

The Gatsby and Henry Morgan - In Pursuit of Happiness

Dr.K.Sarojadevi,

Professor & Head, H&S, Narayana Engg. College, Nellore.

ABSTRACT: *Ethics, as viewed by Aristotle, is an effort to reach our highest goal or highest good that is happiness. According to him, moral virtues and desire-regulating character traits are aimed at human well-being. He preaches that the rational soul must dominate the irrational or vegetative faculty to suppress the appetites. His morality requires a standard which will not only regulate the inadequacies of absolute justice but also an idea of moral progress.*

*This idea of morality is brought into focus in the novels, **The Great Gatsby** of F.Scott Fitzgerald and **Cup of Gold** of John Steinbeck. Like Aristotle, Fitzgerald opposes the idea of achieving happiness through satisfying pleasures, honor or riches. In **The Great Gatsby** he shows the self-destruction of a man due to his pursuit of happiness. If any person resorts to unfair means in order to satiate his desires, suppressing his rationality; he will definitely destroy him-self. Likewise, Henry Morgan in **Cup of Gold** pursues riches and lust amidst many illegal activities, and he finally envisions his unreasonable dreams dismantled by his irrational pursuit of pleasures.*

Keywords: Rational Faculty, Happiness, Morality, Pleasure, Wealth, Honor etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Aristotle human beings tend to achieve their final goal i.e happiness through fair or unfair means. The choice of means depends on the major influence of their rational or irrational faculties. It is the prime duty of the rational faculty to control the passions and desires of the human beings to make them morally good. Yet, some of them try to crave for happiness through unfair means, as their irrational faculty dominates them.

Aristotle views that Ethics is an endeavor to pursue our chief end or ultimate good. Though many ends of life are only means to further ends, our aspirations and desires must have some final object or pursuit. Such a chief end is universally called happiness. Real happiness can be achieved by the just life of a rational being or in a perfect realization and out working of the true soul and self, continued throughout a life time.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this research paper is to bring into focus the efficacy of the implementation of moral philosophy in human life.

III. DESCRIPTION

The human soul has an irrational element like that of animals, and a rational element which is distinctly human. The irrational element is the most primitive one. It is the vegetative faculty which is responsible for nutrition and growth. An organism in which this functions well may be said to have a nutritional virtue. The second part of the soul is the appetitive faculty which is responsible for our emotions and desires. This faculty is both rational and irrational. It is irrational because animals experience desires. However, it is also rational as human beings have the distinct ability to control these desires with the help of reason. The human capacity to control these desires is called moral virtue, and is the focus of morality. Aristotle notes that there is a purely rational part of the soul, the calculative, which is responsible for the human ability to contemplate reason logically and formulate scientific principles. The mastery of these capabilities or rather emotional control is called intellectual virtue.

Asserting that the proper work of man 'consists in the active exercise of the mental capacities conformably to reason,' he concludes that 'the supreme good of man will consist in performing this work with excellence or virtue: herein he will obtain happiness. And he finds confirmation for his view in its correspondence with views previously enunciated, saying- 'our notion nearly agrees with theirs who place happiness in virtue; for we say that it consists in the action of virtue; that is, not merely in the possession, but in the use. (Spencer 71)

The core of Aristotle's account of moral virtue is his doctrine of the mean. According to this doctrine, moral virtues are desire – regulating character traits which are at a mean between more extreme character traits

or vices. For example, in response to the natural emotion of fear, we should develop the virtuous character trait of courage. If we develop an excessive character trait by curbing fear too much, then we are said to be rash, which is a vice. If on the other extreme, we develop a deficient character trait by curbing fear too little, then we are said to be cowardly, which is also a vice. The virtue of courage, then, lies at the mean between the excessive extreme of rashness, and the deficient extreme of cowardice. He concludes that it is difficult to live the virtuous life primarily because it is often difficult to find the mean between the extremes. The important virtues which Aristotle proposes are courage, temperance, liberality, magnanimity, magnificence, meekness, friendliness, truthfulness and justice.

Morality requires a standard which will not only regulate the inadequacies of absolute justice but also an idea of moral progress. Commenting on the different meanings of justice, Aristotle concludes that “the just will therefore be the lawful and the equal; and the unjust the unlawful and the unequal. But since the unjust man is also one who takes more than his share” (Spencer 197). This idea of morality is preached by the faculty of moral insight. The truly good person is at the same time a person of perfect insight, and a person of perfect insight is also perfectly good. Our idea of the ultimate end of moral action is developed through habitual experience, and this gradually frames itself out of particular perceptions. It is the job of reason to apprehend and organize these particular perceptions.

However, moral action is never the result of a mere act of the understanding, nor is it the result of a simple desire which views objects merely as things which produce pain or pleasure. We start with a rational conception of what is advantageous, but this conception is in itself powerless, without the natural impulse which will give it strength. The will or purpose implied by morality is thus either reason stimulated to act by desire, or desire guided and controlled by understanding. These factors then motivate the willful action.

Freedom of the will is a factor with both virtuous choices and vicious choices. Actions are involuntary only when another person forces our action, or if we are ignorant of important details in our actions. Actions are voluntary when the originating cause of action (either virtuous or vicious) lies in our selves. This is emphasized by Aristotle as it is a fact that the acts called good and the acts called bad, naturally conduce, the one to human well-being and the other to human ill-being. “The ideal man is he who can shape his own destiny by accepting responsibilities for his state and choosing between good and evil.”(Gold 139)

Moral weakness of the will results when someone does what is wrong, knowing that it is wrong, and yet follows his desire against reason. For Aristotle, this condition is not a myth, as Socrates supposed it was. The problem is a matter of conflicting moral principles. Moral action may be represented as a syllogism in which a general principle of morality forms the first i.e. major premise, while the particular application is the second, the minor premise. The conclusion, though, which is arrived at through speculation, is not always carried out in practice. The moral syllogism is not simply a matter of logic, but involves psychological drives and desires. Desires can lead to a minor premise being applied to one rather than another of two major premises existing in the agent’s mind. Animals, on the other hand, cannot be called weak willed since such a conflict of principles is not possible with them.

Aristotle says: ‘For it is the man whose condition, whether moral or bodily, is in each case perfect who in each case judges rightly, and at once perceives the truth . . . And herein it is that the perfect man may be said to differ most widely from all others, in that in all such cases he at once perceives the truth, being, as it were, the rule and measure of its application.’ (Spencer 306)

According to Aristotle, everything that we pursue or aim at is good. Some of the goods we pursue are activities and some are products of activities. There is only one good that Aristotle thinks is pursued entirely for itself, and not for the sake of anything else. That good, according to Aristotle, is happiness. In order to understand what kinds of pursuits are really good for human beings, we need to understand the nature of human happiness. An awareness of fulfillment of objective or subjective desires, totally free from any sense of guilt, leads to contentment. In its fundamental character, it lasts longer as an experience when compared to pleasure. This does not suffer the same or similar inherent dichotomy of pleasure and pain, hence can be pursued limitlessly, both qualitatively and quantitatively without jeopardizing and endangering the safety of the seeker.

Aristotle rejects three common conceptions of happiness – pleasure, honour and wealth. Happiness, he says, cannot be identified with any of these things. Pleasure, he says, is found in satisfying desires but whether or not we can satisfy our desires is a chance as it is at our discretion. If happiness is nothing more than pleasure, then the attainment of the chief human end would not be up to us. We would be slaves to our desires.

Influence of Aristotle’s philosophy on Fitzgerald:

Critiques on Fitzgerald are largely concerned with the extent to which the Aristotelian theme of pleasure is reflected in his works. Some are able to perceive the biographical details of the Fitzgerald behind his characters. They have the tendency of considering him as a novelist of manners despite the impact of the Jazz age. Many of his creative works could, very well be read as fables for Americans. In them the sensibilities of a romantic wonder react with the contemporaries, thereby becoming a moral critique of that civilization.

The characters of Fitzgerald are the potential rebels of a decade that is about to burst into an American situation brought about by political upheavals and social catalysis. Even though Fitzgerald was crazy towards popularity, glamour, wealth etc; his works were a treatise on the hollowness of those qualities and a criticism of the age that he had idolized first. But this idolization was not unqualified by his innate love for the old-world values like honesty, courage and industry. An undercurrent of decency runs through all his characters even though they exhibit meanness in their lives.

Like Aristotle, Fitzgerald opposes the idea of achieving happiness through satisfying pleasures, honour or riches. In *The Great Gatsby* he shows the self-destruction of a man, if he resorts to bad means in order to satisfy his desires oppressing his rationality. D. Bruce Lockerbie states that "In the best work of Fitzgerald *The Great Gatsby* he makes it very clear that personal destruction is unavoidable when a man sets all his values by the standards of riches" (602). *The Great Gatsby* is generally regarded as Fitzgerald's finest work, his Magnum Opus. T.S.Eliot hailed it as the first step that American fiction has taken since he joined the community of authors and Lionell Trilling called it a prose version of Eliot's *Wasteland*. In it, Fitzgerald synthesizes the themes that pervade all his writings; the callous indifference of the wealthy, the hollowness of the American materialism and the sleaziness of the contemporary scenario. Borgen comments that "There is an art of melancholy in *The Great Gatsby* which describes a crude rich man's life in a veil of dream or reverie. It is a novel of an absolutely alienated man and reveals how little we actually know about each other." (N.pag.)

Fitzgerald captivated people's psyche by his depiction of various natural human tendencies in the characters of *The Great Gatsby*. They, with their mere natural nature, makes readers stare at them and explore that these characters reflect the prevailing conflict of human beings, their wavering attitudes and ultimately their ardour for conformity. By this, we become aware that American fiction is not fictitious; rather it confines itself to the common human social sense.

The Great Gatsby is the story of a lonely, doomed dreamer. It introduces to us Jay Gatsby, a successful vaguely disreputable man who has a background of privation and neglect. He has assumed the name Gatsby rather pretentiously as if that one act has erased an eminently forgettable past. Gatsby is an innocent American guy, who struggles to regain his lover Daisy. In his journey of hardships, he emerges as a morally superior person in comparison to his reckless associates. Dyson remarks that:

The Great Gatsby has remained for me one of the few novels in any language (*Tender is the Night* is another), for which the appetite regularly and pleasurably returns. It is one of the books that will endure. English critics need not feel that the novel is essentially American, for it is the story of humanity itself. The novel is the study of a broken society. It is also the story of the faith of mankind which has to break, in the end, against a reality radically incompatible with it... Gatsby's personal fate, and the folie, de-grandeur of the American which he also represents, achieves a universal tragic vision as haunting as any I can think of in a novel. (37-38)

From being a clan digger, he has risen to be a wealthy business man to whom the police commissioner sends a Christmas card every year. He worked hard to achieve the highest social stature in order to marry Daisy, irrespective of time. The material enrichment, however, is unattended by emotional maturity. His conception of himself lacks maturity. He sees himself as a godlike figure destined for great achievements and great happiness. His notion of elegance is his pink suit, silk shirts, cream coloured car and a sprawling mansion with a swimming pool. He always spends time in the company of city officials and rich people with pompous music and scandals in his gardens. His Rolls Royce car is proud of celebrities as its passengers and his station wagon waits outside the railway station for the less known guests. Guests arrive at all his hours between nine in the morning and after midnight.

"People were not invited. They went there" (Fitzgerald 35). They came for the party with simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission. They were all there. The drifters and the strangers, those who chose to dip into the bowls of cool champagne and those who chose to dine at the warmth of the swimming pool. Gaudiness was the operative word in his world and the atmosphere was strange. What we find in the extensive grounds of Gatsby is the post war mood of lavish spending and reckless enjoyment. The well-dressed young Englishmen who came to his party are all looking a little hungry. They all seem to be agonizingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity and how it could all be theirs with a few words in the right key. It's all a magnificent, but at the same times a vulgar world. And the vulgarity is not confined to Gatsby alone. Gatsby's cheapness in tastes matches with the shallowness of his knowledge of people. Never even once, for instance, does he see Daisy's superficiality. His vulgarity has become extreme as he sticks himself to his immense faith in himself and in life's opportunities. It is this idealistic attitude which is motivated by his irrational faculty that has motivated his unreasonable pursuit of his dream. And it is this idealism again that encourages his dream of Daisy and his desire to repeat the past. His sense of purpose is unwavering and he also tries to transform Daisy towards his dream.

Sivaramakrishna keenly observes that "A major weakness in Gatsby's belief about recapturing his romantic past with Daisy is that he comes by his love for her through the peculiarly American obsession: the

glamour and gorgeousness of riches. Gatsby's dream is shaped by the very forces which spell disaster to it" (47). This idealism becomes heroic when compared with the idle, meaningless existence of the Buchanans and the dullness of the Wilsons. At the same time, it loses its lustre, when contrasted with his own vulgarity. William Troy also opines that:

Gatsby is a 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 naïve 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. (12-13)

Building his dream around Daisy, Gatsby has devalued his own idealism. Daisy is primarily materialistic, pays attention to mainly physical objects. Even though she is intelligent, her behaviour is abnormal in some situations. She has become crazy towards Gatsby in the beginning and towards Tom later after the marriage. The vulgarity of Gatsby and the cheapness, even of Daisy, was brought out in a poignant scene in Gatsby's mansion. "Here is Gatsby who had wasted five years and bought a mansion where he dispensed starlight to casual moths" (54). Maxwell Geismar reiterates his view as possession of an image like Daisy is all that Gatsby can finally conceive as success; and Gatsby is meant to be a very representative American in the intensity of his yearning for success. Dyson also feels that:

The romantic promise which in Daisy herself was the merest façade 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 eventually becoming an obsession of the most intractable kind. (43)

The long cherished moment of his dream came now. He opened for Daisy his wardrobes full of silk shirts, with stripes and scrolls of various attractive colours. Suddenly Daisy started crying panicky "They are such beautiful shirts, she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. It makes me sad because I have never seen such beautiful shirts before" (61). George W. Layng keenly observes her foolishness as "In the hellish heat, Daisy struggles to contemplate a continuation of her unwanted married life with Tom Buchanan, now made painful by the renewal of her relationship with Gatsby. 'What'll we do with ourselves this afternoon?' cried Daisy, 'and the day after that, and the next thirty years?'" (94). The pathos of the scene is understandable. Gatsby's idealism can neither be lofty nor noble as the object that he idealizes is a shallow person like Daisy and also his idealization of her stems from a consciousness of her wealth and social stature.

Many half-truths expressed by Gatsby himself and the suspicions of people around him add up to envelop him in a shroud of mystery. He is a penniless young man without a past worth remembering or a future worth hoping about. But he left Daisy believing that he was a person from much the same social stratum as hers and seduced her under false pretences. He had intended probably to recover the past. His quest for the grail has finally landed him up in the East Egg as a corpse.

By confronting Tom with the truth, Gatsby thinks that he can bring back to life the flowery reality of the past. But he is mistaken. A dream, however, fondly and intensely shaped and nurtured; cannot but wither at the assault of inexorable time. He did not realize it till the last breath. He is an example for the self-destruction of a man who cannot realize the result of yielding to his appetites.

Under the craze to make his dream true towards Daisy, he resorted to unfair means and even lies several times. He sounds evasive and his story seems phony. Even the businesses he engaged in along with Wolfsheimer are neither legal nor honourable. Even though he succeeds in seducing her, he felt a sense of moral guilt. In this regard Paul Giles says that "Nevertheless, concludes Carraway, Gatsby must have felt that he had 'paid a high price for living too long with a single dream'" (7).

Gatsby committed himself to the pursuit and possession of Daisy as his own. In this pursuit of Holy Grail, his decline has started. Much has been made of the callousness of the rich in the unmaking of Gatsby. Buchanans, have got a major role in the shattering of his dreams and his death. But it may be observed that even without Tom, his death would have taken place, as Wilson under false impression has killed him. In the words of Neila Seshachari :

The Rig Veda, in a creation legend, states how the Vedic god Indra had to strike down the cosmic serpent Vritra in order to release life-giving waters and bring the world into manifestation. The Christian baptism is a rejuvenation through immersion in life-giving or life-purifying waters. Gatsby's death in his swimming pool thus symbolically becomes the scene of his rebirth and apotheosis. His death, as Wilfred Louis Guerin has remarked, is a 'death by water-rebirth myth.' It is meet that the rain should fall at the time of Gatsby's funeral. The rain is a fertility symbol- it rejuvenates the hero and completes his apotheosis. When he emerges from his final test, Gatsby truly rises to the stature of a mythic hero. (98)

But Gatsby cannot be faulted for his efforts at preserving the integrity of his family. Paul Giles suggests that “The corrupt means Gatsby uses to achieve his ends have not altered his fundamental integrity, his spiritual intactness” (2).

The tenacity with which he holds on to his goal morally blinds him to facts. Gatsby is so blind that the realization of his dream will break the house of Tom. The key to their future lies with Daisy. By leaving Tom she can keep Gatsby’s dream true; by choosing to live with Tom she can shatter his dream. Thus she holds in her hands the future of Tom and Gatsby. But she realizes her moral responsibility, so she left Gatsby. But in the beginning Daisy was not clear in her ways; she has become addicted to a change in her life and misled Gatsby also. George W.Layng comments that “Daisy struggles with the senselessness, not of the temperature, but of the present; she longs to return to her past with Gatsby but is blocked by the oppressive heat of her here and now. Daisy, like Gatsby and Nick, beats against time”(94). In this wrong impression, Gatsby demands of Daisy an absolute denial that she ever loved Tom; “Just tell him the truth – that you never loved him – and it’s all wiped out for ever.” (82)

For all the five years he has been waiting for his fortune which is just to get an answer from her about her love of him. His identity and life both have been built on faith in and hope for Daisy. Hence, he behaves abnormal in this situation forcing Daisy to choose between him and Tom. She escapes to give a clear answer in the beginning. Hers is, however, no moral dilemma as it involves for her only pragmatic considerations. The choice is between riches and status on the one hand and riches and romance on the other. “Oh! You want too much.” She cried to Gatsby “I love you now isn’t that enough? I can’t help what’s past. I did love him once – but I loved you too.”(82)

Daisy has brutally failed him. He is shocked with her expression “I loved you too.” The uniqueness of his dream has been shattered with that one word “too”; but he persists in his efforts and tries to pressurize her to leave Tom. Dyson says that “Gatsby is tolerant of other people, but would escape from the sloughs of emotional despond into some simple pattern of control and acceptance” (40). Tom is equally childish saying that he is going to take better care of her from then on forgetting that he has an affair with Myrtle. His attitude was observed by Fryer as “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...” (43) For a moment, Daisy is non-chalant; as she has to select two rich men, one with a dubious past and the other with a solid past. The uncertain look on Tom’s face and his repentance has changed her. She can hardly afford to be associated with a man whose credentials won’t stand the scrutiny of society. She does not love Tom, but she acquires his selfishness. Fryer finds her nature as “It is significant that she planned to marry one man and wound up marrying another, for her need was not for any particular person (unless it was for Gatsby, who didn’t come to her), but simply for an attainable partner who could provide-though marriage the sense of identity and stability she so desperately craved” (51). Tom is proud at her introspection. “Go on, He won’t annoy you. I think he realizes that his presumptuous little flirtation is over” (83). He forgot that he is the cause for the destruction of a man by saying so.

Gatsby shares with Tom his amorality which makes both of them indifferent to the fate and feelings of others. Even though he has an unshakable commitment towards an ideal, his destruction of his energy and time for the association with money has brought about a debasement of his dream. To make his dream come true, he has built a fortune on fraud and violence. He is thus a perverted version of the self-made man. He is destroyed by his yielding to the appetitive faculty. But Dyson comments that:

He is apart from the chaos which his money has mysteriously called into being, presiding over it with benevolent detachment: considerate to his fellows when they are careless, decorous when they are disorderly. As the party finishes, he remains alone on the steps of his mansion- his formality and his solitude an intriguing enigma that has still to be explored. (43)

Daisy starts to play with his fragile dream partly for their youthful romance and partly to make Tom jealous. Later, she conspires with Tom for the sacrifice of Gatsby for her own safety; and is in a sense an accomplice in the final crime. After the accident that kills Myrtle, Nick observes Daisy and Tom for the last time through their kitchen window. They weren’t happy, and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale-and yet they weren’t unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air or natural intimacy about the picture, and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together. Fryer emphasizes her attitude as “But Daisy still needs the security of an established code of behavior, and she finds it easier to leave her lover than her husband.”(54)

An unrealistic vision about an unworthy woman sums up the substance of Gatsby’s tragedy. His romantic quest for perennial youth and undying beauty is an unintentional rejection of the very condition of human existence. What he wishes is to fight with the temporal order of the universe. It involves a repudiation of these laws of nature, so it is fated to fail. As he sought unending pleasure for his happiness, he had to reach such a tragical end of his life. His love for her cries out to him to protect her, to shield her, to support her. Simultaneously, his love is great enough to make him do what he knows he must do, if she is ever to be a whole

person. Many times he tries unsuccessfully to let go his hold on her. But always when he turns away from her into himself he left her holding nothing in her hands. And he is staring at it, calling it many names, but knowing it was only the hope that he would come back soon.

Gatsby's struggle towards his impossible dream can be studied as the embryonic pattern of the final stage of a mythological hero's journey. This apotheosis, however, is often considered as a "crucifixion". Like Jesus, the mythic hero par excellence, who was crucified as a common criminal, Gatsby is killed. It suggests that Gatsby's moral end falls within the pattern of the mythic heroes. The "extinction" of the hero in death in such cases is only a prelude to the final resurrection or apotheosis. The last scenes of *The Great Gatsby* impart to the reader a philosophical sense of tragedy of a mythic ideal, the American Dream, rather than a sense of his personal tragedy. It is a tragedy of society, of its shallowness, of its false values, and of its blindness. Gatsby, even in death, is stoical and as a matter of fact, his stature may be said to rise in his death.

However, there is an evidence for the moral life of a person in the character of Nick Carraway. Nick, since the very beginning, tries to be conscious of morality and stands for its eternity. He has acquired this sense from his father and declares that he wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention for ever. Dyson affirms as "Carraway is also, by now, converted to Gatsby: 'I found myself on Gatsby's side, and alone.' His final compliment to Gatsby, 'They're a rotten crowd . . . You're worth the whole damn bunch put together'" (47).

Nick Carraway, who stands for the moral order of the universe, is awed by Gatsby's stature in death. Nick's attitude and values reflect a reaffirmation of Gatsby's real strength, which sums up apotheosis and resurrection of the mythic hero. Through his resurrection, the mythic hero enlarges the vision of the common man. For the hero figure is, as Neilaseshashari quotes:

One of those eternal archetypal images which slumber in the depths of every soul and which determine human life and destiny in an unsuspected measure. In this sense, Gatsby, the mythic hero, operates not only at the macrocosmic level but through the linking of the imagination of the common man, at even the microcosmic level. (100-101)

Also Buddick supplements to Gatsby's stature:

In resolving himself backwards out of time and out of his own biological and psychological maturation, Gatsby does not achieve distinctiveness, but the generic humanity that Emerson would transcend. Placing a grotesque materiality before his vision, materiality itself comes to be identified as the enemy. And so he loses the world to the ghostly presences that overtake the material and that consequently he himself must join. (169)

John Steinbeck too has established moral values and their impact in his works. The people who do not agree with the society's thinking are misfits in his novels. They are either destroyed or institutionalized by the society. Steinbeck's concern with morality is visible in all his works from Henry Morgan's amorality to Ethan Hawley's Conversion to Conformity.

John Steinbeck's early novels show that the writer is in search of forms, themes and techniques. The most significant element in these novels is his focus on individuals who set themselves apart from others in their search for a dream i.e., wealth or power or a deeper understanding of man and the universe or a new way of life. The theme of loneliness and of man's mystic identity with the whole universe became a recurrent theme in his later novels. According to Warren French:

What *Cup of Gold* is generically, despite the fancy dress and pseudo seventeenth century conversation, is a modernist tale of alienation and disenchantment, the fictional figure that Henry Morgan most closely resembles is not the swashbuckling captain Blood but a more recent romantic pirate who lived flamboyantly while secretly preying on a complacently trusting society, F.S. Fitzgerald's Jay Gatsby. Both Steinbeck's Morgan and Gatsby are poor sons of what Fitzgerald called 'Shiftless and Unsuccessful farm people'. Both young men take to sea to make their fortunes. Both get new names – 'American Adam' Gatsby invents his; Morgan loots his way to a title. Both become disillusioned opportunists when tricked out of great expectations at the end of apprenticeships, and both resolve not to be duped again. Both seek wealth after being snubbed by fashionable folk, and both embark on a 'grain quest', attracted more by the legend than the person of a fabulously beautiful; seemingly unavailable woman. They win their rights to their choices through derring-do in battles, only to find that the real woman is disappointingly different from what they dreamed.

Gatsby remains a naively romantic figure by keeping faith with his dream even though it destroys him and so remain an inspirational figure in an ash-heap world; in contrast, Morgan sells out for personal security and forsakes his quest for material rather than spiritual reward. He learns that one way to cope with the wasteland is to make oneself at home there rather than persisting in what may prove the fatal folly of transcending it. (39-40)

Steinbeck's first novel *Cup of Gold* is a historical romance. The protagonist Henry Morgan has a romantic view of war as adventure and has a romantic view of the world; but his romantic ideals shatter in the light of actualities and the unreasonable dreams are dismantled by the sordid realities of life. Steinbeck opines Henry Morgan is a boy who had dreams, captured his dreams and saw them die in his arms. He struggled toward

unbelievable beauty and found himself sick with a disease called mediocrity. He married boredom and gradually he was convinced by his boredom that he came to disbelieve in the old years, and died with gratification.

Steinbeck is more attached to the concept of man in relation to men. His Henry Morgan is not a man raised from dead history but is a living man of all ages, times and countries. Steinbeck's vision though fixed on history transcends its borders and in Henry Morgan he can see the whole succession of men falling from a state of illusion to reality, transforming his appetitive soul into rational soul. "The novel dramatizes the protagonist's failure to know himself due to his pre-occupation with self. In *Cup of Gold*, as in the next novel, the hero is not able to merge with the ordinary world and become a group animal; thus he fails to emerge as an ideal man." (Jain 7-8).

Steinbeck emphasizes upon his surveying and establishing this inner change in man among men and it is not, therefore, a merely romantic effort to write a romantic novel. The romantic element is crucial to the building up of the world of temptations, the illusions and the baits that once lure its victim and then ultimately bind him and poison his soul. The image of gold cup and the moon takes the significant position in both the structural and the thematic design of the novel.

The theme of the novel is a romantic ideal versus reality. It presents a clear picture of the bare facts and forces of life. Henry has reflected the figure of a pirate who is driven mercilessly on by two ambitions - to conquer the city of Panama, the cup of gold and to win the love of La Santa Roja, the woman whose beauty had become a legend. "Henry Morgan represents man dictated by his physical self, and ruled by vague animalistic yearnings." (Jain 10)

Occasionally Steinbeck refers to the historical profile of Sir Henry Morgan, a buccaneer. Morgan is a boy who has been kidnapped at Bristol and sold at Barbados. His joining with Jamaica buccaneers is uncertain. After striving hard to occupy several places, he captured Panama. He burnt it and exploited much of its treasures. Even though he was ordered for trial, Charles II forgave him and appointed him as the Governor of Jamaica. According to Richard O Connor, *Cup of Gold* is a first rate historical novel of the more literary type. Man has always been central to history and his doings and his career became signposts on his uncharted journey. Steinbeck's dependence on historical facts marks that he wanted to show a mirror to men with such potentialities as historical figures. It seems that he is interested more in the motivating power than the actual deeds. He turns to human life as being enacted on the psychic and emotional planes rather than as a mere chronological chain of events happening in time and place. He finds his young Henry having such potentialities of history. Henry is shown as a self-centred knight of pure egoism. Later, whatever qualities of mind he develops have the features of a perfect egoist. The traces of spirituality and morality begin to dry up in him in proportion to his appetites of power and wealth. He, therefore, becomes a moral wreck, and a spiritually starved person in search of the Holy Grail. But he is completely opposite to the historical Henry who was morally fit for the quest and the discovery of the Grail. His natural end is bound to be a fall from the perilous hill on which he can climb with sheer animal force but having given up the inner values of life; he can neither sustain himself nor possess the object of his desire. John H. Timmerman says that:

As Henry perceives freedom at this point, he sees himself as wholly autonomous, a law unto himself, unrestricted by civilization; and as he enters his buccaneering career, he becomes more and more the wholly lawless entity, but he also becomes more aware of the hollowness that grows in the pit of his freedom.

Henry had gone out with Grippo in the Ganymede, assured that when his guns roared into a Spanish hull, when he stood embattled on a Spanish deck with cries and clash of iron weapons about him, there would come that flaming happiness his heart desired. These things he had experienced, and there was not even content. The nameless craving in him grew and flexed its claws against his heart. He had thought the adulation of the Brotherhood might salve the wound of his desire; that when the pirates saw the results of his planning and marveled at them, he would be pleased and flattered. And this thing happened. The men fairly fawned on him, and he found that he despised them for it and considered them fools to be taken with such simple things. (52)

Henry is an example for a mis-directed potential soul. Having been inspired by his father, he decides to explore the limitless possibilities of the universe. But, he deviates from that and ran crazy towards wealth and beauty. He is much more influenced by the exploits of Dafydd of Indies. Even though the Indies is referred to a wasteland, he selected it as he feels that it is a suitable place for him to thrive in and prosper. From this experience, Morgan finds the pole star of his bloody ambition. Here one can observe the inner world of Henry, who has shattered the dreams of his parents and betrayed his childhood lover Elizabeth. He burns with a desire for new things and wants to conquer the world.

Henry Morgan has given up all the familial and worldly connections in search of his dream. He locked himself in a cell of egoism. It is best observed when he tells Merlin, "I will come back. Surely I will, when this burning for new things is quenched. But don't you see that I must go, for it seems that I am cut in half and only one part of me here. The other piece is over the sea, calling and calling me to come and be whole" (Steinbeck 19). Howard Levant supports him by saying that "Steinbeck's conception of Morgan asserts that, when the

power of will of an essentially mediocre man is strong enough, it can produce an ideal vision of self that becomes a total self-absorption, and thus the man becomes a monster.” (12)

The vision of an egoist is very absurd and narrow. It is revealed to others rather than to himself, as it obstructs his true vision.

Merlin, his all time companion visualizes Henry’s future in this way, you are a little boy. You want the moon to drink from as a golden cup; and so, it is very likely that you will become a great man if only you remain a little child. All the world’s great have been little boys who wanted the moon; running and climbing, they sometimes caught a firefly. But if one grows to a man’s mind, that mind must see that it can’t have the moon and would not want it if it could- and so , it catches no fireflies. (19)

Merlin’s prophetic statements are a clear representation of the theme of this novel. Still Henry ignores Merlin’s words and is spurred on his way, into the world of temptations which first attracts him and later destroys him both mentally and physically. His journey is incorporated with evil deeds which corrupt him further. He meets Tim, a professional cheat, who sold him as a slave. In the world of Tim, people are deprived of basic human and moral values, in which there is no hope for redemption. Even though he realizes the suffering of fellow beings in the beginning stages; his very nature makes him resort to violence like his master to fulfill his passion. So he rises to the position of the captain by these cruel practices; thereby he becomes a mono-maniac towards his dream. Even he does not have any trace of gratitude towards his master, who treats him like his son. He has become an archetype for the physical and psychological degeneration. In the words of John H.Timmerman:

Manhood consists in learning to compromise between civilization and individual freedom. But Henry is possessed by the moon, and he is desperately lonely. That is the price one pays for absolute freedom: ‘But I think there is more than lust . . . You cannot understand my yearning. It is as though I strove for some undreamed peace. This woman is the harbor of all my questing.

The woman who will be the final harbor of his questing, the Santa Roja, is indeed the symbol of attainment for him, but she succeeds thoroughly and painfully in disclosing to him the vacuity of his own aspiration. While Henry perceives her as a dream goddess, this is a real woman who faces him, and her words flay him like whips. She brings Henry out of the childlike dream to his recognition of manhood -that one must give up a piece of the dream, a part of freedom, to survive in this world: ‘I think I am sorry because of your lost light; because the brave, brutal child in you is dead – the boastful child who mocked and through his mockery shook the throne of God.’ And Henry himself confesses when he attempts to re-enter society: Civilization will split up a character, and he who refuses to split goes under. (52-53)

As he goes on conquering many places, Morgan gains no content and there increases more loneliness in him. Steinbeck tells us that Morgan was alone in his success, with no friend anywhere. The craving of his heart must lie crouched within him. All his fears and sorrows and conceits, his failures and little weaknesses, must be concealed. These, his followers, had gathered to the cry of his success; they would leave him at his first sign of weakness. He is now apprehensive of his own frightening success.

Steinbeck as a great artist employs a number of techniques to dramatize the conflict of the forces of life and their operation upon the human mind. Under this fascination only, Henry has attacked even the people devoted to moral and spiritual order, who call upon Jesus to save them. The Christian values like charity and compassion have been burnt up in the crucible of his ambition and he has been left with only evil, as temptation paralyzed his reason and his conscience has been laid to sleep. Roy S. Simmonds keenly observes this as “One of the main themes of *Cup of Gold* is the way in which the desire for wealth and power can corrupt a man’s soul and eventually subdue the glowing vitality of his spirit.” (4)

Henry conquered Panama with his followers, and his dream girl La Santa Roja. He had to face the first blow of reality when he observes her as a hawk-like appearance. She is the symbol of hollowness, temptation and destruction. Howard Levant supports Henry’s idea of La Santa Roja by commenting that “Morgan’s first interview with Ysobel establishes that she is not a goddess, not the Helen of the New World, but a thoroughly evil woman. She has been raised to greatness, by the intensity of her knowledge of evil and her drive to experience new kinds of evil” (20). When his ego had been hurt by her appreciation of a young buccaneer, he lost his temper and shot him without any guilt. Even though he won the golden cup, the moon became a firefly. Now starts the realization in Henry after his victory.

I find I am tired of all this bloodshed and struggle for things that will not lie still, for articles that will not retain their value in my hands. I don’t want anything more. I have no lusts, and my desires are dry and rattling. I have only a vague wish for peace and the time to ponder imponderable matters. (162)

Even though he repented for these values of life, it is not possible for him to go back and the perverse mind cannot regain its purity. Henry’s adventure at the cost of his moral and spiritual peace turns out to be a misadventure into a kind of imaginary hell. Being isolated, he has been thrown into despair and disillusionment from which he can never be redeemed. Howard Levant confirms that “In essence, Ysobel’s lover had been what

Morgan pretends to be; his strength was a total rejection of the social order. Morgan lives and has always lived (we are told) by the conventional standards of material success and money; he is weak.” (20)

Henry accepts the reality and marries his first love, Elizabeth, a very ordinary girl. And he entered the government of Jamaica as the Lieutenant. In the real world, he is changed from his former position of a master to the present position of a mere puppet of the government he serves.

In the last of stage of his life, his psychological stature is being reflected upon. The scene is symbolic of his own dream introspected by him. He confesses all his sins and feels them by his consciousness. He thinks, “They are moving- I am not moving. I am fixed. I am the centre of all things and cannot move. I am as heavy as the universe. Perhaps I am the universe” (196). It is this immobility that he discovers at the heart of the universe which symbolizes the spiritual barrenness out of which no growth can take place. He seems to be united with the universe. This aspect of introspection is remarked by Vatsyayan as it is conventionally believed that a man in the moment of death or confrontation with death reviews his whole life: that statement is probably not literally true, but there is no doubt that under such comparable conditions a human being lives at intense pressure, reliving, condensed into a few moments. Experiences spread over a span of years.

The author tells that Henry realized that his deeds and thoughts were left to live with death; as all that is good has departed from his consciousness. He discovers death at the heart of the spiritual wasteland. But his discovery does not help him; he dies godless and there was no hope for redemption lying buried under the shattered piles of his own romantic dream the dream of an immature great man to drink the moon as from ‘a golden cup’.

Describing Morgan’s desires as essentially selfish, Lester Jay Marks tells that “The world’s great who have dreamed only of personal power, and have sought to achieve it only through violence, have always failed ultimately. So this Henry Morgan failed in love and happiness: although he achieved his dream of power through violence, it did him little good.” (32)

Although Morgan is obsessed with power and lust, he finds that both his body and mind draws back gradually from physical pleasures. Out of realization he comes to know that his exclusive attention towards material and physical pleasures separate him from mankind, which is an unforgivable sin. At least, on his deathbed, he repents a lot about his evil thoughts and deeds that he had and committed in pursuit of happiness.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, the protagonist never earnestly strives to accept love or to affirm. Redemption is never possible for Gatsby and he is doomed to face his fate for following an impossible romantic vision. The American dream and the American disillusion came together in the character of Gatsby. For all his heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, he suffers a cruel disillusionment. His romantic affirmation has no meaningful purpose and is dislocated and destroyed. He stands as an example for Aristotle’s principle that a man’s yielding to his irrational faculty in pursuit of happiness leads to his destruction.

In Steinbeck’s *Cup of Gold*, the protagonist, Henry Morgan tries to achieve happiness through the dreams of conquering the world and his dream girl La Santa Roja. In search of this fragile dream he resorts to many inhuman activities and causes the plight of many fellow-men. He disintegrates psychologically and spiritually, passing through the allurements of material glory and heightened sensuality. In his conquest, he was bewildered by the mockery of La Santa Roja. Only at his deathbed, Henry is able to realize his failure to attain dignity. Thus, he represents a man dictated by his physical self, and ruled by vague animalistic yearnings. Yet, his impending death denies him the chance to taste the fruits of his redemption.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As Philosophy moulds and builds one’s personality, orders one’s life, regulates one’s conduct, shows one what one should do and what one should leave undone; it’s the writer’s duty to reflect these eternal ideals of life in his works. The philosophical principles are applicable in every walk of human life; which lead them towards a philanthropic society.

WORKS CITED

- [1]. Borgen, Johan. "De Fjerne Zo-or (The Distant 20's) Review of Denstore Gatsby." Trans.Peter Magnus. *Dag Bladet*. (Oslo). 1951. Print.
- [2]. Budick, Emily Miller. "Gatsby and Emerson." Ed. Harold Bloom. *Major Literary Characters*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1980. 161– 175. Print.
- [3]. Dyson, A.E. "The Great Gatsby – Thirty Six Years After". *Modern Fiction Studies* (Spring 1961): 37 – 48. Print.
- [4]. Fitzgerald, F.Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. London: Henemann/ Octopus, 1987. Print.
- [5]. French, Warren. *John Steinbeck's Fiction-Revisited*. New Havenn: Twayne Publishers, 1994. Print.
- [6]. Fryer, Sarah Beebe. *Fitzgerald's New Women, Harbingers of Change*. London: UMI Research Press, 1988. Print.
- [7]. Giles, Paul. "Aquinas vs. Weber: Ideological Esthetics in *The Great Gatsby*". *Mosaic* 2.4 (Fall 1989): 1– 11. Print.
- [8]. Gold, Joseph. *William Faulkner A Study in Humanism From Metaphor to Discourse*. Norman : University of Oklahoma Press,1967.Print.
- [9]. Jain, Suneetha. *John Steinbeck's Concept of Man*. New Delhi: New Statesman Publishing Company, 1979. Print.
- [10]. Jay Marks, Lester. *Thematic Design in the Novels of John Steinbeck*. Paris: Mouton & Co, 1969. Print.
- [11]. Layng, George W. "Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*". *The Explicator* 56. 2 (Winter 1998): 93 – 95. Print.
- [12]. Levant, Howard. *The Novels of John Steinbeck, A Critical Study*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1974. Print.
- [13]. Lockerbie, D. Bruce. *Major American Authors*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc, 1973. Print.
- [14]. Neila Seshachari. "The Great Gatsby: Apogee of Fitzgerald's Mythopoeia". Ed. Harold Bloom. *Major Literary Characters*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1980. 93 – 101. Print.
- [15]. Spencer, Herbert. *The Principles of Ethics.Vol.1*. Indianapolis: LibertyFund, 1978. Print.
- [16]. Sivaramakrishna, M. "The Problem of 'The Will to Believe' in Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* and *The Great Gatsby*." *Osmania Journal of English Studies* VIII (1971): 37 – 51. Print.
- [17]. Simmonds, Roy S. *Steinbeck's Literary Achievement*. Indiana: Ball State University, 1976. Print.
- [18]. Steinbeck, John. *Cup of Gold*. New York : The Viking Press Inc,1929.Print.
- [19]. Timmerman, John H. *John Steinbeck's Fiction, The Aesthetics of the Road Taken*. Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986. Print.
- [20]. Troy, Willam. "Scott Fitzgerald – The Authority of Failure". *Accent* 6.1 (Autumn 1945): 56 – 60. Print.