CHAPTER II

THIS SIDE OF PARADISE AND THE BEAUTIFUL AND DAMNED

Fitzgerald was one of the young intellectuals during the 1920s who emerged on the literary scene with a profound conviction that it is possible to produce serious works of imaginative art from the American experience, holding himself free from all invisible restraints; to discover and reveal a private truth. The confessional essays like *The Crack-Up*, *Bare Life with Care*, *Pasting Together* and *How to Live on $36,000 a Year*, help creating and perpetrating a Fitzgerald legend, as a precocious talent born rather late into the materialistic culture of America. Consciously or unconsciously, most American writers of Fitzgerald's generation were governed by "puritanic individualism." Living between two worlds as it were, Fitzgerald seemed to have contrived to commence his career after one world war and die before another began, but he was incapable of creating a new concept of individualism. The inclination toward a moral life in confrontation with the reality of frustration, stupidity and waste seemed to result in Fitzgerald's *Crack-up*.

The legend projects Fitzgerald as a man torn between
the irresistible hedonistic tendencies and moral instincts; a poor Midwestern boy with a fiery desire to acquire riches in order to realize the promises of life. His personality was shaped at an early age by the contrary temperaments of his parents—an ineffectual gentlemanly father and a domineering, exhibitionistic, neurotic mother. The opportunities stifled by the lack of propensive wealth were let loose by Fitzgerald in his fiction by mysteriously dividing himself into various characters. Fitzgerald had intelligence and the gifts of a genius, to effectively function in spite of the contraries, to be in the game and out of it at the same time, writing for money and at the same time "wanting to preach to people in some acceptable form rather than to entertain them." As Mark Schorer observed, Fitzgerald is "a classic of literary self-revelation." Thus in effect Fitzgerald answers Freud's description of a neurotic, whose literary work can be considered as a "substitute form of dissipation."

The artist finds in art, according to Freud, a substitutive gratification for his 'thwarted desires' . . . who with his special gifts, he moulds his phantasies into a new kind of reality, and concede them a justification as valuable reflections of actual life. Thus by a certain path he actually becomes the hero, king, creator, favourite he desired to be, without pursuing the circuitous path of creating real alterations in the outer world. 2

The mysterious process of creativity may not offer exact
correspondences between the novelist and the protagonist, and the circumstances of the novelist's personal incidence may not be the exact correlative in the fiction.

Fitzgerald found it difficult, therefore, to organize and order the mass of material available from his own personal experiences into epitomes of art in This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned. The emerging socio-economic milieu of the post-war America as he observed and lived in, is a virtue in the novels of Fitzgerald as it provided a setting/cross observed, that "he drew heavily on his own experience, certainly, yet much more often than is usually allowed he transmuted this experience into enduring art" in This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned. Fitzgerald had misplaced emphasis on the sensibilities of youth by over-sentimentalizing the misfortunes of his protagonists like Amory and Anthony, and permitted life to dominate over them as it happened with himself.

To a great extent, the protagonists of This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned resembled their creator Scott Fitzgerald in shaping their fancies and fears, aspirations and frustrations. He included many personal experiences, because they are inherently interesting but not because they contribute to the "whole." For instance, Amory's love for Isabelle smacks too much of Fitzgerald's emotional involvement with Ginevra King, the
details of Amory's drinking spree after Rosalind broke
the engagement were supplied from a similar episode in
the novelist's life. The novel was born out of Fitzgerald's
agony from a broken love affair, as he confessed in a
letter to Frances Turnbull:

In This Side of Paradise I wrote about a love
affair that was still bleeding as fresh as the
skin wound on a haemophite.

(But) the amateur can only realize his
ability to transfer his emotions to another
person by some such desperate and radical
expedient as tearing your first tragic love
story out of your heart and putting it on
paper for people to see. 5

Similarly, the exotic parties and the disorganised
lives of Anthony and Gloria in The Beautiful and Damned
resembled the riotous living of the Fitzgeralds which
eventually drained out their money and emotionally augured
ill for the couple. The fictional resemblance of Gloria
to Zelda Fitzgerald was so striking that it necessitated
Fitzgerald's clarification:

Gloria was a much more trivial and vulgar
person than your mother. I can't really
say there was any resemblance except in the
beauty and certain terms of expression she
used, and also I naturally used many
circumstantial events of our early married
life. However the emphases were entirely
different. We had a much better time than
Anthony and Gloria had. 6

Reviewing the novel The Beautiful and Damned under her
maiden name, Zelda noted that Fitzgerald made use of her
letters and portions of her diary in the novel. "In fact," she noted, "Mr. Fitzgerald seems to believe that plagiarism begins at home." 7

Fitzgerald thus was unable to seize the autobiographical material for proper use in his fiction. The involvement was so deep and striking that he could not judiciously select matter for purposes of dramatization and to view the experiences objectively. Fitzgerald's inability to dissociate himself from his fictional creation greatly hampered his reputation as a first-rate novelist. His characters ultimately ended up, Albert J. Lubbel noted as "thinly veiled reproductions of himself and his friends." 8 At best his work becomes what Arthur Mizener called, "transmuted biography." The ability to record minutely the sensations of the past cannot be equated with artistic achievement. The skepticism that surfaced occasionally in his novels doesn't evolve any system of values but appears only as an ingenious trick on the reader's credulity. His imagination became aesthetically a destructive quality, for he continually tried to project himself through his fictional characters. He could only love and not judge the world of his subject matter, weighing it against the universal because it was entirely from within.

Fitzgerald's imagination grasped that the things of beauty remain forever as glamorously and magnetically as
he envisioned them at a given time, as most of the romantics feel.

By temperament, Fitzgerald was a Keatsian romantic and felt the irony of the world with special poignancy. Precisely because he loved the products of time in all their mortal and evanescent glory, Fitzgerald longed to have them last forever, unchanged as Keats longed to be awake 'pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast.'

Keats and Fitzgerald both knew the incompatibility of their expectation. The physical beauty ironically wanes and disintegrates, leaving no trace of its original which might have aroused aesthetic contemplation. Fitzgerald made his early protagonists Amory and Anthony his mouth-pieces to announce his longing for the earthly apparitions of beauty. He evoked the vision of a paradise where young men with intelligence and sensibility were to idle away their days in dalliance and courtship with the most beautiful girls available. There must be poise, poignancy and happiness with no qualms—the unpleasant aspect of economic pulls never existed in this paradise.

As in all great art, the Fitzgerald hero is engaged in a quest for the attainment of paradisal bliss and the "golden girl." He sets out innocently with an extraordinary gift for hope and romantic readiness for wonder. He encounters the traditional hurdles from the insensate world which refuses to recognize marks of greatness in him.
He is tried in the world of reality and found wanting to
surmount the forces working against him. He is seduced
by the unimaginative banality of the world. By the time
he succeeds in dispelling the forces that made him
ineffectual earlier, time runs out. The mythic time,
what Fitzgerald called in *Tender is the Night*, "the lush
of midsummer moment outside time," the moment of bliss
which transcends the limitations of time and space, the
moment that remains enshrined in one's memory, has gone.
Fitzgerald believed that youth is the ideal time of promise
and possibility, something like a germinating seed in
forming one's own "platonic ideal." This "youth" has often
been sentimentalized by Fitzgerald for its possibilities.
The pristine youth passes and the unrealizable remains an
aberration with the protagonist, leaving the residue of
nostalgic sadness.

*Time is the arch-enemy of the romantic protagonists*
in Fitzgerald. When the desired object seems to be very
near the grasp, it either eludes or the struggle becomes
insignificant. The readiness to believe in the possibilities
of life doesn't avail, the symptoms of world-weariness
haunt the hero who loses the vitality of youth. As
Richard Lehan noted, "Disillusionment is the fate of
Romantic innocence, and Fitzgerald's heroes are hopeless
romantics."10
The splendid moment of youthful commitment centres in Fitzgerald round "the king's daughter," accompanied by the appurtenances of luxury, expensive articles and sprawling mansions. His imagination is preoccupied by the consideration of riches. Fitzgerald, the poor Midwesterner, found very early in life that wealth purchases entry into the select aristocratic society characterized by the exterior glitter, leisure, mobility, grace, and "an arrogance of position," irresponsibility and mystery, far removed from the stress and strain of ordinary life. Instinctively, Fitzgerald turns his attention to the money-spenders as epitomes of aristocracy, as representatives and upholders of American civilization. The obvious affluence unfortunately is equated with the fruits of success as revealed by the pursuit of happiness by most Americans. Wealth thus acquired a special significance, a dreadful social sanction for any young man to take an "imaginative possession" of life. In the words of Charles Weir,

It was riches that put a man above the mass, gave him freedom and mobility, granted him the opportunity to develop the finest qualities of his nature, afforded him the heroic stature that made his success a triumph or his failure a tragedy. It was the tragedy of a capitalist society that Fitzgerald attempted to write, a tragedy in which the kings and commanders have been replaced by millionaires.

The Franklinian doctrine of a man's election is
determined and demonstrated by the amount of success he is granted. This success in the American context must be visible in terms of wealth and the expensive articles; possession of material facts offers its own justification. So the dominant male archetype in the American culture devotes much of his energy to the acquisition of wealth. The class background does not deprive a strong willed youth from a meteoric rise. Men willy nilly are plunged into the economic struggle, and women function as their links with the society. Young men have the additional stimulation to acquire wealth for marrying the golden girls. It never mattered how the wealth was begotten the robber Barons of the American frontier were models enough. The men of sensibility in such a culture seem to have been marked for disillusionment, for pursuit of wealth means dissipation of priceless energy.

In the materialistic and technological culture of the United States of America, the industrial orientation to life has no effective countering force either in the past or in the hereditary aristocracy or in an established church. "Pluck and luck" philosophy meant wealth and women for the American aspirant with a burning desire to enter the isolated leisurely class:

Aristocracy's only an admission that certain traits which we call fine - courage and honour and beauty and all that sort of thing can best be developed in a favourable
environment, where you don't have the warpings of ignorance and necessity.\textsuperscript{12}

Similarly, another unfortunate corollary to the concept of Success in America is the possession of a beautiful girl—what Fitzgerald called "the top girl." In order to gain access or to perpetrate his association with the gaudy girl, a boy required what Paul Rosenfield called, the "immense upholstery of wealth." It appears no less than a profound insult to a girl to hear any offer of love without the tautness of material security. For the beauties, life is based on a "festival conception," displaying wealth, organizing frivolity and leading exotic lives and preserving physical features that pass for prettiness. These golden girls lure young men and doom them to achievement of material prosperity. Love thus becomes a commercial proposition in a culture governed by the materialistic consideration. "The basic common denominator of most of the women in Fitzgerald's stories is their intense self-centredness . . . with irresistible appeal to many men."\textsuperscript{13}

These young protagonists, like their creator, believed that the women they encountered were realities and their love would lead them to fulfilment and provide them a kerbstone for their aesthetic contemplation. In their
chivalrous attitude love had become a complicated religion, where sex is not a stressing need. Fitzgerald created his protagonists with slender bodies and feminine sensibilities; and the girls with beauty and corrosive cynicism. Sex for the golden girls has an anaesthetic and antiseptic value rather than leading them to consummation.

Rosalind in *This Side of Paradise*, for example, falls intently in love with Amory but preferred to marry another for social security and for Isabelle, life is a succession of romantic scenes, "under moonlight and pale starlight, and in the backs of warm limousines and in low, cosy roadsters stopped under sheltering trees--only the boy might change."¹⁴

The world Fitzgerald saw was obsessed by the gesture of kissing—an act dissociated from any other physical sensation except that it suggested a general sense of romance or wickedness. Love became an attraction towards a beautiful person, with or without conscious association of sexual desires. But it did not become an "expression of intimacy between two human beings under the condition of the preservation of each other's integrity."¹⁵ The boy-men of Fitzgerald exhibited moods of undiluted sensationalism, passion, and euphoria for love instead of care and responsibility for the loved objects. They invested their emotions and sentimentalized over their attachments,
entirely subjected to the vicissitudes of their instincts. The loss of love or its abdication stemmed from their vulnerable and flimsy foundations of association. They easily discovered a substitute to effect a transference of their emotions. They never seemed to have realized the paradox of human existence of striving for closeness with others depended entirely upon one's own preservation of particularity and uniqueness.

Emotionally Amory and Anthony were immature persons, too busy relieving their own anxieties. Their selves were not drawn out into their loved objects, their loves involved only cool calculations of personal advantages. Their relationships were "always in danger of degenerating into a relation of mere calculation . . . corrupted by resentments about the lack of reciprocity." 16 In the absence of nature's initiation into the maturity of the most intimate and reciprocal of relationships, the adolescents of Fitzgerald incorporated in themselves the values attributed to their loves. Because of the dominance of the gratificatory instinctual pressures, the young men turned their attention into themselves and became auto-erotic characters and narcissists.

The standards of civilization encourage repression of instinctual desires and relegate them into the sub-conscious. As a compensation for the unsatisfactory reality, human
beings revert to a life of phantasy for gratification of those repressed desires. Finding "reality unsatisfying quite generally, and for that reason entertain a life of phantasy in which we like to make up for the insufficiencies of reality by the production of wish-fulfilments. These phantasies include a great deal of the true constitutional essence of the subject's personality as well as those of his impulses which are repressed where reality is concerned." 17

The weakness of "ego" to mediate between the instinctual desires and the restrictions of reality ends up in neurosis. The only escape route for the "ego" to re-establish contact with reality is to channel its frustrations into art. The infantile ego according to Freud deems itself the possessor of all perfection:

He is not willing to forego his narcissistic perfection in his childhood; and if, as he develops, he is disturbed by the admonitions of others and his own critical judgment is awakened, he seeks to recover the early perfection, thus wrested from him, in the new form of an Ego-Ideal. That which he projects ahead of him as his ideal is merely his substitute for the lost narcissism of his childhood -- the time when he was his own ideal. 18

The mythical Narcissus looked into the river and fell in love with his own beauty. The river that reflected an image which he didn't know as his own, was time. Narcissus thus represents beauty and contemplation as well as a rebellion against the passing of time. He struggles to arrest the flux of time and capture beauty at the particular
time. He brings an aesthetic dimension into art. In a free synthesis of narcissism and aesthetic imagination, is born beauty.

The beauty emerging out of the contemplation always avoids a conception with the reality-principle and summons phantasies as vehicles for wish-fulfilment which has its own truth value. Phantasy above all, Herbert Marcuse defined, is the creative activity out of which flow the answers to all the answerable questions . . . (it is the) mother of all possibilities, in which all mental opposites as well as the conflict between internal and external world are united.19

The early protagonists of Fitzgerald Amory and Anthony spend much of their wakeful time day-dreaming and letting loose the phantasies. Under the strong narcissistic tendencies, they tended to worry about the passing of time and declining youth. Instead of achieving sublimation, the adolescent heroes of This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned led lives of illusions about what they were going to be. Instead of "being", they were more concerned with the "becoming," in love with the imagined concept of oneself, shimmering in all its glory and magnificence.

In dreams human beings tend to exhibit an aversion
toward work, study and commercial transactions and prefer passive activities. Amory and Anthony are, so to say, dreamers with purely ego-centric conceptions.

II

The novel *This Side of Paradise* announced the birth of illusions of a generation immediately after the First World War. The adolescent protagonist of this novel was placed in the net-work of Princeton University campus life. Amory Blaine who acquired the generic traits of schizophrenia from his mother Beatrice, looked on the world as a stage from his early childhood. By the time he reached Princeton, St. Regis already confirmed his juvenile phantasies of superiority over others and mused that "Oxford might have been a bigger field" for his activities. Amory considered himself a fortunate youth, sensitive and handsome, resentful of all authority over him. He had developed an inflated sense of self importance:

> He was the eternal hero, one with the sea-rover on the prow of a Norse galley, one with Roland and Horatius, Sir Nigel and Ted Coy. 21

He wished announcing to the world that he was intended to a special nebulous and as a token of his election, he wanted to become one of the celebrities of his class. The freshman foot-ball which would have made him conspicuous, had to be
abandoned with a wrenched knee. His desire to be admired by becoming the Princetonian Chairman or Triangle President could not be realized because of his own intellectual insufficiencies. Amory was unable to exert and hurl himself into action due to his innate idleness. He chose Princeton for its lazy beauty, its half-grasped significance, the wild moonlight revel of the rushes, the handsome, prosperous big-game crowds, and under it all the air of struggle that pervaded his class.22

He thought of Princeton as "being lazy and good-looking and aristocratic, you know, like a spring day."23

Amory's idleness was in accord with his concept of sophomore success, his recklessness and inability to concentrate on study had beaten all the hopes of becoming a big man at Princeton, out of shape he had become the fundamental Amory, the idle and imaginative dreamer. Joining the best club induced in Amory a sense of unqualified superiority complex. Neither could he become a literary genius like T.P.D'Invilliers nor an ingenious inventor of entertainment like Kerry nor an American self-made aristocrat like Dick Humbird; neither he possessed the intellectual sharpness like Burne Holiday nor could boast of animal magnetism like Alec and Ferrenby, to reach the top. Like most of his restless contemporaries, Amory
wished to enroll in the army not in patriotic exultation but to avoid the monotony of life and to escape into the romantic side of war.

Without realizing any expectations after spending four years at Princeton, sharing the emptiness of "all the gorgeous youth that has rioted through here in two hundred years," Amory got enlisted in the army. His hopes of going abroad, again remained an illusion, the possibility of crossing the ocean cancelled by the peace-treaty. His intention to write "immortal literature" as a "dangerous gift to posterity" bore no fruit because he could not trust his own creative imagination. Ultimately, he remained the fundamental Amory: "I'm restless as the devil and have a horror of getting fat or falling in love and growing domestic." 

The restlessness Amory talked of was not rooted in his self for salvaging his own problems of existence or belonging, but was only suggestive of the deep-rooted malady of the post-war American generation. They had no rigid moral code to observe nor any internalized culture to guide. They tried to be heroic without any heroic ideal, and ultimately became members of a drift, Gertrude Stein's "Lost Generation," popularized by Fitzgerald as the Jazz Age.

This generation had its own conventions and toys of
pleasure. Amory perceived all the glitter around and all the paraphernalia that passed for success. The dating and bobbing parties where the girls got accustomed to being casually kissed, boys borrowing rings from their girls only to break the engagement every six months, youth talking furtively about sex, half in earnest and half in mockery, the rolled up stockings of girls suggesting a lack of modesty, had almost become socially acceptable conventions during the early twenties. The mothers without any hesitation, went to the extent of inducing their pretty daughters into the race, for luring and trapping the affluent young men into wedlock. In order to be considered successful, the adolescent had to undertake the elaborate ritual of dating; and because of the competitive nature, emotional involvement had to be avoided which naturally the young man to an ambivalent attitude toward sex. The young men had to depend very much on stimulants like alcohol for excitement; alcoholism and drugging had become a mode of life, particularly amongst the collegiate youth. Display of revolt against the established conventional authority seemed to testify one's belonging to the new generation.

These young men experienced loss of hope when tried on the hard rock of reality, in the possibilities of youth and the beneficial effects of education. Amory later, expounded his theory of Socialism and hoped for a social revolution which might leave him at the top.
I'm sick of a system where the richest man
gets the most beautiful girl if he wants
her, where the artist without an income has
to sell his talents to a button manufacturer.
Even if I had no talents I'd not be content
to work ten years, condemned either to
 celibacy or a furtive indulgence, to give
some man's son an automobile.36

In the backdrop of this defiance, it had to be remembered
that Amory, in fact, worked for an advertisement agency
for a rottenly underpaid salary—thirty-five dollars a
week, in spite of the ten thousand dollars spent on his
education, to write the "darn stuff." Amory considered
that poverty was no more virtuous:

'I detest poor people,' thought Amory
suddenly. 'I hate them for being poor.
Poverty may have been beautiful once,
but it's rotten now. It's the ugliest
thing in the world. It's essentially
cleaner to be corrupt and rich than it
is to be innocent and poor.'37

Amory once belonged to the privileged class before
he advanced into manhood. His father's gamble in oil
business didn't click and the rail-road and street-car
bonds didn't fetch. The family finances had been mysteri-
ously dwindling; his mother Beatrice had to use her money
for keeping the house. The income from Lake Geneva palace
was not even sufficient to meet the expenses for repairs.
Much worse, from Amory's point of view that his mother
squandered away what little remained:
I can forgive mother almost everything except the fact that in a sudden burst of religiosity toward the end, she left half of what remained to be spent in stained-glass windows and seminary endowments . . . I've seen what was once a sizable fortune melt away between speculation, extravagance, the democratic administration and the income-tax.28

Amory intended to regain what was lost--the posture of an idling, imaginative youth, displaying the grace of an aristocrat, "passionately desiring the adventure of life." As his system failed to work and his luck broke, Amory chiefly relied on a social revolution. He discovered himself in a muddle:

Life was a damned muddle . . . a football game with every-one off-side and the referee gotten rid of every one claiming the referee would have been on his side. . . .29

Amory's expectations of youth, grace, beauty and wealth had become illusory. Life turned out to be what Fitzgerald termed, "a remorseless battle to the children of men."

The narcissistic adolescent Amory confronted the reality of life through the flapper girls with whom he had fallen in love. At an early age, his ego was awakened to the possibility of kissing any girl of his choice right from his childish encounter with Myra. Though he lacked the "animal magnetism" that characterises masculine strength,
his romantic profile had an involuntary influence on beautiful girls like Isabelle who would run into the held-out arms as in the story books. The flirtation would end with a silly dispute leading to Amory's realization that he had not an ounce of real affection for Isabelle, but her coldness piqued him. He wanted to kiss her, kiss her a lot, because then he knew he could leave in the morning and not care. On the contrary, if he didn't kiss her, it would worry him. . . . It would interfere vaguely with his idea of himself as a conqueror.30

Isabelle apparently discarded Amory for his lack of confidence, the reason in fact, being his poverty, which evoked a casual feeling in him that "she's spoiled my year." Clara Page, the young widowed cousin, appealed to Amory's sense of romance; he imagined her a poverty stricken beauty, suckling an emaciated child at her breast. To his utter dismay, Clara turned out to be clear-headed and managing herself with superb confidence. Amory was made to realize how emotionally immature and how slavish he had been to his imagination which played him false given half a chance.

Amory's imagination, unsoaked from the earlier adventures, marched on to be fastened on the flapper-queen Rosalind with an "endless faith in the inexhaustibility of romance, her courage and fundamental honesty."31 It
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Amory's imagination, unsoaked from the earlier adventures, marched on to be fastened on the flapper-queen Rosalind with an "endless faith in the inexhaustibility of romance, her courage and fundamental honesty." It
became love at first sight as Rosalind informed her mother, "It may be an insane love-affair," she told her anxious mother, "but it's not insane." Her mother subtly succeeded in planting the seeds of reality and worldly wisdom into her, convincing Rosalind that Amory was an absolute "dreamer, merely clever," incapable of taking care of her in future. In spite of her selfless love for Amory, she feels unable to imagine herself shut "away from the trees and flowers, cooped up in a little flat, waiting for you" and Rosalind goes on to expound her philosophy:

I dread responsibility. I don't want to think about pots and kitchens and brooms. I want to worry whether my legs will get slick and brown when I swim in the summer.

Lack of material wealth ultimately proved to be the bane of love for Amory and Rosalind.

Amory accosted Eleanor next, the "evil under the mask of beauty" as he felt, with whom his imagination ran riot. He recalled to life the romantic and literary poses of Rupert Brooke and Swinburne, by posing like a pagan and running through emotions in half an hour. Eleanor discovered in him a hypocrite, a person incapable of sustained interest. Their exotic dream of romance ended, aptly, with the waning of moon.

Each girl that Amory came across, reflected the gloss
of youth, beauty and radiance—the values he held high. Each girl was a reflection of Amory's irridiscent emotional make-up each one provided him a playing ground for the joys of attachment and sentimentalization of the loved object. He considered his girls were not coarse and his taste best. Each girl Amory fell in love reflected a splinter of his self, each incomplete by itself and unworthy of the struggle. He loved in Rosalind,

her youth, the fresh radiance of her mind and body the stuff that she was selling now once for all. So far as he was concerned, young Rosalind was dead. 

Amory would not love the luxury of the "beaten, broken woman of forty."

Amory seemed to stand perpetually on the edge of a desperate sexual manoeuvre while actually achieving no more than a retreat. Each girl became a mask revealing the protagonist's passing mood. These girls, in addition to being enticingly beautiful, were instinctively conquerors and were imperiously selfish. As unfortunate corresponsences to the fruits of success, these golden girls were transient apparitions of beauty, restricting his experience of love; nor could he transmute their beauty into artistic epitomes.

This Side of Paradise did not acquire any significance as an initiation story. The young Amory did not pass from
ignorance about the external world to some knowledge alleviating his misery, or a valid discovery of self. His final exclamation "I know myself, but that is all," is only typical of Amory's attitudinizing. This brings certainly a reversal to the stance Amory had taken earlier—the illusions and fancies of self-importance proved to be fragile. But this tended to become a futile realization because Amory would not re-encounter the world with the new knowledge and vigour. He hoped again, for a phosphorescent future which looked rather an extension of his adolescent attitude towards life. Amory's disillusionment at best could be termed frustration. "Well this side of Paradise! / There's little comfort in the wise," said Fitzgerald at the outset of the novel, which he must have intended to be understood as a celebration of innocent ignorance. But Rupert Brooke's lines were reinforced by another quote from Oscar Wilde: "experience is the name so many people give to their mistakes." Wilde with his celebrated cynical approach to the world conveyed in unmistakable terms the lament for the loss of innocence. The novel This Side of Paradise not only announced the illusion of youth, but also exposed the futility and death, as Fitzgerald himself acknowledged.

III

If This Side of Paradise dealt with a search for self identity explored through the protagonist Amory Blaine's
life, The Beautiful and Damned looked like an extension of a similar search—for a meaning of life. The protagonist of The Beautiful and Damned, Anthony, had grown slightly older than Amory, free from the network of the campus life. The novel had gained a semblance of reality, as the physical scenes were drawn from New York and its surroundings. Unlike Amory, Anthony had the advantage of an established family and the promise of fabulous wealth. Anthony Patch, at the age of twenty-five, thinks himself rather an exceptional young man, thoroughly sophisticated, well-adjusted to his environment, and somewhat more significant than any one else he knows. . . . In this state he considered that he would one day accomplish some quiet subtle thing that the elect would deem worthy and, passing on, would join the dimmer stars in a nebulous, indeterminate heaven half-way between death and immortality.36

With so much of importance attached to himself, the narcissistic young man finds his reflection in a mirror "adopting an athletic posture" with satisfaction and like "an exquisite dandy, amassed a rather pathetic collection of silk-pyjamas, brocaded dressing gowns, and neckties too flamboyant to wear,"37 anticipating Gatsby. He exhibited an indiscriminate hunger for appreciation and affection. Anthony set out into the world with a profound conviction that idle life is grace, that life has no meaning. The sensitive youth Anthony settled to a calm life with no intention of marrying.
Ironically Anthony came into contact with an equally ego-centric, careless and impracticable, girl, Gloria. The gracefully idle Anthony faced the flapper in Gloria, whose philosophy matched his. Gloria was, to Anthony, an "authentic" character whose considered opinion is that

A woman should be able to kiss a man beautifully and romantically without any desire to be either his wife or his mistress.38

She attached no more importance to the gesture of kissing than as a pleasant social custom. She enjoyed the crowds around her and accepted criticism as an envious tribute from the less successful débutantes. Gloria also seemed an advancement over Rosalind of This Side of Paradise in that she decided to marry her lover, without of course, chartering a materialistic course of action for social security. She took for granted that Anthony belonged to the milieu, possessing those traits attributed to aristocracy: courage, honour and mobility. Gloria intended marrying Anthony, for he is not only going to be a husband but also a lover. Her marriage, she envisaged, is going to be outstanding. It can't, shan't be setting--it's going to be the performance, the live, lovely, glamorous performance, and the world shall be the scenery.39

Anthony and Gloria thus considered life a "hyacinthine spring" and intended living a lurid life. They were ever
radiant with desire to collect all joy from life with no
ery of regret, to live according to a
clear code of honour toward each other,
and to seek the moment's happiness as
feverishly and persistently as possible. 40

If Anthony disliked the responsibility of work, Gloria
abhorred the responsibility of life and rearing children.
The idyllic life envisaged by the couple presupposed a
mine of wealth with a perennial bank account which would
require no replenishment.

Anthony exhibited an avowed aversion for work; the
sensitive and intelligent young man refused to compromise
with the stupid demands of a conventional career like
selling bonds, which incidentally was his only effort to
independently make money. He miserably failed in the
effort of selling bonds which, in fact, was trading in
the future in which he had no faith. He compromised with
the idea of working for the future. But his inability to
stoop to the expectations of the mundane world deprived
him of the special career he imagined for himself. He
could neither use his talents for writing—he intended
writing the History of the Middle Ages from a novel
angle—and make money like his friend Richard Caramel, nor
vulturously amass wealth like the ruthless materialist,
Maury Noble. In comparison with his corrupt friends,
Caramel and Maury, Anthony looked innocent and so,
ineffectual in the material world, good enough to return to Gloria for consolation and compassion after being battered by the stupid and unimaginative world. In order to reduce the pain of failure, Anthony had to perpetually suck a bottle and smoke tobacco, as a device of escape from life, thus by implication extravagantly spending his financial and emotional resources.

Anthony and Gloria were depicted as members of a "rootless class of society;" "Gloria and Anthony are representative. They are two of that great army of the rootless who float around New York. There must be thousands,"\textsuperscript{41} drifting from place to place. Hope and expectation were thwarted and they started spending their lives in dissipation. Their romantic quest for love and happiness, to realize the "old illusion that truth and beauty were in some way entwined"\textsuperscript{42} remained unrealized in confrontation with the fleeting, destructive element of time. There had been a haunting, morbid fear of age, the impending doom of losing youth in them:

Knowing they had the best of love, they slung to what remained. Love lingered—by way of long conversations at night into those stark hours when the mind thins and sharpens and the borrowings from dreams become the stuff of all life, by way of deep and intimate kindness they developed toward each other, by way of their laughing at the same absurdities and thinking the same things noble and the same things sad.\textsuperscript{43}
Anthony thus became a compassionate lover, deriving satisfaction from simply sharing the other's presence, talking and working together. Their hope in life was sustained by frequent high-balls, expecting their love would some day spring up "like phoenix from its own ashes." Their frustration led to further deterioration in love, youth and vitality: their selves never seemed to have fused into the other despite nature's benevolent initiation into intimacy of marriage.

Anthony made a vain attempt to regain his youthful vitality and adolescent fancies by conducting a disastrous love affair with a socially inferior and promiscuous Dorothy without ever having a grain of genuine love or sympathy for the girl whom he had seduced. Anthony's bankruptcy in terms of emotional vitality was signalled by his affair with Dorothy, whom he mercilessly turned out. His physical deterioration was signalled when Bloecman beat him in a brawl. In fact, the character of Bloecman could be utilized by contrasting him with the Protagonist, Anthony. He dressed better every time, indicating the eternal "process of refinement," whereas Anthony gradually tended to neglect his apparel. Neither Anthony nor Gloria ever knew what exactly were the motives of Bloecman except that they had suspicions, betraying their own pettiness. Bloecman's financial achievement testifying his quality for intrinsic faith in work,
accompanying change in his name to Mr. Black indicated a transformation for the better. By contrast Anthony gradually lost his dignity and gained degeneration, as was evident from the appearance of his apartment—everything in disorder. His spiritual dissipation was more than evident when he tried to borrow money from his former friends only to get humiliated.

Anthony's troubles began with wealth or rather the lack of it. With his grandfather's bequeathment Anthony wanted to build his own pedestal and be a Talleyrand, a Lord Verulam. The clarity of his mind, its sophistication, its versatile intelligence, all at their maturity and dominated by some purpose yet to be born would find him work to do.44

But the best part of Anthony and Gloria's life had been spent in running round the court through the interminable adjournment proceedings of the legal suit for the Old Patch's money who intended to deprive them of his legacy for their obvious dissipation. The environmental pressures and social expediency compelled Anthony to accept ultimately the defeat of his philosophy of the meaninglessness of life. Gloria's cynical philosophy: "There's only one lesson to be learnt from life, anyway... that there's no lesson to be learnt from life,"45 was only a chic version of fashionable twitter: Anthony and Gloria in fact
presented a pathetic picture of the ineffectual, striving for a purpose that of irrevocable commitment to gain Adam Patch's money. Their misery stemmed from their stance of childish fantasy as the adult experience attempted to correct. Anthony retreated into self-pity and appeared a pathetic character, evoking sympathy for the succession of failures, carrying the pieces of his broken aspirations on his face.

The indeterminate mind brought Anthony to the brink of disaster. He committed to work too late, after being beaten by time. Anthony was deluded by his vagabond imagination and his adolescent illusions incapacitated him from utilizing his energies in concerted action. The intellectual superiority had never been demonstrated because it was incapable of exerting itself—it was either non-existent or was sterile. It was this inadequacy on Anthony's part that glaring out in *The Beautiful and Damned* which led logically to his failure. Gloria and Anthony were presented on a voyage at the end of the novel; he whimpering to himself, that "it was a hard fight, but I didn't give up and I came through!" True, it effected a reversal of fortune at the end that left Anthony a wealthy catatonic who had been miserably poor throughout the best part of his youth.

Anthony and Gloria tried to escape the pressures of
the material world, and even at the end of the novel they shed away from confronting the world with the help of their new found wisdom. They simply drifted away like sparrows without achieving any understanding of themselves and without the ability to adjust themselves to an environment. As Perkins noted,

There is especially in this country, a rootless class of society into which Gloria and Anthony drifted—a large class and one which has an important effect on society in general... I know that you did not deliberately undertake to do this but I think The Beautiful and Damned has in effect, done this; and that this makes it a valuable as well as brilliant commentary upon American society.46

The thirty thousand dollars gained by Anthony from his moralistic grand-father at the end cannot enrich his emotional vitality nor would deepen his metaphysical speculations regarding the futility of human endeavour nor can retrieve the lost youth and beauty. They were dedicated to false ideals and values of life. No moral decisions could be arrived at on their existence because the illusions they lived by imply inevitable failure. They feared work, feared age, feared change, feared sex and ultimately suffered from a fear of life itself. Ironically, Gloria who categorized people as "clean and unclean" was herself referred to by a fellow passenger as "a sort of dyed and unclean," in spite of her Russian-sable coat,
which might cost a small fortune.

IV

This Side of Paradise thematically dealt with the growth of Amory Blaine, the adolescent standing on the threshold of emotional readiness to life. The story was narrated from the protagonist's point of view, with the author interfering and intruding liberally to guide the course of action, to justify and moralize over the situation. Amory had the representative traits of the post-war generation—the hard drinking and sophisticated posture of sensitivity, abounding in ephemeral emotional responses detached from the formal life. The untainted young man confronted the amiable flappers and got his heart broken. The search for self continued, and by the end, Amory considered "all gods dead and all wars fought."

The disillusionment of Amory in This Side of Paradise has not been effected convincingly and artistically.

In This Side of Paradise Fitzgerald projected wealth as an ennobling possession, opening magic casements to the aristocratic postures of mobility and grace, leading one to the aesthetic contemplation, and by implication suggesting the inadequacy of such a supposition. Affluence was supposed to offer freedom and afford a heroic stature. Granted the graces of wealth, one had to face the fundamental problems
of life like love and morality, society and religion. Amory dreamt of future without ever straining a muscle to achieve even a fragment of what he desired. Instead of heroically struggling, he simply whined at his own failure. The wealth of material that Fitzgerald had, as Amory proceeded from Princeton to his final retreat, had not been properly selected and organized to evolve a focal point. The images and the details available had not been properly dramatized to depict the struggle Amory was involved in. The autobiographical tinge ever remained to create an impression that the incidents are piled and the characters appended to increase the bulk of the novel rather than to evolve a manner in which the protagonist's superiority was to be justified. Amory's life was presented, so to say, as a phantasmagoria of incident without unity and force.

Edmund Wilson opined that This Side of Paradise "is really not about anything: its intellectual and moral content amounts to little more than a gesture—a gesture of indefinite revolt." The indefinite revolt would be a sufficient base to analyse This Side of Paradise. Unfortunately, it was only a gesture amongst the immature and self-centred youth of the 20s. Apart from Amory, the smart boys and girls of the novel would render no more than lip-service to the concept of revolt. The revolt against the Princeton social system and clubs was not the
vital point; and the crisis inspired religion of war was not an indication of faith; the only panacea Amory claimed to know was a social system inspiring revolt everywhere, which should eventually bolster his prospects and passage to the top. His exposition of such a system had no sinister implications except betraying Amory's impatience with poverty, which deprived him of his love for the top-girl.

Amory's questioning the moral code did not proceed beyond the gesture of kissing which created a revulsion in his puritanic sensibility. Amory identified the problem of sex with evil and the evil always creeping to him in the most acceptable of the forms, in the garb of a beautiful woman. What exactly the components of the revolt were and how Amory wanted to act them, were never worked out satisfactorily. The restlessness of the generation that Amory talked of, can simply be reduced to his own insufficiencies in acting and acquiring wealth or possessing a beauty, the visible symbols of success. Amory's failure does not evoke "tragic pleasure"; on the other hand it reveals the fissiparous tendencies of the protagonist throughout the novel. Neither the faith in the possibilities of wealth nor in the potentiality of the social revolution sound genuine in the life of Amory.
This Side of Paradise, technically, has no beginning, middle and end, except that the novel begins with Amory's antecedents and birth; there is no centre of interest, and no sense of a whole as Arthur Mizener points out. Fitzgerald's imagination has floundered on the life around him which exposes correspondingly his artistic inadequacies to organize the imagined experiences in This Side of Paradise. The novel has only the effects of fringe-performance rather than the depiction of life, for which the warmest of Fitzgerald admirers tend to apologize.

Fitzgerald introduced the theme of The Flight of the Rocket, later changed to The Beautiful and Damned aptly in one of his letters to Mr. Scribner,

He (Anthony) is one of those many with the tastes and weakness of an artist, but with no actual creative inspiration. How he and his beautiful young wife are wrecked on the shoals of dissipation is told in the story.48

After the recognition he received as a novelist for This Side of Paradise, Fitzgerald had come to know that another literary genre had gained popular acceptance. He had instinctively turned to the fashionable concept of "the meaninglessness of life" in the ironic-pessimistic tradition. In this literary tradition Fitzgerald intended to employ and test his wit and ability to be ironic with the result that he had gone "haring off in any direction."
The theme of The Beautiful and Damned is failure, but with unintentional appropriateness, it is also a failure as a literary experiment. 49

The theme of failure had been projected through the protagonist Anthony Patch in The Beautiful and Damned who had a patchy character, rather appropriate to his name. He is a contradiction in terms; he wants a fantastic quantity of money to be graceful and mobile and to devote his leisure for purposes of aesthetic contemplation and to divert his sensibility in the direction of writing a "History of the Middle Ages" from a novel angle; and at the same time he abhors the business activity of making money. His native intelligence remains unused; his reflection on the society amounts to shabby criticism.

The Beautiful and Damned, Richard Lehan noted, "is a novel of unassimilated idea. The theme of life's meaninglessness goes against the grain of Fitzgerald's conviction in the premises of life and the horror of wasted time and beauty." 50 Gloria is presented in the novel as a baby vamp, as much as Fitzgerald has found and loved in Zelda, whose materialistic demands on Anthony have grown excessive, debilitating his vitality. For more money, Anthony has to liquidate his investments in bonds, go in for salesmanship, exhaust the resources in stimulating their jaded nerves.
through extravaganza.

The novel has a centralized, though hazy theme. As the protagonist has grown older in age over Amory, there is a marked improvement in the sensibility too, in the "state of narcissistic irresponsibility." Anthony moves in a direction—that of meaninglessness of life, only to discover to his utter dismay the futility of such a philosophy and accepts ultimately the necessity of devoting oneself to the acquisition of wealth.

Though *The Beautiful and Damned* is steeped in the personal experiences and abounds in the incidence of personal acquaintances of Fitzgerald, the novelist seems to have developed a talent for selecting the incidents for dramatization. The distance between the novelist and the protagonist has considerably increased. Technically too, *The Beautiful and Damned* is an improvement over the first novel. The temptation to replace dialogue with narration has been kept under control to a greater extent. The raw material of life is employed in *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned* to construct a copious case history of dissipation, with credible factual information, indicating by corollary Fitzgerald's inability as a novelist to seize the material for aesthetic consideration. Fitzgerald opts for an omniscient point of view in *The Beautiful and Damned* with less interference but without
The objective assimilation of the subject matter that characterizes the greatness of *The Great Gatsby*. 
NOTES


7Fitzgerald Zelda, New York Tribune, April 1922.


14F. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side of Paradise (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 70. (All subsequent references to the novel are from this edition).


21. Ibid., p. 36.

22. Ibid., p. 46.

23. Ibid., p. 30.

24. Ibid., p. 143.

25. Ibid., p. 149.

26. Ibid., p. 249.

27. Ibid., p. 230.


29. Ibid., p. 238.

30. Ibid., p. 89.

31. Ibid., p. 156.

32. Ibid., p. 169.

33. Ibid., p. 177.

34. Ibid., p. 178.

35. Ibid., pp. 227-228.

37. Ibid., p. 13.
38. Ibid., p. 96.
39. Ibid., p. 124.
40. Ibid., p. 188.
42. F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Beautiful and Damned, p. 338.
43. Ibid., pp. 121-32.
44. Ibid., p. 50.
45. Ibid., p. 221.
49. Hilton Hindus, F. Scott Fitzgerald: An Introduction and Interpretation, p. 27.
50. Richard D. Lehan, F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Craft of Fiction, p. 82.