

REVISITING LITERARY, MYTHOLOGICAL AND FOLKLORISTIC PERSPECTIVE IN FITZGERALD'S THE GREAT GATSBY AND THE LAST TYCOON

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Abstract

In American literature, the relationship between literature, folklore, mythical patterns and archetypal figures is complex. Writers concerned with creating conscious work of art like Mark Twain, Melville, Steinbeck, Hemingway and FitzGerald used folklore and myths functionally and not merely as providing transcripts from life. The charm for all these writers was naivete' of their conviction of success in the stories and fables, which often began in childhood. They also believed in the gospel of prosperity, which assured that their hardwork will be rewarded. This belief in wonderful future eventually culminated in the genesis of American Dream. The Adamic myth propelled the American Dream to great heights, relating itself directly to a desire for spiritual and material improvement. Such a tendency became more pronounced and writers found themselves torn between mutually exclusive cultural imperatives. The paper adopts FitzGerald's notion of myth, orality and folklore as a way to interrogate the seemingly nostalgic strain of American modernistic fiction produced in the early decades of the 20th century. The first part argues, that how he reaches comparable insights into the ideological dimensions of the struggle to rehabilitate oral narrative practices. The second part take these insights as the point of departure for an examination of FitzGerald's novels, The Great Gatsby and The Last Tycoon as an affiliated attempt to create an attempt to recreate or refashion the fairy tale as compensatory response to the burdens of every day existence in urban- industrial modernity. This paper generates a perspective that parallels FitzGerald's brief speculations on the folkloric and mythological genre.

Key words: myth, orality, folklore, ideological dimensions.

In American literature, the relationship between literature, folklore, mythical patterns and archetypal figures is subtle and complex. What was initially borrowed from European tradition gradually grew into a literary tradition and folk tradition that had a distinctive cultural identity. 'Folklore and archetypal myths in American literature were used in two ways: passively as a transcript or actively and functionally. Writers concerned with creating conscious works of art, like Mark Twain, Melville, Steinbeck, Hemingway and FitzGerald, used folklore and myths functionally and not merely as providing transcripts from life. The charm for all these writers was the naiveté. of their conviction of success in the stories and fables, which often began in childhood. They also believed in the gospel of prosperity, which assured that their hardwork will be rewarded. This belief .in wonderful future eventually culminated in the genesis of American Dream. America came to be looked upon as .secular garden of Eden with the image of the American Adam as the central driving, motivating and intoxicating image. The Adamic myth propelled the American Dream to great heights, relating itself directly to a desire for spiritual and material improvement. In Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman, the American Dream was an ideal vision for individual and national transcendence During the crucial metamorphosis from the imitative to the optative phase of the American Literary thinking and expression, the concept of the American came to occupy the centre-stage. Innocence and tragedy and transcendentalist optimism, all these cohered conceptually to inspire an obsessive proclivity toward recapturing the original state. But the burgeoning of the American economy and individual wealth propelled a fairy-tale view of life, with the Horatio Alger myth, of a rags to riches boom, the rich girl as the dream girl and ultimate success turned the dream into a materialistic vision for selfish ends A running feud between materialism and idealism or between reality and fables became a chronic paradox for every American individual. The American writer with a pronounced sociological bias found himself torn between mutually exclusive cultural imperatives. Repeatedly

in his fictional work, he tried to reconcile materialism which he could not accept with an idealism that he could not realize. Such a tendency became more pronounced and disturbing in context of the reader's perspective from the late 1920's to the post-second world war era. A critique of the spiritual poverty of consumerism, the alienation and anomie of urban life, cultural disintegration, social fragmentation and the loss of central nourishing values, were expressed by writers like Henry James, Mark Twain, John Steinbeck, Arthur Miller etc. But F. Scott Fitzgerald's novels, *The Great Gatsby* and *The Last Tycoon* comprises a combination of mythological, folkloristic and anthropological approaches.

In fact in his boyhood, F. Scott Fitzgerald sometimes told the story that as an infant he had been left on his parents doorstep, wrapped in a blanket bearing the royal name *Stuart*. He had, in fact, been born to his own parents, Edward and Mollie Fitzgerald, on Sept. 24, 1896, in the city of St. Paul, Minnesota. But the story is in a certain sense true, insofar as it reveals his imaginative origins as a fairy-tale prince who has somehow, wrongly, been given the social garments of a middle class youth. This founding fantasy persisted throughout Fitzgerald career. In boyhood, dreams began a commitment to romantic largeness which led Fitzgerald to his exploration of the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby* (1925) to the very end, in his last unfinished novel *The Last Tycoon* (1941) in Monroe Sathr as an earthly prince who descends from the heavens to the "warm darkness" of the Hollywood dream capital. *The Great Gatsby* gets modeled on the writer's, own faith in life. Fitzgerald creates a character that represents an early American in whom the dream is very much alive. The plot of the *The Great Gatsby* unfolds with the development of the protagonist's seemingly mysterious character. The story is narrated by Nick Carraway a mid westerner who is a graduate and sells bonds in New York City. He rents a house on West Egg, Long Island, with Jay Gatsby as a neighbour and the latter wants to review his love affair with Daisy Fay with the help of Nick. The reappearance of Daisy, a former love, becomes crucial in determining the final outcome of the protagonist's fate. Daisy Fay is already married to Tom Buchanan, yet Gatsby wants to recreate his romantic past and repeat the honeymooned middle of a previous romantic affair. Daisy's husband Tom Buchanan has an extra marital affair with Myrtle Wilson. Daisy meets Gatsby finding it difficult to ignore him, yet sticks to her husband with an apparent fidelity. One day Daisy and Gatsby are driving back to Long Island from a party in New York, and they run down Myrtle Wilson accidentally. Daisy does not reveal the reality about the accident to her husband as it is she, who through rash driving hits the woman. To settle scores with Gatsby as his wife's lover, Tom incites George Wilson to kill the protagonist as an act of revenge over the death of Myrtle. Myrtle's husband, deranged by grief, walks to Gatsby's house and shoots him before killing himself too. Thus the story of Gatsby comes to illustrate the fate, ironic and tragic, of the modern American individual whose hopes and aspirations, innocence and heroism, gets obliterated and annihilated in a society that has become fetish, a microcosm of evil and corruption, decadence and degeneration. Ironically enough, the hero, Jay Gatsby, willingly contributes to the hastening of his own apocalypse.

The essential details of the situation develop through three distinct and separate social spheres; East Egg with its affluence and prerogatives, the valley of Ashes, where the lower middle class has a hazy existence, and West Egg an upper middle class suburb inhabited by the rich. These three different social categories have equations thereby illustrating different psychological characteristics of the characters, their diverse aspirations and ambitions and different social environments from which they spring. The evolution of Gatsby's dream is the history of his involvement with a social class, the American rich. The turbulent imaginings of his adolescence first takes shape in the scheme of self-advancement which he draws up in imitation of Benjamin Franklin and Horatio Alger. At this time, he has plans to make himself rich, but no clear mental picture of what wealth and success would be like. This gap is partially filled when Dan Cody's Yacht anchors off the Lake Superior shore, and Gatsby meets Cody himself. At once Cody, the Western tycoon, becomes Gatsby's image of the wealthy and successful man. He changes his name from Jimmy Gatz to Jay Gatsby in an attempt to embrace this new conception in all its aspects. Gatsby sees the acquisition of wealth as essentially an activity of the frontier "if not the actual geographical and historical frontier, then the non-man's land between business and criminality." (Way 100)

Nick's relationship with Buchanans is strengthened through Jordan Baker and consequently Nick become inspite of his reluctance involved in Gatsby pursuit of Daisy, the material symbol of his dream. The chaos of Gatsby's world requires some judgment vis-a-vis a set of standards and that is provided by the narrator. The Hero's first appearance is in his garden at night looking out at the single green light which symbolizes his dream. He is content to be alone and emerges as a "mythic character, expressing the destinies, aspirations of a modern man" (Bewley 271). He is a mystery in minds of those people who're entertained at his parties. Nobody Knows Gatsby yet his hospitality, everybody accepts. He gives lavish and gorgeous parties to many unknown people, playing host to nearly half of the rich elite of New York. "In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars." (41)

This almost enigmatic aloofness and near alienation of Gatsby from the social crowd frequenting his parties, speaks about the predicament of an individual who as a modern Narcissus illustrates the malaise afflicting his sociological environment. His guests are:

the embodiments of illusions, they are as ephemeral as time itself, but because their illusions

represent the distortions and shards of some shattered American dream the time table they adorn is in effect July 5th the day following the great national festival when the exhausted holiday crowds, as spent as exploded fire-crackers returned to their homes. (Bloom 37)

Gatsby creates the whole decor for the sole purpose of staging a dramatic reunion with Daisy. This unswerving desire to renew a passionate affair with a lady love, now a married woman, symbolizes a kind of demonic erotic lust exercising a stranglehold over an individual, who in spite of his materialistic affluence and splendor cannot resist the corrosion eating at the very vitals of crumbling and degenerated society. Daisy's charm involves a subtle fusion of two powerful sources of attraction, sex and money; in other words money becomes sexually desirable. This quality is concentrated in her voice, the one facet of a beauty which can never fall short of Gatsby's dream. It is Gatsby himself who uncovers the secret of those elusive cadences when he remarks with impressive simplicity: "Her voice is full of money that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the gingle of it, the cymbal's song of it. High in a white palace the king's daughter, the goldengirl..." (115)

Although Gatsby's quest leads him into a vast material wilderness of illusions, the hero still retains the traditional legacy of eternal promise of his catholic upbringing yet his misdirected abortive search for transcendence amid the material promises of the American dream becomes a futile exercise. His meeting with Daisy at Nick's house makes him feel that he has achieved the impossible and realized his ambition to relive the past. Nick warns him that he can't repeat the past, but Gatsby says, "Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why of course you can!" (106)

Unfortunately Gatsby never recognizes the grandeur or the immaturity of his romantic vision. He never completely sees through the ultimate limitations of his aspirations. In any vision of the world, man is always subject to time and mutability. But when individual like Gatsby strives on earth for an ideal world of youth and beauty that is beyond time, he is both overwhelmed and damned. Fitzgerald, unlike Gatsby, knew that man was always engaged in a struggle with time and decay. One could never arrest the passage of youth, sustain an idealized moment of love forever or repeat the past. Failing to realize the destructiveness of time, Gatsby tries to live in a world where past, present and future is all one. The ultimate result of his effort is "unutterable depression" and failure a "walk up and down a desolate path of fruit rinds and discarded favours and crushed flowers." (106)

At the end of the novel, in spite of all his wealth and possessions, Gatsby is alone and helpless while waiting in vain for Daisy's phone call. The dream that gave meaning has disappeared forever and with it, his hopes for true identity. When the dream collapses, his platonic conception of himself and his whole belief in himself and in life, crumbles too. Fitzgerald comments on Gatsby's state of disillusionment immediately before his death. "He must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream." (129)

These words also convey Fitzgerald's maturest vision of American society as a world too brittle, fragile and shallow to entertain and foster any type of individual innocence, heroism or resurgence. Gatsby in spite of his dream and his injured innocence alternately gets sacrificed at the hands of an evil and animalistic society. The theory of the myth of self-made man equates material success with ultimate ethical and spiritual virtues, Gatsby fails to solve this contradiction and hence, tragedy is inevitable. A senseless act of violence closes Gatsby's romantic quest. His fate has universal application.

By making the American dream metaphor for the essential human ambition to transcend limitations, Fitzgerald makes Gatsby, a twentieth century version of Icarus. As such Gatsby is revised not so much into a real person as into a mythical one. (Eble 115)

In trying to transcend 'limitations,' Gatsby, like Icarus, the son of Daedalus, 'flies' too high. The 'wings' of his being fall apart, the "wax" of the hero's self melts and he drowns himself in a wilderness of ruin and disaster. Jay Gatsby does seem to acquire the status of an *alazonic* pagan god, but the irony and the apostasy simply destroy him. The mythical Icarus represents vaulting human ambition, the irresistible desire to "soar" too high often proves ruinous. Jay Gatsby can be likened to the Greek sun-god, Apollo. As an Apollonian narcissist, Gatsby drowns himself in a "whirlpool", a "vortex" of youth, romance, and spiritual energy. As Apollo chased the nymph Daphne, Gatsby chases Daisy thereby inviting the nemesis upon himself. Dreams and fantasies cannot become realities. Gatsby overlooks the "reality" of Daisy's true nature, submerging himself totally into the "dream" of her nymph-like essence. Out of nowhere emerges the "satyr" George Wilson to "conquer" the ironic modern "Apollo" through brute animalistic violence. The American dream lies in tatters.

In addition to the enriching use of Greek myth, Fitzgerald has also drawn upon Christian myth. At the end of *The American Adam*, R.W.B Lewis has placed Gatsby in an Adamic tradition in American literature, describing him as a "self-created innocent". (197) But Gatsby is also an Adam beguiled and by the end fallen from his paradise into the world; his garden becomes an Eden in ruins, Fitzgerald comments that on his last day of his life, Gatsby, "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." (153-4)

If there is a paradise lost, and a lower order of mortal existence, there is also a underworld, or hell that is a

valley of ashes. The world of the rich, corrupt and money crazy easterners is presented as a waste land, and the suggestion of life and birth associated with East Egg provides an ironic framework to the whole thing. Fitzgerald borrowed the images from T.S. Eliot's "The Wasteland" to help communicate the sense of desolation and spiritual decay in a land of stony rubbish. This tension and ambiguity persist into the famous ending where Fitzgerald recreates the American dream, "The dream of an innocent pastoral America created by man's capacity for wonder and [which he] also sees ... as a nostalgic desire for, that which time itself defeats." (Bradbury 89)

Finally, it can be said that Fitzgerald has anchored *The Great Gatsby* in the bosom of a national myth. Lionel Trilling, among others, has commented on Gatsby as an embodiment of the American Dream. In this context he observes:

For Gatsby, divided between power and dream, comes inevitably to stand for America itself. Ours is the only nation that prides itself upon a dream and gives its name to one, "the American dream". We are told that 'the truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God [...]. Clearly it is Fitzgerald's intention that our mind should turn to the thought of the nation that has sprung from its "Platonic conception" of itself. To the world it is anomalous in America, just as in the novel it is anomalous in Gatsby, that so much raw power should be haunted by envisioned romance. (Bloom 19)

The corruption of Gatsby world and the collapse of his hopes indicated that somewhere, something had gone intrinsically wrong with American society. Fitzgerald begins by exposing the corruption of the dream in industrial and urbanized America. He climaxes it by discovering that the pursuit is universally seductive and perpetually damned.

Thus *The Great Gatsby* becomes a cumulative compendium of several recurring myths of American mind and particularly the myth of the self-made man, who eventually becomes an ironic *Alazon* wrestling with the American Dream. Fitzgerald himself became the ultimate exemplar of the "Romantic fantasy, descended from the Renaissance, of personal ambition and heroism, of life committed to or thrown for, some ideal of the self" (Hoffman 238). History, myth and personality together, illuminate the ironic vision of American and the American Dream. It is the same kind of vision which dominated the novelistic world of *The Last Tycoon* (1941), a novel left incomplete at the time of Fitzgerald's premature death in 1940.

The central protagonist is Monroe Stahr, whose quest for heroism proves disintegrative. Whereas *The Great Gatsby* treats the American Dream almost allegorically, *The Last Tycoon* "shows the fable made actuality" (Brucoli 493). The novel becomes thematically and symbolically, an aborted Dream of a receding frontier. The locale is a mining town built on an edifice of motivating illusions and hallucinogenic hopes. As a maiden venture, the author talks about moral attitude vis-a-vis the world and the temporary standards it flaunts. The novel epitomizes a tougher, pragmatic and even phenomenological stance towards history and personality. *The Last Tycoon* weaves a life in an American context of business and technology. Like Nathanael West's *The Day of The Locust* (1939), *The Last Tycoon* as well, beams the American film world as a dream dump, a microcosm of illusions and aspirations.

As a high-powered Hollywood producer, Stahr at thirty-five is at the peak of his influence and productivity. Since the death of his beloved wife, he has, as a kind of compensation, driven himself in his work to the point of emotional and physical exhaustion. Although pursued by Cecilia Brady, a pretty young woman, his interest is aroused only by Kathleen Moore, an English woman who resembles his wife. His encounter with Kathleen, although romantically consummated, comes too late. It fails to prevent her planned marriage to an American, who had previously extricated her from an unhappy life with a displaced European King. Stahr's predicament comes as a labour problem of the studio, especially the communist manipulation of the workers. He also finds himself deeply involved in a power struggle with Cecilia's corrupt and scheming father, Pat Brady. In all the liaisons, double-dealing and black mailing Stahr attempts to maintain his moral equilibrium, yet gets entangled in an encapsulating malignant morass. Like Jay Gatsby, Monroe Stahr too finds himself at the receiving end in a corrupt, scheming and cliché-ridden society. But unlike the other heroes, Stahr decides to pay back animalism with animalism. He plots Brady's murder and just when he realizes the degradation involved in the act and decides to call it off, he gets killed in a plane crash.

Stahr, pitted against the backdrop of Hollywood, functions as the spokesman of the dreams, his fellow Americans nourish. As in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*, California in *The Last Tycoon* becomes America's last frontier, with Hollywood as a part of it, where the protagonist acts the role of a pioneer. Hollywood not only speaks the nation's collective dreams but manufactures them as well. If the movies made the dreams which America craves, than they were more than just an art form, they were a focal point of national culture moulding a nation's destiny "Dreams hung in fragments at the far end of the room, suffered analysis, passed -to be dreamed in crowds, or else discarded" (225).

Monroe exerts a magnetic power over his workers. All the same, paradoxically, he is the last tycoon, the fast fading Adam. Stahr's ideas of executing a large, complex business enterprise are primitive and old fashioned. He arrogates every detail and decision to himself and as such fails to rise above the patronizing mind set

in labour relations. The Hollywood of Stahr's day is already extinct, and nobody has captured its essence more vividly than FitzGerald. By portraying in detail a day in the life of the hero, the author "captures the essence of a fabulous industry and a bygone era." (Miller 155). Hounded by visitors, by phone calls and by directors and writers, Stahr is usually surrounded by builders and owners at an executive luncheon. He views rushes in his private theatre. The narrative presents the picture of the modern American individual wrestling with varied occupations, desperately clinging to some sort of satisfaction. Stahr maintains his cool through a multitude of demands.

Art and Profit determine the essence of this dream-dump. Stahr's literacy level is poor, he still manages to, "climb out of a thousand years of Jewry into the late eighteenth century. He could not bear to see it melt away – he cherished the parvenu's passionate loyalty to an imaginary past" (291). The hero's own nostalgia, checks against the romantic pulls of the past. Stahr appears. as a "perpetual innocent" to whom things happen. He makes nothing happen himself, except his own self. It is his dreamy moon light – Eden, which ultimately swallows him. Stahr's innocence and heroism, finally, evaporate into the realms of darkness and ruin. He meets a violent death: Cain slays Abel and the "deluge" has to be imminent.

Stahr in his haunting search for the woman, who resembles his dead wife, reminds us of Gatsby's determined pursuit of Daisy. In spite of Stahr's love affair with an "imaginary past" (291), Kathleen awakes his passion for life in the present. After he and Kathleen make love at his unfinished Malibu beach house, he comes alive to the rhythm of land and sea and sky. To stimulate his desire, she confesses "I'm rather a trollop" (260). She is a mother by instinct, a trollop by necessity, who begs to be made respectable. We learn about Kathleen through Stahr's consciousness a perception that is unreliable because of his own ambivalent desires. Kathleen, however, responds to her own great need for security by marrying the American who had rescued her, as pointed out earlier. Her rescuer returns to Hollywood, unexpectedly, the next day. She is a sophisticated, worldly woman who never loses sight of her lowly origins "She was a European, humble in the face of power, but there was a fierce self-respect that would only let her go so far" (290). The illusion of Kathleen as Minna is Monroe's projection of his own unconscious wish to be joined through love with death: In love with Minna and death together –with the world in which she looked so alone that he wanted to go with her there" (268). For Stahr, Kathleen becomes the "tantalizing female, a physical object of desire which is sought as possession ..." (Frye 149). Yet Stahr realizes, that, he was not born to love and intimacy. He worked hard to shape the raw materials of his personality into a sensibility, capable of an intimate relationship:

Like many brilliant men, he had grown up dead cold. Beginning at about twelve, probably, with the total rejection common to those of extraordinary mental powers, ... - a mess – all a lie – and a sham -, he swept it all away, everything, as men of his type do; and then instead of being a son-of-a-bitch as most of them are, he looked around at the barrenness that was left and said to himself, "This will never do". (269)

Tolerance, affection, and kindness become Stahr's motivating catalysts. That's why he desired to consign himself wholly to another individual. And this opportunity is offered to him in the meeting with Kathleen. Monroe, however, chooses to remain in his world of properties and discarded celluloid footage where life is defined by scripts and scenarios. Both as an artist and as a man of action, the hero is raised almost to the level of the cultural giants of the renaissance. The same idea is conveyed when the narrative records that, "he had a long time ago run ahead through trackless wastes of perception into fields where very few 'men were able to follow him" (183). Perhaps, like Icarus, Stahr has "flown" too high on unpredictable wings, to fathom the world as a young man:

And while he was up there he had looked on all the kingdoms with the kind of eyes that can stare 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. (186)

Idealists cannot survive in a demonic world. The promises Stahr nourished as a young man disintegrate into nothingness. Hope and innocence get extinguished in a grim and pathetic funeral. Monroe Stahr is the absurd and the activist. He embodies "the disjunction between the probable and wonderful..." (Hendin 10). Climactically, vis-a-vis the ultimate fate of Monroe Stahr, he exemplifies the comic vision of absurdity. *The Last Tycoon*, as Depression Years Hollywood fiction, become an absurdist novel more realistic than being a mere text of Adamic failure and Quixotic redemption. A multitude of characters emerge on the scene of action. Brady, the father of Cecilia, the narrator, is the natural opponent of Stahr. He is a typical mean merchant, interested only in making money, whose motivations are dictated by "Wall Street" ethics. He remains friendly towards Stahr as long as the latter is productive and useful. But begins to turn against him as soon as he realizes the artistic and idealistic aspects of Stahr's character. His opposition becomes greater when he discovers that Stahr is honest. The union leaders respect and understand Stahr's efficiency and fair play, and his sense of responsibility to his men. Yet, they oppose his methods and his despotic individualism. Stahr cannot ally himself with Brady nor compromise with the union and as a result, he is destroyed by an external rather than internal conflict.

The Achilles Heel of Stahr is his transcendentalist dream, yet his irresponsible romanticism denies his dream. He has, in this context been described as:

The self made man whose destruction is brought about by the business organization that his talents and imagination have created. His studio has become so large and complex that he can no longer control its destiny. Instead, he is caught between the divisive forces that are fighting for domination. (Curnutt, *Cambridge* 80)

Stahr never doubts or betrays his values in the battle with Pat Brady over studio control. Brady, basically, represents the world of corrupt and brutal force, besides the world of Wall Street and competitive acquisition. He is a secular satan, let loose in society to create anarchy and confusion.

As an American dreamer, Stahr like all of his ilk cherishes the Christian doctrine that: "the Kingdom of God is within you". The paradox comes when Stahr, toward the end of the novel's narrative, has a fight with the communist party leader Brimmer, which leaves him weak and broken. FitzGerald himself disagreed with communist ideology.

Another fascinating theme in the novel is inspired by a Hindu mythological tradition. It is introduced with the appearance of Kathleen riding on the head of Siva. Illusion and a mistaken identity coupled with transformation, are the keynotes of this episode, reinforced by FitzGerald's inaccuracy in describing the male deity, Siva as a "goddess". Siva or Shiva is associated, "with the antithetical cosmic forces: mystical stillness (yoga) and cosmic rhythm (dance); with universal destruction and recreation and fertility" (Gallo 118). Siva's antithetical movements proclaim that in the Hindu cosmos there is a constant flux. In an ever-evolving universe of changing forms, it is difficult to distinguish illusion from reality. It is Siva who is the destroyer of illusions. Reality is antithetical to Hollywood, a world that thrives on artifice, illusion, deceit. In the episode of Kathleen on the head of Siva, illusion reigns. In the moonlight Monroe mistakes Kathleen for Minna Davis, but her physical proximity begins to dispel the illusion for Monroe, "she had no world at all except the idol's head, the half open door." (234) Monroe offsets the intrusion of reality by relegating Kathleen to the world of pictures. The movie producer functions most comfortably through the artifice of life on film – through imitations of life captured in celluloid squares. Thus, illusion reigns supreme in the fictional cosmos of *The Last Tycoon*.

As a Tycoon, Monroe Stahr confronts life's complexities with a vision grander than ordinary human consciousness. He tries to impose Apollonian order upon his universe. He remains a player to the last till the air crash claims him. Stahr's funeral was to be presented in detail as "an orgy of Hollywood servility and hypocrisy" (307). Cecilia reflects that if Monroe were present at his obsequies, he would dismiss the spectacle as 'trash'. Such, at least, is the impression conveyed by FitzGerald's posthumous fragment of a novel. He knew that the story of America has an endless succession of takes but no 'final script'.

Monroe Stahr's Adamic decline and sudden tragic end together symbolize a secular mishmash of moralistic "Puritanism", secular "humanism" and romantic "idealism". FitzGerald's dreamers like Monroe Stahr and Gatsby, become *alazonic* personages who eventually end as *ironic* pharmakoses, sacrificing themselves on the bed-rock of their quixotic redemptions. All dreams get deconstructed as utopian longings. The secular, modern American Adam fails in his personal "Odyssey" only to emerge as a god of his blighted universe. *The Last Tycoon*, eventually, projects Monroe Stahr as a dreamer whose Dream, like the Rook of Prometheus becomes a multifaceted "Instrument of torture" and a monument of folly"! Thus FitzGerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* and *The Last Tycoon*, are an affiliated attempt to recreate or refashion the fairy tale as compensatory response to the burdens of everyday existence in urban-industrial modernity.

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