this “wedded a desire for money to an essentially unacquisitive nature” (218). Since the Diver family has “sunk from haute bourgeois to petit bourgeois” (84), Dick, like Gatsby, wanted to recover the past, “Gifted with the power of arousing a fascinating and uncritical love” (84) in people and he wanted to be all things to all men. He tried to be a medical and spiritual doctor to Nicole, his other sick patients and the decaying Americans around him. Dick’s weaknesses are rooted in his personality–his egotism and desire to please and be loved transforms him into a social climber. His natural idealism is corrupted by the amoral values of his people.

While Dick was studying at the University, a young Rumanian warned Dick about his most glaring weakness: “You’re not a romantic philosopher. You’re a Scientist. Memory, force and character – especially good sense. That’s going to be your trouble – judgement about yourself” (5).

Even after his education at Yale, Oxford, John Hopkins and Vienna, Dick remains a naive young man, lacking an adult knowledge of him and the world. He had no of idea how charming he is or that the affection he gives, or inspires is really unusual. Like a child, Dick squanders his charm and himself on all that he meets. When he has used himself up and finds only emptiness within, he reacts like a child, a man unaware of his full-grown body and his
brute strength. There is no mature commitment in him. Rollo May argues that Dick’s essential nature seems to be a manifestation of: “Pseudo innocence, consists of a childhood that is never outgrown, a kind of fixation on the past. It is childishness rather than childlikeness” (Power and Innocence: A Search for the Sources of Violence 49). It blinds one to the deceptions of the self and the world. It prevents Dick from fully recognizing his original interest, and commitment to psychiatry. Dick is uncertain whether he really wants to be a psychiatrist. When studying in Vienna his room mate Ed Elkins remarks:

And lucky Dick can’t be one of those clever men; he must be less intact, even faintly destroyed. If life won’t do it for him its not a substitute to get a disease, or a broken heart, or an inferiority complex, though it’d be nice to build out some broken side till it was better than the original structure (116).

Dick defends his studying of psychiatry:

He mocked at his reasoning, calling it specious and ‘American’ – his criteria of uncerebral phrase making was that it was American. He knew, though, that the price of his intactness was incompleteness (116).

Dick’s return to Dolmler’s clinic in Zurich is not a return to work and study, but an attempt to escape from a way of life and a side of himself which he does not wish to acknowledge. What Dick misses in Zurich is the kind of life he had known in France after the war. The earthly quality of this life is symbolically conveyed in the image that Dick uses to express his nostalgia. He remembers France as “French views growing over one’s feet on the ground” (118). In
contrast to France Zurich suggests to Dick “a postcard heaven” (118). In as a man, he feels that they are antithetical to the kind of life that he desires for himself.

Renewing his earlier friendship in Zurich with Franz and his peasant Zurich Dick feels a sense of infinite patience and precision. He feels a sense of oppression that has been brought about by his attempt to renounce his hedonistic self. At one time Dick and Franz had planned to establish in New York an up-to-date clinic for billionaires. When Dick had lightly reminded Franz of their plans, he had dismissed it saying that was student’s talk. Their lives lack grace and adventure. As he enjoys their company, his true thoughts are revealed: “God am I like the rest after all? So he used to think starting awake at night – Am I like the rest?” (14).

What plagues Dick most is his intellect and respectable ambitions (his better self he might say) compel him toward a way of life (psychiatry) toward which he no longer feels any attraction. While his emotions and desires (his worse self) urge him toward a life, which he thinks ignoble: “It is the inability to settle on an occupational identity, which most disturbs young people” (Erikson 132). The choice of profession bothers Dick. It followed him throughout the war and at Zurich he falls in love with Nicole, a rich, beautiful and very sick psychiatric patient. Though Dick is attached to Nicole, he knows that a doctor – patient marriage would be unwise. Both Franz and Dohmler advise him to forget her and warn him that his problem is a professional one. Despite the unconscious annoyance with which the Warrens make it clear that, they are buying a doctor to take care of Nicole, he nevertheless marries her. This act reveals the defect of uncontrollable generosity in Dick’s character. He
had an extraordinary virtuosity with people, the power of arousing a fascinated and uncritical love.

Dick knows that taking up his life with Nicole among the Warrens is difficult, but with his youthful vitality intact, he seems to make it more challenging and interesting. For five years he meets the challenge effortlessly, A.H. Stinberg points out: “Playing doctor allows him to maintain a detached, scientific superiority which cloaks the fact that he cannot participate as husband on an equal basis with his wife in the marriage relation” (Tender is the Night: Essays in Criticism 141). His life begins to slip imperceptibly from his control and something within him; some essential vitality is beginning to decline.

In the beginning of Diver’s marriage, he has no thought of giving up his practice. He also never thought of seeking out a life of grace and mobility, which the Warren fortune can easily subsidize. But with Nicole’s breakdown during the birth of their second child, Topsy, Dick allows his long-standing dissatisfaction with his profession and desires for the luxurious life of the haute bourgeois to surface. Nicole has little difficulty convincing her husband that since he is bored with Zurich, and has no time to write “a confession of weakness for a scientist” (56). Moving to the Riviera would be best for both of them. Nothing feeds the child in Dick more than Nicole’s words: “You’ll help me Dick, so I won’t feel so guilty. We’ll live near a warm beach where we can be brown and young together” (56). From this point on, Dick registers at various lodgings as ‘Mr. and Mrs. Diver’ rather than his usual. ‘Doctor and Mrs. Diver’. The price of Dick’s pseudoinnocence has now become his
incompleteness as a psychiatrist, and the gradual weakening of the pragmatic identity that has ordered his life for six years.

The love, which Dick has for Nicole, must not be underestimated. It is insisted in the scenes with Rosemary, a young Hollywood actress. She is the symbol of what he has renounced for the dreams, the ambitions the creative energy of his youth. Rosemary is a romantic dream. In reality she has nothing for him as he has nothing for her. Early in their relationship when Rosemary begs Dick to take her he refuses. He attempts to tell her something of what his love for Nicole means, an attempt foredoomed to failure. “Active love, he says, is more complicated than I can tell you” (81). The professional side of his relationship to Nicole is indicated clearly following her collapse in Paris as a result of the murder of the Negro and the appearance of his body in Rosemary’s room. Fitzgerald himself comments on this:

Having gone through unprofessional agonies during her long relapse following Topsy’s birth, he had perforce, hardened himself about her, making a cleavage between Nicole sick and Nicole well. This made it difficult now to distinguish between his self-protective professional detachment and some new coldness in his heart (185).

His love for her cries out to him to protect her, to shield her, to support her. At the same time his love is great enough to make him do what he knows he must do if she is ever to be a whole person again:

Many times he had tried unsuccessfully to let go his hold on her... but always when he turned away from her into himself he left her
holding. Nothing in her hands and staring at it, calling it many names, but knowing it was only the hope that he would come back soon (198).

This is the torment, which racks him as he continues in his double role of Dick Diver, husband and Dr. Richard Diver, Psychiatrist. It is stated explicitly after Nicole’s running away from him and the children at the Agiri Fair. Recovering, she begs: “Help me, help me, Dick! A wave of agony went over him. It was awful that such a fine tower should not be erected, only suspended, suspended from him” (210).

The fragmented hero, Dick, finds an outlet for his uncontrollable stress among a small group of Americans who make the paradisiacal Riviera beach the centre of their lives of leisure and idleness. Unaware of Dick’s adeptness at effortlessly manipulating the roles of doctor, lover, father and party giver as the occasion warrants, they find:

To be included in Dick Diver’s world for a while was a remarkable experience: People believed he made special reservations about them, recognizing the proud uniqueness of their destinies. He won everyone quickly with an exquisite consideration and a politeness that moved so fast and intuitively that it could be examined only in its effect. Then, without caution, lest the first bloom of the relation wither, he opened the gate of his amusing world (84).

Dick has the genius for creating a life of enchanting beauty for Nicole and their friends. The world inhabited by Nicole, Baby Warren, Abe North, the
Mckiscos, Tommy Barban, and their life is more of a menace than a refuge for Dick. It fulfils his need for an insatiable thirst for affection and a sense of belonging to the furthermost evolution of a class. Only Nicole senses something of the price. Dick is paying for living too long with a self-image that is not confirmed by his society: “He sometimes looked back with awe at the carnivals of affection he had given, as a general might gaze upon a mass ... he had ordered to satisfy an impersonal blood lust” (84).

These periods of melancholy, a major symptom of Dick’s decreasing vitality, occur more frequently. Although he is well aware of the quality of the various people feeding upon him, Dick cannot detach himself from them. Dick sees characters, which reflect one or another of his weaknesses in isolation—Money, Liquor, Anarchy, self-betrayal and sex. These abstractions take carnal embodiment in Baby Warren, Abe North, Tommy Barban, Albert Mckisco and Rosemary Hoyt. Dick’s need to cater to these neurotics is his fatal wound, a lesion of vitality, which finally drains him of his energy.

The earliest signs of his inability to control occur when he meets Rosemary Hoyt. Nicole has slowly begun to recover from her illness and is no longer completely dependent upon him. Dick finds Rosemary very attractive. Within a few days he tells her: “You’re the only girl I’ve seen for a long time that actually did I look like something blooming” (77). Rosemary is portrayed as being childishy seductive. Dick, at thirty-four is almost twice Rosemary’s age. He is quite aware of this fact and her immature tendency to idolize him and her mother. Although Dick falls in love with Rosemary, he refuses her offer of an affair. He wants Rosemary to meet her first lover “all intact” (127). This ethical act of refusal leaves its psychological mark upon Dick and “for a
moment his usual grace, the tensile strength of his balance, was absent” (127). It cannot wipe away the fact that Dick has consciously allowed himself to drift into an obviously neurotic relationship and he tells Rosemary: “When a child can disturb as middle-aged gent – things get difficult” (154). An impressionable starlet, exuding the persistent aroma of the nursery had broken through his defence, and entered that part of Dick’s mind where he had buried his fundamental self amid “the tawdry souvenirs of his boyhood” (212). To put it precisely, Dick’s affair with Rosemary is the turning point in his psychological life. He has been drawn to an “infant as he calls her, who has become a symbol of remembrance recalling him to his youth, the ultimate cause of his false and unhappy present life” (Sklar F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Last Laocoon 276).

Rosemary leaves and Dick tries to pass off his infatuation for her as a comfortable interlude in his life and the amorphous process of regression continues. Consequently he finds himself drinking a little too much and his relations with Nicole and other adults become strained. His research and clinical work have long lost their appeal. Like an awkward adolescent, Dick begins to focus upon the unripened youth of women. At St. Moritz, when Nicole suggests he dance with a teenage girl he refuses saying: “when I dance with them, I feel as if I’m pushing a baby carriage” (188). Dick feels that there is no essential difference between his infant daughter and Rosemary for both are young and magnetic.

Till his surrender to Rosemary in Paris, Dick had been able to push into the recesses of his mind his growing disappointment in the life he had found with Nicole and in his apathy toward his profession. But Rosemary, answering
Dick’s need for love and beauty, is the catalyst that excites his hedonistic self, which till this time had been held quiescent by Dick’s sense of duty. The effect of this encounter is to show Dick that neither of them is in love with each other.

Following his realization that he has lost himself and that only a dutiful life with Nicole awaits him, Dick is “in love with every pretty woman he sees, their forms at a distance, their shadows on a wall” (201). Each of these women, Dick hopes, might be the one to offer him the beauty and the love, the grace and the adventure that he has been seeking throughout his life. Dick returns to Zurich clinic, which he operates with Franz. The result of Dick’s realizing that he has sacrificed his life for a cause in which he did not believe is an increase in his drinking. It ultimately forces Franz to suggest their partnership be dissolved and Dick was relieved. With desperation he had long felt the ethics of his profession dissolving into a lifeless mass.

Fitzgerald describes Dick’s deterioration and Nicole’s return to health. With health and independence comes the awareness that “she hated the beach, resented the places where she had played planet to Dick’s sum” (307). Her true Warren self emerges, and she turns to a new lover, Tommy Barban. Twelve years have brought about a reversal of roles. Nicole is now in possession of their identity; she is the doctor but unlike Dick, is capable of treating a self-pitying patient with the words of objective truth: “You’re a Coward! You’ve made a failure of your life and want to blame it on me” (319). The power of Nicole’s words breaks through the brittle remains of Dick’s offences. After Nicole leaves “he leaned his head forward on the parapet. The case was finished. Doctor Diver was at liberty” (320). It is Tommy Barban who becomes the final instrument of release and he is to save her, yet he must give
her up too. This is the knowledge which Dick, the psychiatrist must carry with
him from the moment he decides to marry Nicole. Certainly it is a knowledge
which he must face squarely long before the break is accomplished: “certain
thoughts about Nicole, that she should die, sink into mental darkness, love
another man, made him physically sick” (239). If we understand the greatness
of his love, we can feel the tragic proportions of the dilemma with which he is
faced. Arthur Mizener points out so well:

In Dick’s best moment, Tender is the Night shows us how
beautiful the realized ideal life is; but in the end it shows us that
people with the sensitivity and imagination to conceive that life
cannot survive among the rich (Tender is the Night: Essays in
Criticism 108).

Dick decides to return to Buffalo, where his minister father died. On the day of
his departure, Diver lingers on the beach much to the displeasure of Baby
Warren. Baby Warren plays the role of evil genius mysteriously materializing
at all the crucial moments of Dick’s life and subtly dictating his every
important decision. Her scheme to buy a doctor for Nicole brings about Dick
and Nicole’s marriage. She supplies the Warren money so that Dick may
become a partner in a psychiatric clinic. But she never falls under the spell of
Dick’s charm. Luckily Dick had the talent to evoke uncritical love in people
especially women and control them with its power. When this control
weakens, Dick is unable to raise himself to a higher level of maturity where he
could experience adult love. Only Baby Warren reuses this flaw in Dick’s
character and uses it to the complete advantage. Her method is to treat him as a
calculating or a neurotic mother might deal with a son whose life she is
determined to dominate. Dick played into the hands of Warren’s exploitation because of his insatiable need to be loved.

But Dick’s virile is less than Stahr’s struggle. In Fitzgerald’s unfinished novel *The Last Tycoon*, revolves around a superman, Monroe Stahr, crushed to defeat by adverse circumstances. He is described by Zauras as the Aeschylus and the Euripides of the movie world. Stahr is a victim of Brady’s ruthlessness, but also of the just opposition of the unions, and of his own weaknesses disguised under an exaggeration of his own strength and above all a victim of himself. Stahr’s worst enemies and the external forces allied against him find an easy access into his home front – the weakened home front of his inner contradictions, of his unhappy and irregular love affair, of his waning strength. John E.Hart remarks in his work *Fitzgerald’s The Last Tycoon: A Search for Identity*:

> The Last Tycoon is primarily a story of once powerful and dominating personality, who, struggling with changing social patterns and with personal confusions and inner conflicts, falls into moral and spiritual bankruptcy (63).

Stahr, once a nameless man, at the age of twenty-three, had first climbed his way to success. He is actually made known through his friend Schwartz as they return to Hollywood on a transcontinental plane from New York. Although he has known Stahr for a long time, he cannot recall his name and misnames him Smith. He warns him to look out for enemies in Hollywood. Once a practical man of decision in the movies, but now a down and out producer, Schwartz clearly belongs to a past that Hollywood no longer
represents when the plane lands at Nashville, he leaves the airport, and wanders to the statue of Andrew Jackson and there he commits suicide. The self-destruction of a man who believes in the unity and importance of the individual signifies a loss of faith in values just as the sacrifice to the shrine of a man, known for his devotion to the ideals signifies continued belief in them. Just as the fall of Schwartz serves as a preview of Stahr’s own life, so with Schwartz’s death the fictitious Smith is annihilated and the true identity of Stahr emerges as a normal, integrated, same personality. Stahr is regarded in Hollywood as “the only sound nut in a hatful of cracked ones” (19). Actually he is struggling against the inevitable failure in a changing world where his credo of life has no validity. If there are enemies at work in the movie studios, the real enemy lies in his own self-delusion.

Fitzgerald introduces Stahr and reveals through action and symbol, the pattern of behaviour, which has made Stahr’s life one of disintegration and self-delusion. Stahr has always been a fighter. In his youth he headed a gang in the Bronx. Popular with men, he likes being with boys, yet he is never one of them. Throughout his life he has always darted in and out of his various roles with dexterity: “If he could go from problem to problem, there was a certain rebirth of vitality with each change” (37). Although success has come to him, he remains uncertain, and indecisive. In Hollywood, the city of mystery and promise, Stahr achieves position and power. He has found a “new way of measuring our jerky hopes and graceful rogueries and awkward sorrows” (20).

Stahr loses the city in which he has had his success by a series of blows that are struck from both without and within. Stahr realizes that something has gone wrong when he discovers that the earthquake has burst not only the water
mains in the studio lot, but also something inside him as well. As he watches
the picture of his dead wife drift by on the surface of the water, he realizes with
terrible fear that the past he has known has vanished. The earthquake that
destroyed something in Stahr also introduces love and romance, which give an
illusion of security to his old identity. From the confusion that has the flooded
the lot, he remembers having seen two women. When he locates a girl named
Edna Smith, she introduces him to Kathleen Moore “poor, unfortunate, and
tagged with a middle-class exterior which doesn’t fit in with the grandam
Stahr demands of life” (140). Stahr attaches himself to Kathleen as a way out
of his isolation, and overwork. Stahr is immensely weary and dying of over-
work. Stahr has lost his wife and it hunts him to remember her. But he does
not have the gentle disenchantment or the romantic hopefulness of Gatsby and
Diver. He is harder, more constructive, more sensible: “Fatigue was a drug as
well as a poison, and Stahr apparently derived some rare almost physical
pleasure from working light-headed with weariness” (131).

His affair with Kathleen worsens his inner conflict. Kathleen recounts
her past to Stahr, tells him of her impoverished childhood and of her
humiliations, culminating in an impossible and weary relationship with a king.
Her background is as artificial and incomplete as the house on the beach where
the tycoon takes the girl on their day together. The act of love is accomplished
in the unfinished house. For a time the atmosphere becomes idyllic, in the
twilight on the beach, where they meet an old Negro, who has “really come out
to read some Emerson, but is busy picking up grunion” (92). What bothers
Stahr is that the Negro refuses to let his children attend movies, as there is not
profit. Stahr feels somehow personally responsible for such indecision. He
thinks as if his own pictures were not artistic enough to merit the sanction of
the brotherhood or the attention of a man, who is self-reliant as Stahr is not.
This episode underlines the growing incapacity of the last tycoon as a top flight
Hollywood producer.

The final blow comes when he learns that Kathleen is going to be
married, only the pile of film scripts will be waiting for him at home. Stahr has
still a chance of dissuading Kathleen from getting married. But his
disappointment is too deep and he can no longer deal with her with his
customary decision. He attracts Kathleen and a word from him at this time is
sufficient to win her back. But Stahr is unable to utter it, since his pride and his
boundless egotism have been hurt. Like Gatsby, he is unable to accept a
compromise or to bargain for the things he wants. Unable to accept Kathleen
as she is, he is almost guilty of himself losing her. Such is the characteristic,
mark of destiny in his life.

Returning to the studios, Stahr is confronted with a new problem,
organized labor. An organized union has replaced the personal loyalty of
workers to an individual with its own spokesman and organizer. There is clay
feet everywhere. These outward signs of destruction and change aptly reflect
the disintegration of Stahr's inner self. Confused and alone he wonders who
will nurse him back to completeness. The doctor tells him that he has a heart
ailment. He decides that if he is going to die he wants "to stop being Stahr for
a while and hunt for love like men who had no gifts to give, like young
nameless men who looked along the streets in the dark" (90).
Whatever the weakness of Stahr’s position, he meets the problem. Stahr’s meeting with Brimmer, the communist labor organizer, clarifies what Stahr has begun to realize his loss of personal power and leadership in the movie industry. The only leadership that Stahr really understands is that of individual triumph, the personal loyalty between employer and employee. At the interview he is nervous. He accuses Brimmer of trying to break up the unity in his model plant. Since Stahr is that unity, he feels that the communists are trying to get him personally. Actually Stahr is right and when he asks Brimmer “you don’t really think you’re going to overthrow the government” (122), and Brimmer replies “No, Mr. Stahr. But we think perhaps you are” (122). Stahr is clearly reminded of his loss of prestige, his waning power. The interview leaves him weak and confused. The once powerful tycoon seems to be on neither side. Fitzgerald clearly sees that “Whatever we say, the communists have ways of twisting it into shapes which put you in some lower category of mankind ... and disparage you both intellectually and personally in the process” (The Crack-Up 290).

Surrounded by enemies from without and weakened by confusions from within, Stahr is doomed to failure. In order to gain control of Studio management, Brady sides with the Union and plots to kill Stahr. The final episodes of the novel are reconstructed from the notes of Fitzgerald. Stahr in his final effort to regain power hires a thug to kill Brady and then escapes by plane. As the notes indicate, Stahr does not survive the plane crash.

Stahr’s life has begun figuratively and ended literally with flight. Stahr’s aerial adventure has flight. Stahr’s aerial adventure has become a life of contradiction between the dead hand of the past and the high intentions of
the future. If flight has served as a way of beginning, it has been burdened with self-delusions, with the disintegration and loss of identity. Stahr’s actual death only spells out what has already happened to him on a moral and intellectual level. The realization for him is a psychological crack up. The belief, which has once sustained Stahr in his way of life, the old dream of being an entire man has also played him false. He has lost confidence and integrity even the merited respect from others. In a sense, his death is, like that of Schwartz, suicidal. The only part of his past left over from a world that glitters is Kathleen, a fragment of memory whose very name connotes loss of individuation. Having left her husband as a result of the plot against Stahr, she remains, as she has always been “on the outside of things a situation which also has its tragedy” (133). Indeed the tragedy here is that of identity or loss of identity. Stahr demonstrates the tragedy of being deluded by the glitter of a world that seems to be made of diamonds, but it is only rhinestones. It is the mockery in discovering that, although the triumph lies within oneself, now there is no self. There are only struggle, determination and failure.

Fitzgerald’s protagonists, searching for their lost selves in the American Dream, found for themselves a larger self-hood. The protagonists dramatize the theme of the education of the individual by their continuous self-exploration, and understanding. Moreover, they acquire self-mastery by the ambiguities and dilemmas, the pains of involvement and the pangs of isolation through their experience within the society. All Fitzgerald’s protagonists are the chroniclers of contemporary American life, documenting and discovering the patterns of life. All are romantic in their personal outlook and attitudes reaching out to a reality in their American society that lay beyond their own
limited selves. Thus, Fitzgerald’s protagonists present the tensions and the ambivalence in their relation to society, which is the focus of the next chapter.