

Chapter 2nd
THE JAZZ AGE

The Jazz Age

According to Fitzgerald, The Jazz Age began in May, 1919, with the May Day riots and plummeted to its doom in October, 1929. Historians have stated it could not have had such a definite beginning, but the great crash of the stock market on Black Friday, October 29, 1929, did bring it to a sudden end. However, Marvin Barrett says: "Never did a decade form itself so quickly or self-consciously into an Age as did the Roaring Twenties, the Golden Decade." This was a strange period in history--a time when millions "began their fretful milling." It was a time whose courses, trends, and movements are difficult to analyse into usual patters. It was "a mordant, light-hearted, serious-minded, complex and seminal time." Barrett describes it further: "It was an interesting, colourful, bewildering, disagreeable time, when retreat into the past was cut off, and ahead, the angle of slope down which the world was sliding grew even dizzier." And he adds, "Living them was an odd experience."

The Twenties, called by many names--The Mad Decade, The End of Innocence, The Golden Age, The New Society, Indian Summer of the Old Order, Roaring Twenties, Botched Civilization, and The Jazz Age, have often been discussed as-- "a sort of musical comedy of people while resting up between sex-and-gin bouts. The bouts took place all right. It was a feverish time." The listing of factors contributing to these descriptive titles of the age as well as to its development has not been an easy task for the writers of history. Rapid technological change, the failure of idealism, urbanization, the

shock of the war, and the lack of a charted future are among the many causes suggested for the resulting revolt against the past. Barrett describes the situation as follows:

With the demands of idealism swept under the green baize, with self-sacrifice and heroism abandoned at the moment when they could have been most spectacularly put to use, the Years Between addressed themselves to the pleasures of the body and the imagination.¹

In a period distinguished by change, perhaps the most notable change was in the attitude of the American people toward morals. An open revolt against the Puritanical code of the American conscience became evident soon after the close of World War I. As one historian has stated it, people were tired: tired of noble purposes, of lifeless religion, of parties. The War had contributed to the emotional rebellion. Many of the returning young men were disillusioned by the kind of war it had been. In France, faced with the possibility of death and little else, the men had seen laxity of sex morals which they had not dreamed of in the small towns back home. Prostitution had followed the flag. American girls, as nurses and other war workers, were influenced by the continental standards or the lack of them. Conformity to authority thousands of miles distant was deemed unnecessary. Prior to America's entry into the War, the moral standards had been set principally by the family, the local church, or perhaps the outstanding families in the small town. The authority of the family was most often sufficient and final in the enforcement of these moral standards. Social activity was largely limited to the

circumference of the home and church, and on special holidays to a "whole town" celebration. H. L. Mencken wrote of this time that over the lives of men and women was the "fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy."

The new society of urban life with new inventions--particularly of the automobile--and industrialization offered employment to the youth of the small town. The glamour and bright lights of the city proved a powerful magnet for rural young people. An emphasis was placed on advanced formal education and young people left the shelter of home to attend school. The divisions of social strata were becoming fluid. Even the humour of the country was different. "Departing suddenly from the old homespun American tradition, the Twenties' humour was usually insulting or at least supercilious and almost always consciously urbane. The "Restraint" and "decorum" were words which had become out dated and unpopular. The influence of religion on moral standards appeared insignificant. It was said that there wasn't enough religion left to get up a good church fight. The first years of moral revolution were years of "almost pathological unrest and mental panic." The stimulated emotions craved speed, excitement and passion. As older Americans watched the younger generation experiment in these fields, some of the oldsters decided to try it for themselves. According to Hutchens-- "the older generation--after exercising its historic right to denounce the loose ways of the younger--crashed the party." What has been described as a "World-Series week spirit" --a contagion of delighted concern over things that were exciting but didn't matter profoundly--was dominant. Prohibition

only seemed to make the speak-easy and the hip flask more popular. Even "nice" girls were seen smoking cigarettes. One might hear stories of all-night joy-rides and of drunks at well-chaperoned parties. The latest fads in dancing drew criticism from moralists.

The *Catholic Telegraph* stated:

The music is sensuous, the embracing of partners--the female only half dressed--is absolutely indecent; and the motions--they are such as may not be described, with any respect for propriety, in a family newspaper. Suffice it to say that there are certain houses appropriate for such dances; but those houses have been closed by law.²

Everyone wanted to be considered wild and one of the few entirely safe generalizations about the Twenties that can be made is that they had an aversion to dullness.

The young ladies of the era appeared to out-do the young men in efforts to gain moral freedom. The campaign gave particular attention to mode of dress. In July, 1920, a fashion writer reported that the American woman had lifted her skirts far beyond any modest limitation. This meant that hems were nine inches from the floor and, despite all predictions, continued to climb. The flappers, bold and unconventional, were alone for only a short while in wearing--

thin dresses, short-sleeved and occasionally (in the evening) sleeveless; some of the wilder young things rolled their stockings below their knees, revealing to the shocked eyes of virtue a fleeting

glance of shin-bones and knee-cap; and many of them were visibly using cosmetics.³

In spite of nationwide cries of shock and horror, the--

Beaded, fringed, sequined, spangled, shot with gold and silver, the waistless, bustless, hipless parrallelogram persisted.⁴

The materials used in clothing also gave cause for alarm. Lingerie and hosiery industries discarded that heavy dark cottons and wools for the light weight, flesh-coloured rayons and silks. The vogue of rouge and lipstick spread quickly from city to village. The flapper bobbed her hair and dyed it raven black, and the vogue soon became the vogue of middle-aged ladies across the nation.

Women were bent on freedom ... the quest of slenderness, the flattening of the breasts, the vogue of short skirts (even when short skirts still suggested the appearance of a little girl), the juvenile effect of the long waist.⁵

Indications were that the women of the day had become drunk at the fountain of youth:

All were signs that, consciously or unconsciously, the women of this decade worshiped not merely youth, but unripened youth: they wanted to be--or thought men wanted them to be--men's casual and light-hearted companions; not broad-hipped mothers of the race, but irresponsible playmates.⁶

The liberated woman was saying to the liberated man:

'You are tired and disillusioned, you do not want the cares of a family or the companionship of mature wisdom, you want exciting play, you want the thrills of sex without their fruition, and I will give them to you.' And to herself she added, 'But I will be free.'⁷

Soon the limitation of "men only" at the bars gave way to the speak-easy, which catered to both men and women. The night club and the cocktail party were introduced to American society. These trends established a change in the symbolic ideal of American womanhood.

The traditional concepts of love and marriage were cast aside as "Americans in the 1920's became obsessed with the subject of sex." A few American intellectuals had acclaimed Freudian theory, and the average layman read only enough to convince himself that he had an understanding of it. Freudian principles were used to justify sexual freedom. Virtues of chastity and fidelity were replaced by *libido*. Proponents of equality for women included "the right, equally shared by men and women to free participation in sex experience." Moral reasons for any prohibitions in sexual life before or after marriage ceased to exist. A mutual consent divorce, if there were no children, was proposed by Judge Lindsay in 1927. Although the proposal did not become law, it was notable as a suggestion which would not have been considered by the previous generation. The divorce rate climbed steadily even without the suggested legal changes. The result of these facts was that, in spite of the outward display of tolerance, it was difficult for men and women, who had been trained from childhood to

cherish sexual purity, to be broad-minded if their mates were expressing sexual freedom. The possession of happiness was not always found in the pursuit of sex.

Independence of women was also expressed by increased numbers of women workers in offices and industry. With a job, women could "live their own lives." Authority of parents or of husband was not binding on the working woman. If unmarried, it was not necessary to stay in the small town and wait until the right man came along. The young lady could go to the city, live in an apartment, work in an office, be free, and still be a "lady". Married working women did not feel tied down by household drudgery but were free to enjoy the fellowship of adults and the power of the pay check. Under these circumstances, the feeling of economic independence on the part of the working wife convinced the husband of his dispensability. In a book published in 1922, H. L. Mencken commented:

At the present time women vacillate somewhat absurdly between two schemes of life, the old and the new ... they are in revolt against the immemorial conventions. The result is a general unrest, with many symptoms of extravagant and unintelligent revolt.⁸

To these flailing, frightened masses of both men and women came to motion picture, the advent of which was like an opiate. Barrett states: "To a generation without a future, cut off from the faiths of the past, Hollywood unreality was realer than what they saw around them". It was glamor that Hollywood produced and for the admission price of 25¢ one could lose himself in the illusions of the

current movie. The world of illusion could be "re-established each night on fifty thousand silver screens." The titles of the movies were signs of the times: *Restless Souls*; *Man, Woman and Sin*; *The Flapper*; *Heart of a Siren*; *The Sheik*; *The Son of the Sheik*; *The Dancin' Fool*; *What's Your Hurry*; *The Eagle*; *Souls for Sale*; and *Madame Sphinx*. The heroes and heroines of the nation were the Hollywood stars. If they flickered or faded, it did not matter. Others would rise to take their places. The showplaces of America were the gaudy, over-done "homes" of the Hollywood crowd. Marion Davies had a ninety-room beach cottage at Santa Monica with two swimming pools, three dining rooms, a gold ceiled drawing room and a private theatre--all of this with a 240,000 acre front-yard. It tended to be "less formal" than Mary Pickford's estate at Pickfair where royalty and the elite came to dine and "marvel at Mary Pickford's dynamic subjugation of life," as Fitzgerald stated. (He and Zelda were welcome visitors at both places.) As quoted by Barrett, Leo Rosten comments of Hollywood's manners and mores: "Probably never in history has so immature a group been accorded such luster, such sanctions, and such incomes."

For those who could afford it, or could pretend they could, visiting the Continent became a favourite pastime. Paris and the Riviera were the two places most frequented. Barrett has called Paris and Hollywood the "twin capitals" of the era. He dubbed them the "City of Light" and the "City of Flickering Shadows," respectively:

For those subjected to the eddies and cross-currents of Babbitry and Boom, of rampant

materialism and craven procrastination, they seemed legitimate havens. For a few brief years they remained Eldorados for the morally dispossessed.⁹

Although Fitzgerald described those who visited Paris as possessing "the human value of Pekinese, bivalves, cretins, goats," Barrett claims: "Nor was it all frivolity and self-delusion. The fastidious of the world were looking now to Paris for inspiration and detraction." Gertrude Stein provided one of the principal centers of entertainment for those staying at the Ritz, and although she called them "the lost generation," she welcomed the cortege of would-be writers, artists, and musicians to her train of followers. Many of them became bored (it seemed an easy thing to do at this time) and tried the Riviera. According to Fitzgerald's contemporary report: "They all just slip down through Europe like nails in a sack until they stick out of it a little into the Mediterranean Sea."

Irresponsibility characterized the American of the age at home or abroad. Yet, "while cultivating the attitude of indifference, the Twenties grew excited easily." The impact of the forces of disillusionment, the new freedom of women, prohibition, Freud's doctrine of sex, the automobile, moving pictures, and the sex and confession magazines, was greater than any set of outworn social mores could withstand.

Changing with moral idealism was the American philosophy toward the accumulation of wealth. With the arrival of such marvellous devices as the radio, the moving picture, the automobile,

the telephone, the sewing machine, and many other labour-saving, health-preserving, beautifying contraptions that could be mass-produced, the making of money became the most important purpose in life. The majority of American citizens felt that the War had deprived them of material possessions as well as certain pleasures. These were now to be obtained. A booming economy helped to make these dreams materialize.

But prosperity held perils of its own. It invested enormous political and social power in a business class with little tradition of social leadership It made money the measure of man.¹⁰

The advent of the salesman, the advertising agency, and the instalment plan persuaded the average man to "a broad misunderstanding of right methods--to say nothing of profligacy--in the use of the family income." This opinion, expressed by Pennsylvania bankers, was an unheeded warning. As the average man became more and more eager to make money, his concern for others decreased. This resulted in a form of moral decadence. Drama critic George jean Nathan's confession is pertinent:

The great problems of the world--social, political, economic and theological--do not concern me in the slightest. If all the Armenians were to be killed tomorrow and if half of Russia were to starve to death the day after, it would not matter to me in the least. What concerns me alone is myself, and the interests of a few close friends. For all I care the rest of the world may go to hell at today's sunset.¹¹

The novelist Joseph Hergesheimer stated that sending money for the relief of starving children abroad was one of the least engaging ways in which it could be spent. Mencken observed once, that if he were convinced of anything, it was "that Doing Good is in bed taste." In the frenzy to get as much money as quickly as possible, people of all walks of life tried the new get-rich-quick method of speculating with common stocks. Prices soared and unlimited wealth appeared possible.

All one had to do was to buy and grow rich. Leading men of the nation assured the people that it was so. A 'new era' had dawned in which all were to have money and poverty was to be abolished. As the decade drew toward its end, America was living in the fantastic dreams of opium or delirium.¹²

Will Rogers had prophesied: "You give the country four more years of this Unparalleled Prosperity and they will be so tired of having everything they want that it will be a pleasure to get poor again.

An impending sense of disaster was prevalent, according to the historians, but the prophets of doom were ridiculed or cast aside. If the people needed reassurance, they only needed to listen to their leaders in government. Prosperity was here to stay, the public was assured. And, if individual fears increased, they were camouflaged with a facade of gaiety. Apathy was the fashion of the day.

Looked back upon from the late fall of 1929, a good deal that was still vivid in memory did

appear to be sinister or silly-- Teapot Dome scandals, acceptance of corruption, flagpole sitters, Scopes Trial, Dr. Coue and his formula for self-improvement ("day by day in every way I am getting better and better."), the great confidence game known as the Florida Boom, intellectual forums on the new national institution called the petting party, de-bunking of traditional heroes, bobbed hair, dancing marathons.¹³

In discussing Middletown, a sociological study of small town life during the Twenties made by Robert and Helen Lynd, Donald Sheehan notes:

the people of Middletown shared only a small amount of the prosperity and participated little in the desperate pursuit of happiness ... Theirs was not the insecurity which accompanied speculation in submerged Florida real estate but that which comes from the chilling fear of unemployment.¹⁴

The gay night life of the Twenties was not a part of their daily existence for-- "They could hardly have attended many all-night drinking parties, since most of them were on the way to work by seven o'clock in the morning." Commenting on Sheehan's remarks, Allen declares: "Instead of presenting a fond reminiscence of the days of easy profits, he reveals the essential shallowness and the sense of insecurity which characterized many of the people who shared in those profits."⁴¹ Although the Lynd's views are somewhat dissimilar from Allen's, they are not contradictory. The focus is merely different. Allen presents the history as "a broad panorama from New York to Florida and from the Waldorf-Astoria to Senate hearing committees."

The Lynds, on the other hand, being sociologists, concentrate their intensive study on a small area, and conclude that even the small town citizen felt the desire and pressure for things which money could buy.

Allen notes:

One of the most conspicuous results of prosperity was the conquest of the whole country by urban tastes and urban dress and the urban way of living ... the time had come when working-men owned second-hand Buicks.¹⁵

Ultimately, a rude awakening was to await the American people in their delirious pursuit of happiness and the inevitable crash swiftly came. Yet, strangely, the admiration which the average man had felt for money continued to be maintained even during the dark depression days. It actually increased despite the total loss of his dream of abounding wealth. Materialism was king.

The consensus of opinion of literary historians of the period seems to be that Fitzgerald wrote honestly of the era. His contemporaries may not have admired him whole-heartedly. They may have deplored his waste of talent and lack of concentrated effort. They may have recognized that his characters were not always "true to character." Yet most of them regarded him as the spokesman for the rebellious youth of the nation.

Glenway Wescott called him:

One little man with eyes really witnessing;
objective in all he uttered, even about himself in a

subjective slump; arrogant in just one connection, for one purpose only, to make his meaning clear.¹⁶

Wescott also proclaimed *This Side of Paradise* as a novel which "haunted the decade like a song." In speaking of Fitzgerald before *The Great Gatsby* was published, Paul Rosenfeld declares:

Not a contemporary American senses as thoroughly in every fibre the tempo of privileged post-adolescent America. Of that life, in all its hardness and equally curious softness, its external clatter, movement and boldness, he is a part; ... and what he writes reflects the environment not so much in its superficial aspects as in its pitch and beat. He knows how talk sounds, how the dances feel, how the crap-games look. Unimportant detail shows how perfect the unconscious attunement.¹⁷

He continues in his praise of Fitzgerald's capture of the spirit of the time:

Not another has gotten flashes from the psyches of the golden young intimate as those which amaze throughout *The Beautiful and Damned*. And not another has fixed as mercilessly the quality of brutishness, of dull indirection and degraded sensibility running through American life of the hour.¹⁸

Critical acclaim after his death collaborated Wescott's observations.

Other clues to the authentic portrayal of the times of which an author writes may often be discovered by examining his sources. Fitzgerald simplifies this search by his admissions in his letters and

notes of certain autobiographical and biographical references in his fiction. In the stories, Fitzgerald makes use of numerous boyhood happenings which he recorded with exactitude in a notebook called his "Thought book." Scott advised his teacher that Central America did not have a capital city. His teacher determined that Mexico City should be the capital of Central America, rebuffed the suggestion, only to have Fitzgerald's rejoinder: "There's no use teaching us wring." Within minutes Scott had received the principal's unjust but undivided attention. "Basil's brief and unprofitable employment at the Great Northern is the relation of an actual experience of Fitzgerald at the Northern Pacific in St. Paul, even to the loss of his new four dollar overalls." "A Night at the Fair" is based on notes in Fitzgerald's ledger, which tell of his first significant notice of the opposite sex.

In referring to other publications, Fitzgerald acknowledges in a letter to Maxwell Parkins that "*The Sensible Thing*" is a "story about Zelda and me, all true." In a letter to Shane Leslie, he asserts that he married the Rosalind of the novel *This Side of Paradise*. In another letter to Leslie, Fitzgerald admits that the description of Monsignor Fay's funeral in *This Side of Paradise* was taken entirely from Leslie's own letter. The description of a walk through a cemetery by Sally Carrol Happer and Harry Bellamy in "*The Ice Palace*" is depictive of a walk Fitzgerald and Zelda themselves made on one of his Montgomery visits before their marriage. The Mr.-In-and-Mr.-Out episode of "*May Day*" was based on a wild party in May, 1919, which Porter Gillespie, a college friend, and Fitzgerald carried on until morning at Delmonico's. "Well into the next morning they breakfasted

on shredded wheat and champagne, carrying the empty bottles carefully out of the hotel and smashing them on the curb for the benefit of the churchgoers along Fifth Avenue. A visit by Fitzgerald to White Sulphur Springs, Montana, in the summer of 1915, at the ranch of a Princeton friend, Sap Donahoe, provided the setting of "*The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*." In Fitzgerald's second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*, the parties given by its principal characters "occur in a cottage in Connecticut like the one the Fitzgeralds rented in Westport in May, 1920."

The practice of using characters in his fiction based on friends and acquaintances often made his friends uncomfortable victims. For a period of three years, 1926 to 1929, Fitzgerald studied the Gerald Murphys, who were to be reincarnated as the Dick Divers in *Tender Is the Night*. "This analysis got to be too much for the Murphys, for when Fitzgerald was drinking he did not hesitate to give them the benefit of it." Fitzgerald in a letter to Sara Murphy dated August 15, 1935, more than a year after the publication of *Tender Is the Night*, gives reasons for his use of her as a model and confesses: "I used you again and again in Tender." Ginevra King, his first love, became Judy Jones in *Winter Dreams* and was "to make the ideal girl of his generation" in Fitzgerald's fiction. Ginevra is characterized as Josephine Perry in a series of later stories. Dick Diver's memories of his father are derived from Fitzgerald's memories of his father and their times together--going for the papers together, the "liar" argument, and the Civil War stories. For Fitzgerald's incomplete novel, *The Last Tycoon*, Irving Thalberg was the model for Stahr.

Mizener states that, in general, "back of every other character in the book, ... lay Fitzgerald's acute observation of a real person."

Morals and Manners

As a young author living during the greatest changes in moral standards in the history of a modern nation, Fitzgerald had not easily ignored in his fiction the American revolt against Puritannical purity and Victorian tradition. As a matter of fact, Fitzgerald has been credited by Allen with calling the revolution of morals to the attention of American parents.

It was not until F. Scott Fitzgerald, who had hardly graduated from Princeton and ought to know what his generation were doing, brought out *This Side of Paradise* in April, 1920, that fathers and mothers realized fully what was afoot and how long it had been going on. Apparently the "petting party" had been current as early as 1916, and was now widely established as an indoor sport.¹⁹

Perosa proclaims Fitzgerald as "the mouthpiece or the singer of the jazz age" and has given him the title of the lucid accuser. "He was well aware of its equivocal dangers, of its irresponsible attitudes, and he pitilessly exposed its disastrous consequences.

In a study of Fitzgerald's writings, one is sometimes amazed at the naivete of Fitzgerald's characters when judged from the standpoint of the typical morality of the sixties. From this viewpoint, the deviations from which Fitzgerald's early character exhibits seems

Puritannical. Amory Blaine is concerned with sex but, though he is daring by the standards of 1920, he is upset by a kiss he has bestowed on Myra: "sudden revulsion seized Amory, disgust, loathing for the whole incident. He desired frantically to be away, never to see Myra again, never to kiss any one." Fitzgerald has endowed Amory with "a puzzled, furtive interest in sex." Yet, as his temptations come, Amory sees visions representing evil and death, which cause him to panic and run. *This Side of Paradise* is a novel which makes unorthodox mention, for 1920, of petting and other "revolutionary" behaviour.

Eating three o'clock, after-dance suppers in impossible cafes, talking of every side of life with an air half of earnestness, half of mockery, yet with a furtive excitement that Amory considered stood for a real moral let-down.²⁰

The youth of the land and Amory were disquieted, for Amory admits: "My whole generation is restless." According to Perosa, the novel expresses the desire for freedom from "bourgeois morality. Alfred Kazin states that the novel "announced the lost generation."

Fitzgerald was criticized severely by many religious groups for the subject matter of the novel, but Fitzgerald disclaimed any exaggeration. In a letter to Shane Leslie written in the fall of 1920, he remarks:

One Catholic magazine, *America*, had only one prim comment on my book-- "a fair example of our non-Catholic college's output." My Lord! Compared to the average Georgetown alumnus

Amory is an uncanonized saint. I think I laundered myself shiny in the book!²¹

Writing to Marya Mannes in October, 1925, Fitzgerald reveals that his ideas regarding the morals of American youth have not changed.

The young people in America are brilliant with second-hand sophistication inherited from their betters of the war generation.

... They are brave, shallow, cynical, impatient, turbulent and empty.

... America is so decadent that its brilliant children are damned almost before they are born.²²

From this early glimpse of moral revolt in *This Side of Paradise*, Fitzgerald's portrayal of moral decay enlarges in *The Beautiful and Damned*, where, it is declared, a whole race was going hedonistic, deciding on pleasure. And Fitzgerald himself describes his new novel as the story of how Anthony Patch and his beautiful young wife are wrecked on the shoals of dissipation. Filled with their own delusions as to their own worth, the do-nothing couple finds itself drifting downward from one drunken party to another, to infidelity--toward what should be an awakening. But, typical of the generation they represent, neither Anthony nor Gloria display any awareness of their true degradation and continue to what should be the climax of the novel to live in a dream-world, damned but not beautiful.

Fitzgerald's short stories of the period also depict his personal reactions to the youth of the age. Dolly, who tries every scheme to catch *The Rich Boy*, was--

What is known as "a pretty little thing" but there was a certain recklessness which rather fascinated me. Her dedication to the goddess of waste would have been less obvious had she been less spirited-- she would most certainly throw herself away.²³

Another little thing, Marcia of *Head and Shoulders*, declares:" All life is just going around kissing people."

In *Babylon Revisited*, Charlie Wales has a full realization of his own loss caused by moral decadence and demonstrates his progress toward moral integrity.

Charlie came to believe in character-- "to jump back a whole generation and trust in character again as the eternally valuable element. Everything else wore out."

The absolute amoral attitudes expressed by Braddock Washington and his family in "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" may be considered an extreme example, but Fitzgerald is again accenting his conviction of moral deterioration caused by greed.

May Day presents a wide contrariety of characters floundering in varying degrees of moral degradation. The story was intended to be the history of "the general hysteria of that spring which inaugurated the Jazz Age." Gordon Sterrett has been ruined by the war and his own weaknesses, including his proneness to drink. Gordon is told by Dean, from whom he is trying to borrow money: "You seem to be sort of bankrupt--morally, as well as financially." Moral and emotional bankruptcy even more than financial bankruptcy, were to Fitzgerald

matters of the gravest concern. In a letter to his daughter, he tries to convince her of their importance.

Our danger is imagining that we have resources--material and moral--which we haven't got. One of the reasons I find myself so consistently in valleys of depression is that every few years I seem to be climbing uphill to recover from some bankruptcy. Do you know what bankruptcy exactly means? It means drawing on resources which one does not possess.²⁴

Describing himself in *The Crack-Up*, Fitzgerald uses the quotation from Matthew 5:13: "Ye are the salt of the earth. But if the salt hath lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?"

Illustrated also in *May Day* are the destructive power of mob violence and a description of those left with nothing. Examples are two recently discharged soldiers who are now in the vaguely uncomfortable state before they sign up for their next bondage. They are uncertain, resentful and somewhat ill at ease. The ex-soldiers manage to steal, get drunk, take part in a riot, and break a man's leg. One of them gets himself shoved out a window to his death and the other is thrown in jail, all within a period of twelve hours. However, Fitzgerald evokes the sympathy of the reader for such wasted lives and causes one to join him in more harsh censure of another character in the story. Wrapped in her own arrogance, Edith is disdainful of any indication of lack of sophistication in others to the revelation that outward sophistication is all she possesses.

The wild parties of the Twenties which were characteristic of the decade's social setting also appear in Fitzgerald's fiction. Jay Gatsby is the host to the numerous bizarre festivities in *The Great Gatsby*. The manners of the guests are apparent-- "Once there they were introduced to somebody who knew Gatsby, and after that they conducted themselves according to the rules of behaviour associated with an amusement park." Extravagance--in food, in music, in entertainment, in number of guests, in length and frequency--describes Gatsby's parties. Early in the evening, the party is pictured by Fitzgerald as follows:

The bar is in full swing, and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside, until the air is alive with chatter and laughter, and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot, and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other's names.²⁵

As the evening progresses--

the fraternal hilarity increased. When the *Jazz History of the World* was over, girls were putting their heads on men's shoulders in a puppyish, convivial way, girls were swooning backward playfully into men's arms, even into groups, knowing that someone would arrest their falls.²⁶

Guests were not always eager to leave. Some lingered for days. Others were removed forcibly by their husbands or wives. There were also those who found it difficult to leave by automobile because of their intoxication. One such guest insisted there was "no harm in

trying" to drive his car even though it had lost a wheel and gone into a ditch.

The wild parties of the parasitic friends of Gatsby constitute only a glimpse of superficial moral abandonment in comparison with the lack of morals depicted in the lives of the principal characters of *The Great Gatsby*. Nick Carraway is the only major character who retains his moral integrity. Nick is attracted by Jordan Baker, who is incurably dishonest and had begun dealing in subterfuges when she was very young. Nick recalls: "When we were on a house-party together up in Warwick, she left a borrowed car out in the rain with the top down, and then lied about it." Jordan has a bored, naughty face and a cool insolent smile. There had been a near-scandal regarding a semi-final round in a big golf tournament when a caddy accused her of moving her ball from a bad lie. Nick notices that she avoids shrewd men and is more comfortable in an atmosphere where no deviation from a moral code would be considered possible. Tom Buchanan is contemptible in his arrogance and pride, in addition to his corruption as demonstrated by his affair with Myrtle Wilson. Tom exhibits physical cruelty and breaks the nose of his mistress with his open hand. He manifests cruelty in his speech and by his silence in the hit-and-run accident and he feels justified in doing so. His marriage to Daisy for a period of five years has been punctuated by one affair after another. Tom suggests to Myrtle's distraught husband that Gatsby was probably her lover and the one who ran over her with the car. Gatsby's subsequent murder only fulfills Tom's expectations. Daisy is totally despicable and yet pitiable. She proves to have no

moral conscience, even to the point of manslaughter for which another is allowed to assume to blame. There is no repentance or remorse shown by either Daisy or Tom even at Gatsby's death. Gatsby, who has made his riches by bootlegging and gambling, introduces Nick to Meyer Wolfsheim with a flourish akin to pride as the gambler who "fixed" the World's Series in 1919. The world of *The Great Gatsby* is a world of moral corruption and carelessness.

Representative of Fitzgerald's later development of the theme of morality is his novel *Tender Is the Night*. The theme revolves about a group of people determined to provide a charming and alluring society but whose depravity eludes the fabrication. Incest, adultery, homosexuality and all forms of deceit are practiced with moral apathy. The glamor of life with Americans abroad fades into dismay and disgust. Miller describes the encompassing power of the novel:

Tender Is the Night tends in its thematic complexity to move rhythmically both inward and outward, inward to an exploration in depth of the spiritual malaise of Dick Diver, outward to an examination in breadth of the sickness of a society and a culture.²⁷

In Perosa's analysis of the novel, he states:

... the entire novel, in its formulation and general lines, is an attempt to illustrate and comment on a fundamental dramatic conflict of the ethical and sociological order. The single characters stand for definite social and moral positions and exemplify in their conflicts a contrast of wider social

implications and of larger moral and symbolic significance.²⁸

Tender Is the Night has a different structural approach to the theme of morals and manners of Fitzgerald's age than does *The Great Gatsby*. In *The Great Gatsby* the principal revelation of the morals of its characters is through dramatization. In *Tender Is the Night*, treating his characters psychologically, Fitzgerald developed an interwoven arrangement of detail that makes the web of moral disorder strong and binding.

The greater part of the immorality of the novel emerges from sexual themes. Nicole is a victim of her own father's lust. Fitzgerald describes it, the debased but wealthy society of Chicago. From the psychological clinic, she is released to the care of a husband-doctor who is purchased for the purpose. Nicole and Dick Diver, linked by marriage and her need for him, appear as the ultimate in evolution toward sophistication in the personal judgment of Rosemary, the most innocent of the characters. The effort exerted by the Divers in attaining a blase manner is not discernible to her. Rosemary is amused that Nicole has made Dick some black lace swim trunks which require close examination to reveal that they are lined. Overwhelmed by his charm, Rosemary offers herself to Dick and is refused. Dick does not seem particularly interested in Rosemary until he hears a story about Rosemary and another man, and the vision haunts him thereafter. Dick finds that he is attracted more and more often to women--even mental patients. Fitzgerald describes Dick's feelings-- "Yet in the awful majesty of her pain he went out to her unreservedly, almost sexually."

A flirtatious affair with a daughter of a patient of the clinic precipitates an attempt by Nicole to wreck the car with the entire family in it. Dick meets Rosemary in Italy-- "She wanted to be taken and she was, and what had begun with a childish infatuation on a beach was accomplished at last." Dick makes a game of drawing women to him. Even as Dick is leaving Nicole, he stops for a drink with Mary North, and-- "felt the old necessity of convincing her that he was the last man in the world and she was the last woman." He leads Mary on-- "His glance fell soft and kind upon hers, suggesting an emotion underneath; their glances married suddenly, bedded, strained together." Dick disappears from sight but one of the last things the reader hears is that "he became entangled with a girl who worked in a grocery store." Nicole, in her struggle to find a new life for herself, drains much of the strength from Dick, but cannot continue as his wife when she feels she no longer needs him. Her affair with the crude Tony Barban seems to aid in her final break with Dick. Nicole, newly confident in her own strength, recognizes Tony's power and "his assertion seemed to absolve her from all blame or responsibility."

Lesser characters show similar sexual deviation. Mary North and Lady Caroline pretend to be sailors on leave and pick up two girls and are later arrested when the girls report them. Lady Caroline feels no remorse and Mary is only afraid her husband Hosain will hear about it. Fitzgerald gives us Dick's reaction-- "The lack, in Lady Caroline's face, of any sense of evil, except the evil wrought by cowardly Provençal girls and stupid police, confounded him." Girls

wave panties from the windows in farewell to sailors. Baby Warren does not shrink from the nudity of Collis Clay; and the homosexuality of young Francisco is a story frequently heard by Dick. Nicole's father only temporarily repents of incest and then flees in fear from her before he can ask her forgiveness. Hints of immorality envelop the society in which they move until all dialogue and action seem sexually motivated only.

Other moral weaknesses are exhibited by the novel's characters. Abe North and Dick both succumb to the weakness of drink. Baby Warren is guilty of false moral superiority. Kaethe is malicious with her tongue. Bribery and falsehood are essential to their way of life. Mrs. Speers, Rosemary's mother, surprises Dick by her amorality. With evident disregard of any harmful consequences to Rosemary, Mrs. Speers tells Dick: "She was in love with you before I ever saw you. I told her to go ahead." Neither Nicole nor Nick can find enough moral fibre to stand alone. Few characters exact the sympathy of the reader, and the moral tragedy draws to a close with redemption unearned by the players.

The writings of Fitzgerald clearly substantiate Shain's description of Fitzgerald as America's most sentient novelist of manners. Moral standards were at a new low, and

... even the lightest, least satirical of Fitzgerald's pages bear testimonial to the prevalence of the condition. A moralist could gather evidence for a most terrible condemnation of bourgeois America from the books of this protagonist of youth.²⁹

Fitzgerald wrote to advise an acquaintance: "If you are in any mess caused by conflict between old idealisms, religious or social, and the demands of the present ... That is all too frequently a problem of these times. He offered a coherent description of these problems and the inner conflicts which resulted in the low state of morals and manners in the era.

The Love of Money

Fitzgerald's attitude toward wealth reflects the compulsion which his generation had for the earning and spending of money. Though critics are not in complete agreement as to the exact fascination which money held for him. Charles E. Shain states that Fitzgerald's "attitude toward money and moneyed people has been much misunderstood."

Others, literary men in particular, criticized Fitzgerald for his absorption with the subject. In a letter to Hemingway, Fitzgerald complains that John Bishop wrote of "how I am an awful suck about the rich and a social climber."¹⁰¹ Hemingway wrote to Fitzgerald and money in *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*. Hemingway's hero, Harry, is musing about the rich. They were dull or they drank too much or they played backgammon too much. In the original version, Hemingway used Fitzgerald's name in the following passage:

He remembered poor Julian and his romantic awe of them and how he had started a story once that began, "The very rich are different from you and

me." And how someone had said to Julian. Yes they have more money. But that was not humorous to Julian. He thought they were a special glamorous race and when he found they weren't it wrecked him just as much as any other thing that wrecked him.³⁰

Hemingway's criticism was called the "public burial of a has-been writer." Evidently Hemingway respected the feelings of Fitzgerald enough to change the name in the story for--as it is quoted here from a collection of short stories--the name Julian has been substituted for Scott Fitzgerald. The reference offended Fitzgerald to say the least. He wrote a letter to Hemingway:

Please lay off me in print. If I choose to write *de profundis* sometimes it doesn't mean I want friends praying aloud over my corpse. No doubt you meant it kindly but it cost me a night's sleep. And when you incorporate it (the story) in a book would you mind cutting my name?

It's a fine story--one of your best--even though the "Poor Scott Fitzgerald, etc." rather spoiled it for me ... Riches have never fascinated me, unless combined with the greatest charm or distinction.³¹

Malcolm Cowley chose the title of "*The Romance of Money*" for his introduction to the 1953 edition of *The Great Gatsby*. Cowley expresses his belief that Fitzgerald differed from other serious writers of the era in his attitude toward money.

The serious writers also dreamed of rising to a loftier status, but--except for Fitzgerald--they felt that money-making was the

wrong way to rise. They liked money if it reached them in the form of gifts or legacies or publishers' advances. But they were afraid of high earned incomes because of what the incomes stood for: obligations, respectability, time lost from their own work, expensive habits that would drive them to earn still higher incomes. In short it was a series of involvements in the commercial culture that was hostile to art.

Cowley continues his reminiscing as to what the writers thought of money:

"If you want to ruin a writer." I used to hear them saying, "just give him a big magazine contract or a job at ten thousand a year." Many of them tried to preserve their independence by earning only enough to keep them alive while writing; a few liked to regard themselves as heroes of poverty and failure.

However, Fitzgerald did not choose to separate himself from the business world. Cowley considered the teaching of money as the reward of virtue an important influence upon Fitzgerald's concepts of money. Fitzgerald and the younger generation "had been taught to measure success, failure, and even virtue in monetary terms." As evidence of his opinion of money, Fitzgerald kept an accurate record of his earnings but had little knowledge of his expenditures.

Paradoxical as it may sound, Fitzgerald did not care enough about money ever to manage it in a businesslike way. What he did care for was that vision of the good life which he had come to feel was, at least in America, open only to those who command the appurtenances of wealth.... He

strove, therefore, to become a member of the community of the rich, to live from day to day as they did, to share their interests and tastes.³²

He often wrote his publishers to determine the extent to which he had drawn on future earned monies and was always shocked to hear the amount.

The sensation of well-being that money could bring was enjoyed to the fullest by both Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald--

Zelda was as proudly careless about money as an eighteenth-century nobleman's heir. Scott was more practical and had his penny-pinching moments, as if in memory of his childhood, but at other times he liked to spend without counting in order to enjoy a sense of careless potency.³³

Fitzgerald was forced by Zelda Sayre to consider money as fulfilment of promise. All of the responsibility for his desire for money cannot be placed at Zelda's feet. Fitzgerald found money, and the security which it proffered, essential to the winning of the girl he loved as his wife. He remembered that

"Zelda was cagey about throwing in her lot with me before I was a money-maker..." Zelda wanted, just as Fitzgerald did, a luxury and largeness beyond anything her world provided and she had a certain almost childlike shrewdness in pursuing it.³⁴

Returning from a visit to Montgomery, Fitzgerald boarded a Pullman as he bid Zelda farewell and then sneaked to a day coach, which was all he could afford. He had spent the visit trying to

convince Zelda that he was rich enough to make her happy. Zelda "was inevitably drawn toward 'the stream of life,' a stream with such a high concentration of money in it." Fitzgerald used this feeling of Zelda's in a story, "*The Bridal Party*." After *This Side of Paradise* was accepted for publication, Fitzgerald became exuberant about his writing prospects. He wrote and revised several short stories which he sold to the *Post*. Zelda finally after having been courted by telegrams announcing sums of money received for his works renewed their engagement. Fitzgerald was also delighted with the money. He celebrated by buying Zelda an expensive feather fan, buying his friends pints of Scotch from his own private bootlegger and dressing for a date with hundred dollar bills protruding from his pockets in a conspicuous fashion. His friends finally took five to six hundred dollars from him and had it put in the hotel vault. He was drunk with the excitement of money.

There were few times in Fitzgerald's life during which he could ignore the need for money. Within three months after his marriage he suddenly found that he did not have left any of the \$18,000 he had made during 1920, and he owed Reynolds \$650 for an advance on an unwritten story. The Fitzgerald continued to live above their income as his "How to live on \$36,000 a Year" attested. "Scott was extravagant," said Max Perkins, "but not like her. Money went through her fingers like water. She wanted everything; she kept him writing for the magazines." In a letter to Edmund Wilson, dated February 6, 1922, Fitzgerald says that "it would be absurd for me to pretend to be indifferent to money, and very few men with a family

they care for can be." He had written to Wilson the month before about their baby girl. "... The baby is well--we dazzle her exquisite eyes with gold pieces in the hopes that she'll marry a millionaire."

The preoccupation with the occupation of making money could not be obliterated from Fitzgerald's life not from his work. As Malcolm Cowley points out: "In dealing with the romance of money, he chose the central theme of his American age. 'Americans,' he liked to say, 'should be born with fins, and perhaps they were--perhaps money was a form of fin'." The development of the theme of money progresses in Fitzgerald's fiction as his own attitudes toward money were revised. His conception of the importance of money does not basically change, but rather the potential results from its possession. In 1919, Fitzgerald wrote to Alida Bigelow declaring that the three unforgivable things in life were toothpicks, pathos, and poverty. In 1935, he advised a young married woman that Samuel Butler was right in placing health and money as the first and second most important things in life. Even in his final but uncompleted work, *The Last Tycoon*, Fitzgerald portrays the glamor of the life of the very rich. He also includes the conflict between right and wrong which he believed came in a particular way to those who had many possessions. He succeeded in showing that many possessions was a relative idea.

In the same way the necessity for money plagued Fitzgerald from time to time. It plagued some of Fitzgerald's characters as well. In one of his early stories, *Head and Shoulders*, its chief character finds it necessary to take employment in an inferior position that does not give proper play to his remarkable intellectual capacity. His

dreams and purposes of an outstanding career fade and he finally discovers that it is his wife who is considered the intellectual whereas he himself is only the shoulders. He had chosen love--and anonymity. Also included in his first collection of short stories, *Flappers and Philosophers*, published in 1921, is the tale of "*Dalrymple Goes Wrong*." Dalrymple goes wrong because:

happiness was what he wanted--a slowly rising scale of gratifications of the normal appetites--and he had a strong conviction that the materials, if not the inspiration of happiness, could be bought with money.³⁵

Dalrymple was not convinced "that honest poverty was happier than corrupt riches." He is Fitzgerald's representation of the young war hero coming home to find that his war-won glory was short-lived. Yet, although Dalrymple chose the immoral way, toward riches, he found himself rewarded in spite of his lack of virtue.

Dexter Green, in *Winter Dreams*, did not need money for food nor to care for a family. He had a dream of glittering things of which Judy Jones, daughter of "a rich man," is the symbol. As Fitzgerald describes him:

he was bothered by his scanty funds. But do not get the impression, because his winter dreams happened to be concerned at first with musings on the rich, that there was anything merely snobbish in the boy. He wanted not association with glittering things and glittering people--he wanted the glittering things themselves.³⁶

Ultimately, Dexter manages to make money. Soon after earning his college degree and becoming the successful owner of a string of laundries, Judy Jones again came into his life.

Judy Jones had left a man and crossed the room to him--Judy Jones, a slender enamelled doll in cloth of gold: gold in a band at her head, gold in two slipper points at her dress's hem. The fragile glow of her face seemed to blossom as she smiled at him.³⁷

She was the emblem of wealth--not earned, but established--which he could only touch--not possess. Years later, when Dexter learns of her faded loveliness, he realizes his winter dreams have also faded and left nothingness.

Another Fitzgerald character who, as one of his chief traits, admires money is John Unger of Hades, Mississippi, who attended St. Midas' School near Boston. One of his rich acquaintances is Percy Washington. Invited to his friend's home for a visit, John learns that Percy's father possesses "*The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*." 'He must be very rich', said John simply. 'I'm glad. I like very rich people. The richer a fella is, the better I like him'." John is amazed by the wealth of the Braddock Washington chateau, located in a hidden valley beside a diamond mountain. He falls in love with a daughter, Kismine, and then learns he will not be allowed to leave the secluded treasure trove alive. The day prior to his scheduled murder, planes arrive to bomb the valley. As a bomb hits the slave quarters, Kismine exclaims, "There go fifty thousand dollars' worth of slaves at pre-war prices. So few Americans have any respect for property." John, Kismine and her

sister Jasmine escape before the mountain is purposely destroyed by Braddock Washington when God refuses his bribe. Mistaking rhinestones for diamonds in their hurry to escape, Kismine and John find they have nothing of value left except their love for one another. Fitzgerald manifests in this story the amorality which he felt was a frequent companion of wealth. Mr. Washington had been sure that God had his price; he was only fearful that he had not made his bribe large enough. After all, wasn't "God made in man's image?"

Anson Hunter, in "*The Rich Boy*," was born to inherit, with other children of the family, a fortune of fifteen million dollars. The assurance of established wealth contributed to Anson's self-reliance and a confidence which was displayed in the form of condescension or toleration of those who were not as solvent as he. He fell in love with a rich girl but soon found he could not give to Paula what she required--himself. The discovery several years later that Paula was happy without him was a tremendous blow to his ego, leaving him purposeless and old. Fulfilment of his desires was impossible, for at every opportunity Anson found a withholding of himself which formed an impassable gulf to others. Yet, when others were showing him affection or revering his supremacy, Anson enjoyed a kind of happiness.

I don't think he was ever happy unless some one was in love with him, responding to him like filings to a magnet, helping him to explain himself, promising him something. What it was I do not know. Perhaps they promised that there would always be women in the world who would spend

their brightest, freshest, rarest hours to nurse and protect that superiority he cherished in his heart.³⁸

Although the theme of money runs through most of Fitzgerald's fiction, perhaps the greatest emphasis is placed on it in his novel *The Great Gatsby*. "*The Romance of Money*", as Cowley has called it, is representative of Fitzgerald's best work. Considering primarily the money theme, Fitzgerald has contrasted "acquired wealth" and "established wealth." Established wealth is represented by Tom and Daisy Buchanan and by other residents of East Egg, a region of "white palaces" which "glittered along the water" of Long Island Sound. Tom, who was a college-mate of Nick Carraway, the narrator of the novel, controlled inherited wealth.

His family were enormously wealthy--even in college his freedom with money was a matter for reproach--but now he'd left Chicago and come East in a fashion that rather took your breath away; for instance, he'd brought down a string of polo ponies from Lake Forest. It was hard to realize that a man in my own generation was wealthy enough to do that.³⁹

Their house was quite elaborate, a red and white Georgian colonial mansion on the bay. But the wealth which they possessed had not brought them happiness. They had lived in France for a year and moved from place to place "wherever people played polo and were rich together." Tom pretended to a culture which he did not possess and Daisy could not conceal her "basic insincerity" no matter how often she repeated: "Sophisticated--God, I'm sophisticated."¹²⁸ Later

Fitzgerald was to describe Daisy by saying that her voice was full of money.

That was it. I'd never understood before. It was full of money--that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it ... High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl.⁴⁰

Across the bay on the tip of West Egg lived another rich man, Jay Gatsby. Gatsby, as a young army officer, had fallen in love with Daisy in Louisville. Gatsby had been amazed at the things she took for granted. Her beautiful house "was as casual a thing to her as his tent out at camp was to him." In Louisville, Gatsby had been--

overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves, of the freshness of many clothes, and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor.⁴¹

And Daisy had fallen in love with Jay. But loneliness after his departure for France combined with Gatsby's poverty and Tom Buchanan's determined courtship made her choose Tom. Tom Buchanan had determined her future with his attractive young manhood and a three hundred fifty thousand dollar pearl necklace. In choosing Tom, Daisy chose his way of life.

Gatsby's dream of a life with Daisy becomes not only an illusion but an obsession. After five years, Gatsby locates Daisy and is willing to do whatever is necessary to win her away from Tom.

Gatsby has become rich by illegal means and has bought an enormous house:

a colossal affair by any standard--it was a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool, and more than forty acres of lawn and garden. It was Gatsby's mansion.⁴²

Fitzgerald makes use of the little bay which separates East Egg glamor from West Egg ostentation as a symbol of the slight difference in the mode of the "riches" illustrated. It also symbolizes the difference in refinement and moral standards between the types of riches. After Gatsby reveals his presence to Daisy, he tries by much unsophisticated methods to impress Daisy with his riches. One of the most pathetic scenes occurs while Gatsby is showing his mansion to Daisy for the first time. Daisy and Nick are with him in his bedroom, and Gatsby struggles:

"I've got a man in England who buys me clothes. He sends over a selection of things at the beginning of each season, spring and fall."

He took out a pile of shirts and began throwing them, one by one, before us, shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel, which lost their folds as they fell and covered the table in many-colored disarray. While we admired he brought more and the soft rich heap mounted higher--shirts with stripes and scrolls and plaids in coral and apple-green and lavender and faint orange, with monograms of Indian blue. Suddenly, with a

strained sound, Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily.

"They're such beautiful shirts", she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. "It makes me sad because I've never seen such--such beautiful shirts before."⁴³

In other aspects of dress as well Gatsby was often a gaudy display of acquired wealth: white flannel suit, silver shirt, and gold-coloured tie. In his description of Gatsby's accumulation of things, Fitzgerald makes the choice of automobiles an outstanding example of the difference of taste and custom associated with the two forms of riches. Gatsby's automobile is described as follows:

It was a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hat-boxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of wind-shields that mirrored a dozen suns. Sitting down behind many layers of glass in a sort of green leather conservatory, we started to town.⁴⁴

Tom drove an unpretentious blue coupe.

The snobbery of the established rich, on the other hand, is shown by Fitzgerald in a brief incident. Tom, Mr. Sloane and a pretty young woman are horseback riding and stop by Gatsby's mansion for something to drink. The young woman is the only one who has been to the house previously. It is the first time Tom and Gatsby have engaged in conversation and Tom is annoyed when he learns Gatsby is acquainted with Daisy. The young woman, perhaps under the influence of several highballs, invites Gatsby to a dinner party and he

agrees to come by following them in his car. When Gatsby excuses himself for a moment, they ride quickly away.

Fitzgerald offers a glimpse of Daisy's snobbishness at a party at Gatsby's which she and Tom attend. When Gatsby identifies a particular man for her, saying that he is a small producer, she remarks, "Well, I liked him anyhow."

But the rest offended her--and inarguably, because it wasn't a gesture but an emotion. She was appalled by West Egg, this unprecedented "place" that Broadway had begotten upon a Long Island fishing village--appalled by its raw vigor that chafed under the old euphemisms and by the too obtrusive fate that herded its inhabitants along a short-cut from nothing to nothing. She saw something awful in the very simplicity she failed to understand.⁴⁵

Fitzgerald's conviction that riches contaminate or corrupt all except the strongest of moral characters is illustrated often in this novel. Jordan Baker is compulsively dishonest. Daisy is aghast that Gatsby could have earned his money illegally. Yet she is willing that he should take the blame for a hit-and-run accident for which she is responsible. Tom tells George Wilson, the widowed man, that Gatsby has killed his wife, but refrains from confessing that he, Tom, was her secret lover. Later, Tom defends his action to Nick:

"What if I did tell him? That fellow had it coming to him. He threw dust into your eyes just like he did in Daisy's, but he was a tough one. He ran over

Myrtle like you'd run over a dog and never even stopped his car."

There was nothing I could say, except the one unutterable fact that it wasn't true.⁴⁶

Even Gatsby's murder--the murder of the man whom Daisy loved with the little capacity she had--did not produce a phone call or word of any kind from Daisy or Tom Buchanan. Nick expresses Fitzgerald's feelings:

I couldn't forgive him or like him, but I saw that what he had done was, to him, entirely justified. It was all very careless and confused. They were careless people, Tom and Daisy--they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made.⁴⁷

The destruction of character by wealth is probably best demonstrated in Fitzgerald fiction by his third novel *Tender Is the Night*. Fitzgerald uses the love of money as the corrupting element which produces other "bankruptcies" in many of his works; it is plausible that money is the strongest single force which reduces Dick Diver to nothingness.

The first hint that the young psychiatrist, Dick Diver, will be a servant of Mammon is his attitude toward his colleague Franz Gregorvius, and Franz's home and acceptance of it.

For him the boundaries of asceticism were differently marked--he could see it as a means to

an end, even as a carrying on with a glory it would itself supply, but it was hard to think of deliberately cutting life down to the scale of an inherited suit. The domestic gestures of Franz and his wife as they turned in a cramped space lacked grace and adventure. The post-war months in France, and the lavish liquidations taking place under the aegis of American splendor, had affected Dick's outlook.⁴⁸

A patient whom Dick has helped to return to reality by corresponding with her is the lovely and rich Nicole Warren. At lunch one day he asks:

"... Why do you have so many different clothes?"
"Sister says we're very rich," she offered humbly.
"Since Grandmother is dead."
"I forgive you."⁴⁹

Nicole's sister, Baby Warren, suggests that Mr. Warren could obtain a position for Dick at the University of Chicago.

A burst of hilarity surged up in Dick, the Warrens were going to buy Nicole a doctor--You got a nice doctor you can let us use? There was no use worrying about Nicole when they were in the position of being able to buy her a nice young doctor, the paint scarcely dry on him.⁵⁰

Baby Warren decided against Dick as that doctor, for she did not think he could be made into "an aristocrat." Fitzgerald believed an aristocrat should have money. In a letter to Margaret Trumbull, Fitzgerald asks:

has the aristocrat got money?--if "it" hasn't it had better be born into the middle of the middle classes in a small town. If you had money and were not Russian or Spanish it was certainly an advantage to be an aristocrat up to now. One might not be invited out much or have a king give up his throne in one's honor or be as well known as Harlow and Low outside the country, and certainly one had to kneel to the monied nobility, but it had its compensations.⁵¹

Thus, since Dick did not have money and was neither Russian nor Spanish, Baby decides he will not do. But Dick, for love or money, or a combination of the two, marries Nicole in disregard of Baby's opinion. The surrender seems slight concession at first.

That seems unreasonable, Dick--we have every reason for taking the bigger apartment. Why should we penalize ourselves just because there's more Warren money than Diver money?⁵²

But later:

We must spend my money and have a house--I'm tired of apartments and waiting for you.

At a Paris bank: "there was Muchause, who always asked him whether he wanted to draw upon his wife's money or his own." To the suggestion from Franz that Dick take two hundred twenty thousand dollars from the Warrens to buy a clinic for which Dick would be the "brilliant consultant", Baby had said: "We must think it over carefully--" and the unsaid lines back of that: "We own you, and you'll admit it sooner or later. It is absurd to keep up the pretence of

independence." But Dick learns to purchase others with money: "He had long ago purchased the doorman." Thinking of the manager-owner of a hotel, Dick muses: "It was good that he had made the extra effort which had firmly entrenched him with Mr. McBeth."

Even the law, Dick finds, can be bought:

"Now we are prepared to give--" Dick calculated quickly, "one thousand francs to each of the girls--and an additional - - - - - to the father of the 'serious' one. Also two thousand in addition, for you to distribute as you think best--" he - - - - - shoulders, "--among the men who made the arrest, the - - - - - house keeper, and so forth. I shall hand you the five thousand and expect you to do the negotiating immediately. Then they can be released on bail on some charge like disturbing the - - - - - whatever fine there is will be paid before the magistrate tomorrow--by messenger."⁵³

The Dick Divers use their money and their cleverness to attract others--a group which they can please, entertain, and make glow by basking in the Diver artificial sunshine. Dick becomes something he had not intended to be. His acquired sophistication gradually becomes a facade. He gives himself so completely to Nicole and others until he is an "emotional bankrupt." He no longer wants to possess good manners. He falls in love with every girl he sees. As his pride diminishes, he becomes ruder. Gradually Dick's drinking habits and frequent rudeness isolate the Divers from many people and places where they had formerly been welcome. When Nicole finds she is

well enough to exist without him, Dick is free, but he is the captive of his own moral and spiritual decadence.

Other characters of the novel exemplify Fitzgerald's concepts of the misuse of riches--the pseudo-culture assumed by Violet and Albert McKisco, the power wielded by Baby Warren, the recklessness of Lady Caroline, and the conviviality of Collis Clay.

Fitzgerald describes the cosmopolitan rich to his daughter, Scottie:

I have seen the whole racket, and if there is any more disastrous road than that from Park Avenue to the Rue de la Paix and back again, I don't know it.

They are homeless people, ashamed of being American, unable to master the culture of another country; ashamed, usually, of their husbands, wives, grandparents, and unable to bring up descendants of whom they could be proud, even if they had the nerve to bear them, ashamed of each other yet leaning on each other's weakness, a menace to the social order in which they live--oh, why should I go on? You know how I feel about such things. If I come up and find you gone Perk Avenue, you will have to explain me away as a Georgia cracker or a Chicago killer. God help Perk Avenue.⁵⁴

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17. Typical of critical acclaim following Fitzgerald's death are the following statements:

John Dos Passos : It's the quality of detaching itself from its period while embodying its period that marks a piece of work as good. I would have no quarrel with any critic who examined Scott Fitzgerald's work and declared that in his opinion it did not detach itself from its period. My answer would be that my opinion was different. (Fitzgerald, *The Crack-Up*, p. 338.)

John K. Hutchens : The first of the Twenties' writers of enduring importance fully to 'arrive' after the decade began, he seemed forever conscious of the speed with which time flowed past him. And now, sooner or later, any consideration of the

Twenties must come back to him and linger there. Their pace and despairs, their successes and self-induced tragedies filled in almost too perfect measure the life of one whose first novel was a new generation's declaration of independence. (*The American Twenties*, p. 27.)

Marvin Barrett : Of all the people who knew both Paris and Hollywood in the Years Between, none bridged the gap between the two cities so significantly as Fitzgerald, seeing the beauty of one, the fascination of the other, seeking out their weaknesses, recording them, taking advantage of them, underlining them with his own. (*The Years Between*, p. 55.)

18. Allen, *Only Yesterday*, p. 90.
19. *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, ed. Andrew Turnbull (New York, 1963), p. 377. (Hereinafter referred to as *Letters*.)
20. *Ibid.*, p. 489.
21. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Babylon Revisited and Other Stories* (New York, 1960), p. 167. (Hereinafter referred to as *Babylon*.)
22. *Letters*, p. 530.
23. *Letters*, p. 55.

24. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Three Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (New York, 1953), Introduction to *The Great Gatsby*, Malcolm Cowley, p. 39. (Hereinafter referred to as *Three Novels*.)
25. James E. Miller, Jr., *F. Scott Fitzgerald, His Art and His Technique* (New York, 1964), p. 146.
26. Sergio Perosa, *The Art of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Ann Arbor, 1965), p. 124.
27. *The Crack Up*, p. 320.
28. Ernest Hemingway, *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* (New York, 1938), p. 72.
29. *Letters*, p. 311.
30. Arthur Mizener, *The Far Side of Paradise* (Boston, 1951), p. 127.
31. Fitzgerald, *Three Novels: The Great Gatsby*, p. xi.
32. Mizener, p. 78.
33. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Flappers and Philosophers* (New York, 1920), p. 166.
34. Fitzgerald, *Babylon*, p. 118.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
37. Fitzgerald, *Three Novels: The Great Gatsby*, p. 6.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 52
43. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 130
47. Fitzgerald, *Three Novels: Tender Is the Night*, p. 22.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

50. *Letters*, p. 442.

51. Fitzgerald, *Three Novels: Tender Is the Night*, p. 54.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 324.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

54. *Letters*, p. 102.