Chapter 7

Fitzgerald - The Spokesman of the America's Roaring Twenties or The Jazz Age
The decade of the 1920s was at one and the same time the gaudiest, the shortest and the most misinterpreted era in American history. It has been judged both as a "Golden Age" and as a "hollow time between wars". The years have been seen as frivolous and roaring, and at the same time, bathed in tragedy and despair. The tremendous interest that chroniclers find in this period can be judged by the various terms that have been used to define it - "Roaring Twenties" or "The Jazz Age". The Critics and the Chroniclers either regard the period as an adolescent spree or with a regret approximating that of a bad hangover.

Like so many American writers F. Scott Fitzgerald created a public image of himself as a representative figure of his times, which may have been a part of the promotional campaign to sell his fiction. It worked for a while, with such success that any effort to evoke the Jazz Age or Roaring Twenties is inevitably accompanied by a reference to Ora photograph of Fitzgerald. When Fitzgerald appeared on the literary scene in 1920 with This Side of Paradise, a semi-autobiographical guide to life at Princeton and the story of a sensitive young man who is trying to find his place in society, the critics were taken with its sophisticated style, its use of the social milieu, its honest treatment of emotional experience, and its somewhat bold portrayal of the younger generation.

F. Scott Fitzgerald's career was remarkable for its brevity and intensity. It is perhaps not overstating the case to say that he was the representative American writer of the Jazz Age. Fitzgerald lived his times and wrote about his age with sympathy and irony. His was the story of great success followed by sharp
decline-success as a writer and as a man of means. Born in St. Paul's Minnesota, in 1896, father a scion of southern landowners, mother the daughter of a prosperous Irish immigrant, Fitzgerald was educated at Princeton. He involved himself in literary activities striking friendships with Christian Gauss, John Peale Bishop and Edmund Wilson. He decided to become a writer as a result. His courtship of Zelda Sayre, tempestuous and colourful, now on, now off, culminated in marriage in 1920 which in turn coincided with the success of Fitzgerald's first novel This Side of Paradise. He had begun this novel in college and worked at it in army training camps. It is the story of the exuberant young man coming of age. Fitzgerald had earlier thought of The Romantic Egoists as a title, but settled for This Side of Paradise.

This Side of Paradise was a great success. It sold 40,000 copies in its first year. Fitzgerald became a cult hero. His life-style was representative of his age and it was careless and amoral. He, as well as his age, become synonymous with affluence, high life and liberalism of all kinds. Fitzgerald treats this theme with ambivalence in The Rich Boy Fitzgerald's extravagant life style in high-flying society in New York "the land of ambition and success," as he called it, was paid for by the earnings from Flappers and Philosophers (1921), Tales of the Jazz Age (1922) and The Beautiful and Damned (1922). His fantasies of the good life were usually far ahead of his earnings.

In 1924 Fitzgerald and Zelda went to Paris for a two-and-half-year stay. Here they lived with other American expatriates like Hemingway. Gertrude Stein and Ezra Pound and a brilliant modernist set which included James Joyce and at various points T.S. Eliot and Samuel Beckett.
During this phase *The Great Gatsby* (1923) appeared and *All the Sad Young Men* (1926) a collection of short stories. The hero of *The Great Gatsby*, Jay Gatsby, is a wealthy gangster who desires a glamorous upper class woman but comes to grief. The tale of the gangster, actually a mid-western boy, pursuing the American dream of success, also exemplifies the tragedy of all those who dream. It lifted *The Great Gatsby* to the level of a classic of American literature. *All the Sad Young Men* and a latter collection of stories *Taps at Reveille* (1935) secured Fitzgerald a place as one of America’s best short story writers, but the popularity of the genre and the prospect of easy money from it also fuelled Fitzgerald’s decline because he began turning out sub-standard work. He lost confidence in himself.

In December 1926 Fitzgerald returned to America and took up work at Hollywood as a screen writer. Financial problems overtook him. Zelda, now frustrated in her artistic ambitions, had a break-down and Fitzgerald who was ever on the move the in and out of hospitals where Zelda was admitted, coped with the situation by producing a masterpiece—*Tender is the Night* (1934). The novel traces the decline of an American psychiatrist, who like Fitzgerald himself is emotionally and professionally a wreck, and who has married a beautiful and wealthy patient. The novel is an elegy to the lost values of an expatriate society in the French Riviera. The autobiographical dimension can hardly be missed.

Fitzgerald’s poor health and his alcoholism steadily brought on a crack-up. He took to screen writing in Hollywood and he partially revived but not enough to prevent death by heart-failure at 44 in New York. He left an unfinished novel *The Last Tycoon* which was posthumously published in 1941. His assorted essays and miscellaneous pieces edited by Edmund Wilson appeared as *The Crack-Up* in 1945.
Fitzgerald’s works are notable for their accurate expression of the rhythms of the jazz age. Whether he wrote in America or abroad, Fitzgerald’s work is about America. The expatriate experience in Paris is also thoroughly American, no less in the American grain than the work of the home-made writers. Being abroad only meant nostalgia for home. Fitzgerald spoke allegorically of America, though being an expatriate, as Van Wyck Brooks has pointed out in Pilgrimage of Henry James (1925) one runs the risk of severing oneself from the familiar. Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby proves otherwise. It is an American novel.

The generation of the Twenties has also been called the lost generation and clearly Fitzgerald’s works reflect the illusions and disillusions of the age the despair but also the promise. In his essay The Crack-Up, Fitzgerald asserts: “The test a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function.” This statement nicely describes Fitzgerald’s own kind of excellence. He contained the contradictions of his age, and he retained his ability to function till he cracked-up.

This brings one to his fictional craft. Fitzgerald was a conscious craftsman. His writing is always intense and highly interesting and when it comes to shaping or designing a piece Fitzgerald was usually a success. He has a fine balance of exuberance and restraint, of vision and realism, and a tough wit and irony suffuses even his romantic excess. Here is a good example of his cool way of speaking of mental stress and breakdown. It is from The Crack-Up.
Of course all life is a process of breaking down, but the blows that do the dramatic side of the work—the big sudden blows that come, or seem to come, from outside—the ones you remember and blame things on and, in moments of weakness, tell your friends about, don’t show their effect all at once. There is another sort of blow that comes from within—that you don’t feel until it is too late to do anything about it, until you realize with finality that in some regard you will never be as good a man again. The first sort of breakage seems to happen quick—the second kind happens almost breakage seems to happen quick—the second kind happens almost without your knowing it but is realized suddenly indeed.

The passage bespeaks a Henry James like control and a firmness one associates with Conrad, one of Fitzgerald’s models. It will perhaps not be wrong to assert that Fitzgerald is a minor classic of our times, because in him there is that careful craftsmanship which balances an otherwise disordered life.

As a true representative of the ‘Jazz Age’ and American youth culture, Fitzgerald’s obsession with Juvenescence. “Youth by heaven – youth! I want it near me, all around me just one more before I’m too old to care”.(1) The statement aptly glosses Fitzgerald’s entire corpus, for throughout his writing his fixation with youth is a central concern. At its most basic, age provided Fitzgerald a measure of self-worth. Youth was an ambrosial gift from gods, a divine favor that marked the triumph of destiny over hard work. Unfortunately, most critics ignore the cultural background of Fitzgerald’s age consciousness, describing his obsession with youth as a personality flaw that distracts from the
maturity of his craft. Yet his attitude toward growing old reflects a broader fetishization of youth that proved endemic to twentieth-century popular culture. "Time was when age meant dignity, authority, and power, while youth meant helpless slavery." The forces responsible for this century-long "Youthquake" are broad and diverse. As many historians have noted, the definition of adolescence as a distinct transitional period in the life cycle did not exist outside of the upper class until the 1890s, when a range of institutions charged with overseeing the moral development of maturing youth arose in response to increasing patterns of industrialization and urbanization that eroded familial oversight over children—compulsory public schooling, child-labor laws and even extracurricular outlets like the Boy Scouts and the YMCA segregated teens from adult culture granting them their own social space by stratifying them into age-specific cohort groups that encouraged intra-generational identification.

Teenagers themselves constituted only a segment of this emerging youth culture, however. The signs and symbols by which adolescents flaunted their youth entered the public domain where they risked appropriation by those who may not have been young but nevertheless wished to appear young. As Fitzgerald remembered in *Echoes of the Jazz Age*, the *Children's Party* of the early 1920s was eventually "taken over by the elders, leaving the children puzzled and rather neglected and rather taken aback."

Fitzgerald showed teens as they were themselves. As the St. Louis post-dispatch warned, paradise promised a rude awakening for parents who believed their children lived in a Louisa May Alcott World. Fitzgerald owed his early
success to the fact that adolescent and post adolescent readers were ripe for fiction that substantiated the newfound confusion and complexity associated with teenage life. As The Bookman recognized This Side of Paradise was “a convincing chronicle of youth by youth” because Fitzgerald was not” looking back to youth’s problems with a wistful patronage” but was “still in the thick of the fight, and the fierceness of combat(3) By tracing Amory’s emotions through triumph and tragedy, the novel documented the “instability and fluctuation” of youth’s temperament, illustrating how, as Hall argued, teens are torn between a “genius for extracting pleasure and gratification from everything.” Undoubtedly Fitzgerald defined adolescence as a process of emotional and historical accommodation.

Although Fitzgerald’s novels after This Side of Paradise center on characters at the cusp of their thirties, much of his short fiction also features adolescents like Amory who must weather the storm and stress of growing up. Among the best of these “Juveniles” are the Basil and Josephine Stories, a series of fourteen tales written between 1928-1931 that treat teen courtship and popularity rituals with empathetic depth and dignity.

Abandoning the demeaning mooncalf stereotype in his short stores allowed Fitzgerald to focus on the liminality of the adolescent experience and examine, like Hall, the conflict between impulse and discipline. Fitzgerald’s teens must also confront serious character flaws that threaten the evolution of their personalities. Yet he refrains from reducing adolescence to a risible foible, treating it in stead as a series of formative developmental Challenges. Instead of
encouraging adolescents to think like adults, Fitzgerald insists that older readers recognize that youth are instinctual, impulsive creatures for whom restraint seems an unfair impediment to mapping their own moral boundaries. By addressing a different implied audience than Tarkington, Fitzgerald made it clear that his sympathy lay with youth who, he implies, need latitude, not lecturing from elders.

In soliciting this adult understanding, Fitzgerald was not simply creating a more nuanced portrait at teen Psychology than seventeen allowed. He was also reversing the values traditionally attached to youth and maturity by idealizing the former as a standard that adults invariably fail. Youth for Fitzgerald marked the apogee of one’s romantic promise; once that peak was reached, aging exiled one into the cold, mundane world. In portraying age this way, Fitzgerald drew from a Common Pool of imagery that equated growing up with the Biblical story of the fortunate fall Hall’s Adolescence also alluded to the fall to describe adulthood.

Perhaps the myth of Adam of Eden describes this epoch. The consciousness of Childhood is molted, and anew...Consciousness to be developed”.

While his fiction “threw the behaviour of America’s youth in the Public’s face,” it also lamented their alienation from” an older values and standards” that “had been rendered conspicuously inoperative.” While providing an insider’s perspective on his generation’s mind set, he also assured older readers that youth “were less a threat to former stability than an ongoing reminder that it had passed.” We know we have fallen, Fitzgerald was insisting, but we do not know it we can get up.
Yet Fitzgerald also recognized that the fantasy of endless youth must inevitably confront the reality of aging. In his novels in particular, flappers typically enjoy an extended adolescence only to discover suddenly that their decadent, indulgent fun has irreparably weathered them. Although Gloria Patch aspires “to be young and beautiful for a long time,” dissipation and marital discord exhaust these precious qualities. After a decade’s worth of living out the role of baby vamp, she is despondent to learn on her twenty-ninth birthday that the looks two old to convincingly play that part in the movies. Because she can pass for “a woman of thirty,” the film studio suggests she is better suited for “a small character... supposed to be a very haughty rich widow.

In Tender is the Night, Rosemary at first fulfills the flapper’s function by resuscitating ‘Dick Diver’s’ youth. “you are not middle aged,” she assures him when he complains of their age difference. “you are the youngest person in the world”. But while Rosemary invigorates his adolescent passions, Dick’s “father complex”, his quasi-incestuous attraction to young girls, allows him to see her only as a child. During their initial infatuation, he is haunted by gossip that the teenage Rosemary was caught in flagrant delicto on a train; four years later, upon consummating their affair, he demands full knowledge of her sexual history.

At both moments, Dick can’t reconcile her sexuality with the ingénue she portrays in films like Daddy’s Girl, in which she appears so young and innocent... embodying all the immaturity of the race”. While he tries to explain the abrupt ending of their friendship by claiming that “Rosemary didn’t grow up” his affection for her is doomed the minute he realizes than she is indeed an adult. Once he understands that her apparently naïve innocence is a cinematic illusion, Dick simply has to use for Rosemary.
Of course, Fitzgerald’s most affecting portrait of the aging flapper is Daisy Buchanan in The Great Gatsby. Although worn Cynical by her husband’s constant infidelity, Daisy Strives at twenty three to remain the same frivolous teenager who fell in love with Jay Gatsby five years earlier. To maintain her self-image, she affects contrived, exaggerated gestures that accentuate her childishness, occasionally even speaking in the same baby talk as Miss Pratt in Seventeen. But where as Tarkington employed this affection to convey his heroine’s innocence in The Great Gatsby it underscores Daisy’s desperate denial of her role in her lovers demise. As long as she believes herself young and carefree, she can be careless without consequence. Thus when Tom and Gatsby square off at the Plaza Hotel to demand Daisy Choose between them, she pines to escape into youth. “We are getting old,” she announces as music seeps into their suite from a nearly ballroom. “If we were young we’d rise and dance.”

In the novel’s closing indictment of Tom and Daisy’s “vast carelessness”, Nick implicitly ties the couple’s ability to retreat and “let other people clean up the mess they had made” to their unwillingness to acknowledge their lost youth. When Jordan Baker accuses him mistreating her, Nick acknowledges the connection between age and complicity that the Buchanan can not admit: “I’m thirty, I’m five years too old to lie to myself and call it heroin”. Equating maturity with gait, Nick suggests that Daisy’s desire to remain young is not been born the hope of preserving youth’s ephemeral but her need to evade adult responsibilities.
Fitzgerald’s work also reveals awareness of a third aspect of youth culture prevalent in the 1920s: the emergence of youth as a market place commodity. The fascination with youth’s life style also engendered fads and fashions aimed at adults anxious to avoid feeling old. By the mid-1920s, much popular discourse was insisting that age was a matter of Psychology, not Chronology. As Forum Magazine assured its audience “a youthful spirit can dominate gray hair on wrinkled hands, if it is not cramped and cumbered by the mental limitations of ‘years’. Fitzgerald’s age consciousness was the product of a culture in which aging became synonymous with deterioration and degeneration. More than any other author of the era, he was obsessed with the symbolism of age milestones, often making their passage the dramatic crux of his plots. The Beautiful and Damned might well be subtitled Countdown to Thirty, for Anthony and Gloria so dread the onslaught of middle age that their descent into decadence seems an effort to squander their youth before it can claim it.

Fitzgerald’s deterministic belief in the stages of life turns even grimmer in his note books, where he often ascribes his professional failures to senescence. A prescient couplet suggests deeply aging shaped his sense of his own capacity: “Drunk at 20, wrecked at 30, dead at 40 – Drunk at 21, Human at 31, mellow at 41, dead at 51.” Age consciousness is even a recurring motif in the reminiscences of his contemporaries. The critic Alice B. Toklas in her autobiography What is Remembered recalls Fitzgerald visiting Gertrude Stein’s famous atelier at 27, rue de Fleurus on his thirtieth birthday.” One afternoon he said, You know I am thirty years old today and it is tragic. What is to become of me, what am I to do?” And Gertrude told him that he should not worry, that he had been writing like a man of thirty for many years. The idea of premature aging was simply too Central to his tragic sensibility.

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The glorification of youth prevalent in Fitzgerald’s writing suggests the extreme to which American popular culture denigrated adulthood. The fixation with adolescence apparent in This Side of Paradise, The Beautiful and Damned, The Great Gatsby, Tender is the Night the short stores, and essays not only reflects this denigration but also has heaped sustain it in the American imagination since the 192s. In 1953, Van Wyck Brooks cautioned against resurgent interest in Fitzgerald by warming that “the cult of youth” he celebrates might “fill the readers with a fear of growing old that …. Precludes at the outset any regard for the uses of growing up” Other Eisenhower – era critics – one thinks of Leslie Fielder and Ihab Hassan in Particular – also cited Fitzgerald as an example of the American intellect’s arrested development. To minimize his importance, they depicted him as a harbinger of the beats, juvenile delinquents, and Elvis presleys of their time – which may not be frivolous as legacy as they intended the comparison to seem. The rise of culturalist approaches to literature has helped us better appreciate the multifarious uses that the category “Youth” serves in the popular arena. Adolescence as a tempestuous stage of ethical accommodation and adjustment dramatizes the unsettling celerity of change that characterized the twentieth century: the adolescent, mean while, marks the space within which we debate these transforming social attitudes toward sex, marriage, and work, among other issues. Rather than rebuke Fitzgerald for failing to mature, we ought to recognize how deeply his corpus registers the struggle to grow up in a culture that demonizes growing old.
“Scoot Fitzgerald did crown the beginning of his career with success, adulation, excitement. And the middle was crowned too, through in a different way, with shocks such as few men have to endure, with private grief’s of the most poignant and pitiful kind”[5]. After his withdrawal from the University due to ill health, in November 1917 the united states entered world war I and he joined the army.

This Side of Paradise, his coming-of-age novel about, as he put it, the “affairs of youth taken seriously.” A manuscript was sent the following May to Scribner’s. Editor Maxwell E. Perkins rejected, but later accepted a revised version, which Scribner’s published in May 1920 and promoted as “a novel about flappers written for philosophers.” To the surprise of both its publisher and author, the novel became a runaway best seller. Although reeking of adolescence and seldom read today, This Side of Paradise remains “at once dated and ageless,” according to Fitzgerald scholar James L.W. West, of Pennsylvania State University, “very much a product of its own times – the first (and still most faithful) chronicle of American youth in transition from the nineteenth century into the twentieth.”

The unexpected success of This Side of Paradise launched the 23 years old Fitzgerald’s literary career and made it possible for him to marry Zelda Sayre, a beauty from Montgomery, Alabama, whom he had met while stationed at nearby Camp Sheridan. The writer Ring Lardner Jr. called Scott and Zelda “the prince and princess of their generation. Their glittering lifestyle and well-publicized partying in new York and Paris and on the Riviera epitomized the
excesses of young people who had, in Fitzgerald’s words, “grown up to find all
gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in men shaken.” But the marriage was soon
bedeviled by Scott’s alcoholism and Zelda’s emotional instability. She was
eventually institutionalized, and died in a fire at a mental home in 1948, eight
years after Scott’s death of a heart attack.

In the early 1920s Fitzgerald completed two other full-length works. His
second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922), is a moralistic and, some
would say, prophetic tale about the decline and fall of Anthony and Gloria Patch,
a contemporary American couple, who go from wealth and academic success to
alcoholic ruin. Though it might sound a lot like what the Fitzgerald’s life would
become, his book was clearly influenced by Theodore Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* and
other American novels. Published to mixed reviews, *The Beautiful and
Damned* became a best seller but failed to generate sufficient royalties to
maintain the Fitzgerald’s lavish lifestyle.

His third novel, *The Great Gatsby* (1925), chronicled the rise and fall of
a dashing bootlegger undone by his romantic obsession for the rich and beautiful
Daisy Buchanan. T.S. Eliot hailed it as the first important step in the American
novel since Henry James, and it is generally considered to be Fitzgerald’s most
enduring work. In *The Great Gatsby*, the authors’ sensitivity to social nuances
and moral scruples is brilliantly on display. It is the archetypal American novel
of social ambition and the often tragic consequences of innocence betrayed,
whether the paradise lost is a Midwestern boyhood, Paris in the Twenties, or
Gatsby’s platonic ideal of Daisy.
Although a critical success, *The Great Gatsby* had disappointing sales, and its author found it increasingly difficult to resist the financial temptations of writing short stories (some of them brilliant, others mere hack work) for mass-market magazines. He also turned to scriptwriting for Hollywood.

Fitzgerald was slow to come up with new ideas for novels that would match his literary reputation, and nine years elapsed before publication of *Tender is the Night* (1934). Abandoning two early versions of the novel, Fitzgerald drew on his expatriate life to recast his book as the story of Dick Diver, an American psychiatrist who surrenders his youthful idealism in the pursuit of social advancement and betrays his talent for a life of “drink and dissipation.” In part, Fitzgerald drew on the painful experience of Zelda’s medical history to portray Nicole Diver, a mentally ill women who marries her psychiatrist; Nicole Diver, a mentally ill woman who marries her psychiatrist; Nicole’s hospitalization and eventual cure contributes to Diver’s personal and professional decline. *Tender is the Night*, which went through 17 drafts and set proofs, received mixed reviews, in part because of its complex structure and confusing chronology. The critic Malcolm Cowley said there were really two Fitzgerald’s: the man outside, with his face pushed against the window pane. In *The Great Gatsby* the two Fitzgerald’s come together brilliantly in its narrator, Nick Carraway, who is both a participant and a spectator. The problem with *Tender is the Night* is that theme and structure never quite join, and the novel is fractured down the middle by this split.
Fitzgerald attempted unsuccessfully to adapt *Tender is the Night* for the movies. He had first visited Hollywood in 1927, and 10 years later he moved there permanently. Fitzgerald worked on M-G-M scripts for *A Yank at Oxford*, a comedy about an American Rhodes scholar, and for *Three Comrades*, the movie version of Erich Maria Remarque’s novel of the same name, and he contributed to the script for *Gone with the Wind* and many other films. Fitzgerald tried hard to learn the craft of screen writing but was unable to fit into the factory-style organization of the studio system. Although his mistress, the columnist Sheilah Graham, made great efforts to control his drinking, he was past help. By 1939 he was without a studio contract and worked as a freelance scriptwriter when he could find work. His boozing ended a brief collaboration with Budd Schulberg on *Winter Carnival*, a college film set at Dartmouth. Fitzgerald was also having difficulty writing good commercial fiction, despite the Pat Hobby Stories published in *Esquire*, and was reduced to submitting stories under a pen name. Dropped by his agent, Harold Ober, he became increasingly despondent. In the summer of 1940 he spent time aimlessly perusing the daily newspapers, circling items in the “personals” and advertisements for spiritual healing. He suffered a fatal heart attack on December 21, 1940, while reading a football story in the *Princeton Alumni Weekly*.

Fitzgerald’s Hollywood experience at least provided grist for his final novel, *The Last Tycoon*, which he was still working on at the time of his death, was loosely based on the career of M-G-M producer Irving Thalberg and like so many other Fitzgerald works, its theme was the American Dream. A version of the novel was pieced together from Fitzgerald’s manuscript, outline, and notes by Edmund Wilson and published in 1941 as part of an anthology that included *The Great Gatsby* and five short stores.

In a famous exchange described by Ernest Hemingway in his short story The Snows of Kilimanjaro, Fitzgerald once remarked, “The rich are different from you and me.” To which Hemingway replied, “Yes, they have more money,” Hemingway clearly though he had gotten the better of the exchange. Which in fact precisely defines the two writers. Hemingway, whose star in the 1930s ascended while Fitzgerald’s sank was never interested in social distinctions and the nuances of manner. His style was suited to one man, alone, on the battlefield or in the bullring. It is a style that could never describe the world of Gatsby and Daisy. Fitzgerald, on the other hand, stands with Henry James and Edith Wharton as a master of social scene, where money, manners, and social standing are the sources of action, the very fabric of reality, and the subjects of moral judgments. Of all the American writers of his time, F. Scott Fitzgerald can now be seen as the greatest chronicler of the world Gatsby dreamed of but could never obtain.
The immense popularity and success of Fitzgerald's first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, is linked with the changing social reality recorded in it. The novel not only records the rebellion of the younger generation, it also presents an authentic picture of youth lost to misplaced ideals. Alfred Kazin was right when he said that *This Side of Paradise* "announced the lost generation". In his treatment of social change in the novel, Fitzgerald does not borrow abstractions from the social sciences as Theodore Dreiser and Dos Passos do; rather, he focuses on a relationship between individual and society as a struggle between irreconcilables. In his attempt to restore the balance between the material and the non-material, the individual in his fiction is either pushed into isolation or forced to live in the unreal of dream of fantasy.

Fitzgerald's concern for social change is reflected generally in the novel's epigraph and the sub-titles of its main division. The epigraph, Borrowed from Rupert Brook's *Tiare Tahiti*, implies a story about a young man involving himself fully in life and learning about it not from the past experiences of others but from the consequence of his own. Fitzgerald makes his hero pass through this side of paradise — the changing social reality of the Twenties — to record his mistakes and failures. Amory Blaine's quest for identity or social education gets completed only when he falls back on his inner self to analyze his mistakes. In the words of Rose Adrienne Gallo (1978:22), "Wisdom, like paradise, cannot be gained by bequest, just as life cannot be gained vicariously. The wisdom that ensues selfhood must be attained by each individual by going into the dirty grey turmoil of life, of experience."
The subtitles of the novel's two books – The Romantic Egotist and Education of a Personage – suggest the intended direction of social change in the Twenties. The novel is divided into two parts. Each pertaining to moments before and after the war and these two parts have strongly contrasted atmospheres. Amory's experiences in the first part of the novel reflect his dependence on the codes of genteel culture. In the second part of the novel his experiences are informed by the postwar atmosphere. In the early part of the novel he is full of youthful enthusiasm and idealism. He is introduced as the "son of Beatrice." Here Amory's mother represents the aristocratic traits of the genteel tradition and "a culture rich in all traditions, but barren of all ideals" (Fitzgerald 392). Amory's education in St. Regis's school adds to his egoism. He registers his superiority over others by devising social distinctions that are temporarily coined. In one such attempt he claims that he belongs to a superior class of "slickers." Amory's attitude reflects the result of social fluidity that has come with social change. To quote Milton R. Stern, "his [Amory's] qualities are not an inheritance from an established past and present, but are sign of deliberate calculus at success in the future" (25-26).

During his education at Princeton, Amory comes to know about the "air of struggle that pervaded his class,; and "the breathless social system" of the campus. "Oh it isn't the breathless social system," asserts Amory, "I like having a bunch of hot cats on the top" (355). Here Princeton becomes a miniature America involving the individual in an endless struggle for social superiority. But this social struggle results in failure and distress. William Goldhurst rightly says in this regard, "Fitzgerald's eager protagonists suffer the consequence of their self-imposes social displacement: they lose dignity and youthful optimism, or vitality or life itself" (131).
Fitzgerald’s treatment of the revolution in manners and morals by the young, particularly of young flappers like Rosalind and Isabelle, reveals his romantic attitude towards his characters. It seems as if the writer himself participated in these events. But a closer look at his fiction highlights Fitzgerald’s attitude as a moralist that makes him view beauty and sex in moral terms. Thus, whenever Amory encounters beauty and sex in the novel he finds some evil force lurking behind the veil. As soon as his first love affair reaches its climax in a kiss “a sudden revulsion seized Amory, disgust loathing for the whole incident” (368). His meeting with Isabelle also ends with a sense of despair. “There was a clamor for a dance, there was a glance that passed between them – on his side despair, on hers regret” (372). His relationship with Eleanor also brings him close to evil. Again, when Amory is spending wild evenings with Fred Sloane, he thinks he sees a pale man watching him. This consciousness of evil and despair that Amory encounters in particular situations is a result of a deepening fear in his mind that without informing goals and moral restraints, his desires and passions, his feelings and emotions, his imagination and intellect could run out of control in several directions.

Amory’s disillusionment and disenchantment with the values of the past reaches its climax when he encounters the First World War. The War, presented as an interlude between the two books, forever changes the world and renders Amory’s prior experience and education irrelevant. Princeton for him now stands as a “warehouse of dead ages” (420). For him, war acts as a traumatic shock: “I confess that the war, instead of making me orthodox, which is the correct reaction, has made me passionate agnostic” (427). It is only towards the end of
the novel that he comes to realize that the real value of life lies not in possession but in sacrifice. He makes a sacrifice by saving his friend Alec Connage who is about to be registered under the Mann Act, for having sex with a girl. Fitzgerald seems to reaffirm his faith in the human values of love and sympathy, of solidarity and friendship by showing a change in the attitude of Amory.

The state of youth during the twenties, which played a decisive role in accelerating social change in that decade, is the most serious concern of Fitzgerald in *The Beautiful and Damned*. Like Amory Blaine, Anthony Patch has a romantic conception of life, but as the novel progresses, this attitude of the hero is nullified by the pressures of social change. Unlike Amory, who preoccupies himself with discovering a meaning of life in the turmoil of life, Anthony Patch justifies his way of life, his doing nothing by his philosophy of meaninglessness of life. Anthony's grandfather, Adam J. Patch, personifies Victorian values but the hero rejects everything that the old man represents.

Fitzgerald has used the dramatic device of the objective correlative to render the state of mind of the young in the years of social change. In one of the memorable scenes in the novel. Anthony observes the carnival of New York city only to reveal the underlying hollowness of the glamorous city life:

*The soft rush of taxis by him, and laughter as hoarse as a crow's, incessant - and loud, with the rumble of subways underneath - and over all, the revolutions of light, the growing and receding of light - light diving like pearls forming and reforming in glittering bars and circles and monstrous grotesque figures out amazingly on the sky.* (515).
The modern city, symbolizing the pleasure principle whereby everything is enjoyed at a hurried pace, becomes a nightmare for the sensitive individual. Anthony considers that it is "technically excellent but not convincing" (575). Losing his faith in the social order, Anthony feels a make with his values to adjust in the world of the rich seals his fate. He commits himself to an impossible set of conflicting demands to become a moral guide for others and to be a performer before the expatriates. This dialectic between his public and private selves becomes his tragic flaw. Dick himself hints at his failure: "He had been swallowed like a gigolo, and somehow permitted his (arsenal) to be locked in Warren safety deposit vaults" (249). In a significant scene Rosemary, a young actress who falls in love with Dick at the French Riviera, observes the extravagance that has gone into the entertainment world: "The bizarre debris of some recent picture, a decayed street scene in India, a great cardboard whale, a monstrous tree bearing cherries large as basket balls" (126). Fitzgerald here tries to evoke the ephemeral nature of the entertainment world by showing the temporary structures of a film set. Dick while performing the role of a clown before the expatriates indulges in an extravagance of emotional and moral energy. His social commitment carries with it an aura of falsity. He performs before those who lack commitment and promise.

There is a great deal of violence in Tender is the Night that has become a part of everyday life, of the fabric of man. Fitzgerald hints that after the war violence became a reality of social life. When Dick and Nicole go to the Gare St. Lazare to see Abe North off to America, they witness a murder. A woman passenger takes out a revolver and kills her lover. "Then as if nothing has
happened, the lives of Divers and their friends flow into the street” (170). But, “the shots had entered their lives” (170). Tommy Barban and Albert Mckisco indulge in mock fights that become source of disturbance for them. Sometimes violence erupts in the form of a psychological imbalance of the characters. Nicole’s repeated attacks of schizophrenia generate horror in the minds of other characters. Sometimes this violence takes a surrealistic shape when the characters reveal a death-wish beneath their laughter. For instance, Rosemary associates herself with a jolting tree strapped to a truck” “Looking at it with fascination Rosemary associated herself with, and laughs cheerfully with it, and everything all at once seemed gorgeous”(166). The laughter of a tree, of Rosemary and her fellow expatriates, of the whole post-war generation has a hysterical quality in it.

The picture of sickness and defeat becomes clearer when Fitzgerald presents a close up of the life of the expatriates. Memorable among these characters in Abe North, an alcoholic musician, “who after a brilliant precocious start had composed nothing” (134). He finds himself at the fag end of the life from where very action seems futile and meaningless. He explains to one of his friends why he has given up hope. “I got bored, and then it was such a long way to go back in order to get anywhere” (167). Abe North’s casual death shows the fate of a man of promise in a world where everything is measured through money. By contrast, Albert Mckisco, a degraded artist, thrives by writing trash for the movies. It is ironical that Mckisco with his second-rate ideas becomes a successful artist, while men of promise like Abe North and Dick Diver become notable failures.
In this way *Tender is the Night* becomes a tragic novel presenting the failure of its central figure, a man of promise defeated by the pressures of change that have come in the social set-up of the post-war years. The action of the novel becomes tragic because it involves the spiritual and emotional waste of Dick Diver.

Thus, Fitzgerald presents a vivid picture of modern social realities and renders with full intimacy the intricacies and complexities of the psychological make-up of characters chosen as representatives to typify the governing mood of the period. Keeping in mind the state of crisis in the life of modern man, Fitzgerald tries to define and illuminate the problems and difficulties the crisis situation posed before an individual. Like a true social novelist, the writer brings to light the forces which condition and motivate men as social beings. We also get proof of Fitzgerald’s faith in the possibility and validity of humanism, although as a realist he recognized that the substance of humanism has been considerably reduced in times of social, political and economic change. Although the writer perceives a threat to the principles of humanism, he reaffirms faith in the humanistic ideals of liberty and love. Avoiding direct sermonizing or moralizing upon his reader, Fitzgerald succeeds in rendering the truth of the human situation in contemporary time without compromising his artistic impartiality and integrity.

F. Scott Fitzgerald was concerned with the artist theme from the very start of his career. *This Side of Paradise* (1920) deals with the growth of Amory Blaine, a man conscious of his literary abilities and trying to develop from
boyhood a 'personality' fit for the artist. Amory is obviously a copy of Fitzgerald himself, as are so many of the artist – heroes patterned on the beliefs of their creators. But the autobiographical material does not help to make This side of Paradise a successful novel. No doubt, the novel is an exercise which contributes to Fitzgerald's later achievements but, as yet, he is immature and fails to combine all the strands into a neat whole. Though there are some memorable episodes, like Dick Humbird's death or Amory's supercilious sacrifice, the novel is, on the whole, very uneven. A multiplicity of details is held together by Amory's presence, but Fitzgerald is not always able to show how they contribute to the growth of the artist. Even the passages enlisting the books read by Amory or the poems written by him do not seem to be organic parts of the novel. Fitzgerald may have implied that the connection between the artist's experience and the work of art is not always tangible. But the narrative fails to establish even an underground connection.

From the outset, Fitzgerald adhered to the Renaissance and Romantic conception of the writer as a man of action who experiences his material at first hand – not from lack of imagination, but so he can write about it more intensely.

This transformation of experiences into material is not always convincing in This Side of Paradise. The conclusion, of course, lays more emphasis on the world of experience than on the world of art. But even so, there is a feeling that all the preceding episodes do not contribute to this conclusion. Their cumulative effect should be felt in the last chapter, but it is not. While Amory's friendship with Father Darcy seems to have been a valuable experience, the Princeton sections seem to be overwritten.
Some chapters may be enjoyed, whether they contribute to the theme or not. But the general sense of dissatisfaction remains, more so as we cannot help comparing this novel with Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), a book Amory has read. Amory's going through a series of moral crises and his attempts to evaluate their emotional significance are very like Stephen's. Just as Joyce sometimes seems to treat Stephen with a faint irony, Fitzgerald presents Amory's view, at least in book one, with a consistent banter. Stephen's "mystical kinship of fosterage" with his father, mother and sister is paralleled in Amory's life: Father Darcy is Amory's spiritual ancestor, a key figure in his development; his parents contribute very little to it. Indeed, being the 'son of Beatrice' is a hindrance to Amory's growth. In this sense, his real parents are foster parents and the foster parent the real one. There may be a joking allusion to Amory's affinity with Stephen in the fact that both Amory and Father Darcy were descended from an Irishman called Stephen. Father Darcy writes to Amory:

> Sometimes I think that the explanation of our deep resemblance is some common ancestor, and I find that the only blood that the Darcys and the O'Haras have in common is that of the O'Donahues... Stephen was his name, I think...'

The ironic presentation of the hero is effective in showing how Amory, spoiled by his mother, becomes a 'Narcissus'. It is a major point in the book that Amory can write a poem only when "Narcissus" is 'off duty'. His love of Isabelle was 'the high point of vanity, the crest of his young egotism'. Long
after the relationship has ended, 'a quick glad memory of Isabelle' results in a poem. The failure in life contributes to success in art. But in terms of life also, this may not be a failure altogether, for Amory has lost his vanity and egotism. Though he feels that he has lost half his personality, Father Darcy points out that doing 'the next thing' is more important for people like them than to achieve high-handed schemes of success.

"Personality is a physical matter almost entirely; it lowers the people it acts on – I've seen it vanish in a long sickness. But while a personality is active, it overrides 'the next thing'. Now a personage, on the other hands, gathers. He is never though of apart from what he's done. He's a bar on which a thousand things have been hung – glittering things sometimes, as ours are; but he uses those things with a cold mentality back of them".

The second part of the book is called 'The Education of a Personage'. Amory learns at the school of life, from his relationship with Rosalind and Eleanor, from the disintegration of romantic mythus. Just as he had to setup out of thinking too much about himself, he steps out of all illusions about others at the end of the book. The Byrons and Brookes he sees as people who are 'mistaking the shadow of courage for the substance of wisdom'. And just as there were no more wise men or heroes left in his world, the women, too, could not be perpetuated in terms of experience.

They could not contribute 'anything but a sick heart and a page of puzzled words to write.'

After this complete disillusionment, he renounces the beauty of great art, the beauty of all joy and the beauty of woman.
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After his complete disillusionment, he renounces the beauty of great art, the beauty of all joy and the beauty of woman……..the waters of disillusion had left a deposit on his soul, responsibility and a love of life, the faint stirring of old ambitions and unrealized dreams.

Paradoxically enough, more convincing statements of this stirring of ambitions and dreams come in the novels where the quasi-artists are left without any possibility in the conclusion. The development and disintegration of Nick Carraway and Dick Diver are more maturely done. Nick, the narrator in The
Great Gatsby (1925), shares with Stephen and Amory an awareness of his own spiritual development. But is this development that of an artist or that of the sensitive hero so common in modern fiction? Perhaps the answer lies in Fitzgerald's use of language. Nick's moral crises are often presented in a language which, by suggestive associations, joins them with an artist's struggle with his craft.

Even as Nick introduces the action in the first chapter, we understand that he is no detached observer. And when the story ends, we felt that it has set before us not only Jay Gatsby's tragedy but the growth of Nick's character as well. He brought East with him a particular set of values. Gatsby's tragedy has been a test for those values as much as the values have helped Nick to sort out and evaluate that tragedy. He participates in the action, reacts morally to the incidents and comes out a sadder and a wiser man. But he is also a weary man. After the turbulence of East Egg and West Egg, his 'interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men' is 'closed out'. But he admits that Gatsby, though he represented everything for which he had 'unaffected scorn', was exempt from this reaction. He gives reasons for this exemption and in so doing gives us a privileged glimpse into his own ideas about creative temperament.

If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. This responsiveness
had nothing to do with that flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of the 'creative temperament' – it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again" (10).

At the very outset of the narrative, then, Nick carefully isolates what is usually called creative temperament from the real creative temperament. This temperament is not defined, but there are ample clues for a definition: 'heightened sensitivity', 'responsiveness', 'gift for hope', 'romantic readiness'. Presumably, these are the things that go with a creative temperament and replenish it. Nick also has this gift for hope; it is the basis of his tolerance which in turn is the 'hard rock' at the base of his conduct. But his tolerance has its limits, because 'reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope' . But his hope reaches its limit only after the violent and harrowing experiences recounted in the book. Even then, he is not ready to judge Gatsby. Earlier, he had the ability to reserve his judgment on Tom and Daisy as well.

This tolerance is part of the artist's temperament because it helps him to be impersonal, keeps him from sticking 'good' or 'bad' labels to men and their actions. Nick speaks of life as enchanting and repelling him at the same time. He is describing the party at Tom and Myrtle's New York apartment and his own futile attempts to get away from it, when he says:

Yet high over the city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I saw him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life" (11)
This also is the artist's view. He is at once a participant and a 'casual watcher'. Nick must participate in spite of himself because he has the artist's curiosity, his attempt to solve the riddle of existence. Nick's ultimate weariness is at least partly due to his failure. All his participation leaves life as mysterious and confused as in his drunken stupor in chapter two: He remains 'the casual watcher in the darkening streets' to whom the line of windows high over the city does not reveal its secrets. He maintains his tolerance towards Gatsby to the last; but he himself seems doubtful about his success in penetrating the mystery of Gatsby's character. To Nick, this failure is always associated with a problem of communication, a problem of expression, which again is an artist's problem. After Gatsby's self-revelation in chapter six, a significant passage underlines Nick's problem:

Through all he said, even through his appalling sentimentality, I was reminded of something – an elusive rhythm, a fragment of lost words, that I had heard somewhere a long time ago. For a moment a phrase tried to take shape in my mouth and my lips parted like a dumb man's, as though there was more struggling upon them than a wisp of startled air. But they made no sound, and what I had almost remembered was uncommunicable forever" (12).

Like Stephen and Amory, Nick has moved, from the problem of grasping and evaluating experience, to the problem of communication. This may be called a stage in the development of an artist. The use of the words 'rhythm', 'words' and 'phrase' in the passage is significant; Fitzgerald wants us to think of Nick as
a poet grasping for words. But he does not make Nick an actual writer; he remains only a potential one. This is perhaps because wasted possibilities and decaying values were Fitzgerald's common themes. Dick Diver, the hero of Tender is the Night, is another quasi-artist ending in failure. His medium is not the paint or the word, but men. Just as the artist unites his material, Dick imposes a pattern on the set of men and women to which he belongs by his likeable personality. He takes personal relations as an artistic activity. In the Diver's actions, there is "a purpose, a working over something, a direction, an act of creation....." But with the failure of the artist, this world also vanishes [13].

Of course, in any absolute sense, Scott Fitzgerald was not a failure at all; he has left one short novel, passages in several others, and a handful of short stories which stand as much change of survival as anything of their kind produced in this country during the same period. If the tag is so often attached to his name, it has been largely his own fault. It is true that he was the victim, among a great number of other influences in American life, of that paralyzing high-pressure by which the conscientious American writer is hastened to premature extinction as artist of as man. Upon the appearance of The Crack-up, a selection by Edmund Wilson of Fitzgerald's letters, notebooks and fugitive pieces, it was notable that all the emptiest and most venal elements in New York journalism united to crow amiably about his literary corpse to this same tune of insufficient production. Actually their reproaches betrayed more of their own failure to estimate what was good and enduring in his writing than his acknowledgeable limitations as an artist. If Fitzgerald had turned out as much as X or Y or Z, he would have been a different kind of writer — undoubtedly more
admirable from the standpoint of the quasi-moral American ethos of production at any cost, but possibly less worth talking about five years after his death. And it might be said that Fitzgerald never hovered so close to real failure as when he listened from time to time, with too willing an ear, to these same reproaches.

But Fitzgerald brought most of it on himself by daring to make failure the consistent theme of his work from first to last. Similarly Virginia Woolf used to be accused by the reviewers of being a sterile writer because she made sterility her principal theme. It is perhaps only adumbrated in This Side of Paradise; for the discovery of its hero Amory Blaine that the world is not together his oyster is hardly the stuff of high tragedy. The book is interesting today as a document of the early twenties; nobody who would know what it was like to be young and privileged and self-centered in that bizarre epoch can afford to neglect it. But it can also be read as a preliminary study in the kind of tortured narcissism that was to plague its author to the end of his days. The Beautiful and Damned is a more frayed and pretentious museum-piece, and the muddiest in conception of all the longer books. It is not so much a study in failure as in the atmosphere of failure - that is to say, of a world suited to the purposes of the novelist, and the characters float around in it as in some aquamarine region comfortable shot through with the soft colors of self-pity and ironic irony. Not until The Great Gatsby did Fitzgerald hit upon something like Mr. Eliot’s "objective correlative" for the intermingled feeling of personal insufficiency and disillusionment with the world out of which he had unsuccessfully tried to write a novel.
Here is a remarkable instance of the manner in which adoption of a special form or technique can profoundly modify and define a writer's whole attitude toward his world. In the earlier books author and hero tended to melt into one because there was no internal principle of differentiation by which they might be separated; they respired in the same climate, emotional and moral; they were tarred with the same brush. But in Gatsby is achieved a dissociation, by which Fitzgerald was able to isolate one part of himself, the spectatorial or aesthetic, and also the more intelligent and responsible, in the person of the ordinary but quite sensible narrator, from another part of himself, the dream-ridden romantic adolescent from St. Paul and Princeton, in the person of the legendary Jay Gatsby. It is this which makes the latter one of the few truly mythological creations in our recent literature— for what is mythology but this same process of projects wish fulfillment carried out on a larger scale and by the whole consciousness of a race? Indeed, before we are quite through with him, Gatsby becomes much more than a mere exorcizing of whatever false elements of the American dream Fitzgerald felt within himself: he becomes a symbol of America Itself, dedicated to "the service of a vast, vulgar and meretricious beauty."

Not mythology, however, but a technical device which had been brought to high development by James and Conrad before him made this dissociation possible for Fitzgerald. The device of the intelligent but sympathetic observer situated at the center of the tale, as James never ceases to demonstrate in the Prefaces, makes for some of the most priceless values in fiction— economy, suspense, intensity. And these values The Great Gatsby possesses to a rare
degree. But the same device imposes on the novelist the necessity of tracing through in the observer or narrator himself some sort of growth in general moral perception, which will constitute in effect his story. Here, for example, insofar as the book is Gatsby’s story it is a story of failure – the prolongation of the adolescent incapacity to distinguish between dream and reality, between the terms demanded of life and the terms offered. But insofar as it is the narrator’s story it is a successful transcendence of a particularly bitter and harrowing set of experiences, localized in the sinister, distorted, El Greco-like Long Island atmosphere of the later twenties, into a world of restored sanity and calm, symbolized by the bracing winter nights of the Middle Western prairies. “Conduct may be founded on the hard rock or the wet marshes,” he writes, “but after a certain point I don’t care what it’s founded on. When I came back from the east last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart ever recurring.” By reason of its enforced perspective the book takes on the pattern and the meaning of a Grail-romance – or of the initiation ritual on which it is based. Perhaps this will seem a farfetched suggestion to make about a work so obviously modern in every respect; and it is unlikely that Fitzgerald had any such model in mind. But like Billy Budd, The Red Badge of courage, or A Lost Lady – to mention only a few American stories of similar length with which it may be compared it is a record of the strenuous passage from deluded youth to maturity.
Never again was Fitzgerald to repeat the performance. *Tender is the Night* promises much in the way of scope but it soon turns out to be a backsliding into the old ambiguities. Love and money, fame and youth, youth and money—however one shuffles the antitheses they have a habit of melting into each other like the blue Mediterranean sky and sea of the opening background. And it is this Bovaryism on the part of the hero, who as a psychiatrist should conceivably know more about himself, which in rendering his character so suspect prevents his meticulously graded deterioration from assuming any real significance. Moreover, there is an ambiguous treatment of the problem of guilt. We are never certain whether Diver's predicament is the result of his own weak judgment or of the behaviour of his neurotic wife. At the end we are strangely unmoved by his downfall because it has been less a tragedy of will than of circumstances.

Of *The Last Tycoon* we have only the unrevised hundred and thirty-three pages, supported by a loose collection of notes and synopses. In an unguarded admission Fitzgerald describes the book as "an escape into a lavish, romantic past that perhaps will not come again into a lavish, romantic past that perhaps will not come again into our time." Its hero, suggested by a well-known Hollywood prodigy of a few years ago, is another one of those poor boys betrayed by "a heightened sensitivity to the promises of life." When we first meet him he is already a sick and disillusioned man, clutching for survival at what is advertised in the notes as "an immediate, dynamic, unusual, physical love affair." This is nothing less than "the meat of the book." But as much of its as is
rendered included some of the most unfortunate writing which Fitzgerald has left; he had never been at his best in the approach to the physical. Nor is it clear in what way the affair is related to the other last febrile gesture of Stahr—his championship of the Hollywood underdog in a struggle with the racketeers and big producers. Fortuitously the sense of social guilt of the mid-thirties creeps into the fugue, although in truth this had been a strong undertone in early short stories like "May Day" and "The Rich Boy." It is evident that Stahr is supposed to be some kind of symbol—but of what it would be hard to determine. From the synopses he is more like a receptacle for all the more familiar contradictions of his author's own sensibility—his arrogance and generosity, his fondness for money and his need for integrity, his attraction toward the fabulous in American life and his repulsion by its waste and terror. "Stahr is miserable and embittered toward the end," Fitzgerald writes, in one of his own last notes for the book. "Before death, thoughts from Crack-up." Apparently it was all to end in a flare-up of sensational and not too meaningful irony: Stahr, on his way to New York to call off a murder which he had ordered for the best of motives, is himself killed in an airplane crash, and his possessions are rifled by a group of school children on a mountain. If there is anything symbolic in this situation, could it be the image of the modern Icarus soaring to disaster in that "universe of ineffable gaudiness" which was Fitzgerald's vision of the America of his time?

Inquiry into what was the real basis of Fitzgerald's long preoccupation with failure will not be helped too much by the autobiographical sketches in The Crack-up. The reasons there offered are at once too simple and too complicated.
No psychologist is likely to take very seriously the two early frustrations described inability to make a Princeton football team and to go overseas in the last war. In the etiology of the Fitzgerald case, as the psychologists would say, the roots run much deeper, and nobody cares to disturb them at this early date. His unconscionable good looks were indeed a public phenomenon, and their effect on his total personality was something which he himself would not decline to admit. The imago of the physical self had a way of eclipsing at times the more important imago of the artist. But even this is a delicate enough matter. Besides, there were at work elements of a quite different order – racial and religious. For some reason he could never accept the large and positive influence of his Celtic inheritance, especially in his feeling for language, and his hearkening back to the South has a little too nostalgic a ring to be convincing. Closely related to this was the never resolved attitude toward money and social position in relation to individual worth. But least explored of all by his critics were the permanent effects of his early exposure to Catholicism, which are no less potent because rarely on the surface of his work. (The great exception is “Absolution,” perhaps the finest of the short stories.) Indeed, it may have been the old habit of the confession which drove him, pathetically, at the end, to the public examen de conscience in the garish pages of Esquire magazine.

To add to his sense of failure there was also his awareness of distinct intellectual limitations, which he shared with the majority of American novelists of his time. “I had done very little thinking,” he admits, “save within the problems of my craft.” Whatever he received at Princeton was scarcely to be
called an education; in later years he read little, shrank from abstract ideas, and was hardly conscious of the historical events that were shaping up around him. Perhaps it is not well for the novelist to encumber himself with too much knowledge, although one cannot help recalling the vast cultural apparatus of a Tolstoi or a Joyce, or the dialectical intrepidity of a Dostoievski or a Mann. And recalling these Europeans, none of whom foundered on the way, one wonders whether a certain coyness toward the things of the mind is not one reason for the lack of development is most American writers. Art is not intellect along; but without intellect art is not likely to emerge beyond the place of perpetual immaturity.

Lastly, there was Fitzgerald’s exasperation with the multiplicity of modern human existence—especially in his own country. “It’s under you, over you, and all around you,” he protested, in the hearing of the present writer, to a young woman who had connived at the slow progress of his work. “And the problem is to get hold of it somehow.” It was exasperating because for the writer, whose business is to extract the unique quality of his time, what Baudelaire calls the quality of modernity, there was too much to be sensed, to be discarded, to be reconciled into some kind of order. Yet for the writer this was the first of obligations, without it he was nothing—“Our passion is our task, and our task is our passion.” What was the common problem of the American novelist passion.” What was the common problem of the American novelist was intensified for him by his unusually high sense of vocation.
In the last analysis, if Fitzgerald failed, it was because the only standard which he could recognize, like the Platonic conception of himself forged by young Jay Gatsby in the shabby bedroom in North Dakota, was too much for him to realize. His failure was the defect of his virtues. And this is perhaps the greatest meaning of his career to the younger generation of writers.

"I talk with the authority of failure," he writes in the note books, "Ernest with the authority of success. We could never sit across the same table again." It is a great phrase. And the statement as a whole is one neither of abject self-abasement nor of false humility. What Fitzgerald implies is that the stakes for which he played were of a kind more difficult and more unattainable than "Ernest" or any of his contemporaries could even have imagined. And his only strength is in the consciousness of this fact.

Scott Fitzgerald wrote for money more bad fiction than any other American of similar stature. He deeply regretted this. In 1924 he told Edmund Wilson, "I really worked hard as hell last winter but it was all trash and it nearly broke my heart". But at the same time Fitzgerald laid great stress upon the writers need of self conscious craft. On March 2, 1938, he commented to Mr. Dayton Kohler.

Some people seem to look on our time as a sort of swollen Elizabethan age, simply crawling with geniuses. The recessing of the artist in every generation has been to give his work permanence in every way by a safe shaping and a constant pruning, lest he be confused with the journalistic material that has attracted lesser men.
Scott Fitzgerald's style shows 'shaping' or 'a molding' of the confusion of life into form (15) and pruning or economy. These are well exemplified in the painstaking way he cut and revised his material. Even in *This Side of Paradise*, inferior in art to his later work, he tells us he "wrote and revised and compiled and boiled down" (16). From *The Great Gatsby* he deleted enough to make another novel, but was still dissatisfied. He complained to Bishop that he had not reached the stage of "ruthless artistry which would let me cut out an exquisite bit that had no place in the context." *Tender is the Night*, composed between 1925 and 1934, went through three versions and numerous titles. Fitzgerald one remarked that he had written more than 400,000 words on it, but had thrown away three-fourths (17). Even after its publication he labored over it, finally deciding that the story should be presented in chronological order rather than beginning as in the original version with Rosemary meeting the Divers and their circle. But although Scott Fitzgerald revised his work with considerable care, often making several drafts before arriving at the one he wanted, he tried not to overwrite. In a letter of January 17-1938 to Joseph Mankiewiez, he said that his kind of style could not survive excessive reworking, and in his "Notes' to *The Last Tycoon* he reminded himself. "Rewrite from mood. Has become stilted with rewriting. Don't look. Rewrite from mood" Along with craftsmanship, shaping and pruning, poetry and originality were essential for the development of a great style. Besides his convictions about the elements that compose a great style, there are at least two other important aspects of Fitzgerald's views on writing: the place of morality and the role of "Subjectivity" and "objectivity".
Lionel Trilling once observed that Fitzgerald's work is "innocent of mere sex." This resulted from the fact that as a romanticist he based relations between men and women on mental and spiritual rather than physical needs while some of his contemporaries, particularly the naturalists, stressed only physical attraction. Fitzgerald felt that "sex books... arouse prudence and sometimes. Kill the essence of romance." All this, of course, does not mean that Fitzgerald was a prude. He was also opposed to hypocrisy in these matters. He also was very particular to instill a moral into his stories. Fitzgerald opposed the tendency to psychoanalysis that was grooving in his period. It caused the disintegration of personality and "the extinction of that light is much more to be dreaded than any material loss".

Scott Fitzgerald felt that the writer must listen to that voice within that encourages him to record his feelings and actions became these feelings and actions are actually "his style", his personality – eventually his whole self as an artist.

He also developed individuality and a "particular style" for his writing. All these demonstrate Fitzgerald's conviction that all writers, beginners and veterans, inevitably exploit their own emotions and experiences; and it shows the development that came about in both his novels and his critical opinions.

Scott Fitzgerald's career as an artist followed very closely his observations to Miss. Turnbull. All his work is subjective, reflecting his own experiences and emotions, but the early novels present these in quite a direct way, while the later work employs for devices – "composite" character and
sympathetic, intelligent observer - to transfer them to something or someone outside the author. The observer as narrator was the second important technique Fitzgerald acquired in his efforts to achieve greater “objectivity” when the story - teller is someone other than the author, an aesthetic distance is created between the characters under observation and the author, a distance resulting from the story - tellers’ acting as a sort of middle man. Thus Fitzgerald was forced to take into consideration not only his reactions, but the reactions of the “persona” who represented man in general almost as much as he did his creator. The device, which came to Fitzgerald chiefly through his study of Joseph Conrad’s Marlow, is responsible for the feeling of greater “objective” in The Great Gatsby and The Last Tycoon as compared with Tender is the Night, where the writer himself is the all knowing narrator.

Fitzgerald’s daughter well said that “sweat”, “heart breaking effort”, and “painful hours of work under the most adverse circumstances” made Scott Fitzgerald’s finest prose possible. (20)

In conclusion we can say that Scott Fitzgerald, a celebrity and acclaimed literary figure of the twentieth century, is undoubtedly one of the handful of truly great writers of his age. Fitzgerald’s scholarship and criticism are the most eventful anecdotes in the American literature. His works will continue unabated into the new millennium. “Fitzgerald was a beautiful writer, his best writing as graceful and truthful as ever, and he was a heroic man who was defeated and kept on fighting”. At the end, Mrs. Ring recalls and asserts,” He wasn’t finished. He wasn’t “Failure” though he was poor. Fitzgerald’s’ celebrity resides in his achievements as an American writer whose masterpieces continue to be passed on the new generations of readers throughout America and the world.

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17. Malcolm Cowley, *Introduction to Tender is the Night, Three Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (New York. 1953) P.IV.

