Chapter V

THE FITZGERALD HERO: THE LATER PHASE

The intellectual and artistic maturity that Fitzgerald had achieved through his persistent efforts to project his ideas more clearly and sharply created in Gatsby an immortal character who has since become symbolic of the failure of the American dream. In spite of their serving well the purpose of the author in projecting his intended meaning, Amory and Anthony remain blurred and at times uncertain and incoherent, but Gatsby is undoubtedly a faultless creation who embodies the ambitions, dreams and failures of the whole nation. One of the most baffling characters of the fictional world, Gatsby's unwavering commitment and scrupulous honesty to his imaginative vision represent the ultimate in romantic idealism, but once again it delineates the elusive nature of the American dream. Ingrained in the infinite possibilities of life, and with an inexorable will to turn his fantastic dreams into reality, Gatsby is an archetypal character who has come to represent a whole race whose forefathers had aspired to realise the Edenic purity on the earth. Gatsby, brought up on the success-myth and the Victorian morals, has a capacity to adjust to the changing temper and situation of the 1920's to realise his "incorruptible dream", a quality which Anthony completely lacks. In spite of the dubious means to acquire wealth and his shady background, Gatsby is a sensitive and conscientious young man who dedicates himself to the quest of realising his dream which
recognises no physical limitations and transcends time and space. He has been brought up on the assumption that everything is possible in America, that America is a land of infinite promises where, if one possesses the requisite qualities, one can fulfil one's aspirations. For the first time the American civilisation has been surveyed by Fitzgerald in its entirety and the "foil figures of Gatsby and Tom Buchanan serve him as devices for breaking down into contrasting parts and recombining in even more ambiguous relation his twin senses of the physical glamor of the rich and their spiritual corruption, their force of character and their moral weakness, the ideal nature of romantic vision and the baseness of the methods employed in its service, the essential shabbiness of romantic vision in a society which can measure vision only in money." The spiritually and morally bankrupt wasteland of the twenties comes alive in the novel and forms the background against which Gatsby with his "romantic readiness" is pitted for the realisation of his dream, Daisy Fay, whom he had idealised in a moment of youthful enchantment and had woven all his future dreams around her. Referring to his unique position among Fitzgerald protagonists, Miller observes that "Jay Gatsby is the most clearly projected of the tribe of Fitzgerald heroes

who are in pursuit of an elusive dream which, even though sometimes within their grasp, continues somehow to evade them. What makes Gatsby tower over Amory Blaine, Dexter Green and George O'Kelly is the greater magnitude of his glittering illusion and the single-mindedness with which he tries to make it a reality. Gatsby's quest of the "grail" is marvellous and his devotion unmatched, and as the disastrous events unfold themselves, Gatsby at one stage seems very near to the attainment of his ideal, Daisy Buchanan, who symbolises the dazzling world of his vision. But the infernal world of ash-grey men infested with corruption and careless irresponsibility is hardly a match for his "heightened sensitivity" and gorgeous vision. His "extraordinary gift for hope", a quality that forms an integral part of his vision of the American dream, is belittled by the sordid waste land of the twenties, and "Gatsby, unlike the other Fitzgerald heroes, sacrifices his life on the altar of his dream, unaware that it is composed of the ephemeral stuff of the past."

Nick Carraway, the sensitive narrator of the novel, is both repelled and attracted by Gatsby, and this ambivalence is the outcome of a constant struggle between his moral conscience and his fascination with Gatsby's imaginative vision and his single-minded devotion. Conceding that "Gatsby ... represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn" Nick still

2 Miller, His Art and His Technique, p. 106.
cannot resist being attracted towards him, and is indeed over-
awed by his gorgeous and magnificent vision, "his heightened
sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to
one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten
thousand miles away." His extraordinary faith in the American
dream has vested in him an "extraordinary gift for hope, a
romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other per-
son and which it is not likely I shall ever find again." Abso-
lute and unqualified faith in his ideal with an unwavering
dedication to its realisation becomes the religion of Jay
Gatsby and what for any other man would have been just a
casual affair, becomes the sole purpose of his life. Gatsby's
enormous mansion, lit from tower to cellar, his pomposity and
gaudiness, the broken fragments of the rumours about him, his
fabulous parties in the blue gardens, initially repel Nick
Carraway and he feels disgusted with this vulgar display of the
riches. But when Jordan Baker tells him about Gatsby's motive
of living so fabulously and throwing magnificent parties to the
"casual moths", he realises the depth of Gatsby's purposeless
splendour and extravagance. He is instantly fascinated by
Gatsby's extraordinary responsiveness when Jordan tells him
that he purchased the colossal mansion and "dispensed starlight"

to the casual revellers because "he half expected her [Daisy] to wander into one of his parties, some night...." The colossal vitality of Gatsby's dream fascinates Nick and he is tempted to penetrate beneath the seeming glamour of Gatsby, and ultimately realises his greatness even in his futile quest. The green light on the dock of Daisy is symbolic of his faith in the American dream and it is his unfathomable faith in his romantic vision that distinguishes him from the rotten crowd of the uncouth and irresponsible people.

Jay Gatsby, James Gatz till the age of seventeen, actually belonged to the lower middle class, and his parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people. His heightened sensitivity and gorgeous imagination never really accepted them as his parents, because his imagination, fed on the American dream, could never accept his low position, and he was determined to make a way for himself. In fact Jay Gatsby "sprang from his Platonic conception of himself", and he remained faithful to this conception to the end. From the very beginning he lived a very fanciful life and, with his imagination, used to weave grotesque dreams that satisfied his passionate urges. His varied experiences as a clam-digger or a salmon-fisher also could not deter him from his romantic illusions and

4 Ibid., p. 80.
5 Ibid., p. 99.
his heart was in a constant, turbulent riot. The most grotesque and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at night. A universe of ineffable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain while the clock ticked on the washstand.... Each night he added to the pattern of his fancies until drowsiness closed down upon some vivid scene with an oblivious embrace. For a while these reveries provided an outlet for his imagination; they were a satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing. (6)

With the romantic imagination and a will to rise in life, with his unswerving faith in the American dream which had since been corrupted and vulgarised by the dull and obtuse generations, the young Jim Gatz was transformed into Jay Gatsby. Deluded by the "vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty", the quester of the future glory found his destiny in the hands of Dan Cody who instantly observed that he was "quick and extravagantly ambitious." He soon became a close confidant of Dan Cody, 'the pioneer debauchee', and, after his death, inherited a legacy of twenty-five thousand dollars which he actually never got.

Dejected and penniless, he joined the War and met the beautiful Daisy, found her "excitingly desirable", and was captivated by her charm and popularity. She was exquisitely beautiful and belonged to an extremely rich family. He felt an emotional thrill in her presence, but was fully aware of his low position and knew that "he was in Daisy's house by a colossal accident." Despite the glorious future he envisioned

6 Ibid., pp. 99-100.
for himself, he was conscious of the fact that "he was at present a penniless young man without a past, and at any moment the invisible cloak of his uniform might slip from his shoulder. So he made the most of his time. He took what he could get, ravenously and unscrupulously—even eventually he took Daisy one still October night, took her because he had no real right to touch her hand." The whole affair had seemed casual to him at first. As he had imagined it to be just one of the several love affairs, he didn't despise himself for it. He had, perhaps intended to "take what he could and go" but his moral conscience pricked him, and he found that "he had committed himself to the following of a grail." Daisy, in her carelessness, an essential trait of the rich people, "vanished into her rich house, into her rich, full life, leaving Gatsby—nothing." But the conscientious Gatsby "felt married to her, that was all." His middle-class background and moral upbringing had not yet known the sterility and immorality of the lives of the rich, and as the American dream had ultimately come to be propagated as the success-myth in terms of financial and material prosperity, Gatsby mistakenly attributed all the loveliness and freshness of Daisy to her riches. Daisy's thrilling voice that had captivated Gatsby, initially enchants Nick Carraway also when he

7 Ibid., pp. 148-49.
8 Ibid., p. 149.
visits East Egg for the first time; he realises that it is "the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down, as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again." He finds that it has an "excitement" which invariably carries "a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour." But this delusion, this deceptive charm of sophisticated glamour of the rich that blinded the romantic Gatsby, does not last long with Nick whose penetrating insight, after the first flush of the enchantment is over, observes: "The instant her voice broke off ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said." He finds that it is also a trick of the rich and behind her charming facade lay the vast carelessness and spiritual barrenness of "a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged." Nick's critical intelligence can see beyond the glittering surfaces of the rich, their recklessness and depravity, but Gatsby, in his fascination, can only idealise the glamorous Daisy and adore wealth that, he thinks, has wrought this marvellous frame. When Nick remarks: "She's got an indiscreet voice. It is full of—" and hesitates to complete, Gatsby suddenly

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9 Ibid., pp. 9-10.
10 Ibid., p. 18.
adds: "Her voice is full of money." Kick observes: "That was it. I'd never understood before. It was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it.... High in a white palace the King's daughter, the golden girl."  

Gatsby, in his romantic illusions, had no capacity to judge the basic insincerity and the callousness of the rich and captivated by the "inexhaustible charm" and the superficial glitter, he felt that when "he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God.... At the lips' touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete." When he found that his love was returned, Daisy for him acquired symbolic significance, the fulfilment of all his romantic illusions and aspirations and "he found himself committed to the following of a grail." When Nick listens to Gatsby how Daisy came to be incarnated, he is reminded of something—"an elusive rhythm, a fragment of lost words, that I had heard somewhere a long time ago. For a moment a phrase tried to take shape in my mouth and my lips parted like a dumb man's...." This elusive phrase which had stirred the minds of the earlier generations and has since become "uncommunicable forever" in

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11 Ibid., p. 120.
12 Ibid., p. 112.
the altogether altered milieu and mercenary values of life, is unquestionably the 'American dream'. Gatsby has an unswerving faith in it, and with his "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life", he dedicates himself to the quest of his ideal.

Nick, with his strict moral background and his desire to see "the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever", initially wavers between scepticism and faith. He sees, clearly, in Gatsby the faults which he scorns in others—'charm' that is simply a technique for success, self-centredness masquerading as heroic vision, romantic pretensions based on economic corruption and a total disregard for humanity—yet he is impressed, despite himself, by the faith which transmutes all this into another person. Gatsby is different from the others in that he means every word he says, really believes in the uniqueness of his destiny. His romantic cliches, unlike those of Tom or Daisy, are used with simple belief that they are his own discovery, his own prerogative, his own guarantee of Olympian apartness and election. (14)

Gatsby's fundamental sincerity and faith in his ideal distinguish him from the corrupt and careless rich, Tom and Daisy, and the steady process of this awareness dawning upon Nick through the various events, culminating in his total alignment with Gatsby after his death when he is deserted by everybody, reveals the greatness of Gatsby's character, magnificence of his vision and sincerity of his purpose. Nick finds him completely detached at his fabulous parties, throwing everything to

13 Ibid., p. 2.
others while still not participating in the chaotic profusion, moving around like a stranger in his own world dispensing courtesy and forgiveness, and bearing smilingly with the malicious propaganda and fabricated rumours spread by his uninvited visitors. Nick is particularly attracted by the intimate manner of his smile which he finds as "one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life." When he learns from Jordan the purpose of all the wild splendour of the large parties, he is taken aback by the devotion of Gatsby to an ideal of his hypersensitive imagination. Realising that Gatsby had "waited five years and bought a mansion where he dispensed starlight to casual moths—so that he could 'come over' some afternoon to a stranger's garden", even the moralist Nick agrees to arrange a meeting between Daisy and Gatsby. Before coming to settle at West Egg, Gatsby, right from the moment he fell in love with Daisy, had followed her in right earnest. Due to certain complications or misunderstanding, instead of returning to Daisy after the War, Gatsby had to go to Oxford, and during his stay there her letters to him revealed a quality of "nervous despair." Daisy, young and charming, eager for the pleasures of the world, was a part of the whirlwind of gay and exciting world of dinners and dances. Seeker of the golden but

15 Fitzgerald, Gatsby, p. 43.
16 Ibid., p. 79.
superficial charm of the glittering world, Daisy naturally found it unrewarding to remain locked with the sacred memory of Gatsby and adore his inspiring feelings of ideal love. Unable to resist the pressure, she began to move again to enjoy the rich and colourful life of the artificial world. Keeping "half a dozen dates a day with half a dozen men" she suddenly got restless and "wanted her life shaped now, immediately—and the decision must be made by some force—of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality—that was close at hand." Tom Buchanan, a heartless and malicious millionaire, provided this force and in the characteristic fashion of the rich, she carelessly abandoned Gatsby and married him "with more pomp and circumstances than Louisville ever knew before." A little before her marriage she was disturbed by an emotional letter from Gatsby, but it all passed over soon after her cool brain calculated the millions of the string of pearls presented by Tom. With the conviction that she was deeply in love with him and that the marriage was forced upon her by the circumstances, Gatsby irresistibly pursued her after he got back from abroad. Wedded to his vision, dejected and penniless, he wandered desperately with the sacred memory of their love but somehow he became aware that "he had lost that part of it, the

17 Ibid., p. 151.
18 Ibid., p. 76.
But actually he could never forget it and started working towards the acquisition of wealth to be worthy of Daisy and her rich promises. He grew conscious of the fact that Daisy could be won back only with money. Easy wealth could come only through corrupt means, and to gain his dreamy ideal, he, during those prohibition days, soiled his hands and through illicit sale of liquor or other illegal means, acquired wealth for the fulfilment of his "incorruptible dream." With his single-minded devotion to his romantic ideal, he all along held the illusion that Daisy also loved him as intensely as he loved her. Gatsby tells Nick: "I don't think she ever loved him (Tom)," but as Nick is doubtful, he corrects himself a little: "Of course she might have loved him just for a minute, when they were first married—and loved me more even then, do you see?" To wipe out even this trace of love for Tom, he curiously remarks: "In any case it was just personal." Nick is baffled by this unmeasurable intensity of Gatsby's conception of the whole affair and, despite his hard-boiled morality and his disapproval of him "from beginning to end," he pronounces "a kind of benediction over Gatsby" when he compliments him: "They're a rotten crowd. You're worth the whole damn

19 Ibid., p. 153.
20 Ibid., p. 152.
bunch put together."

Gatsby, as has been pointed out by many critics, repre­
sents "the irony of American history and the corruption of the
American dream." He has been presented as the 'mythic'
embodiment of the American dream at a stage when the Dream
"had already been brutalized under the grossly acquisitive
spirit of the Gilded Age and Republican capitalism." Gats­
by, with "his heightened sensitivity to the promises of life", is
shown lacking moral compunctions in acquiring wealth, essential
for the realisation of his dream, through illegal and culpable
means. He has offended many critics for his lack of moral
maturity but, Mizerne points out, Fitzgerald's canons of judg­
ing the moral question involved in his unscrupulous means were
quite different; for him virtue meant the "realization of
one's inner vision of the possibilities of life", and it
"seemed self-evident to him that only the rich and successful
people in any society have the means and therefore the oppor­
tunity to make of life what it is...." Fitzgerald, whose atti­
tude to the rich has generally been misunderstood, after care­
fully observing the American life, perceived that along with
the gift of imagination which was vital, wealth too was important

22 Fitzgerald, Gatsby, p. 154.
23 John Henry Raleigh, "F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great
"not for itself, but because wealth alone makes it possible for a man actually to live the life the imagination conceives."

But Fitzgerald did not like the rich merely because of their wealth; rather, if they did not make "the most important moral choice ... the real, achievable choice between fineness of perception and of moral discrimination on the one hand, and the brutality of unimaginative, irresponsible power on the other", they roused in him "not the conviction of a revolutionist but the smouldering hatred of a peasant." It is on this basis that Fitzgerald wants us to distinguish between Gatsby on the one hand and Tom and Daisy on the other. Tom Buchanan in the end is "wistful and pathetic" and with his coarseness, sordid and unimaginative selfishness, "he is a fully conceived case of the undeveloped imagination." The murder of Myrtle, Tom's mistress, brings out the utter moral irresponsibility and selfishness of Daisy who conspires with Tom to sign the death-warrant of Gatsby who, ironically, is determined to sacrifice himself for saving Daisy. As opposed to Gatsby who considers his wealth merely as means for the attainment of his magnificent vision, Tom and Daisy use their money for the "brutality of unimaginative, irresponsible power" and get Nick's strongest

25 Mizener, VOA Forum Lectures, p. 129.
26 Ibid., p. 130.
27 Fitzgerald, Crack-Up, p. 77.
28 Mizener, VOA Forum Lectures, p. 130.
indictment: "They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made." On the other hand, behind Gatsby's "apparently meretricious life," his "tasteless appurtenances", his superficial and uncultured manners, his legal culpability, there is heroic idealism which has given meaning and purpose to his life. Daisy has been portrayed as the embodiment of a vision, grand and magnificent, and Gatsby's love for her has been endowed with religious significance and it is to this "incorruptible dream" that his whole life has been dedicated. No doubt, for the realisation of his dream, he indulges in illegal businesses for which in the crucial Plaza scene, Tom attacks him "with ostentatious piety as 'a common swindler'. But it is perfectly clear that Fitzgerald believes there is no important moral distinction between Gatsby's kind of business and any other." The moral distinction

that matters in The Great Gatsby does not depend on how people acquire their money: on that score Fitzgerald has serious doubts about everyone. It depends on how people use their wealth, and of all these people, only Gatsby, despite his bad taste, uses his money really well. In itself, for mere power or possession or self-indulgence, wealth means nothing to Gatsby; he is perfectly ready to throw it away—along with his life—when Daisy destroys his faith in her as the incarnation

of his dream. Though Gatsby is, according to the law and Emily Post, a criminal and a fake, beneath his conventionally deplorable surface there is a purity of heart that gives every act of his life remarkable integrity. (30)

Nick, who has inherited the "moral seriousness" of his ancestral Mid-West and developed a strong "sense of the fundamental decoencies" and for whom the "virtues of small-town Christian morality" are the "measuring rod" for judging the people and their actions, initially cannot distinguish between Tom's corruption and Gatsby's corruption. His "provincial squeamishness" is greatly offended by Gatsby who represents everything for which Nick has "an unaffected scorn", but as he gets a deeper understanding of Gatsby's sacred motives and spiritual quest, as opposed to Tom's selfish motives of personal and sensual gratification, Nick's conventional morality undergoes a change; despite Gatsby's "superficial absurdity" and "moral culpability", he begins to rise in Nick's estimation and turns out "all right at the end." Nick is deeply moved by Gatsby's magnificent vision and his sincere and unwavering commitment to it and realises his greatness even in his futile quest. Shedding his ambivalent attitude, he ultimately sides with Gatsby: "I found myself on Gatsby's side, and alone." A new consciousness grows in Nick.

30 Mizener, YOA Forum Lectures, p. 135.
31 Eble, F. Scott Fitzgerald, p. 97.
32 Fitzgerald, Gatsby, p. 164.
and he finds himself "responsible" to Gatsby to defend man's right to have dreams, to envision the possibilities that are latent in human life and society. He finally begins to "have a feeling of defiance, of scornful solidarity between Gatsby and me against them all." Gatsby's memory becomes so sacred and pious to him that he automatically erases an obscene word scribbled by some urchin on the steps of Gatsby's house; he cannot bear his name being defiled in any manner. Dyson reflects that behind "the facade of the rich, the 'rather distinguished secret society' to which they belong, is money and carelessness--the two protections upon which, in moments of crisis, they fall back, leaving those outside to sink or swim as best they can." Gatsby is also rich but he is not careless, and this makes him essentially different from the "rotten crowd." The affair that became for Daisy just one of her casual romances, for Gatsby turned out to be the "greatest thing" of his life: "The romantic promise which in Daisy herself was the merest facade became, for him, an ideal, an absolute reality. He built around her the dreams and fervours of his youth: adolescent, self-centred, fantastic, yet also untroubled by doubt, and therefore strong; attracting to themselves the best as well as the worst of his qualities, and

33 Ibid., p. 166.
34 Dyson, "The Great Gatsby: Thirty-Six Years After", 39.
eventually becoming an obsession of the most intractable kind."

He lives by an ideal, and the intensity of faith in his ideal is his distinct quality:

... this intensity springs from a quality which he alone has; and this we might call "faith". He really believes in himself and his illusions; and this quality of faith, however grotesque it must seem with such an object, sets him apart from the cynically armoured midgets whom he epitomizes. It makes him bigger than they are, and more vulnerable. It is, also, a quality which commands respect from Carraway: since at the very least, "faith" protects Gatsby from the evasiveness, the conscious hypocrisy of the Toms and Daisies of the world, conferring something of the heroic on what he does; and at the best it might still turn out to be the "way in" to some kind of reality beyond the romantic facade, the romantic alchemy which despite his cynicism Carraway still half hopes one day to find. (36)

What Gatsby now expects from Daisy reveals his innate innocence, and his naive expectations arouse Nick's suspicions about his ever achieving the sacred goal in this polluted society. From Gatsby's account of his quest, Nick gathers that "he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy." The confused and disordered life that he had been leading for the last five years could be straightened out only if he returned to the starting point, and is therefore determined of "fixing everything just the way it was before." Nick is baffled when he realises the unmeasurable intensity of Gatsby's passion for completely obliterating the past of five long years. Gatsby wants nothing less than that

35 Ibid., 43.
36 Ibid., 42.
Daisy should go and tell Tom: "I never loved you." Gatsby tells Nick that after "she had obliterated four years with that sentence they could decide upon the more practical measures to be taken. One of them was that, after she was free, they were to go back to Louisville and be married from her house--just as if it were five years ago." His dreamy eyes, fixed on the green light and oblivious of the changes that time has wrought in Daisy, still regard her as the youthful Daisy of eighteen when he had first met her. He feels that she also must have all the time remained unhappy and restless, always curious to leave Tom and rejoin her true love. But Nick has perceived the truth behind her enchanting facade and sophisticated pose, and he dissuades Gatsby from entertaining such impossible illusions:

"I wouldn't ask too much of her", I ventured. "You can't repeat the past!"

"Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why of course you can!"

What any man with the most elementary common sense can see through, Gatsby fails to judge because he hopelessly lacks critical intelligence and mature perception. His gorgeous vision, divested of the critical faculty and mental maturity, not only weaves fantastic dreams around Daisy but also fails to realise, till the end, her basic insincerity and callousness, the essential traits of the society she represents. His wild imagination does not recognise any human limitations, and

transcending even time and space, he is naively wedded to the
infinite possibilities of the concept of the American dream.

In the private world of Gatsby

past and future can be held captive in the present. His
faith allows almost boundless possibilities to be con­
templated; and if the 'universe' which has "spun itself
out in his brain" does happen to be one of "ineffable
gaudiness", this does not alter the fact that it is more
remarkable, and colorful, than the realities against
which it breaks. Like Tamburlaine, Gatsby has made a
"Platonic conception of himself" out of the extravagant
emotions and aspirations of an adolescent. (38)

Daisy dislikes her life of spiritual and emotional ennui
with faithless and ignoble Tom, and except drifting here and
there restlessly, there is hardly any purpose and meaning in
her life. She has lost even the sense of time, and her eyes
seem to Nick almost impersonal and void of any desire. But in
spite of the dreary and dull life she has been leading, spiri­
tually she is equally barren and hopelessly craves the moneyed
protection that Tom offers. Basically she is as selfish and
careless as Tom and belongs to the "secret society" which has
no concern for the human values. It is, therefore, imperative
that when a chance is offered to her by Gatsby, she cannot rid
herself of the allurement of the permanent security that Tom's
money provides and thus tumbles far short of Gatsby's colossal
dreams that he has built around her. True to her nature, Daisy
is instantly dazed by the gorgeous mansion, sparkling lawns and

38 Dyson, "The Great Gatsby: Thirty-Six Years After", 46.
gardens, splendid apartments, the gaudy and glamorous piles of
garments and suits of Gatsby and cries out: "They're such beauti­
ful shirts. It makes me sad because I've never seen such--such
beautiful shirts before." The inconceivable intensity with
which he had passionately loved Daisy adds splendour to every­
thing, but there is a momentary bewilderment in Gatsby:

There must have been moments even that afternoon when
Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his
illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything.
He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion,
adding to it all the time, decking it out with every
bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of
fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store
up in his ghostly heart.

But in her presence he seems "possessed by intense life", and
experiences a new life with feverish warmth; he gets simply
captivated by her, and the hope of realizing his sweet dreams
radiates from his face. The whole carnival of splendid parties,
uninvited guests, revelry and music, all the gaudiness and charm
of his make-believe world had been created for a chance-visit
of Daisy, but once Gatsby feels that she does not approve of
it, the entire apparatus of advertisement is rendered futile.
He wishes to do everything within his power to recover the lost
past and is delighted to find his goal almost attained when
Daisy confesses that she loves him. But her profession of love
can never fathom the deep burning fire in his heart where
nothing but Daisy exists, and he expects to find the same

39 Fitzgerald, Gatsby, pp. 93-94.
intensity in her too. He becomes so confident of his own love that he tells Tom, in that critical scene at the hotel, point-blank: "She never loved you.... She only married you because I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me. It was a terrible mistake, but in her heart she never loved anyone except me!" He can never think of Daisy ever having loved any one else and he, therefore, beseeches her to tell Tom that she never loved him and wipe him out forever. But he is visibly shaken when she fumbles: "Oh, you want too much! I love you now—isn't that enough? I can't help what is past. I did love him once—but I loved you too." Gatsby's love had gone beyond time and space, and it was inconceivable to him that Daisy had not only been physically ravished but spiritually and mentally also she had loved someone else. Bewildered, still unable to see through the real Daisy, he feels that she is confused and insists that she would marry him. Tom plays his trump-card and disparagingly talks of his bootlegging business, shady deals and his connections with Wolfsheim, and threatens him with dire consequences. After the initial confusion, Gatsby begins to "talk excitedly to Daisy, denying everything, defending his name against accusations that had not been made. But with every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up, and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away...."  

40 Ibid., p. 131.  
41 Ibid., p. 133.  
42 Ibid., p. 135.
The moment the secure anchor of Gatsby's wealth seems to be slipping, the golden girl of the glittering world shatters the romantic illusions of the dreamer. Gatsby stands defeated—Mr Nobody from Nowhere. The concept of a classless society as envisaged by the Founding Fathers is completely exposed when Daisy chooses to go with the security of a traditionally rich person, Tom, who, like Humbird, hardly knows what aristocratic tastes are. But he has come to represent a particular class of society, a "rather distinguished secret society", which has contemptuous indifference to the aspiring individuals of lower classes. Gatsby, with all his imagination, idealism and sincerity, is a non-entity in this world of compartmentalised society and breaks "like glass against Tom's hard malice...."  

The fatal accident that kills Myrtle Wilson, Tom's mistress, while Daisy is driving Gatsby's car, further crystallises the contrasting values that Gatsby on the one hand and Daisy and Tom on the other represent. Gatsby's love is not yet abated a whit for her and he is somehow convinced that she got nervous and so couldn't decide. He stands outside her house to guard her from Tom. But Nick finds Daisy and Tom sitting across a table with "an unmistakable air of natural intimacy ... and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together." It is an irony that while Daisy is busy conspiring with Tom

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43 Ibid., p. 148.

44 Ibid., p. 146.
against Gatsby, he is keeping vigil outside to defend her against any outrage. Nick tries to convince Gatsby of the futility of his mission, but fails and ultimately leaves him "watching over nothing." Gatsby made an apotheosis of 'nothing' and fell for his wrong incarnation. Even the next day, he is clutching at some hope and refuses to listen to Nick's advice of leaving the place. Nick suspects some foul play, but Gatsby can never imagine any life without Daisy. Wilson has no difficulty in getting the name of the owner of the 'death-car' from East Egg, and while Gatsby is expecting a telephone call from Daisy, he is shot dead in his swimming pool. The coveted telephone message never came and Nick reflects:

I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn't believe it would come, and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about ... like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees. (45)

The repository of the American dream had fallen and his dream became the instrument of his fall. Daisy and Tom, after bringing about the catastrophe, had silently departed from the place. Nick tried hard to reach them and inform Daisy, but they had deliberately left no address. The incarnated Daisy

failed to realise that the minimum tribute she could easily afford to pay to the complete devotion and unwavering dedication of Gatsby was to be present at his funeral, and acknowledge the grandeur of his magnificent vision. Symbolically the Dream had reached a stage in the 1920's beyond any possibility of redemption, but the naive Gatsby, unaware of the nightmarish change that had altered the concept altogether, in his innocence "made the American Dream his own and died by it." The timeschedule and general resolves of Gatsby's childhood, found written on the faded back-leaf of The Great Gatsby, which his father shows to Nick, place him in the tradition of great American dreamers who, through their similar resolves and diligence, rose to become the greatest in American history. In the radically changed environment, however, Gatsby failed because of his faith in those very dreams, and Aldridge rightly suggests that "Gatsby's story is, in a sense, Fitzgerald's parody of the Great American Dream Success." Fitzgerald ridicules any hope of realising the American dream in the corrupt and materialistic society, and haunted by this national failure, he went to depict it again and again in his novels. Gatsby's father, unaware of the brutal changes that had destroyed the foundations upon which the myth of the American dream was built, naively suggests: "If he'd of lived, he'd of been a great man. A man like James J. Hill.

47 Aldridge, Lost Generation, p. 50.
He'd of helped build up the country." The whole philosophy of the American dream had contracted so as to signify only the material part of it which James J. Hill represented. But Fitzgerald's vision was sharp enough to observe that even that had become a nightmare in the society infested with Toms and Daisies who, being utterly selfish and callous, were not only completely insensitive to the significance of the Dream but were also instrumental in the destruction of its aspirants. Gatsby's wonderful imagination reminds Nick of

the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes—a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.

In the tradition of the Founding Fathers, "Gatsby's wonder" also "picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock", and at one point "his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it." But he discounted the devastating changes that had brought about a radical shift in the values since the American dream had first stimulated the spirits of the Dutch sailors and "did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity...." Geismar traces his

49 Ibid., p. 182.
illusion to the American dream and says:

He /"Gatsby/ is a sort of cultural hero, and the story of Gatsby's illusion is the story of an age's illusion too. The bare outlines of his career, the upward struggle from poverty and ignorance; the naive aspirations toward refinement and the primal, ruthless energy of these aspirations; the fixation of this provincial soul upon a childlike notion of beauty and grace and the reliance upon material power as the single method of satisfying his searching and inarticulate spirit--these are surely the elements of a dominant cultural legend in its purest, most sympathetic form. (50)

Gatsby thus becomes a mythical figure and the last lines of The Great Gatsby clearly enunciate Fitzgerald's judgement of the elusive nature of the American dream: "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--to-morrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms further.... And one fine morning--So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." Ornstein calls the book "a dramatization of the betrayal of the naive American dream in a corrupted society", and reflects that it is "the adumbration of the coming tragedy of a nation grown decadent without achieving maturity--a nation that possessed and enjoyed early in its arrogant assumption of superiority, lost sight of the dream that

51 Fitzgerald, Gatsby, p. 182.
52 Robert Ornstein, "Scott Fitzgerald's Fable of East and West", College English, 13 (December, 1956), 139.
had created it." The innocent assumptions based on the mythical past play a deceptive trick with the individuals who naively fashion their lives on the strength of the cultural history of America. Their defeat at the hands of insensitive and corrupt society wedded to "the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty", exposes its irresponsiveness to their romantic urges and aspirations and thus ridicules the concept of America as a dream. The American Adam miserably failed to recreate the Paradise on the American soil, a promise that once had enraptured the human imagination.

Whatever be the reasons for the comparative failure of Tender Is The Night in the thirties, it is, according to Mizener, "the most mature and moving book Fitzgerald ever wrote", and its hero, Dick Diver, is one of the most complex and representative characters in American fiction whose defeat symbolises the degeneration of the American society and the American dream. Once again, the post-war decaying American society, with its shattered values and collapsed structure, becomes the focus of Fitzgerald's critical vision. Like his other protagonists, Dick Diver, an innocent idealist, unaware of the moth-eaten foundations and taking the structure at its face value, rises to create an ideal environment to lead the life of his own imagination but

53 Ibid., 143.
54 Mizener, Twelve Great American Novels, p. 106.
meets his inevitable doom. The confrontation between the corrupt social structure and the romantic dream this time is on a much wider plane, and almost the entire American civilisation comes within the critical ambit of the novel. The panoramic magnitude of Fitzgerald's vision of the American social and historical perspective is vividly brought out by focussing the protagonist with a set of traditional moral values against the backdrop of a large number of characters representing the decaying and sterile culture of gross materialism, naked selfishness and moral corruption. In Mizener's opinion, even The Great Gatsby, the most perfect novel of Fitzgerald, stands no match to the depth and insight of Tender is the Night. "The scope of Tender is the Night is such that, for all the book's faults, its philosophical impact is unforgettable. It makes The Great Gatsby, which, in structure so perfectly satisfies 'the canons' of the dramatic novel, seem neat and simple." Tender is the Night is a representative novel of the moral dilemmas of its times and portrays the society in decay. It is "a vision in art of an era in American history, of the failure of a society and of an individual who embodied its graces and weaknesses." While Tender is the Night is profound in its indictment of the pettiness and mediocrity, of the purposeless and unimaginative lives of the rich and semi-rich in the American society,

55 Mizener, Far Side, p. 279.
56 Sklar, Leacock, p. 292.
its emotional appeal lies mainly in its hero, Dick Diver, whose "intricate destiny" has been movingly traced by Fitzgerald. Dick Diver is the American dream incarnate whose imagination strives to create an ideal life for himself as well as for all those around him. But the sterile society fails to respond to the American Adam whose desire to create an oasis in the desert and see all those emotionally attached to him lead meaningful lives becomes the cause of his destruction and disintegration. Sapped of all his vitality in the process, completely exhausted and dried-up, he is lost in the oblivion as a non-entity; the selfishness and the spiritual bankruptcy of the effete civilisation triumph and idealism fails.

Dr. Richard Diver, son of a retired clergyman of Buffalo, is a brilliant and promising young man of twenty-six. A charming man of strict discipline, he is at the same time emotional and sensitive to the feelings of others. He has already made a name for himself by publishing a book on psychiatry and is usually referred to as "Lucky Dick." A sharp and intelligent young man, Dick, who regards the quiet scholarly pursuit as the nearest of all things to heavenly peace, has lived in the world of his imagination and has consequently acquired the outlook of a "romantic philosopher." Romantic illusions coloured his imagination from the very start and he "got up to Zurich on

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fewer Achilles' heels than would be required to equip a centi-pede, but with plenty—the illusions of eternal strength and health, and of the essential goodness of people—they were the illusions of a nation, lies of generations of frontier mothers who had to croon falsely that there were no wolves outside the cabin door." He is deeply ingrained in the concept of the American dream and sincerely feels that the infinite possibilities of life cannot be beyond the reach of a man provided he has the will and determination to mould life according to his ideals. Dick has inherited certain basic qualities from his father which govern his mind and behaviour throughout. He had been brought up to believe that nothing is superior to " 'good instincts', honor, courtesy, and courage" which in fact make him all the more yearn for realising his dreams and also more vulnerable to the ridiculously hard and selfish society that he confronts. Before he meets Nicole, he has the sole ambition of becoming the greatest and the most distinguished psychologist of the world and, therefore, lives in his own intellectual world. But at the same time he wants to transcend the narrow limitations of the self and asks himself quite often: "God, am I like the rest after all?" He feels convinced of his unique destiny, and, weaving dreams of an ideal 'self', steps forth with strong

58 Ibid., p. 5.
59 Ibid., p. 221.
60 Ibid., p. 23.
determination to conquer the world. Not that he considers himself perfect; he knows he has certain characteristic weaknesses of his own, but he never feels they can stand in his way of realising his ideals. He is vaguely aware of the fatal yearning that has constantly patterned his character, the desire that "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." This yearning makes him easily vulnerable, and at times propels him to take irrational decisions. The intellectual control and self-discipline that he possesses in abundance give way to his emotional impulses, and his decisions are at times dictated not by his scientific brain but by his impulsive behaviour.

The schizophrenic Nicole is a particular case of the depraved society of the post-war era where all the moral values had collapsed. She gets mentally deranged after an incestuous act of her father, a multi-millionaire, who tells that they "were just lovers—and ten minutes after it happened I could have shot myself—except I guess I'm such a God-damned degenerate I didn't have the nerve to do it." What Dick initially regards as a little encouragement to Nicole when he allows her to write to him, develops soon into an emotional involvement. Sensitive as he is to the feelings of others, he finds Nicole hopeful and longing for a normal life. Driven by his uncontrollable

61 **Ibid.**, p. 22.
62 **Ibid.**, pp. 18-19.
generosity he feels he must help her out of the miserable world she lives in. Soon he feels attracted towards her and "the impression of her youth and beauty grew on Dick until it welled up inside him in a compact paroxysm of emotion." He tries hard to disengage himself from her thought because, through his professional knowledge, he feels convinced that "obviously the logic of his life tended away from the girl." Howsoever hard he struggles to divorce her from his mind, her hopeless position and her growing dependence on him force him to have a sympathetic attitude towards her desires. In spite of his strict self-discipline, he does not succeed in driving her out of his mind and honestly admits before his colleagues, Dr. Dohlmler and Dr. Franz: "I'm half in love with her--the question of marrying her has passed through my mind." Franz warns him of the dreadful consequences of such an involvement. Dick's renewed efforts to completely eliminate himself from the involvement fail because he cannot tolerate Nicole falling to pieces. He is in a curious dilemma because he knows life with her would mean death of all his professional ambitions and dreams. He even tries to provide antidotes including a telephone girl, but realises that he had been emotionally involved with Nicole and cannot bear the emptiness and pain that this affair might cause to her: "Nicole's

63 Ibid., p. 25.
64 Ibid., p. 23.
65 Ibid., p. 31.
emotions had been used unfairly—what if they turned out to have
been his own?" He can no longer resist helping her and,
against his better judgement, decides that "her problem was one
they had together for good now." We must understand, at this
stage, the sublime greatness of his love: "It is a battle be­
 tween reason and emotion and that emotion wins. If Diver had
been a stronger man, he would not have ruined his life. But this
is only part of the truth. It may well be that he is a greater
man because he does have the capacity for great love, for sacri­
ficial love that knows what it is sacrificing." True to his
faith in the American dream, his first choice is for being an
ideal human being and between "becoming a great psychologist and
a great human being, he opts for the latter." For satisfying
the emotional appetite of Nicole to enable her to recover her
normal life and health, he not only ignores the professional
advice of his senior friends and abandons his own better judge­
ment against taking up a mental patient as wife, but also over­
looks the discomforting and arrogant remark of Baby Warren,
Nicole's sister, that they are buying a doctor for Nicole, that
their money would allure any good doctor to jump at the chance of

66 Ibid., p. 38.
67 Ibid., p. 50.
68 Eugene White, "The 'Intricate Destiny' of Dick Diver", Modern Fiction Studies, 7 (Spring 1961), 56.
grabbing millions and marry Nicole. Her attitude is characteristic of the ruthless rich of the post-war American society who thought that wealth could purchase even human beings. In his intense desire to be helpful to others, to be a good and great human being, Dick underestimates the corrupting influence of the close association with such callous and heartless persons and attempts at creating entirely a new world for Nicole wherein she could forget her past and recover her lost self. He well realises from the very start that the task he has set for himself is not an easy one, especially because of the background of the ruthless and insensitive environment of the rich people she has been brought up in, but at this stage he has that intense youthful vitality and confidence in his own powers and character that he willingly accepts the formidable challenge. He completely dedicates himself to the cure of Nicole and manages to recreate a new world for her who fully enjoys her new life without realising that her every day is created for her by Dick through his painful efforts and imaginative unselfishness. In an effort to keep her happy, he has to compromise with his own resolves, and steadily gives in to the persistent pleas of Nicole to have better apartments, own houses and have other luxuries which in turn increase his own dependence upon Nicole's money. He submits to her demands because he has to act at one time both as a doctor and a husband. As he devotes all his energies to enliven the dead spirits of Nicole, his
ambition of becoming the greatest psychiatrist also recedes to the background. Thus the promising young doctor who had always taught others that "work is everything", and had valued knowledge above anything else, sacrifices his professional ambitions for the sake of being an ideal human being. Initially what he does for Nicole seems quite effortless on his part, and for five years his imaginative and planned world that he creates for Nicole considerably alleviates her mental derangement. But in the process his youthful vitality that has gone daily into creating a new world for Nicole, suffers decline, and his superb self-discipline, his prime source of energy, begins to show, at first imperceptibly, the signs of his losing control of the things.

After a few exciting years of married life, Dick discovers the Riviera in France for their peaceful living which is conducive to the cure of Nicole, and the first trace of his declining vitality or the ultimate disintegration is faintly visible when Rosemary, a film celebrity, asks him the time:

"Do you know what time it is?" Rosemary asked.
"It is about half-past one."
They faced the seascape together momentarily.
"It's not a bad time", said Dick Diver.
"It's not one of the worst times of the day." (70)

But it is only on rare occasions that he shows these signs which at this stage can hardly be noticed because of his charm and the inherent qualities which he has almost perfected through his long

70 Fitzgerald, Tender, p. 67.
training and self-discipline. He radiates dignity and pleasure all around, which captivate the innocent and fresh, eighteen year old Rosemary who, no wonder, instantly falls in love with Dick. His extraordinary virtuosity with people around him fascinates her and she finds him "kind and charming—his voice promised that he would take care of her, and that a little later he would open up whole new worlds for her, unroll an endless succession of magnificent possibilities." But what attracts her most towards him is, along with the most sensitive mind, "the layer of hardness in him, of self-control and of self-discipline, her own virtues," and she becomes wildly mad about him. She finds him perfect, and his wonderful world acquires for her a uniqueness in which there is "a purpose, a working over something, a direction, an act of creation different from any she had known." But her simplicity and immaturity can observe only the charm of the whole show that Dick has created through what he calls his "trick of the heart" without gauging its depth and complexity:

Her naïveté responded whole-heartedly to the expensive simplicity of the Divers, unaware of its complexity and its lack of innocence, unaware that it was all a selection of quality rather than quantity from the run of the world's bazaar; and that the simplicity of behavior also, the nursery-like peace and goodwill, the emphasis on the simpler virtues, was part of a desperate bargain with the gods and had been attained through struggles

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71 Ibid., p. 75.
72 Ibid., p. 74.
she could not have guessed at. At that moment the Elvers represented externally the exact furthermost evolution of a class, so that most people seemed awkward beside them—in reality a qualitative change had already set in that was not at all apparent to Rosemary.(73)

Dick Diver, with his unflinching faith in the American dream, struggles to create an ideal atmosphere for people around him, but everyone, including Nicole, just enjoys the high excitement generated by him, failing to realise the painful efforts and constant struggle that are required to create it. It never occurs to anyone that the declining vitality of Dick has to be recuperated by returning at least a fraction of the abundant love that he has been showering. In the absence of any compensating force, his emotional and spiritual powers being gradually drained out in creating a better world for Nicole, he steadily goes on losing his vitality, essential for the challenging task he has deliberately taken up.

As compared to "the chic grossness, the neurotic orderliness, the lifeless intellectuality" of the self-seeking people around him, including McKisco and others, who repel Rosemary on the beach, Dick Diver has natural grace, and his sensitivity to the feelings and requirements of others is remarkably unique. While for others it is all fun which they take for granted without bothering about his own feelings, for him it means a great "waste and extravagance" of his emotional and spiritual

73 Ibid., p. 77.
74 Mizener, Twelve Great American Novels, p. 115.
energies: "He sometimes looked back with awe at the carnivals of affection he had given, as a general might gaze upon a massacre he had ordered to satisfy an impersonal blood lust." Driven by his inherent urge to make everybody around him happy without reservations, he keeps the gates of his intimate and emotional world always open, and as long as they are in it their happiness becomes his sole preoccupation. No wonder then that Rosemary, new to Dick's World, gets instantly fascinated and feels that "the Villa Diana was the centre of the world. On such a stage some memorable thing was sure to happen." Dick Diver is fully aware of the waste and extravagance involved in the whole show, but, propelled by his sincere belief in the American dream, cannot resist the temptation of exercising his faculties to create a better world for the clumsy and selfish people around him. He naively supposes that his sacrifices would perhaps change the outlook of the people and that they would lead better and ideal lives with an emotional and spiritual meaning. Urged by his uncontrollable generosity, Dick, instead of pointing out their weaknesses and defects, makes them realise their significance and think of their best selves that they once had been or should have liked themselves to be. But it was possible only after he had been "blurred by the compromises of how many years", which no one realises and hence, in

75 Fitzgerald, Tender, p. 84.
76 Ibid., p. 86.
77 Ibid., p. 111.
the absence of any compensating force, his emotional and spiritual energy goes on declining; consequently he is at times seen gripped by melancholy which ultimately leads to the spiritual vacuum and ennui. Though the background of the novel is largely confined to the Riviera, most of the characters we meet in the novel are Americans and they represent the vulgarity, hard-core selfishness and the graceless mediocrity of the corrupted and degenerated society of the post-war era which has completely lost sight of the Dream. A few idealists, like Abe North and Dick Diver, inspired by the imagination of the Founding Fathers, still strive to realise the lost Dream but are foredoomed to fail in the materialistic civilisation which worships only one god—Mammon. The naive and innocent Rosemary is instantly attracted towards the promise of the American dream—Dick Diver—but she is bound to lose faith in it as she is corrupted through experience.

"Organizer of private gaiety, curator of a richly in-crusted happiness", Dick Diver, who had renounced himself for the sake of Nicole, after a long period, meets a sensitive person in Rosemary who is simply infatuated with his extraordinary qualities. Her youthful innocence and freshness, her admiration and adoration of him and her intense love for him play havoc with his disciplined self-denial and kindle his natural urge, wanting to be loved. The youthful vitality and emotional exuberance of Rosemary that were once characteristics
of his own nature and which he still reveals through great efforts, provide, for the first time, long-denied compensating force, and Dick, against his better judgement, feels attracted to Rosemary. But he has not yet lost full control of his wisdom and self-discipline, and his love for Nicole, created out of necessity, overpowers his emotional attraction for Rosemary. Torn by the conflicting emotions and urges, he still retains his fundamental faith and prefers his ideal commitment. Dick cannot think of deserting Nicole in such a pitiable condition and tells Rosemary that his "relations with Nicole are complicated. She's not very strong--she looks strong but she isn't. And this makes rather a mess." While he has all along starved himself emotionally and spiritually and Rosemary offers him an opportunity to drink to the full, he is still considerate to her: "So many people are going to love you and it might be nice to meet your first love all intact, emotionally too. That's an old-fashioned idea, isn't it?" But notwithstanding his consideration and self-discipline, when he is ultimately swayed away by his emotions, he remorsefully admits that "that's not the best thing that could happen", because what is more important to him is not his own emotional satisfaction but that Nicole must not suffer. Not that he is unaware of this emotional incongruity

78 Ibid., p. 137.
79 Ibid., p. 127.
80 Ibid., p. 136.
with his general conduct, but once he loosens a little the tight rope of self-discipline, it gets out of his control and despite his efforts, he is unable to tighten it again:

He knew that what he was now doing marked a turning point in his life—it was out of line with everything that had preceded it, even out of line with what effect he might hope to produce upon Rosemary. Rosemary saw him always as a model of correctness.... (81)

But this brief period of infatuation is soon over. He once again chooses to sacrifice his own emotional and spiritual needs, and decides to return to the sick Nicole who needs him badly. The Rosemary affair and the sickness of Nicole, in addition to his disappointment over his own failure to do his work, leave him utterly disgusted. But he cannot even show his true feelings because, for Nicole's cure, he must "keep up a perfect front now and tomorrow, next week and next year", and this necessity of putting up a pose creates tensions which draw him in different directions. Nicole, hard and insensitive, cannot understand the disintegration of Abe North and is alarmed at the fact that so many "smart men go to pieces nowadays." But Dick, with his inborn sensitiveness, can understand the plight of sensitive persons: "Smart men play close to the line because they have to--some of them can't stand it, so they quit." Abe

81 Ibid., p. 153.
82 Ibid., p. 178.
83 Ibid., p. 160.
84 Ibid., p. 161.
North's disintegration foreshadows Dick's own and in his observa-
tion lies the exact cause of the disintegration not only of Abe North but also of his own. The emotional neglect and the spiritual vacuum are certain to sap the vitality of an individual, howsoever great he may be.

However hard Dick might try to contribute to the household expenses, Nicole's ever-increasing money makes his small earnings insignificant. In the rigid domesticity which he had maintained all these years for the cure of Nicole, his "work became confused with Nicole's problems; in addition, her income had increased so fast of late that it seemed to belittle his work." Also, Nicole, "wanting to own him, wanting him to stand still forever, encouraged any slackness on his part", which naturally added to the neglect of his work and his torment on this account. This urge to own him through the ever-increasing Warren money, had already deprived him of his independence, and the "old rich insolence" of Baby, using Nicole as her tool, now drags him into an uncomfortable and unwilling agreement with Franz about a mental clinic at Zurich. Contrary to the expectations of Baby, Nicole rather feels more disturbed and uneasy in the new environment of mental patients, and her reliance upon Dick grows even more. Owing to the lack of the serene atmosphere of the Riviera she gets upset over small incidents. A letter from a mental patient falsely charging Dick with involvement with

85 Ibid., p. 183.
her daughter disturbs Nicole so much that all his protestations fail to move her. Dick is simply confused and bewildered at her such ununderstandable behaviour which further adds to his bitterness and mental exhaustion and he finds that the "dualism in his views of her—that of the husband, that of the psychiatrist—was increasingly paralyzing his faculties." As in "restating the universe for her", Dick, both as a husband and a doctor, has actively participated in her anguish and sufferings, he is agonised to find that "such a fine tower should not be erected, only suspended, suspended from him.... Dick and Nicole had become one and equal, not opposite and complementary; she was Dick too, the drought in the marrow of his bones. He could not watch her disintegrations without participating in them. His intuition rilled out of him as tenderness and compassion...." This constant participation, in addition to Nicole's irresponsible and irresponsible behaviour, wrecks him gradually. He feels completely exhausted and upset after Nicole's abortive attempt at killing the whole family in a car accident. Realising that he badly needed replenishment of his exhausted energies in order to face the arduous challenge, he goes out alone for a change. He does not run away from his duty to Nicole, but goes to redeem his lost soul:

86 Ibid., p. 204.
87 Ibid., p. 207
He had lost himself—he could not tell the hour when, or the day or the week, the month or the year. Once he had cut through things, solving the most complicated equations as the simplest problems of his simplest patients. Between the time he found Nicole flowering under a stone on the Zurichsee and the moment of his meeting with Rosemary the spear had been blunted. (83)

Dick realises now that he has "wasted nine years teaching the rich the A B C's of human decency" but to no avail. Rather, in the process, "he had been swallowed up like a gigolo and had somehow permitted his arsenal to be locked up in the Warren safety-deposit vaults." The cause of his destruction is, what Mizener calls "emotional bankruptcy", and once "Dick uses up the emotional energy which is the source of his personal discipline and of his power to feed other people", he becomes a helpless witness of his own disintegration.

On his way back from America where he had gone to attend his father's funeral, he runs into Rosemary in a hotel in Rome where she was shooting. She is no longer an adolescent girl of eighteen, but Dick has remained for her, all these years, "an ideal by which Rosemary measured other men and inevitably his stature had increased to heroic size." But here is Dick, a

88 Ibid., p. 218.
89 Ibid., p. 219.
90 Ibid., pp. 218-19.
91 Mizener, Far Side, p. 271.
92 Fitzgerald, Tender, p. 229.
human being, an apostle of self-denial, who craves "some nourishment from people now." But instead of nourishment, he gets chiding from Baby for leaving Nicole alone. He is bluntly told that if he thought she could be happy with someone else, it could be arranged. He is shocked by the belated realisation how ungrateful the rich could be. He finds that he is still deeply in love with Nicole and the depth of his love was beyond the comprehension of common people who only thought of physical love, and "not a wild submergence of soul, a dipping of all colors into an obscuring dye, such as his love for Nicole had been. Certain thoughts about Nicole, that she should die, sink into mental darkness, love another man, made him physically sick." Rosemary also, instead of providing any nourishment, arouses his baser instinct of jealousy when she reveals that she has a lover. It is natural for her to love someone else when she knows that Dick cannot afford to give anything to her. But Dick, who, a few years ago, understood her situation more clearly, is not now as judicious and discerning a man as he used to be. Rosemary is also puzzled at this change in him, and he too realises it: "I guess I'm the Black Death. I don't seem to bring people happiness any more." Dick now feels completely worn out and lets the self-control go; he takes to excessive drinking in a hotel and then quarrels with the taximen. Consequently, he is taken

93 Ibid., p. 235.
94 Ibid., p. 237.
to the police-station where, in a brawl with the policemen, he is brutally beaten, dragged and thrown into a prison cell. When he regains self-consciousness, Dick feels the effect and agony of what had happened:

Dick's rage had retreated into him a little and he felt a vast criminal irresponsibility. What had happened to him was so awful that nothing could make any difference unless he could choke it to death, and, as this was unlikely he was hopeless. He would be a different person henceforward, and in his raw state he had bizarre feelings of what the new self would be. (95)

When he is under the torment of this great humiliation and moral let-down, Baby, who had come to his rescue, is enjoying her characteristic "satisfaction of feeling that, whatever Dick's previous record was, they now possessed a moral superiority over him for as long as he proved of any use." In the materialistic civilisation that America had come to represent, men counted as long as they were of any 'use'.

After the catastrophe in Rome, Dick is violently shaken and his increasing addiction to drinking reveals that he is gradually losing control of his fundamental faculties. His old qualities of pleasing everyone and making him see the best of himself give way to disgust and recriminations. He naturally grows to be unpopular with his friends who had been constantly feeding on his charm. The lingering effect of the episode, added to the bitter and hostile attitude of Nicole, makes him aware of

95 Ibid., p. 251.
96 Ibid., p. 253.
the total dullness of his surroundings, and he starts criticis-
ing candidly and bitterly the selfish and crude people. He no
longer finds it possible to drain out his depleted energies in
nursing the wicked and corrupt people for whom money and its
accomplices were the real consideration. Nicole’s careless
attitude, for whom he had wasted all his life and ambitions,
worsens the matter further. He develops a disliking for the
patients in the clinic who were uncultured and went on “bully-
ing their betters with hard ignorance and hard money.” Franz,
who is now firmly established in business, no longer needs his
brilliant brain and he is, therefore, virtually discarded.

On their visit to Mrs. Mary Minghetti, lately Mary North,
a one time close friend and admirer of Dick, he is undeservedly
humiliated and insulted by her. Nicole also unhesitatingly
objects to small things done by him, and, full of guilt and
remorse mingled with the feeling of weariness, Dick admits:
“I’m not much like myself any more.” But his bitterness with
the dull and selfish persons goes on increasing, and instead of
charming them, he now exposes their real selves, and every such
incident of insult and humiliation at the hands of crude and
vulgar people takes him further into the lap of liquor. As
Nicole is recovering and getting stronger, her attitude to Dick

97 Ibid., p. 271.
98 Ibid., p. 278.
is changing. She openly criticises him now whenever she gets an occasion and unscrupulously torments him with her unsavoury remarks and suggestions. He is glad to find her getting better but is puzzled over the corresponding change in her attitude also. Dick's training during the last ten years is gradually losing its effect and the attitude natural to the rich is taking possession of her. He is unjustly misunderstood, insulted and humiliated, and because he cannot be brutally vulgar, he cannot even effectively counter the charges. Owing to his excessive drinking, the process of deterioration is accelerated, and instead of helping him, Nicole feels happy over his failing nerves because "for almost the first time in her life—his awful faculty of being right seemed to have deserted him at last." 99

She, to add fuel to the fire, starts showing extraordinary favours to Tommy Barban, a sophisticated anarchist, and feels the feminine satisfaction when she knows that Dick does not appreciate her advances: "She was somewhat shocked at the idea of being interested in another man—but other women have lovers—why not me?" The idea flatters her so much that "she did not want anything to happen, but only for the situation to remain in suspension as the two men tossed her from one mind to another; she had not existed for a long time, even as a ball." 100

99 Ibid., p. 294.
100 Ibid., p. 295.
To assert her independent existence, she decides, instead of devoting herself to the deteriorating Dick, to have an affair with Tommy. Against Dick's express command and advice, she tosses the whole bottle of the special camphor-rub to Tommy and then hardly bothers to justify her action: "She throws away Dick for Tommy, throwing away the curative, patient years of rare Dick's self-denial and discipline and ordered care and virtues and graces." He is visibly perturbed over the impending disaster and helplessly watches his ruin. But Nicole can guess that Dick "was contriving at some desperate solution." She is not afraid now anyhow, and the "imminence of a leap" gives her new charm, and she starts detesting everything connected with Dick:

She had come to hate his world with its delicate jokes and politeness, forgetting that for many years it was the only world open to her. Let him look at it--his beach, perverted now to the tastes of the tasteless; he could search it for a day and find no stone of the Chinese wall he had once erected around it, no footprints of an old friend. (103)

Rosemary who had heard wild rumours about Dick all around, arrives on the beach for a day to witness the fallen edifice. Initially she finds the edifice intact but as the day advances, she finds a great change in him. Sapped of all the vitality, he fails to perform the lifting-exercise that he could perform two

102 Fitzgerald, Tender, p. 293.
103 Ibid., p. 299.
years earlier so easily. Mary's contemptuous treatment of Dick and his unpleasant remarks and bitterness in return reveal a different Dick to Rosemary, and she is surprised at his conduct as she had always thought of him as "all-forgiving, all comprehending." She still idealises him but he candidly admits of his deterioration:

"Did you hear I'd gone into a process of deterioration?"
"Oh, no. I simply--just heard you'd changed. And I'm glad to see with my own eyes it isn't true."
"It is true", Dick answered, sitting down with them.
"The change came a long way back--but at first it didn't show. The manner remains intact for some time after the morale cracks." (104)

His morale cracked not on account of Rosemary's first visit at the beach, as many critics contend, but much before that. Rosemary had simply acted as a catalytic agent and the signs of this crack started showing as she appeared on the scene. While Dick, now known as the dissipated doctor, tries to enliven himself in the company of the young Rosemary, Nicole is irritated at his efforts to share the joys of the exciting youth and in fact prefers to enjoy on the probable hurt she might cause to Dick. In a relaxed mood she discovers that she is well again and starts hating the beach and resenting "the places where she had played planet to Dick's sun." Once she realises that she has recovered and no longer needs him for her cure, she thinks she can easily discard him:

104 Ibid., p. 304.
"Why, I'm almost complete", she thought. "I'm practically standing alone, without him." And like a happy child, wanting the completion as soon as possible, and knowing vaguely that Dick had planned for her to have it, she lay on her bed as soon as she got home and wrote Tommy Barban in Nice a short provocative letter. (105)

In the absence of Dick, she makes "her person into the trimmest of gardens" to receive the wild Tommy in whom she finds the reflection of her own hardness and unscrupulousness. She "did not want any vague spiritual romance—she wanted an 'affair'; she wanted a change." Instead of feeling guilty of her infidelity towards the man who had resurrected her, she blames Dick for the situation, and rather assures herself that "such an experiment might have a therapeutic value." Tommy, an uncultivated barbarian, notices a change in her eyes and unhesitatingly tells her that they look like "white crook's eyes." Indignant at his suggestion, she decisively asserts her rich heritage: "I have no mirror here ... but if my eyes have changed it's because I'm well again. And being well perhaps I've gone back to my true self—I suppose my grandfather was a crook and I'm a crook by heritage, so there we are." Thrilled by the immoral possibility of the "imminent leap" and completely swayed by the charm and personality of Tommy, she opts for a barbarian

105 Ibid., p. 307.
106 Ibid., p. 309.
107 Ibid., p. 310.
way of life. But the romantic episode, violently involving her passions, has no sacred effect on her. She visualises herself now more or less as a whore, flattering herself with the possibility of many such affairs and at the same time absolving herself from any kind of blame or moral responsibility. In a shore-hotel, she commits the greatest sin, the sin of adultery, and the last cord of the sanctity of her relations with Dick is broken. She sacrifices her saviour at the altar of physical lust and indulges in the satiation of sheer biological passions: "Moment by moment all that Dick had taught her fell away and she was ever nearer to what she had been in the beginning, prototype of that obscure yielding up of swords that was going on in the world about her."

When Dick comprehends the whole situation, Nicole's betrayal torments him, and he contrives at some desperate solution to the whole tangle. She is alarmed at finding him completely worn out and exhausted because "though Nicole often paid lip service to the fact that he had led her back to the world she had forfeited, she had thought of him really as an inexhaustible energy, incapable of fatigue...." She in fact now enjoys his extreme helplessness and drives him to utter despair and the ignoble destiny. The selfish and ignoble Nicole, instead of repenting for destroying him, rather charges him: "You're a coward! You have made a failure of your life, and you want to

108 Ibid., p. 316.
Nicole, for whom Dick has made a failure of his life, like Daisy, does not owe any responsibility to anyone in the materialistic civilisation. Once she knows she is well and no longer needs Doctor Diver to help her, she, like Rosalind and Daisy, is free to discard him and open new vistas for herself with her money. For a new marriage or adventure with Tommy, Dick is discarded with complete indifference and Baby cynically belittles his great sacrifice:

"Dick was a good husband to me for six years", Nicole said. "All that time I never suffered a minute's pain because of him, and he always did his best never to let anything hurt me." Baby's lower jaw projected slightly as she said: "That's what he was educated for."(110)

In the last chapter, we find Dick, back in America, moving from one small town to another, trying to establish himself but failing at every place, signifying, what critics have called his "dying fall." Fitzgerald, in his last full-length novel, projected in unequivocal terms, his vision of the American dream in relation to the post-war American society. Dick, who personifies the Dream, is desperately moving from one place to another, but is driven out from every corner to become ultimately a dot, a non-entity. Dick's fate thus symbolises the death of the American dream in a corrupt society where the individual with faith in the unique cultural experiment must fail and in the process be corrupted and sapped of all the emotional and spiritual

109 Ibid., p. 319.
110 Ibid., p. 331.
meaning. More fully drawn than any of his other heroes, Dick Diver emerges as the "most human hero" who is destroyed by the most inhuman and irresponsible civilisation. Life for a sensitive and conscientious man in the materialistic civilisation offers no alternative but failure, and Dick Diver's fate epitomises the fate of all ideal aspirations in the society which had radiated a new promise to the world. Hindus fails to comprehend the difference between the Dick of the beginning and the Dick of the end when he says:

Dick Diver, we must remember, had been introduced by his creator as one who regarded "the fine quiet of the scholar" as the "nearest of all things to heavenly peace." According to this criterion, Geneva, New York, may be as favourable (even more favourable, because of its very lack of worldly distractions) to creative intellectual activity as any other place. (III)

In fact there is no inconsistency in the character of Dick Diver as the critic wishes to point out. Dick, at the end, is sapped of all his spiritual and emotional energy and haunts the different places trying in vain to start afresh. Embittered by the futility of his self-sacrifice, his whole being is completely shaken up; all his beliefs have proved untenable. This "dive" of Dick is the "all-inclusive, individual summation of the disintegration of the social world, the breakdown of Western civilisation that Fitzgerald felt around him and saw articulated in Spengler's Decline of the West." The dedicated and innocent

seeker, committed to his ideals and the Dream of the nation "expends himself totally only to discover that the cause he gave his life to is an irresponsible and selfish, gilded cor-
ruption."  The Fitzgerald hero is intensely in love with the American dream that betrays and destroys him, and he gradually sinks into darkness and oblivion, the situation aptly portrayed in the lines of Keats that Fitzgerald chose to quote in the beginning: "But here there is no light,/Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown/Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways."

The Last Tycoon, the last fragment of a novel that Fitz­
egerald came to write towards the end of his life, once again goes to prove that, throughout his career, Fitzgerald was pre­occupied with the theme of the American dream vis-a-vis the American society. This last novel, incomplete as it is, springs once again out of his felt experience of the life of Hollywood and "continues to be the most profound analysis we have had in fiction of the motion-picture industry." We by now very well know that the failure of Tender Is The Night with his reading public had tormented him, and, sick and broken, he had to move to Hollywood for the sake of money. But his heart was always in the novel. Though he earned a lot more from his stories, he always regretted the waste of his talent on the not-so-good,

113 Ibid., p. 345.
114 Piper, Portrait, p. 276.
rather inferior, literary pieces to which he had to go again and again to meet his extravagant expenses. As far back as 1924, he had proclaimed his ambition as "to get where I need to write no more but only novels." Though he could never reach that stage in his life, he always struggled to write a novel even when all the odds were against him. Tender Is The Night and The Last Tycoon are a living testimony of his serious attempts of returning to the novel even in the most adverse circumstances. Physically sick, intolerably tired and facing the gravest mental agony of his life, Fitzgerald was still busy writing his profoundest indictment of the American dream in The Last Tycoon which many critics, not without reason, have regarded as the promise of his greatest novel. Dos Passos' observation cannot be called exaggerated when he says that The Last Tycoon is "one of those literary fragments that from time to time appear in the stream of a culture and profoundly influence the course of future events." It is indeed "a new way of looking at" the phenomenon of the American dream, and the hero, Monroe Stahr, the last tycoon of Hollywood, has been portrayed to illustrate the loss of individualism and individual identity in the gross and corrupted American life. Through him the complex and tangled life of Hollywood has been depicted so artistically

and convincingly that one moves with Stahr through each of the phases of the production line, and the social, industrial and the artistic life of Hollywood comes alive to the reader. The adolescent Amory Blaine, the romantic Gatsby and the mature Dick Diver had found it impossible to lead a life of their choice because of the vulgar materialism that had destroyed the Dream. But Monroe Stahr confronts a different situation where individualism, an integral part of the American dream, is destroyed by the unholy connivance of the self-seekers and the organised mob-rule. Once again Fitzgerald creates an imaginative and heightened world of Stahr in which he is shown to be the last tycoon of his dynasty, the last champion of the dignity and position of an individual. In his notes, writing about Stahr, Fitzgerald says that he wants "to give an all-fireworks illumination of the intense passion in Stahr's soul, his love of life, his love for the great thing that he's built out here, his, perhaps not exactly, satisfaction, but his feeling of coming home to an empire of his own--an empire he has made. I want to contrast this sharply with the feeling of those who have merely gypped another person's empire away from them like the four great railroad kings of the coast." Like Gatsby and Dick, Stahr also steps into the world with the heightened awareness of the self and hopes to realise the infinite possibilities.

of life that this golden land promises to an individual of virtues and strength, faith and struggle. But, as compared to Gatsby, "the protagonist of The Last Tycoon is more extensively defined, both on the psychological and on the social and ethical level of his conflict, while in comparison with Dick in Tender Is The Night his predicament is more deeply rooted in a context of external circumstances and his struggle is less passive and more virile." Mizener too finds that though Stahr resembles Fitzgerald's most other protagonists in many ways, he is "Fitzgerald's hero at his most mature and serious, applying his gifts to the central activity of American society." Stahr too, like Gatsby, was not born with the worldly advantages but, again like Gatsby, had, at a very early age, come to believe in the infinite capabilities of an individual and made his way through the world with his indomitable will and ceaseless struggle. Crossing various hurdles and climbing the successive rungs, through his vitality, drive and artistic purpose, he has come to attain an enviable position in Hollywood.

Stahr, an embodiment of individualism, has grown to be the most powerful and purposeful producer in Hollywood, and he is said to regard himself as "the only sound nut in a hatful of cracked ones." In our very first introduction, we are

119 Mizener, Far Side, p. 332.
120 Fitzgerald, Tycoon, p. 19.
captivated, as is Cecilia, the narrator, by his deep and penetrating eyes. Monroe Stahr, once a 'nameless' man, had "darted in and out of the role of 'one of the boys' with dexterity", and had climbed the ladder of success at the age of twenty-two, what Amory had unsuccessfully attempted to do. He always appeared to others standing at a higher pedestal, and from "where he stood (and though he was not a tall man, it always seemed high up) he watched the multitudinous practicalities of his world like a proud young shepherd to whom night and day had never mattered. He was born sleepless, without a talent for rest or the desire for it." His fiery spirit to become the leader of men and the affairs had always found its way through right from the beginning when he was a small kid: "He looked spiritual at times, but he was a fighter—somebody out of his past knew him when he was one of a gang of kids in the Bronx, and gave me a description of how he walked always at the head of his gang, this rather frail boy, occasionally throwing a command backward out of the corner of his mouth." He had struggled and made his way through the school of experience to rise to the highest position of the Hollywood empire where he is admired, loved and respected. Very few people could be a match for him: "Though Stahr's education was founded on nothing more than a night-school course in stenography, he had a long time ago run ahead through trackless

121 Ibid., p. 15.
wastes of perception into fields where very few men were able to follow him." At the age of thirty-four, he had come to achieve a position which his rivals in Hollywood rightly envied, but they also marvelled at his capacities and insight which he had acquired long before he came to Hollywood:

He had flown up very high to see, on strong wings, when he was young. And while he was up there he had looked on all the kingdoms, with the kind of eyes that can stare straight into the sun. Beating his wings tenaciously—finally frantically—and keeping on beating them, he had stayed up there longer than most of us, and then, remembering all he had seen from his great height of how things were, he had settled gradually to earth.

After his "illuminating flight", he came to Hollywood, the city of "mystery and promise", to be a leader of men and matters, and find a "new way of measuring our jerky hopes and graceful roggeries and awkward sorrows...." But his artistic conscience, heightened sensitivity, and his enviable position also make him, like Dick Diver, over-confident of his capabilities and blind him to the dangers, both from within and without. He too, like Dick Diver, ignores the warning of Manny Schwartz, once a man of power and position but now a ruined producer, whose suicide at the Hermitage of Andrew Jackson, like the deterioration of Abe North, symbolises the impending fate and tragedy of Monroe Stahr. Stahr apparently seems to be the unchallenged master of the movie world, and though he is a

122 Ibid., pp. 17-18.
123 Ibid., p. 20.
partner in a big production-company, his position is unique. The other partners are there because they have money and they invest their money in pictures as they might have invested it in any other business. But Monroe is there because he has developed an artistic conscience; he has raised the film production to the level of art. Every other man looks to him for the latest standards and his voice is regarded as "oracle". He is acknowledged as the true judge of the changing tastes of the people and everyone in the line has to, willy-nilly, submit to his will: "He was a marker in industry like Edison and Lumiere and Griffith and Chaplin. He led pictures way up past the range and power of the theatre, reaching a sort of golden age, before the censorship." Stahr, though youngest of the group of producers, with his sensitivity, ingenuity and incisive vision, rules over others--most of them "dull dogs"--even in financial matters, and he is regarded as "our production genius." His verdict to go ahead with a "losing picture" because it is a "quality picture", and because they "have a certain duty to the public", though puzzling to the rest of them, is accepted without a murmur. He takes keen personal interest in everything that goes to make a good picture; from script-writing to the approving of the daily rushes, he handles every significant phase of the film-production himself and has invented many new

124 Ibid., p. 28.
125 Ibid., p. 48.
methods for speedy and qualitative work. His artistic conscience does not accept anything that is not perfect, that does not exactly match his imagination. He never accepts any impediments that could block his way and for him "the literal sky was the limit" to which a man could go. He has created his own world where he is the supreme ruler and commands the loyalty of every member of the team. But he is not a heartless prince whose whims decide the destiny of others. He feels himself personally responsible to every member and takes keen interest even in the personal affairs of everyone. Even while he is "the busiest man in California", the welfare of his workers is always his first preoccupation. Be it Pete Zavras, the cameraman, tormented with the false notion of going blind, writer George Boxley, disgusted with the standard of Hollywood writers, comedian Mike Van Dyke, afraid of a nervous breakdown, or the handsome hero Roderigues, tortured by the psychological tension of having gone impotent, Stahr succeeds in solving the intricate problem of everyone in a very skilful manner, and then takes up the next thing with equal interest and vitality: "If he could go from problem to problem, there was a certain rebirth of vitality with each change." It is natural for them to look to him whenever in trouble and they are certain that he would find the most appropriate solution. Even those who are jealous of him and his position,

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126 Ibid., p. 42.
127 Ibid., p. 37.
like Wylie White, their jealousy is "mingled with admiration and even affection." It is his world and they are his men.

There is no world so but it has its heroes, and Stahr was the hero. Most of these men had been here a long time—through the beginnings and the great upset, when sound came, and the three years of depression, he had seen that no harm came to them. The old loyalties were trembling now, there were clay feet everywhere; but still he was their man, the last of the princes. (129)

He is "the last of the princes", but the times have moved very fast and the days of individual heroism have vanished. In the nightmarish days of the turbulent period, Stahr's heroism no longer stands on a firm rock and the stormy winds of the indiscreet mob rule would tumble down his empire. He is, therefore, "struggling against inevitable failure in a changing world where his credo of life no longer has validity. If there are enemies at work in the movie studios, the real enemy lies in his self-delusion." In an era where the old values have been shattered, individual identity has lost its meaning and has been swept away by the wind of unionism. The dream of the limitless possibilities of an individual, the dream that had guided the pioneers, has proved fatal for the aspiring individuals of vigour and strength in the changed circumstances. As everywhere else in America, in Hollywood too the corrupt and unscrupulous

128 Ibid., p. 38.
129 Ibid., p. 27.
men, not even remotely concerned with art, and the organised unions and their communist leaders seem to Stahr dethroning dreamy and aspiring individuals like him and smashing the very foundations upon which the American dream was based.

Though he is more mature and practical than Gatsby, he also has his illusions and, like Gatsby, wishes to repeat the past emotionally. The earthquake introduces him to Kathleen Moore, one of the two girls whom he rescues from the flooded back-lot, who resembles his dead wife, Minna Davis. Deeply in love with his wife, he had denied himself the emotional and romantic divergence after her death. He is instantly fascinated by the beauty of Kathleen and is swayed away emotionally to recreate his dead past. He finds Kathleen, unlike the young girls crazy for film-career, disinterested in Hollywood, and is happy that "there was beauty in the world that would not be weighed in the scales of the casting department." Madly in love with Kathleen, his mood is "passionately to repeat yet not recapitulate the past", and he frankly tells her that his "heart's in the grave", that he was attracted to her mainly because she looked like Minna and did not want to lose her in any case: "He wanted the pattern of his life broken. If he was going to die soon, like the two doctors said, he wanted to stop being Stahr

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131 Fitzgerald, Tycoon, p. 66.
132 Ibid., p. 88.
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." But after a day-long emotional spree with his newborn love, when he reaches home and finds the letter of Kathleen that had been misplaced in the car, he is greatly disappointed to learn that she is going to be married soon. Stahr had always been regarded as 'the unity' in Hollywood and he was extremely puzzled when Kathleen, after the seduction on the beach, had asked her: "Don't you always think—hope that you'll be one person, and then find you're still two?" Stahr had always tried to keep 'the unity' of his two selves intact but this is the first blow that shakes him. Though he convinces himself that he "had quite another sort of adventure reserved for his mind—something better than a series of emotional sprees", he is perturbed over his failure to repeat his past: "He went upstairs. Minna died again on the first landing, and he forgot her lingeringly and miserably again, step by step to the top. The empty floor stretched around him—the doors with no one sleeping behind." The letter of Kathleen destroys his hope of feeding his long-starved emotions and his life is once again filled with

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133 Ibid., p. 90.
134 Ibid., p. 88.
135 Ibid., pp. 96-97.
136 Ibid., p. 98.
emptiness. Another episode that takes place on the beach gives a very severe jolt to his artistic conscience. Stahr had always tried to keep the film-production at the higher level, above the gross commercial values, and had always viewed himself as a great artist serving the humanity. But the negro on the beach tells him that he never allows his children to go to the movies because there is no "profit" in them. He tells Stahr it appears "as if they don't know what they are for. One week they for one thing and next week for another." Stahr who regarded himself as the key figure in the industry and also a conscientious artist, considers himself responsible for the low opinion people have of the pictures. The negro had cut at the very roots of the industry and Stahr's conscience was pricked. Torn by the predicament of his love for Kathleen and haunted by what the negro had said, he struggles against the conflicting forces within his mind that threaten his self-reliance and uniqueness. His pride and egotism have been shattered by the two episodes, and psychologically and emotionally he feels defeated, his convictions broken like a glass-house. The inner conflicts that rage on in his mind weaken his will power to face the outer dangers resolutely and boldly. Added to these inner conflicts is his failing health. He has been overworking for years without any type of relaxation, physical or emotional. Doctor Baer, who

137 Ibid., p. 93.
finds in him "a perversion of the life force" and a "definite urge toward total exhaustion" considers his case utterly hopeless. But in spite of his illness, physical exhaustion, psychological conflicts, and emotional dreariness, he, single-handed, pursues his ambition of skyrocketing his empire. Boxley, a disgusted English writer whom Stahr tries to interest in the characteristic task of film-scripts, feels that "Stahr like Lincoln was a leader carrying on a long war on many fronts; almost single-handed he had moved pictures sharply forward through a decade.... Stahr was an artist only, as Mr. Lincoln was a general, perforce and as a lay man." Stahr is proud of an artist's empire and regards himself as the unchallenged tycoon.

But the first signs of his psychological tensions and inner conflicts come to the surface when he receives a phone call from Kathleen. An autocratic and decisive Stahr betrays an impression of being indecisive and outraged when, after initial pungent and incisive rebuff, he ultimately accepts her invitation of meeting her again. He gathers from the account she gives of her life and the proposed marriage that she too is equally interested in him and he can fill his empty and isolated life with the emotional exuberance by marrying her, but his pride and egotism come in his way. He very much wants her but does not wish to lower himself by taking the initiative, and rather

138 Ibid., p. 106.
rationalises not to make the commitment unless she proposes. She represents the possibility of a new life for Stahr and he realises that he should "not let her go now"; his conscience also exhorts him: "It is your chance, Stahr. Better take it now. This is your girl. She can save you, she can worry you back to life. She will take looking after and you will grow strong to do it. But take her now—tell her and take her away." But his divided self, his self-defeating ego tells him to "sleep on it as an adult, no romantic. And not to tell her till tomorrow." Though he knows he is madly in love with her, yet, hesitating to take the initiative, irresolutely decides to postpone the decision till the next day: "Many thousands of people depended on his balanced judgment—you can suddenly blunt a quality you have lived by for twenty years." His decision proves fatal; Kathleen's fiance arrives next morning and their marriage at noon is a great psychological shock to him. He is emotionally upset at his failure in love and thus tormented by the inner conflicts finds himself physically and mentally incapacitated to face the chain of events that threaten to shatter his empire.

Stahr's interview with Brimmer, the communist organiser, takes place in the most unfavourable circumstances when he is oppressed heavily by the strains and psychological tensions. He

139 Ibid., p. 115.
140 Ibid., p. 116.
is visibly upset at certain recent developments involving some members of the Writers' Guild. He appears "white and nervous and troubled" because he fears that the organised unions are out to create chaos and shake the foundations of the well-established employer-employee relationship. He cannot appreciate the role of the unions or the organised labour as he understands only the personal loyalty of the workers to the employer. He has all along been very generous and kind, a paternalistic employer to all his workers and, therefore, does not see why the mob-rule should kill this traditional loyalty and mutual relationship based on faith and goodwill. He is a great believer in individualism; his achievements are strictly personal. Unable to compromise with the historical collapse of all the traditional values, he still thinks his workers also belong to him. He considers himself directly responsible to them, and thus cannot comprehend a situation wherein the organised union leaders may become the intermediaries between him and his employees. He, therefore, unequivocally tells Brimmer that they are trying to break 'the unity'--Stahr himself--of the industry and impatiently remarks: "It seems to be ma you're after." Stahr, with a fiery spirit fed on the American dream, had developed a personal credo of individualism and had always felt that his workers belonged to him. All of a sudden now he

141 Ibid., p. 120.
finds his credo being questioned by Brimmer: "Frankly we do find you difficult, Mr. Stahr—precisely because you are a paternalistic employer and your influence is very great." Stahr suddenly finds that they no longer belong to him, he no longer belongs to them and his whole empire, along with the traditional values and virtues, is tumbling down. It seems as if the very basis of his faith, his belief in the American dream, were founded on the sandy desert of hopelessness and the deluding phrase had been coined to trap the aspiring individuals. Disgusted with this new development and wanting to relax, he drinks excessively and consequently loses control over his faculties. Unable to bear the strain of excessive stimulation and make a cool judgement, he threatens to beat up Brimmer who for him is a symbol of destructive forces opposing his ideals and values. In the process, Stahr is molested and hit by Brimmer who contemptuously withdraws as if saying: "Is this all? This frail half-sick person holding up the whole thing." Unionism, an offshoot of communism, naturally hates the personal glory and power which Stahr possesses abundantly. Fitzgerald denounced this concept of communism when he wrote to his daughter: "Communism has become an intensely dogmatic and almost mystical religion and whatever you say they

142 Ibid., p. 125.
143 Ibid., p. 127.
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." Here is Stahr, the most humanistic employer, but a champion of individualism, being disparaged "both intellectually and personally", not because he is against the employees but on the assumption that he does not fit in the scheme and maxims of proletarianism.

The sudden and untimely death of Fitzgerald cut short the manuscript at this stage and thus the promise of a great novel about Hollywood, relating it to the historical and cultural past of America through the concept of the American dream, remained unfulfilled. But after his death, Edmund Wilson, his life-long friend, took pains to collect the material of the novel from various sources—diagrams, notes, private discussions—and he narrates in brief the various stages through which Stahr's disintegration as the last tycoon of the movie-industry would have been presented. But the decisive stage in the novel had already been reached and from Fitzgerald's notes and diagrams, it is evident that Stahr's interview with Brimmer is the turning point in his life, and henceforth he would fight a losing battle. Immediately after his interview, he goes to Washington with the hope of finding a correlative inspiration for his old-fashioned values and his belief in the American dream, but he is baffled to find that his values no longer sustain the capital,

144 Fitzgerald, Letters, p. 65.
symbolic of the aspirations and urges of the nation. Disgusted with this dismal change in the American ideals and values, he returns to Hollywood to face graver problems. His rival, Brady, who had of late been trying to capture the industry, had ordered a wage-cut which Stahr openly disapproves. To defeat Stahr, Brady sides with the union, and the workers, forgetting his paternalistic and friendly relations, view Stahr as a great danger. Though embittered by the happenings, he thinks it ignoble to surrender to the evil designs of Brady. The information that Stahr has again been meeting Kathleen is used for blackmailing him. Brady plays upon the jealousy of Kathleen's husband, a studio-technician, who brings a suit against Stahr for alienating his wife. On the other hand, Stahr finds it difficult to accept Kathleen as his wife because she is "poor, unfortunate, and tagged with a middle-class exterior which doesn't fit in the grandeur Stahr demands of life." The struggle, both inner and outer, is too much for his failing health but, in spite of his grave illness, he gives a heroic fight on all fronts. When Brady hatches a plan for his murder, Stahr loses patience and resorts to Brady's own methods. He employs gangsters for killing Brady and as per the arrangement leaves for New York by plane. But on the way, he is disgusted with the realisation that in arranging the murder this way, he too has fallen to the level of

145 Fitzgerald, Tycoon, p. 131.
Brady. His remorseful decision to call off the murder by wiring from the next airport does not materialize because before that the plane crashes and he is killed in the accident. Through the death of the last tycoon in the movie-world who rose to the highest position believing in the American dream, Fitzgerald bemoans the collapse of all the values that once nurtured the society. Stahr clung to his faith and values which were outmoded in the changed American context and was, therefore, crushed by the connivance of the greedy self-seekers and the mob-rule. The last apostle of individualism died with Stahr and the American dream was finally buried in the cold grave.

The Fitzgerald protagonist, thus we conclude, is a representative figure of the post-war generation who has been brought up believing in the American dream. He invariably comes of a comparatively humbler background, but, through his unswerving dedication to his ideals, makes his way through to the top. But the innocent seeker of the Dream is unaware of, or ignores, the radical changes that have shaken the very foundations of the society it was based on. The society that has been corrupted by the gross materialistic outlook gives a series of blows to the protagonist as he confronts it with his sincerity, honesty and diligence. He fights a heroic, though losing, battle and is doomed to fail as his credo no longer holds any validity. But his various experiences in the society bring out the utter
selfishness and irresponsibility of the people around him, and he, without losing his fundamental faith in the American dream, wages a war against the vicious and corrupt society. His struggle is heroic and his inevitable failure, in most cases, rises to tragic heights. The tragic vision of Fitzgerald and the tragic dimensions of his protagonists have been analysed in the following chapter.