Chapter - 1

The Novels of Fitzgerald - A pastoral Documentary of the Jazz Age
F. Scott Fitzgerald, the spokesman of ‘America’s roaring twenties’ or the ‘Jazz age’, is one of the most recognized figures in American literary and cultural history not only as one of the major writers of the 20th Century, but also as a man whose life story excites the fascination of the public.

He always, however, wrote about himself or about people and things with which he was intimate. As a consequence his life is inextricably bound up with his work. He was a personality, a being of great charm and influence, despite the unforgivable things he occasionally did. The life of F. Scott Fitzgerald was sharply divided in every sense. The years of youth, of his first maturity and his early success in the 1910’s and 1920’s contrast markedly with the years full of personal and public happenings that led to his premature death in 1940. These later years, full of disillusionment and suffering, though identified with human and artistic growth, were cut off at the very moment when Fitzgerald’s career seemed about to bear its fruits. But Fitzgerald’s life was divided above all in a personal and human sense. It was divided between the pursuit of the artistic ideal and the continual, too frequent concessions to the taste of the moment or to the lure of easy success; It was divided between a rigorous application to the craft of fiction and the waste of precious energy in purely commercial literary activity. Fitzgerald was a victim, in so many ways, of the myth of success and money, the false gods, as Hemingway was to call them in Green Hills of Africa, on whose altars so many promising young writers were sacrificed. Fitzgerald was able, nevertheless, to save his better part and succeeded in
reaching an awareness that his own greatness was in literary art. The tensions
and sufferings of his mature period redeemed limitless complacency of the first
years and the shock of recognition bore fruit in his later writings.

In order to understand the works of Fitzgerald, first we should understand
his biographical details, as his life and his works are intermingled (unified) and
inseparable. As Mathew Brucholi.

There never was a good biography

Of a good novelist. There

Couldn't be. He is too many

People. If he's any good

Yet, let's have a glance of life of Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul,
Minnesota, on September 24, 1896. His father Edward worked for a small
company, but counted among his fore-bearers a congressman at the time of
Jefferson's administration. From the gentility of his southern family Edward
Fitzgerald preserved all the sensitives and habits of a gentleman. He married
Mary McQuillan, from an Irish family that had immigrated in 1850, but grown
prosperous. She gave her son the eccentricity and restlessness of these
antecedents, adding her own indiscriminate passion for literature as well as a rare
quality of indulgence. In his parents' characters, Fitzgerald could already witness
a primary division: between sensitivity and financial security, between genteel
manners and practical ability. These contrasts were reflected in his later novels. In his admiration for his father he was well aware of the impracticality, on the other hand he realized that his mother's money had been too recently acquired to have been transformed into a certain style in living. These are early warnings of later themes.

In 1898 his family moved to Buffalo, New York. From 1901 to 1903—until 1908, the year in which his father gave further proof of his ineptitude by being dismissed from his job. On an earlier visit to Maryland in 1903 Fitzgerald had become aware of ties with an aristocratic family past, but the new situation did nothing but show him the specter, later to become an obsession with him, of decadence. During this time, he had entered St. Paul's Academy and began writing. He wrote a mystery story, played with the idea of drawing up a history of the United States, and kept a "Thought book" on the characters and happenings of the city. He was unpopular in school, and yet he did publish a short story in the student paper (1909) followed by two more sketches on the civil war, and sports piece. (2)

In 1911 he went on to the Newman Academy, a good Catholic School in Hackensack, New Jersey, there he repeated the earlier mistakes; wasting time in a thousand activities, alternating between dreams of being a great athlete and of becoming a great writer. (3) Later he was admitted in Princeton. It meant leaving the Provincial city for an intellectually alive university campus. And, in fact, these years at Princeton were the most intense and determinant phase of
Fitzgerald's development. His athletic ambitions were shattered but he found his way to literacy achievement. Quickly, after as initial moment of ostracism, Fitzgerald became a member of the Triangle Club and of the editorial board of the *Daily Princetonian*, contributed to "The Nassau Lit" and *The Tiger*. He wrote librettos for the musicals that the Triangle Club Produced. An unexpected illness brought the final blow in December 1915, he had to drop out of Princeton for the rest of the academic year. Fitzgerald never recovered from this trick of fate and regretted it even in later years.

It was at Princeton, especially after his return there in the fall of 1916, that he came in touch for the first time with culture. There he met Father Sigourney Fay (Monsignon D' Aney in *This side of paradise*), formed ties of friendship with John Peale Bishop (Parke d' Invilliers in the same novel) and Edmund Wilson (His "intellectual Conscience", as he was later to describe him). He heard of Tolstoy and Whitman, read Booth Tarkington and Shaw, H.G. Wells and Compton Mackenzie, Wilde and Pater, John Masefield and Rupert Brooke, to name only a few. It was an enriching experience: in that intellectual climate, as A. Mizener rightly states he began "to write for the first time in his life with the mature intension of realizing and evaluating his experience."

At Princeton he wrote the first drafts of "*This Side of Paradise*" and by the end of 1917 the novel was already completed. At the same time he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the army. After having sent the grammatical errors corrected copy to Scribner's, he got a letter of encouragement and a polite request for certain revisions.
Meanwhile, in July 1918, Fitzgerald met Zelda Sayre in Montgomery, Alabama. For both it was love at first sight. As soon as he was discharged from the army in February, 1919, Fitzgerald went to seek his fortune in New York, oblivious of his novel. He took a small job there, Meanwhile he wrote nineteen short stories and received one hundred and twenty rejection slips.

Growing "nervous" in Montgomery, Alabama, Zelda Sayre broke their engagement in June 1919. Quitting his job, he went back to his hometown. He began to rewrite the novel that had been dragging along for years, "Emotion recollected in tranquility" as Wordsworth had said. The new manuscript was sent to Scribner's and this time Maxwell Perkins overrode the other editorial advisers. The book was accepted in only thirteen days, on September 16. From Alabama, Zelda Sayre reaffirmed a love which had really never died, and now Fitzgerald was in seventh heaven. Even before This Side of Paradise was successful both with the public and the critics, he began to write a new novel (only the title, The Demon Lover) and to rewrite or revise old stories for The Smart Set, Scribner's Magazine and The Saturday Evening post. His income reached fantastic figures. Zelda came to New York for a gorgeous wedding on April 1920, and in a short time the couple became one of the its attraction.

According to those who knew her, Zelda Fitzgerald was a fascinating and intelligent woman even in the darkest moments of her life. She played an important part in Fitzgerald's life. She was more ambitious for success and social prominence than for literary distinction. She was an admirer, but if we
trust Hemingway's opinion, a little jealous of her husband. Their life of parties and their expensive habits provided him with matter for artistic elaboration, but also with acute financial problems. Fitzgerald was forced to market products of poor quality, and his life was further divided between activities and projects not easily reconciled. The artistic results were not always in proportion with the waste of energy they required.

On his dangerous tightrope, swirled in the turmoil of his new life, he published a collection of short stories (Flappers and Philosophers) and in less than a year completed a new novel, The Beautiful and Damned. In 1921 the couple took their first trip to Europe. During this short visit Fitzgerald met Galsworthy in London and Joyce in Paris, and was particularly impressed by the latter. Back in St. Paul for the birth of their daughter in October, 1921. His new novel was published first serially, then in book form and was followed by a second collection of stories titled, Tales of the Jazz Age. His play Vegetable was a failure, but in the meantime he had undertaken, almost stealthily, a third novel. This work came in the best end to a happy fruition - The Great Gatsby was to prove the best achievement of his better part. Moreover, his serenity was shattered under the Riviera sun by Zelda's restlessness and by her affair with a French aviator. This was a new trial for Fitzgerald, but it was also a step toward maturity. "It has been a fine summer - I've been unhappy, but my work hasn't suffered from it. I am grown at last", he wrote to Maxwell Perkins. He was not fully grown. The novel was published in April, 1925, and it was a Critical
success. Depressed by the poor success of the book he returned to Paris and plunged himself in a life of "1000 parties and no work". He began a new novel Tender is the Night and he was trying to use new and difficult material because the themes and techniques of his early novels had been exhausted, and the struggle to recreate an artistic world that would renovate them coincided with the least happy period of his life. While still in Europe he published a third collection of stories All the Sad young Men (1926). Tired and disillusioned, he and his wife returned to America to try Hollywood. Meanwhile Zelda had her nervous breakdown. In an attempt to rebuild her personality, Fitzgerald even helped her to write and publish a novel titled Save me the Waltz. At the end of 1933 the novel was completed. Tender is the Night had a limited success, and his private life had foundered on the shoals of misunderstanding and mental illness; the dream of the writer was wrecked, and so his dream of eternal love. Zelda's final hospitalization freed both writer and man from a yoke that might have proved fatal, and which certainly added nothing to his art nor to his psychological stability. Hence forth, he was able to think of himself, which meant, above all, of his own artistic endeavours. Unlike Dick Diver in 'Tender is the Night', he did not disappear into the warm darkness, but gave further proof of his artistic vitality with a final literary flavoring.

Zelda's crisis transferred itself to him and without any restraint he drank immoderately and suffered his first collapse. He published his last collection of short stories Taps at Reveille in 1935. When he moved to Asheville; and then
for a short while to Hendersonville, North Carolina, he found himself in real poverty. All that was left him was the courage of ruthless self analysis. He stripped himself naked in the three famous articles on his own crackup, The Crack-up, Handle with Care and Pasting It Together.

He moved to Hollywood and the last three years of the his life were marked by a reawakening of his creative forces and by his last desperate struggle with the specter of decadence. He started – The Last Tycoon at last he succeeded as no one else had in giving us a picture of the historic world of Hollywood. The last period of his life becomes interesting and important both from the human and the artistic point of view. His relationship with columnist Sheilah Graham (10) was a new lease of life and he was more serious to complete the novel. In the spring of 1939, after he had began writing the final draft of his novel, a new bout of his illness confined him to bed, but he was pre occupied only with his novel(11). But on 21 December 1940 he had the fatal heart attack and died.

The artist had overcome the weaknesses of the man; by cruel irony, premature death snatched away the full crowning of his achievement. “There are no second acts in American, lives”, he had written in the notes for his books. Brief as it was, Fitzgerald’s life had a second act, and not one of more repetition, as was to be the case with many others more famous than he, but one of genuine artistic renewal. One might say, it is true, that it was a second act that was interrupted before the last scene; but it differed from the first and bore the mark
of a new development. Ignored or obscured until recently, this second act now permits us to have a better idea, closer to the truth, of the writer’s real stature and of his whole achievement.

Perhaps to no one but Fitzgerald, who called himself, “a mediocre caretaker of most things left in his hands, even of his talent”, could be better referred the disconsolate lament of William Empson in his poem “Missing Dates”.

The waste remains, the waste remains, and kills; but from the continued waste, which smothered and impoverished him before killing him, Fitzgerald the writer was still able to rescue a few shapes of beauty faithful to his own deeper and better nature, despite external interference or inner conflicts.

The fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald has received as much attention as that of any American novelist, with the exception perhaps of Melville, James, Hemingway and Faulkner. If we consider the plight of Fitzgerald when he died on December 21, 1940, we can find an all too pathetic irony in this. If we consider the achievement of the man – an achievement in the face of the cruelest difficulties – we can also find a satisfying justice.

The story of Fitzgerald the man has been told often and told well and the commentaries on his fiction help us to see the complexity of his best work. We can undoubtedly place Fitzgerald within the traditions of nineteenth and twentieth-century literature, showing the Romantic quality of his imagination. There are similarities of themes between Fitzgerald and Keats, Swinburne,
Pater, Dowson, Rupert Brooke, Oscar Wilde, Frank Norris, H.G. Wells, Joseph Conrad, as well as, Oswald Spengler. Fitzgerald was writing of a deeply personal sense of experience. His fiction is at times an exercise in self-pity and self-justification, and he often used the novel to settle old scores to excrete in his imagination people who had hurt him in life.

His main themes - the theme of youth, success, and money - stem from attitudes founded on personal experiences - experiences often romantically removed to a heightened world. In time Fitzgerald learned to control this heightened sense of life, to find ways to objectify his emotions, and to establish an ironic distance. Fitzgerald had a kind of incremental imagination, and he first worked his ideas into his stories and later into the novels, deepening and enriching the texture as he moved from story to novel. The fact that Fitzgerald wrote so directly from his own sense of experience is both the source of his strength and the source of his weakness as a novelist.

Fitzgerald 'the laureate of the Jazz age and the true representative of the Jazz age,' was utterly committed and lived totally within his own era, the Jazz age. The Jazz Age has been defined in a number ways by the critics i.e., "Era of wonderful Nonsense" 'The Aspirin Age' 'The Lawers decade' 'The passionate years' 'The day of boom and bust 'The roller coaster Ride up and Down' and 'the period of meretricious gaiety'. One critic described it as 'a Mark brothers extravaganza with a frantic Jazz Orchestra in the pit and a bawdy farce on the stage'. Fitzgerald himself rightly quoted "America is going on the greatest grandest sprec history". One of the songs of the Jazz age described it thus.
"The rich get richer and

The poor get Children

In the mean time

In between time

Ain't we got fun"

American music Jazz and the blues came into their own during the twenties. Jazz originated much earlier in the U.S. through the fusion of African polyrhythms and European concepts of melody and harmony. It represented in the beginning a kind of protest since it emerged among the slaves in the south. Jazz became the symbol and the symptom of the twenties. Waldo Frank in his discovery of America 1929 made a sweeping statement in which the main holds good. "Jazz is the art which is part reflection and apology of our chaos and part rebellion from it.

The Jazz Age presented the world a good number of popular writers like Hemingway, Sinclair Lewis, Thomas Wolfe and Fitzgerald too. At the time bigotry, intolerance, revivalism became rampant in America. The twenties was a period of great contradictions. It was indeed Boom and Bust, the second flowering of American literature, art, music but also the period of bigotry and intolerance.
What Charles Dickens in ‘A Tale of Two cities’ is particularly apt in describing the twenties. “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness. It was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredibility, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair....”

For literary history, the career of F. Scott Fitzgerald begins with an exuberantly immature best selling novel entitled This Side of Paradise and concludes with the posthumous valedictory and confessional volume entitled The Crack Up. The implied antithesis is neat, and not insignificant, and it is more than literary. There was throughout, the closest correspondence between Fitzgerald’s life and his writings, and yet the widest disparity between the man and the artist.

Almost from the start of his career from the publication of This Side of Paradise in 1920 Fitzgerald was a popular and successful writer. During this professional career a period of just about twenty years, he produced something like 160 short stories not to mention thirty odd articles, a scattering of poems, plays and the radio work, and a three years supply of movie scripts and one play titled ‘The vegetable, un numbered letters of prose collections and the five novels. Of the five novels The Great Gatsby and Tender is the Night, were more successful than This Side of Paradise The Beautiful and Damned and The Last Tycoon.
Fitzgerald was considered to be the spokesman for the younger generation than for his artistic achievement. Bewley saw in Fitzgerald the last genuine representative of the American literary tradition. He deals with 'The new American experience' more critically than any one in this tradition since Cooper. He has a finer sense of the inherent tragedy in the American experience than any of the others. His writing is not a celebration of them but a judgment on them. He is one of the greatest novelists of the 20th Century who had brought about the well known flowering of the American Renaissance. Fitzgerald unconsciously suited the public taste. As he himself said later, the generation for which he wrote "bore him up, flattered him and gave him more money than he had dreamed of, simply for telling people that he felt as they did. He found a good response in him readers became his own sincerity and open mindedness matched their dispartie for utter intellectual and emotional clarity. So, his first novel This Side of Paradise became at once in the readers' minds, a book of protest and revolt in the name of liberty as a generic principle; it seemed to advocate freedom from money, from bourgeois morality, from Victorian hypocrisy, from religion and above all from conformity. The book stripped the idols, prejudices and lies of a society at the very moment that it felt an awakening need to examine all the conventions on which it was based. His denunciation of the vulgarity of the new rich, his social criticism, and his frankness made Fitzgerald the mouth piece and the leader of a revolution in customs and manners which was open to any suggestion and which was later to exceed the positions he
had taken in the novel (12). If it did not capture the elusive spirit of the times, the book reproduced distinctively the moment of transition from one generation and bore witness to a radical change of attitude among the young: and so it was that Fitzgerald came to be greeted as the herald of a new age.

Nearly all the novels that have, by the lapse of time, reached an assured position of recognized greatness, are not only saturated in the personality of the author, but have in addition quite unaffected personal outbreaks "The novel is the only medium through which we can discuss the great majority of the problems (13). As Edmund Wilson rightly remarked "The works of Fitzgerald live because of their youthful freshness and self assurance, redeeming quality of prose. We would not say that in the novels of Fitzgerald was able to achieve "epigrammatic beauty" "emotional depth" and a breath taking quality of language" as a fine novelist like John Marquand believes". But he had already mastered a mature and fluent prose, sweet and modulated light and harmonious. It can be melancholy and dreamy in its sentimental moments. Gertrude Stein had no hesitation in proclaiming young Fitzgerald "the only one of the younger writers who wrote naturally in sentences" (14).

Judgment of Fitzgerald's work is confused in another way by the critics who assume that a fiction embodies no more understanding than its author is able to formulate in expository language, as abstract theory about life or art. Fitzgerald himself knew well that the natural mode of expression for his understanding was a fiction and that he knew a great deal in his stories that he
did not know any other way. Characteristically he expressed this knowledge an
observation of behaviour rather than as a theory by noting his habit of
"sometimes reading my own books for advice. Fitzgerald's literary career as a
gradual shift from the technique of the novel of saturation to the technique of the
novel of selection. Fitzgerald was not the kind of writer, if there are any for
whom understanding consisted in the command of a technique. These
judgements of Fitzgerald's perception represent what we ordinarily call a neo-
classic attitude. Somewhere not very far back of them is a conviction that fiction
is a theory to advantage dressed.

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. Fitzgerald's first novel This
Side of Paradise was started in college and worked at in army training camps. It
is the story of an exuberant young man coming of age. Fitzgerald had earlier
thought of The Romantic Egoist as a title, but settled for This Side of
Paradise. The book was a great success and he 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 liberation 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 the earnings from Flappers and Philosophers (1921), Tales of the Jazz Age (1922) and The Beautiful and Damned (1922). The Great Gatsby appeared in 1923. The hero of The Great Gatsby, Jay Gatsby, is a wealthy gangster who desires a glamorous upper class woman but comes to grief. The talk 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 American literature. All the Sad Young Men and a letter collection of stories Taps at Reveille (1935) secured Fitzgerald a place as one of America's best short story writers.

As far as Tender is the Night (1934) is concerned, 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. His unfinished novel The Last Tycoon 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 writes in America or abroad, Fitzgerald's work is about America. He spoke allegorically of America though being an expatriate, as Van Wyck Brooks has pointed out in Pilgrimage of Henry James (1925). 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 of 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" (15). 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 of 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. Perhaps, Fitzgerald is called a minor classic of the times, because in him there is that careful craftsmanship which balances an otherwise disordered life.

An awareness of social change and its consequences is a dominant theme in the fiction of Fitzgerald. Most of the critics have not attached due significance to the important aspect of his fiction. For them, Fitzgerald is either a neo-romantic novelist of the genteel tradition or merely a chronicler of the Jazz Age. Further they find to identify the fictional hero with the legendary life of Fitzgerald. Some of the specialized approaches like psycho – analysis, myth – criticism and linguistic analysis, which have been applied to his fiction, ignore the particular aspect of the writer's individual response to the social change and the process through which Fitzgerald transformed personal experience into impersonal art.
Fitzgerald was born at a crucial juncture of American history and started writing when the young generation had just returned from the First World War. These younger people were completely disillusioned with the "old gang" after they had discovered in their experience of the war the lies of the older generation that had driven them into the arena. Distrustful of the pact disillusioned with customs and conventions, essences and abstractions, they had nothing to fall back upon except their own experience. The genteel tradition of the nineteenth century was rejected. R.W. Horton observing the impact of war on the Victorian values, contended that, "the war acted merely as a catalytic agent in the breakdown of Victorian social structure".  

A reaction against Puritanism was also a major cause of post-war degeneration and a change in social values. They despised capitalism as the foul offspring of Puritanism. The economic growth of America and the development of the consumer industry were other factors responsible for the social change in America during the Twenties. The First World War had unprecedented effects on the economy of the United States making the post-war decade a period of prosperity and industrial growth. Instalment buying and stock market speculation gave a fresh impetus to prosperity. The gap between the elegant and the not-so-elegant, between the working class and the leisure class became wider and wider. 

The revolution in manners and morals of the younger generation was one of the major signs that reflected a social change in the twenties. It was the
decade when youth rejected every social and moral code of the past and "became a social problem". Revolution in dress, bobbed hair, smoking and drinking by women, freedom of sex before and after marriage, freedom and equality for women and rejection of all the established codes - all these became a part of the general stance of subversion adopted by this generation. The American woman emerged as an independent force after winning the right to vote in the twenties. Although the political gains of the suffrage were very paltry, it consolidated their position as man's equal. It is worthwhile to analyze four Fitzgerald novels for the purpose of studying the writer's response to this important aspects of social change and the focus will be on exploring those situations which Fitzgerald chose to present social change.

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. Fitzgerald's concern for social change is reflected generally in the novel's epigraph and the sub-titles of its main divisions. He makes his hero pass through *This Side of Paradise* - the changing social reality of the twenties - to record his mistakes and failures. Among Blaine's quest for identity or social education gets completed only when he falls back on his inner self to analyze his mistakes. The subtitles of the novel's two books are 'The Romantic Egoist' and 'Education of a personage'. Amory's experience in the first part of the novel reflects his dependence on the
codes of gentle culture and in the second part of the novel his experiences are informed by the post war atmosphere. But a closer look at his fiction highlights Fitzgerald's attitude as a moralist that makes him view beauty and sex in moral terms. But 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. 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 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. Fitzgerald also records the state of the arts in the years of social change. He shows how art lost its real meaning in the materialist age and has become perverted. The hero of the novel at last believes that in a purposeless universe the only wisdom is cynicism, beauty has no affinity with truth. Observing this debasement of art William A. Fahey aptly comments, "Man of mind in such a society is at best a conveyor of sardonic paradoxes, at best a cynical exploiter of them"(17).

Fitzgerald's most celebrated novel The Great Gatsby, dramatizes the ribaldry of the Jazz Age. The most apparent symbol of the Jazz age is the party that captures the mood of carnival. Significantly, the action of the novel takes place in some important parties to index the riches of the wealthy, to reveal the
frustration of the poor and to expose the boredom, fear and inevitable crack-up of the post war generation. Nick Carraway, the narrator and the controlling consciousness of the novel, acts both as stage manager and chorus. He not only exposes the fabulous world of the rich, he also discovers the fundamental innocence and immense vitality of Gatsby's dream. Fitzgerald hints at the perversion of the renaissance ideal of aristocracy, whereby riches are utilized to cultivate mind, to achieve an ability to appreciate the arts, and to inculcate a moral sense for acquiring a higher plane of existence. The long catalogue of names that Nick Caraway records on the empty space of a time table at a party given by Gatsby highlights the impact of social mobility in the years of social change. The party indexes the social chaos that has resulted from social mobility. The names and scraps of rumour are interwoven to show how people are being hurried indiscriminately together in a frantic pursuit of money and pleasure. The wealthy, the criminal, the disreputable, the pretentious, the showy, the frivolous, the rootless and vulgar civilization drift towards their inevitable crack up.

At another level, which seems more acceptable, The Great Gatsby arrests a particular moment from the flux of life during the years of social change in America. The tragedy of Gatsby is enacted against the background of social change during the twenties. Unlike the allegorical artists, who tend to resolve the complexities of social life into polarities, Fitzgerald has tried to dramatize the complexities of post – world war I life by relying on objective social observation. In his attempt to transfuse all the three realms of meaning. Fitzgerald has raised the novel to the level of a great work of art.
By the time Fitzgerald set out to write *Tender is the Night*, the Jazz age had completed its youth and was fading into decrepitude. The young generation that danced to the music of Jazz, that forgot every moral and social responsibility in the excitement of sex and liquor, that diverted its attention to the call of Boom, was moving towards its disastrous crack up in the thirties. The novel relates the disintegration and collapse of its hero Dick Diver on the moral, psychological and social levels. Dick begins his life with a moral advice from his father that "nothing could be superior to good instincts, honour, courtesy and courage". But the pressure of a materialistic age nullify his beliefs in the essential goodness of man.

There is a great deal of violence in the novel that has become a part of everyday life, of the fabric man, Fitzgerald hints that after the war, violence became a reality of social life. In this way *Tender is the Night* became 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.

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 for 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 whereas 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 times without compressing his artistic impartiality and integrity.

Fitzgerald once told "Almost everything I write in novels", as he once put it quite truly himself, "goes, for better or worse, into the sub conscious of the reader" (18). As John Peale Bishop put it, "He, has the rare faculty of being able to experience romantic and ingenuous emotions and half an hour later regard them with satiric detachment". (19) Fitzgerald brought two innovations to American fiction, and in the way in which he developed them there is already a mark of his "Americanism". The theme of love and romance are the central interest in his fiction. In Fitzgerald, for the first time, we witness instead a profound interest for the theme as such, and a corresponding intensity of artistic realization. The end of a sentimental delusion in This Side of Paradise, its pathetic consequences in The Beautiful and Damned, its ruin and tragedy in The Great Gatsby and Tender is the Night, its instrumental role in The Last Tycoon. The love motive is always at the center of these stories, no longer as a pretext but as a catalytic agent in reality. At the same time, Fitzgerald was able to discover another fictional possibility provided by American reality - the possibility of artistic treatment offered by the leisure class and the very rich.
Literary reputation is a capricious and unpredictable phenomenon of history. There is no need to repeat the familiar story of Fitzgerald's posthumous rise to literary prominence. Fitzgerald suffered from a destructive kind of literary schizophrenia when he thought that he could write both popular and serious material at the same time" (20). Although Fitzgerald lived a heightened life, he so feared the drab that he romanticized and heightened even further his own sense of experience, and he had a ready-made audience waiting and willing to participate vicariously in this experience Fitzgerald embodied almost too perfectly the psyche of his our generation.

A number of critics eulogized Fitzgerald and at the same time recognized his weaknesses too. He was praised as a social historian of his time and of the upper middle class. Fitzgerald has been placed with Edith Wharton and Henry James as a very shrewd observer of American society. His subconscious awareness of American values has been increasingly emphasized and his moral awareness has enhanced his claim to be taken seriously as a novelist. The immediacy of Fitzgerald's writing has not vanished with the passing of time. His style impresses any reader with more than a passing interest in writing. The movement and clarity of his sentences, the aptness of his phrases, and the poetic quality of his prose are hall marks of his style. The great virtue possessed by Fitzgerald was that he was a great and born story teller concerned not only with the story as 'life' or 'truth' but the story as 'art'.

24
It is worth adding that there is joy in Fitzgerald's work that should not be
ignored when dwelling upon profundities, complexities, and tragic implications.
Edmund Wilson early described this joyous characteristic as a "quality
exceedingly rare among even the young American writers of the day. He is
almost the only one among them who has any real light hearted gaiety". (21) Not
only theme and technique distinguish these novels, but flashes of brilliance,
comic as well as tragic, illuminate individual scenes.

His weaknesses are obvious and his range is narrow his works of great
excellence also few. The tragic view often results in the merely pathetic effect.
Sentimentality mars his poor work and threatens his best work. The surface is
often so shimmering that it conceals the depths. Finally his work is uninformed
by any Philosophy other than that residing in a youthful romanticism he could
never abandon.

Despite all the criticism, these strictures are not sufficient to disallow
Fitzgerald's claim to a distinguished place is modern American writing. Above
all, he has the strong alliance of the amateur reader and the professional literary
man - student, scholar, and writer - to keep his reputation secure. For he seldom
failed to live up to that sole obligation which Henry James said we should require
of the novel that it be interesting. And he never failed to be aware of his own
observation about his contemporaries. "that material, however closely observed,
is an elusive as the moment in which it has its existence unless it is purified by an
in corruptible style and by the catharsis of a passionate emotion" (22).

2. The paper was called Now and Then; The titles of Fitzgerald's Contributions were The Mystery of the Raymond Mortgage. Reade, substitute Right half, A Debt of Honor, The Room with the Green Blinds. (The St. Paul Academy Now and Then (2nd October 1909) Apprentice Fiction: New York). 4-8.


7. The Saturday Evening Post "How to Live on $36,000 a year" (April 5, 1924) PP 87-99.


11. In a letter to his picture agent William Dozier on November 5th, 1940 (Quoted in FSP) P.291.

12. Fernanda Pivano's Introduction to the Italian translation of 'This Side of Paradise'. (Di qua dal paradiso Milan – 1952) In a letter to E.Wilson, January 10, 1918. Letters. P.323, CU.P.252.


