A Critical Analysis of Fitzgerald's Beautiful and Damned.

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Fitzgerald's Beautiful and Damned

by Thomas S. Spencer

A Thesis
Presented to the Graduate Committee
of Lehigh University
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in
The Department of English
This thesis is accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

March 11, 1975
Date

Professor in Charge

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Abstract of
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By Thomas S. Spencer

Fitzgerald's second novel, The Beautiful and Damned, was published in 1922. The subject matter and the novel's treatment of the two main characters, Anthony Patch and Gloria Gilbert, demonstrate that Fitzgerald was deeply influenced by Frank Norris, H. L. Mencken and other writers. The structure of the novel, as well as biographical information indicate that Fitzgerald's intent was to write a novel of saturation, of the kind that H. G. Wells favored and Henry James denigrated. The result is a discursive "novel of ideas."

The chief flaw of the novel is its inconsistent tone. Although the author ostensibly wishes to remain detached from his characters, occasionally he seems to present them in too favorable a light. Specifically, he intends them to act out a drama of hedonism and waste, but the results often reveal a latent snobbery which the author only occasionally treats ironically and indeed often seems to justify in his management of events. This problem becomes clearer when the novel is compared to an earlier work, the long story "May Day," which has the same weakness. Furthermore, Fitzgerald handles Anthony's attitude toward money and work in a similarly confused fashion. At times he would have us believe that his protagonist's fine insights render him unsuitable for employment; at other times Anthony seems merely a self-indulgent weakling. In general, Fitzgerald tried to write a novel of "irony and pessimism," as Edmund Wilson wrote in an early review, but too often his characters' actions run counter to his theme, seemingly with his approval.
This paper is an examination of the influences upon a novelist and an analysis of how those influences became merged with the novelist's own ideas and talent to form a novel, specifically, The Beautiful and Damned by F. Scott Fitzgerald. In order to understand what Fitzgerald was trying to accomplish in 1920 and 1921, when heady from recent critical and financial success from his first novel, This Side of Paradise, he wrote his second major work, we must look closely at the writers to whom he was paying attention at the time. H. L. Mencken supplied ideas on the theory of the novel and on the American scene in general to which Fitzgerald paid great heed. Both Frank Norris and Theodore Dreiser provided fictional models, especially with Vandover and the Brute and Sister Carrie, from which Fitzgerald gleaned ideas on techniques and even some inspiration for specific situations.

We should also examine Fitzgerald's own earlier work to determine the changes he underwent as a writer and thinker between the writing of his first two novels. Specifically, the writing of the important long story
"May Day" was clearly an exercise for Fitzgerald, preparing him for the larger task of *The Beautiful and Damned*. Another interesting and fruitful approach to understanding the novel is an examination of the critics, both those in Fitzgerald's generation and in ours.

Clearly *The Beautiful and Damned* has suffered critical neglect relative to the other four novels by Fitzgerald. In Milton R. Stern's perceptive new study of Fitzgerald's four complete novels the author devotes only about fifty pages to *The Beautiful and Damned* in a book almost ten times that long. Further, one need only look in the M.L.A. bibliography to see just how little has been written about a novel that was of great importance in the development of its author's career.

The ostensible reason for this neglect is an apparent feeling on the part of scholars and critics that the novel, at least as compared with the rest of the Fitzgerald canon, is rather weak. This paper will certainly not be an attempt to elevate the status of its subject to the level of *The Great Gatsby* or *Tender is the Night*, but on the other hand the book deserves a better (or at the very least, fuller) treatment than most critics have given it. I hope this thesis will fill that need.
BACKGROUND

The *Beautiful and Damned* is a sort of Horatio Alger novel in reverse. Set roughly between 1910 and 1920, it traces the decline of one Anthony Patch in physical, psychological and financial terms (the latter being "relieved" ironically at the end). The other most important character in the novel is Anthony's wife, the former Miss Gloria Gilbert, a child-like sentimentalist of great beauty. The courtship and early marriage of this couple, and the descent from the ironically presented agonies of love in the beginning of the novel to the clinically presented apathy and antagonism at the end, provide the main framework.

Anthony Patch is a man, we are told time and again, of delicate tastes and strong ideas. In one important aspect of his character the former leads to the latter—he perceives the stultifying effects of regular work and hence feels himself unsuited for employment. Contributing a practical underpinning to this philosophy is Anthony's hope of inheriting the vast fortune of his grandfather, the former tycoon and present puritanical philanthropist, Adam Patch. Adam, however, is unim-
pressed by his grandson's lack of purpose fostered by a belief in the "meaninglessness of it all" as well as his psychological unsuitability for regular work.

Matters come to a head when the prohibitionist grandfather arrives unannounced at the rented home of Gloria and Anthony during a drunken party. Anthony is disinherited, and the rest of the novel is devoted to his further emotional and financial decline and his attempts to have Adam's will ruled illegal and hence recover his money. Although ultimately he gains the fortune, his success is a dubious one at best.

Several other characters in the novel serve as foils; their ascents are contrasted with Anthony's fall. One is Richard Caramel, a classmate of Anthony's at Harvard and a writer who writes one serious novel in the beginning of his career and then degenerates to writing movie scripts and pot-boilers with great financial success. As he becomes richer and loses his aesthetic ideals, Anthony becomes poorer but refuses to "compromise" his way of life. Another classmate is Maury Noble, an extremely cynical proponent of life's meaninglessness, but who nevertheless eventually leaves chaotic New York and Anthony, and moves to Philadelphia where he puts his talents to the purpose of making himself wealthy. A third foil is Joseph Bloeckman, a
suitor of Gloria, business associate of her father, and a Jew. As the novel progresses, he becomes quite wealthy in the motion picture industry, and his gains in economics and self-respect reflect in reverse Anthony's decline.

These, then, are the major characters and situations in Fitzgerald's novel of Anthony Patch. Let us now briefly examine Fitzgerald the man as he was at the time he wrote *The Beautiful and Damned* and some history of the novel's creation and publication. In March, 1920 *This Side of Paradise* was published by Scribners, and the following month Fitzgerald married the former Zelda Sayre of Montgomery, Alabama whom he had met in her home town while he was stationed there in the Army. In May the couple moved to Westport, Connecticut and lived in a rented house similar to "the gray house" in Marietta in *The Beautiful and Damned*. It was here that most of the novel was written in the summer of 1920. At various times the provisional titles for the novel were *The Flight of the Rocket* and *The Demon Lover* (the title of Richard Caramel's first book), but the author finally decided on *The Beautiful and Damned*, and since *This Side of Paradise* was such a popular success, he was able to sell the serial rights to the *Metropolitan Magazine* for $7,000. He finished the book in May, 1921.
and Scribner's published it in book form in April, 1922.

Fitzgerald wrote the book in great haste—at one point fifteen thousand words in three days, but he was characteristically confident about its merits and potential for success, calling it "sensational." When the magazine serial appeared, Fitzgerald found that his novel had been edited from 130,000 words to less than 90,000, and virtually every word that did not advance the plot seemed to him to have been deleted. Since this novel is one of saturation rather than selection, as will be explained later, the shortened version suffered greatly. Still Fitzgerald was able to sell the movie rights to Warner Brothers for $2,500 in 1922. (The movie version starred Marie Prevost and Kenneth Harlan and was described by one reviewer as "one of the most horrific motion pictures of memory.")

As was generally the case with Fitzgerald, much of this "searching novel of American Youth" (the Metropolitan Magazine's subtitle) was written from direct experience. One of the most clearly autobiographical aspects of The Beautiful and Damned is the ideas that certain characters, especially Maury Noble, espouse. Henry Piper states

Fitzgerald had talked so much about immortalizing his friends in his next book that now he felt obliged to do so at any price.
The models for Maury Noble are primarily George Jean Nathan and to a lesser extent Fitzgerald's Princeton classmate, Ludlow Fowler (who was also the model for a later story, "The Rich Boy"). The cynical ideas on his "education" that Maury espouses in the chapter entitled "Symposium," however, are mostly Fitzgerald's own.

In addition, there is easily provable evidence of the similarities between Zelda and Gloria. In general terms, says Milton R. Stern, Gloria resembles Zelda in her "laziness, her housework, her aimlessness, her beauty, her vague desire to go into the movies." More specifically, Stern quotes the diary of Alexander McKaig, another Princeton classmate: "In the evening Zelda drunk--having decided to leave Fitz and having nearly been killed walking down R. R. tracks blew in." This is strikingly similar to an incident that occurs in the novel during a weekend party in Marietta. Furthermore, there is a letter in the novel that is a "slight rewording" of one written by Zelda after a fight.

One more example should suffice. Miss Milford asserts that early in 1922 Zelda had an abortion in either New York or St. Paul, and there is evidence to this effect in Fitzgerald's journal. Miss Milford goes on to observe that in the first draft of the novel Gloria is pregnant and finds this situation intolerable, but
in the book version it is difficult to determine what actually happens. Apparently Gloria feels she is pregnant but later learns she is not. At any rate Piper is incorrect in saying that after the supposed pregnancy is mentioned, we hear no more about it. After a visit to a friend, Gloria says to Anthony, "It's all right," and he asks if there is any doubt, to which she answers, "None!" Then the couple rejoices with "reborn irresponsibility." It is natural that Gloria embodies certain aspects of Zelda's personality. Sara Mayfield, in her almost vicious attack on Scott Fitzgerald's creative ability in her biography of the couple, quotes Lawton Campbell, a mutual friend, as saying,

I have seen him many times write down the things she said on scraps of paper or the backs of envelopes. The Beautiful and Damned was pure Zelda.

Even Zelda herself took a stand on this issue of her husband's writing from experience. In a review of the novel that appeared in the New York Tribune on April 2, 1922 she mentions that her husband used parts of her diary in the novel and coyly suggests that "plagiarism begins at home." K. G. W. Cross, the English critic, however, makes a point that Miss Mayfield consistently misses and Zelda Fitzgerald herself failed to consider:
Fitzgerald drew heavily on his own experience, yet much more often than is usually allowed he transmuted this experience into enduring art.\textsuperscript{18}

The creation of a character requires more than the recollection of incident.

It appears that Fitzgerald also used incidents from his own life in the creation of Anthony. There is a brief episode in \textit{The Beautiful and Damned} in which Anthony finds to his horror that he has written a bad check. A similar event once occurred in Fitzgerald's own life; Piper says, "He was deathly afraid that he would not be able to catch his overdraft in time."\textsuperscript{19} He later used the incident again in a short story, "The Rubber Check." This is a superficial correspondence.

Cross's observation, quoted above, is valuable here to remind us of the difference between fiction and its author's life. In addition we should be aware of the difference between autobiographical incident and the actual personality of the author. It has already been observed that some of Fitzgerald's ideas are spoken by Maury Noble, not Anthony Patch. We must conclude that autobiographical parallels are not always of great significance; characters, almost by definition, are synthetic, if experientially inspired.

Acknowledging his need to write from experience, Fitzgerald wrote to his editor Maxwell Perkins at
Scribner's in 1924:

Also, I don't know anyone who has used up as much personal experience as I have at 27.... This Side of Paradise was three books and The Beautiful and Damned was two.20

It is interesting to juxtapose the above with a comment by Edmund Wilson on Fitzgerald's milieu:

...We must remember that the environment and chief source of stimulation [of young American writers in 1921] have been the wars, society, and the commerce of the Age of Confusion itself.21

So we see that, according to Wilson, Fitzgerald's was a case of an autobiographical novelist having to deal with "confusion" around him and, we might add, in his own life as well. The recently-married Fitzgeralds were a social sensation in New York in 1920 and 1921, and one needs only to look at Fitzgerald's biography to see that much of their notoriety was due to their frenetic fashion of living. This confusion is expressed in one of the more important scenes in The Beautiful and Damned in which Anthony is discovered by his grandfather in the midst of a drunken party in "the gray house." In addition, the general economic affairs of the Patch couple are presented as being quite disorganized, and they are approached irrationally by the couple themselves. Both of these aspects are autobiographically inspired. In its concern with confusion, the book looks forward to The Great Gatsby.
II
INFLUENCES

In a letter to Gory Ford early in July, 1937 Fitzgerald wrote that his novels alternated between selectivity and saturation, and that The Beautiful and Damned and Tender is the Night "could have been cut by a fourth." This letter, of course, was written sixteen years after the Metropolitan Magazine had done to Fitzgerald's great anger and horror what he now advocated. There is evidence of a certain artistic maturity here, and we should suppose that if Fitzgerald were to do the editing the results would be better than those achieved by the magazine. At about the same time as the above letter Fitzgerald wrote Thomas Wolfe:

Now the more, the stronger, man's inner tendencies are defined, the more he can be sure that they will show, the more necessary to rarify them, to use them sparingly. The novel of selected incidents has this to be said: that the great writer like Flaubert has consciously left out the stuff that Bill or Joe (in his case Zola) will come along and say presently. He will say only the things that he alone sees.

By 1937 Fitzgerald had changed his feelings about the art of the novel. At this time he was a member of the Conrad-James school of selectivity, whereas earlier Fitzgerald had been greatly influenced by the H. G. Wells idea—saturation. James E. Miller proves for us Fitz-
erald's awareness of Wells in the early 1920's: "Amory Blaine was familiar with a bit of the theory and perhaps a few examples of the novel of selection. And his preference was definitely for saturation." Such novels as Robert Hugh Benson's None Other Gods and Wells' The Research Magnificent are mentioned as being on Amory Blaine's reading lists. Given the autobiographical aspects of This Side of Paradise, it is safe to assume that Fitzgerald was close to these books at this time.

Around six years before Fitzgerald wrote The Beautiful and Damned, a quiet controversy took place in England. The subject was the art of fiction, and the opponents were Henry James and H. G. Wells. Six months before James' death H. G. Wells brought out Boon, The Mind of the Race, The Wild Asses of the Devil, and The Last Trump, the fourth chapter of which is entitled "Of Art, Literature, of Mr. Henry James." This was an answer to an essay James had written called "The Younger Generation," in which he discussed modern English novelists. After Wells' book was published, the two authors exchanged letters in which they discussed their respective theories on the art of the novel. Leon Edel says that

Wells disagreed with James about fiction. He laughed at the entire concept of fiction as a 'craft.' He argued for the 'loose, usable'
novel against the organic creation the master had always espoused. Part of Wells' defense was attack. He argued that James' selection becomes "just omission and nothing more." Wells felt that in order for a novel to be effective, its characters have to have opinions, which, he said, James' do not:

In all his fiction you will find no people with defined political opinion, no people with religious opinions...etc.

Wells admitted that he would "rather be called a journalist than an artist" and said that to James literature was like painting, while to Wells "literature like architecture is a means, it has a use." James naturally replied that to him both literature and architecture were art. Edel says he rejected the "utility idea of the arts." It was the classic argument between a man who wished to use literature as a vehicle for social commentary and a man who believed that fiction should be aesthetically pure. Predictably, Edel awards the victory to James:

Wells' social novels have been judged at this time obsolescent. James' novels, those which left out fact but dealt truthfully with human dilemmas, have more vogue today than they ever did.

In another work, this time an essay entitled "The Contemporary Novel," Wells, like Poe, stated that the short story should aim at producing "a single vivid
effect," but the novel should be "a woven tapestry of interests." He believed that (1) character is more important than action, (2) nothing is irrelevant if the writer's mood is happy, (3) nearly all great novels have been saturated with the personality of the author (intrusion--a vivid example of his difference from James), (4) the novel should be a vehicle for the discussion of problems.11 James, on the other hand, preferred the "extract from life as a substitute for the slice of life," feeling that the very act of "slicing... implies some method."12 James at one point even used Compton Mackenzie's Sinister Street (whose influence may be strongly felt in This Side of Paradise) as a bad example: "What does it mean as a whole?" he asked in a book entitled Notes on Novelists.13 James E. Miller asserts that "Wells desired irrelevance in order to imitate life--James desired selection in order to convey the effect of life."14

In a letter to Edmund Wilson in the fall of 1917 Fitzgerald wrote, "Have you read Wells' Boon, The Mind of the Race (Doren 1916). It's marvelous!"15 It is not difficult to see that three years later Fitzgerald was still under the influence of James' antagonist. Sergio Perosa asserts that the main points of Wells' aesthetic for a novel can be found in This Side of Paradise.
written two years after its author had first read *Boon*. Perosa writes that Fitzgerald's first novel contains "'rambling discursiveness'" and, "as all the interest is centered on Anthony, the action is subordinated to his characterization." Further,

many episodes have no thematic relevance, the author's intrusions are continual, and it is the personality of the author that saturates Amory and the book itself.

Perosa also observes that at the end of the book we get Fitzgerald's philosophy--for which the book seems to be a vehicle. 16 James E. Miller agrees, saying there is in the novel "an abundance of events but with no apparent unifying purpose." 17

It seems clear that the Wells influence may be seen just as readily in *The Beautiful and Damned*. Fitzgerald certainly rambles; there are several passages which are merely clever and add nothing to the novel's theme. When Richard Caramel and Anthony meet Gloria's parents, we have several pages of dialogue by way of an introduction, but the parents are barely heard from again. Fitzgerald seems at this point to be more interested in satirizing the foolishness of these empty-lived people. (Satire, however, requires authorial distance. Fitzgerald, in his character studies of Anthony and Gloria, frequently treats them ironically, but also he often seems to identify with them. This problem of tone or inconsistent detachment will be discussed in greater

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Fitzgerald also regularly commits the Jamesian cardinal sin of intrusion. We are told how to think about various issues, such as class distinctions in New York City:

Jewesses were coming out into a society of Jewish men and women, from Riverside to the Bronx, and looking forward to a rising young broker or jeweller and a kosher wedding; Irish girls were casting their eyes, with license at least to do so, upon a society of young Tammany politicians, pious undertakers, and grown-up choir-boys. (p.31)

This is all said with an air of satiric detachment, but it is evident what the author's feelings are. Although earlier he had given a similar treatment to the "first layer of New York society," we cannot help but feel that he is closer to them in attitude. There are other examples of Fitzgerald's racism that intrude which we shall examine later.

Lastly (and some of these categories overlap), Fitzgerald makes use of his novel to serve as a platform for his philosophy. This is most evident in the chapter entitled "Symposium" in which Maury Noble holds forth on his "education" as evidence of the meaninglessness of life.

By 1924, however, Fitzgerald seems to have purged himself of Wells' influence and had made a set of rules
of his own. The author should create his novel in such a way as to make authorial comment unnecessary, he should be concerned with form, and he "should try to convey the feel of his scenes, places, people directly--as Conrad does ..." Furthermore, he should avoid "smart sophisticated philosophizing just for the sake of being clever." These rules, which he set down for Charles C. Baldwin for The Men Who Make Our Novels, are what allowed him to move from the level of The Beautiful and Damned to that of The Great Gatsby. But there was another obstacle in his road to artistic maturity--H. L. Mencken.

On December 28, 1920 Fitzgerald wrote to his aunt and uncle that his current idol was H. L. Mencken. The Young Fitzgerald, prone to overstate his emotions, had not done so this time. For a period of several years the editor of the Smart Set and his colleague George Jean Nathan were very influential in shaping Fitzgerald's philosophical and literary attitudes. It would be valuable to examine one of Mencken's essays to determine how closely Fitzgerald had adhered to his ideas while writing The Beautiful and Damned. In an essay entitled "The National Letters" published in 1920 Mencken examined the state of American fiction and did not like what he saw.

To begin with, Mencken was an advocate of the novel
of saturation. He laments that with American novelists

To get on: this is the aim. To weigh and reflect, to doubt and rebel: this is the thing to be avoided.20

To Mencken the plots of American novels were constrictively tight, and Fitzgerald agreed. The Beautiful and Damned is the author's longest work, and it frequently digresses from its line of action.

Mencken continues, almost as if he were sketching the character of Anthony Patch, by mentioning one of the "fundamental defects" of American fiction:

It habitually exhibits, not a man of delicate organization in revolt against an inexplicable tragedy of existence, but a man of low sensibilities and elemental desires yielding himself gladly to his environment, and so achieving what, under a third-rate civilization, passes for success.21

Anthony is a man of delicate tastes and supposedly high intelligence who revolts against the benumbing effects of the work ethic. He is true to his "ideal" to the end, but Fitzgerald undercuts the situation by inflicting doubt into the novel as to whether Anthony's recovery of the money is really a success at all.

In a sarcastic summation of American fiction Mencken presents an example of the shoddy Horatio Alger novel of which The Beautiful and Damned is a virtual reverse:

In character creation its masterpiece is the advertising agent, who, by devising some new and super-imbecile boob-trap, puts his hook-
and-eye factory 'on the map,' ruins all the other factories, marries the daughter of his boss, and so ends an eminent man. 22

In contrast, Anthony is in a Menckenesque downward flight throughout the novel. He is a distinct failure when he tries to take up business, and his wealth at the end is due to anything but the "virtue-rewarded" schema of the Alger novel.

Mencken, discussing the "man of reflective habit," asserts that he is interested not in any of the conventional conflicts in American fiction, but in "the far more poignant and significant conflict between a salient individual and the harsh and meaningless fiats of destiny, the unintelligible mandates and vagaries of God." 23 Throughout the novel runs a pattern of fatalism—Gloria and Anthony are bound to meet, the money is recovered not because Anthony works to get it, but because people on juries just happen to be tired of prohibition and Adam Patch was a teetotaler. The best example of these "fiats of destiny," however, is the fact that Anthony's blood pressure just happens to be too high so he cannot be an officer. Life is indeed harsh for Anthony when, due to a power beyond himself, he is forced to mingle with enlisted men.

Mencken also believed that the great novels of the world all have as their heroes men who do not "yield and
win but who resist and fall." Again, Anthony is a failure but Fitzgerald has him say to himself that at least he has not given in—he has not gone to work. Would this, however, qualify as worthwhile resistance for Mencken? This is not really to the point, for Mencken was able to admire the struggle man undergoes with "the obscure, atavistic impulses within him." Anthony certainly does war with his weaknesses for beauty and liquor. Dot Raycroft, a girl he meets while in the Army, appeals to his aesthetic sense, and as a result he finds himself in trouble. Liquor, which he uses as a means to escape life's harshness, aids in the destruction of both his mind and body.

Mencken continues with the assertion that what we see in the "great bulk of superior fiction is character in decay," mentioning the examples of Dreiser and Dostoevsky. Clearly this is a paragraph which Fitzgerald must have read and taken to heart. He then mentions an American novel that excited Fitzgerald a great deal.

It is the superficiality of the inferior man ... that is the chief hallmark of the American novel. Whenever we encounter a novel that rises superior to it, the thing takes on a subtle but unmistakable air of foreignness—for example Frank Norris' Vandover and the Brute.

It is certainly possible that Fitzgerald first became

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familiar with Norris's novel through Mencken's essay. Later we shall examine some specific ways in which Fitzgerald used this very novel as a model for his own work.

Aside from Mencken's general ideas about what an American novel should be and how those ideas found their way into the plot of *The Beautiful and Damned*, we should also be aware of Mencken's social thought and how Fitzgerald utilized it. Frederick Hoffman says Fitzgerald's novel is

informed by Mencken's kind of 'objectivity' which is not objective at all but depends upon the use of sure aim against an easy target. This development meant that Fitzgerald had halfway succeeded in dissociating himself from his characters.28

This is an important observation. In *This Side of Paradise* Fitzgerald was extremely close to Amory Blaine and treated him with more seriousness than he deserved. By the time of *The Great Gatsby* Fitzgerald was able to remain detached by the use of a first person narrator who was quietly aware of ambivalence around him. *The Beautiful and Damned* lies somewhere between the two. As will be seen later, the character of Anthony is not one who is ambivalent so much as he is merely out of focus. Objects of attack such as Gloria's parents are disposed of summarily because they have so little ammunition of their own; they are presented as buffoons.

Maury Noble delivers the most pungent Mencken-in-
spired broadside in the novel. Although Fitzgerald in a letter to Perkins claimed that most of the ideas in Maury's symposium lecture were his own, James E. Miller believes that much of Maury's material was inspired by Mencken, specifically by "The National Letters." Fitzgerald had praised a section of the essay entitled "Cultural Background" when he reviewed it. At one point Mencken says:

Democracy, obliterating the old aristocracy, has left only a vacuum in its place; in a century and a half it has failed either to lift up the mob to intellectual autonomy and dignity or to purge the plutocracy of its inherent stupidity and swinishness.

Mencken also bemoaned the lack of "a civilized aristocracy, secure in its position, animated by an intelligent curiosity...and delighting in the battle of ideas for its own sake." Punctuating it with his own yawns, Maury gives his auditors the story of his "education" in "The Symposium." Besides the overriding theme ("There's only one lesson to be learned from life... That there's no lesson to be learned from life." says Gloria), Maury speaks in Menckenesque terms:

For it seemed to me that there was no ultimate goal for man. Man was beginning a grotesque and bewildered fight with nature--nature, that by the divine and magnificent accident had brought us to where we would fly in her face. She had invented ways to rid the race of the
of the inferior and thus give the remainder
strength to fill her higher--or, let us say,
her more amusing--though still unconscious
and accidental intentions.... in Europe there
was taking place an economic catastrophe to
save three or four wretchedly governed races
from the one master that might organize them
for material prosperity. (p.255)

These cynical observations employ the typical Mencken-esque
irony and outrage at man's inability to govern himself.
Fitzgerald too apparently believed at this time in his
life that aristocracy had departed and left only a
"vacuum," as Mencken put it.

The Mencken influence is easily seen in many other
areas of the novel as well. There are musical metaphors,
for example, "Anthony and Dick evidently considered this
a sly sally, for they laughed one bar in three-four time"
(p.42), which Robert Sklar considers a "fixture" of
Mencken's style.33 Arthur Mizener points to Fitzgerald's
use of animal images to describe politicians,34 such as
his calling Congress a pigsty (p.56). In Fitzgerald's
description of Adam Patch's mind as being "under the
influence of that insidious mildew of righteous indig-
nation (p.4) Frederick Hoffman also notices Mencken's
influence.

There are other examples. In the dialogue in "A
Flash-Back in Paradise" "The Voice" says that America is
"a land whose wisest are but little wiser than its
dullest." (p.27) He describes a night club as a place
where its patrons can "take a nice girl" and this means

of course, that everyone has become equally
harmless, timid, and uninteresting through
lack of money and imagination. (p.69)

This has the unmistakable sound of Mencken attacking the
"booboisie." In another instance Fitzgerald debunks
history as Mencken might. The gray house in Marietta
was built just around the time "when our ancestors were
gloriously deserting Washington in droves." (p.177)
Later Fitzgerald offers us a cynical Mencken-sounding
political observation:

Wilson and his cabinet--a cabinet that in its
lack of distinction was strangely reminiscent
of the twelve apostles--let loose the carefully
starved dogs of war. (p.306)

One last example cannot be resisted. While riding on a
troop train Anthony reads in a newspaper that the towns-
people of Shakespeareville, Kansas recently had a meet-
ing to decide what to nick-name the American troops.
After contemplating such names as "Sammies" and
"Battling Christians," they finally decided on
"Liberty Lads." (p.316) The discussion, organized by
the local Chamber of Commerce, sounds like Mencken's
sneering at the mid-west filtered through the pages of
Main Street.

Even when the actual language Fitzgerald uses is
not reminiscent of Mencken, frequently his characters
seem to be fictionalized examples of what Mencken was
prone to attack: the minister with the gold teeth who marries Anthony and Gloria, the stock broker from "Buckleigh" who is convinced he will some day be worth millions, and the organizer of the sales meeting Anthony attends at the end of the novel who constantly speaks in catch phrases in accepted booster fashion.

It is easy to agree with Robert Sklar when he argues that even though Fitzgerald thought he was being more objective in *The Beautiful and Damned*, he was actually allowing H. L. Mencken to do the subjective thinking for him. In March, 1921 Fitzgerald wrote in the review of Mencken's essays that he had done "more for the national letters than any man alive." This respect is clearly evident in *The Beautiful and Damned*, but Mencken's influence did not last long. After the publication of his second novel Fitzgerald came to realize that Mencken had a very limited literary judgment. Furthermore, Fitzgerald was moving on to more substantial literary minds like Conrad, an inspiration for *The Great Gatsby*. We should concede, however, that it was Mencken who interested Fitzgerald in Conrad, as well as in Dreiser, in the first place, and hence was in this respect a positive force in his literary development, even though "his lack of respect for the importance of fictional technique enabled him to place Dreiser
indiscriminately in the same group with Conrad."^39

Fitzgerald came to realize that, much like Wells, Mencken was more at home dealing with social problems than with aesthetics. In a later essay, "How to Waste Material," Fitzgerald observed that Mencken's ideas were doomed to get "twisted in his hands" because "his ideas had always been ethical rather than aesthetic."^40 Hoffmann is less kind: "Anthony Patch...is as much a victim of Mencken's misreading of Dostosvsky as he is of his own inner weaknesses."^41 By February, 1925 Fitzgerald was able to boast in a letter to Ernest Boyd that in the case of The Great Gatsby,

All my harsh smartness has been kept ruthlessly out of it--it's the greatest weakness in my work. 42

Another important influence on Fitzgerald at this time was Frank Norris, author of Vandover and the Brute. Early in 1920 while Fitzgerald was working on This Side of Paradise, he wrote Maxwell Perkins that he had "fallen lately under the influence of an author [Norris] who's quite changed my point of view."^43 So impressed was Fitzgerald by the San Francisco novelist that he mentions near the end of This Side of Paradise that Amory had discovered,

through a critic named Mencken...several excellent American novels: "Vandover and the Brute"...and "Jennie Gerhardt."^44

There are a great many similarities between

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Vandover and the Brute and The Beautiful and Damned, so many in fact that it is clear that the former must have served in many respects as a model for the latter. Before we examine the many parallels, however, let us look at what is different about the two books, in order to give our comparison more perspective. Fitzgerald must have been impressed when he read excerpts from "The True Reward of the Novelist" by Frank Norris quoted by Charles Norris in his introduction to Vandover and the Brute. If the writer is true to himself, Frank Norris wrote,

...he will be able to say: 'I never truckled. I never took the hat off to Fashion and held it out for pennies. By God!...I told them the truth!' And that is his reward--the best a man may know....^5

Norris could probably say that he maintained his artistic integrity with Vandover and the Brute. It is a consistently presented portrait of a young man who, like Anthony Patch, is viewed as he descends from respectability to a state of poverty, insanity and madness. The difference between the two novels lies in their respective author's attitudes toward their subjects. Norris never varies in his presentation of Vandover as a person who is ruined by his own apathy and "preoccupation with sensual pleasures combined with a lethargic attitude toward all situations which might cause
Fitzgerald's tone is more complex. He seems to view Anthony's rebellion as a not totally insignificant one because the objects of his revolt are, in most cases, repulsive. Except for the vague diplomatic work he envisions for his middle age, the work that is possible for Anthony to do is stultifying—it ranges from working in a stock brokerage firm to selling printed pep-talks to increase sales. As mentioned above, these situations are presented satirically. Given these facts, plus Anthony's heightened sensibilities, we have a man who would find it difficult to succeed in the conventional sense. Still we cannot overlook Anthony's faults—laziness, drunkenness, and even occasional cowardice.

The problem is well delineated in the novel's title; it is difficult to create characters who are both beautiful and damned. Sergio Perosa asserts that

The double choice offered in the title is reflected in the lack of a consistent resolution of its conflicting motives. The objective and inescapable result of the action is that Anthony and Gloria are 'damned;' and they cannot be, therefore, as 'beautiful' as the author tries to make them.47

Robert Sklar is more specific on this point. Another lamentable aspect of Fitzgerald's aristocracy in The Beautiful and Damned is its racism, but even on this point Fitzgerald seems to waver. Sklar writes,
When the reader is asked to admire Fitzgerald's aristocrats, he is also meant to admire their racist views, when he is asked to feel contempt for weakness and blindness, he is meant also to condemn their racist views.48

Sklar uses Joseph Bloeckman, the Jewish film-maker, as an example. In the beginning Bloeckman is a "pushy Jew" and we feel Fitzgerald wants us to be amused when Anthony laughs at him. Later, however, when Anthony is stupified with liquor, Bloeckman (Joseph Black by this time) seems respectable and we sympathize with him when the two fight.

This is but one example of the way in which Fitzgerald fails to make his characters truly aristocratic, or "beautiful." Miller asserts that Fitzgerald "conceived the aristocratic society of which Anthony and Gloria formed a part as far more significant than it was or than the reader could possibly imagine it to be."49 It is true that Fitzgerald's aristocrats are distinguished chiefly by their snobbery and the fact that they have money. At this point in his career Fitzgerald was unable to distinguish between plutocracy and aristocracy as he did in The Great Gatsby and Tender is the Night.

If Norris's novel is more thematically consistent, Fitzgerald's is more thematically complex. For example, another theme that emerges is that of the waste of youth
and of opportunities; neither Anthony nor Gloria ever really does anything constructive during the course of the novel, and we are frequently told that they are irresponsible, lethargic, and wasteful. Yet how can this be of significant importance if we are to take Anthony, Gloria, and Maury at their word when they complain that the world is meaningless?\(^5^0\)

This idea can be applied to another thematic aspect—that of revolt. The unwillingness of Anthony to lead a conventional life and his dogged determination to resist the bourgeois value system seem inconsistent with his contention that life is meaningless. Why bother? James E. Miller adds that "by showing the deterioration of those in revolt [Fitzgerald detracts from] the significance of their rebellion."\(^5^1\) Rebellion implies action but there is none on the part of Anthony and Gloria.

There are other differences between Vandover and the Brute and The Beautiful and Damned. Snobbery is a great concern in Fitzgerald's novel. Bloeckman is unacceptable because he is Jewish, Ted Paramore because he is too righteous. Frequently the lower class's most salient characteristic is that of stupidity; witness Geraldine, Anthony's casual girl friend, and Anthony's fellow soldiers. In Norris, however, there
is no feeling of inherent superiority on the part of Vandover. His reticence about being seen in public with a girl of the lower classes is due only to his fear that it might hurt his chances with Turner Reeves, a girl of his own class. Indeed, as Vandover descends, he goes about with drunkards, gamblers and prostitutes. He has no social ideal to maintain.

Similarly, the deluded Anthony feels that by refusing to compromise by going to work he has actually committed a very positive act. Vandover, on the other hand, is conscious of his laziness, his sexual voraciousness, and his inability to resist temptation, and he feels guilty about it. Vandover also feels guilty about the death of his father who he feels died partly as a result of Vandover's sordid behavior. Anthony, on the other hand, has no love for his grandfather and in fact wishes he were dead.

It may be said that Frank Norris served the creator of The Beautiful and Damned the same way that Compton Mackenzie did the creator of This Side of Paradise. There are many basic similarities between the two novels. In both the protagonist is a young man with only one relative, Adam Patch and Vandover's father, who lost his mother at an early age. Both are upper class, Harvard-educated, carefully dressed men with artistic
sensibilities but with inabilities to accomplish anything of significance in this area. In the end of each novel both are broken men as a result of their own weakness and they have lost the love of their respective women as a result of their behavior.

Both men seem to have an abnormal susceptibility to the charms of women. Anthony hangs pictures of musical stars in his bathroom and phantasizes about them. More importantly, he later is unable to resist Dot Raycroft when he is in the Army and finds himself in a troubling entanglement. Vandover likewise is responsible for Ada Wade's pregnancy and suicide because, as he reflects, he is unable to stop himself at the crucial time. Later his friend Haight remarks that he seems unable to leave girls alone for even one day.⁵² At one point we are told that

Vandover was self indulgent—he loved...sensuous pleasures, he loved to eat good things, he loved to be warm, he loved to sleep. He hated to be bored and worried—he liked to have a good time.⁵³

These characteristics apply to Anthony as well. We frequently see him luxuriating in his bathroom (as does Vandover), enjoying his great bed, and later we find he drinks to escape both boredom and worry over his inheritance.

Vandover and Anthony are both unable to sustain an
effort of creativity. If Vandover is unable to get a face or figure right in an art class, he simply gives up. Similarly Anthony is forever getting organized but writes almost nothing during the entire novel, and it is simply his inertia that keeps him from taking the positive step of becoming a war correspondent. Vandover also rents a studio which he knows he cannot afford. Later he squanders his entire inheritance after resolving to be thrifty, while Anthony and Gloria spend as much money on one spree as they would need to buy Gloria the coat she has wanted for two years, but felt she could not afford.

Another area of common ground which the two characters share is that of fear. Frequently Anthony imagines he hears noises while he is in bed at night but he is too fearful to investigate. Vandover is also subject to fits of "hysterical unreasoning terror."54

Later as both are deserted by their friends they realize that their ways of life have turned sour. Vandover learns that "the old life of dissipation seems to have lost its charm,"55 and Anthony is made to note that "nothing... grew stale so soon as pleasure." (p.418) It is clear, then, that both these lives are wrecked, and money will not serve as an effective cure. Vandover realizes that "nothing made much difference after all.

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His money has come too late." Similarly, Anthony receives his money right after he has suffered a breakdown—the money is now virtually useless to him. Neither, of course, was able to earn money on his own, both scorning the business world and failing as a result. Richard Astro suggests that the more precise cause of their failure, however, might be apathy. We know that business bores Vandover so he puts his affairs in the hands of his lawyer and his friend Charlie Geary. Anthony as well seems apathetic—he cannot even be bothered to keep appointments with the lawyer who is representing him in his attempt to gain his grandfather's inheritance, and he is unable to stick to the two jobs he has in the novel for more than several days.

Each novel has two characters in it who serve as friends to the protagonists and form contrasts with them. Dolly Haight, a quiet, ineffectual young man, and Charlie Geary, a self-assertive bore who eventually swindles Vandover, are his companions. Anthony's are Caramel, the writer, who "sells out" and writes popular fiction, and the cynical Maury Noble. Dolly Haight is able to resist temptation with as much strength as Vandover has weakness in this area. Geary, like Noble, eventually becomes dedicated to accumulating wealth, in contrast to
Anthony and Vandover who recklessly squander their money. In fact, late in the novel Geary refuses to loan Vandover any money, and in *The Beautiful and Damned* Maury snubs Anthony before he has the opportunity to ask him for money.

Maury and Dick are in some ways Anthony's alter egos. Maury reflects Anthony's cynical side and Dick his urge toward creativity, but they are different in that they both sell out while Anthony remains true to his tarnished ideal of resistance. Astro asserts that in both novels the protagonists have the potential to lead meaningful lives in contrast with their friends. He speaks of the aura of feebleness that surrounds Dolly and Dick, which is certainly manifested in their appearances. Dolly is frail and sickly while Caramel has a bad eye, undoubtedly symbolizing his lack of vision as a novelist and as a judge of himself. These details reinforce ironically the theme of waste as they apply to the two potentially useful protagonists.

Henry Dan Piper has written that an "atmosphere of moral decay permeates both" novels. Eventually both men lose their social status, Anthony being snubbed by Maury and by other friends in the Plaza Hotel, and Vandover loses Turner Reeves, his respectable girl friend and is even abused by common laborers at the end.
of the novel. Astro points out that both even descend to the level of brawling near the ends of both books. Anthony is beaten by Bloeckman for calling him "a Goddam Jew" (p.437), and Vandover for accusing a fellow card-player of cheating. Previously both men had gone into "moral tailspins" after their affairs with Ada Wade and Dot Raycroft, the tailspins seemingly caused by the close brushes both have with potential responsibility. Ada Wade, pregnant and deserted, commits suicide, while Dot Raycroft maddens Anthony by threatening to do the same. Lastly, we should not omit a further striking similarity: As a result of their madness, both characters take on aspects of wild animals. This is, of course, much more fully developed with Vandover who, when the "brute" is allowed to manifest itself, crawls around on his hands and knees and howls like a dog. But Anthony too suffers in this same way. Piper observes that toward the end of the novel when his nerves are gone, he "paces back and forth in his shoddy apartment." Clearly the themes, characters and techniques of Vandover and the Brute were much on Fitzgerald's mind when he wrote The Beautiful and Damned.

Milton Hindus asserts that in Fitzgerald's second novel, we have an example, if not of full-blown Zolaesque or Dreiserian naturalism, of something apparently inspired by their example.
We should recall that Dreiser as well as Norris made Amory Blaine's reading list in This Side of Paradise, and in the same letter to Maxwell Perkins in which he announces his discovery of Norris, Fitzgerald mentions that Dreiser is a writer of quality. At about the same time he wrote his agent Harold Ober to ask if a novel like Dreiser's Jennie Gerhardt would have a chance of commercial success. Clearly Fitzgerald was paying a good deal of attention to Dreiser at this time in his young career.

One of the important areas of common ground that the two authors share is their concern for the effect of money on American society. Milton R. Stern observes that,

So pervasive was the color of wealth in the psychology of [Dreiser] that...his public as well as his private writings...are shot through with rhetorical figures of subject-matter as capital and of emotional resources as banked wealth.

Fitzgerald of course does the same, referring to himself as "drawing on resources that I did not possess," and "mortgaging myself physically and spiritually up to the hilt." In "May Day" Phillip Allen refers to Gordon Sterrett as being "bankrupt--morally as well as financially."

Milton R. Stern also feels that economics are an
Important concern for Dreiser. His books are filled with the effect of money on human personality in a vastly luxurious, fluid, snobbish, pretentious and democratic, commercial society.

Certainly this can be said of The Beautiful and Damned as well. After all, the book is about how a couple react to the loss and then sudden gaining of money. The psychological effect of the loss is severe: Anthony becomes alcoholic and breaks down after long months of lethargy. Gloria too mourns the loss of opportunities for glamour which money afforded, and it is doubly severe for her because she has to mourn the loss of her youth as well. Again in reference to the Stern quotation, we can see further parallel concerns. Fitzgerald presents scenes of great luxury, especially around the New York theatre district:

In the foyer of the theatre they waited a few moments to see the first-night crowd come in. There were opera cloaks stitched of myriad, many-colored silks and furs, there were jewels dripping from arms and throats and ear-tips of white and rose, there were innumerable broad shimmers down the middle of innumerable silk hats, there were shoes of gold and bronze and red and shining black. (p.24)

Fitzgerald's society is fluid as well, at least economically. View the rise of Bloechman to the state of wealth, or of Adam Patch, for that matter. Gloria can be a frightful snob, as she manifests in a letter to
Anthony:

I can't even hate the damnable presence of people, those people in the station who haven't any right to live—I can't resent them even though they're dirtying up our world. (p.360)

There are also characters of social pretension, Bloeckman, for one, when he tries to talk to Anthony about Harvard hockey games (p.94), and when he spouts pompous aphorisms at dinner. (p.99) That Fitzgerald's society is a commercial one is obvious by Anthony's strong contrast with all types of businessmen—Adam Patch, Mr. Gilbert, his temporary colleague in the brokerage firm, Kohler, and of course the man who sells the "Heart Talks."

Stern also observes that

the tension between democratic earthiness and snobbish racism never completely left Fitzgerald, as it never really left Dreiser or most of the writers who tried to dramatize their distrust of and desire for American wealth.69

This fact helps to explain a major flaw in *The Beautiful and Damned*. Fitzgerald condemns Gloria's snobbery and yet can make snobbish observations on the social layers in New York and write of Anthony's fellow soldiers as if they were little better than cattle.

If Fitzgerald used a specific novel of Dreiser's as a pattern for *The Beautiful and Damned*, it is *Sister Carrie*. Perosa observes that Dreiser's influence was both thematic (Hurstwood's deterioration matches Anthony's)
and stylistic ("the heaviness and monotony of style is similar in the end of both novels"). There are many parallels between Hurstwood and Anthony. Both lack regular jobs, both waste away their lives, their friends become shabbier and shabbier, they engage in bitter meaningless arguments with Carrie and Gloria, and both even read newspapers while drunk in semi-darkness.

There is one essential difference between Hurstwood and Anthony: The former is not only doomed by his own weakness but also by external circumstances such as "the ruthless laws of the business world and the deep-rooted social prejudice of middle-class Philistinism." This, according to Perosa, gives him a "tragic destiny" which Anthony does not have, his downfall being caused exclusively by his own weakness and apathy.

Although Gloria "identifies herself with Anthony's lethargy" and Carrie becomes independent of Hurstwood, there is another crucial thematic similarity. Carrie's victory is in a sense a defeat like Anthony's because, although both achieve financial success, "Carrie's success brings her only solitude and sadness, dissatisfaction and regret," and Anthony finds himself wealthy but no longer loved by his wife and emotionally and physically ill, as well as deserted by his friends.

Stylistically the two books are both novels of
saturation. Hindus says that Fitzgerald makes an attempt to create, instead of a logical and dramatic construction designed to turn the raw material of life into consummate art, a ponderous case history which seems to aim at factual truth rather than aesthetic beauty and to prove that the two are mercilessly at odds with each other.75

It is true that Fitzgerald believed in Wells' theory of the novel at this time in his career and hence felt that a multi-faceted view of human characters and their surroundings are more important than a unified line of action. The novel's being "ponderous," however, is not proof that factual truth and aesthetic beauty are at odds with each other in any novel of this type, so much as it is proof that Fitzgerald rushed the creation of this novel and as a result lost control of his material. If theme and characterization were consistent, Hindus would not level his charge at Fitzgerald. The fault of the novel lies not so much in its author's theories as in the way he practiced them.

Briefly we should mention several other possible sources of influence for The Beautiful and Damned. Henry Dan Piper states that Fitzgerald drew heavily on The Notebooks of Samuel Butler which, as he wrote in his own copy, was "the most interesting book ever written." Piper notices that he even uses Butler's "Life is one long process of getting tired" as his own.76
During an interview with a writer for the St. Paul Daily News, Fitzgerald said the book is something after the manner of Linda Condon. Hergesheimer tried to show the effect on a woman after her once legitimate beauty had passed. That is what I am trying to do with Gloria.?

Gloria, of course, is not shown to be reconciled to the loss of her beauty while Linda Condon is, realizing that it is temporary, but that its memory can be preserved.

Amory Blaine, we are told, was puzzled and depressed" by Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, so we know that Fitzgerald was familiar with it. James E. Miller quotes Oscar Carghill as postulating in *Intellec-
tual America* that the idea for Gloria's diary in *The Beautiful and Damned* came from the end of Joyce's novel. It seems more likely, however, Zelda Fitzgerald was correct when she wrote in reviewing her husband's novel that when she read the book, she noticed "a portion of an old diary of mine."
In an article for The Literary Spotlight in 1924 Edmund Wilson described the difference between Fitzgerald's first two novels as follows:

Since writing This Side of Paradise—on the inspiration of Wells and Mackenzie—Fitzgerald has become acquainted with another school of fiction: the ironical-pessimistic. In college, he supposed that the thing to do was to write biographical novels with a burst of ideas toward the close; since his advent into the literary world, he has discovered that there is another genre in favor: the kind which makes much of the tragedy and the meaninglessness of life.¹

Wilson recognizes that This Side of Paradise is not a novel of selected incident. Like The Beautiful and Damned it is saturated with authorial intrusions, sections of dubious relevance, and is basically autobiographical. The difference between the two novels then, is primarily one of tone. At the end of This Side of Paradise Amory cries out to the Princeton sky that he knows himself, but that is all.² In other words, Amory has at least come to an understanding of himself during the course of the novel; hence the guardedly optimistic ending to which H.L. Mencken objected, Amory's espousal
of the credo of "constructive individualism."\(^3\) By the end of *The Beautiful and Damned* however, the reader has a different feeling. Anthony's apathy and irresponsibility have risen up to crush him, and we can see nothing optimistic in his future. Whereas Amory Blaine learns, Anthony Patch deteriorates.

As has been established, at the time Fitzgerald wrote *The Beautiful and Damned*, he was noticeably influenced by H.G. Wells's ideas on the novel and H. L. Mencken's ideas on the novel and the American scene as well. From the very outset, then, it can be asserted that Fitzgerald's second book is a discursive "novel of ideas," in which, as Wilson observed, he presents ideas both ironical and pessimistic. Although this technique is quite different from Conrad's or James's, we should not automatically assume that it is not as good. We must judge the novel on its effectiveness in conveying this irony and pessimism.

This leads us directly to the chief critical problem of the novel and the one with which this chapter will be concerned. In one sense it is the broadest and most basic question which can be asked about a novel: what does it mean? Expressed more specifically, the problem translates into one of control: what is the essential tone of the novel? Is there a consistently presented
viewpoint of character, of narrator, in fact of author? Does Fitzgerald present characters toward whom he intends us to feel ambivalence? Certainly his characters are ambiguous but are they believable within the parameters of their ambiguity? Similarly, another problem which confronts us is the show/tell one. Wayne C. Booth has clearly established that telling in fiction is not necessarily a flaw and is in fact often unavoidable, but what if we are presented with telling that seems to contradict what we are shown?

To start, let us examine some of the reviews of The Beautiful and Damned which were written soon after the novel's publication in the spring of 1922. A reviewer for the Philadelphia Public Ledger felt that the object of the book was to

devastate...with satire and overwhelm that part of America that lives in theatres, cafes, cabarets, summer resorts and winter colonies with considerable scorn.

The problem according to this reviewer lies in the fact that Fitzgerald has

ended by making vice, loose living, sex, red liquor and twelve-cylinder cars much less hateful than he intended, or maybe not.

This reviewer is, in effect, wondering whether Fitzgerald wrote an ineffective satire, or simply was unsure of his own attitude toward his material. As we shall see, there
is ample evidence to support either assertion. At any rate, of course, this reviewer recognizes that the book has this serious flaw, even if he is unsure of its cause.

Several critics observe that Fitzgerald's intent seems somewhat confused, among them Paul Rosenfield who wrote that the characterization is severely muddled:

The couple in *The Beautiful and Damned*, charming and comely enough and yet portrayed at length in the horrible effort to perpetuate a state of narcissistic irresponsibility, we are begged to perceive as iridescently wonderful bodies and souls.⁷

Although Rosenfield continues by unfairly attacking the ending and missing its point, his criticism here is undeniably valid; the reader is confused about Fitzgerald's characters. Louise S. Field wrote in the *New York Times* that Anthony never seems "one third as intelligent as his author thinks him."⁸ Similarly, John Peale Bishop admired Fitzgerald's ability to create a surface portrait, but he condemned his inability to create complex, believable and consistent characters:

He has the rare faculty of being able to experience romantic and ingenious emotions and a half hour later regard them with satiric detachment. He has an amazing grasp of the superficialities of the men and women around him, but he has not yet a profound understanding of their motives, either intellectual or passionate. Even with his famous flapper, he has as yet failed to show that hard intelligence,
that intricate emotional equipment upon which her charm depends, so that Gloria, the beautiful and damned lady of his imaginings, remains a little inexplicable, a pretty vulgar shadow of her prototype.\textsuperscript{9}

Other critics bemoaned Fitzgerald's lack of distance from his material, including Bishop himself in a later review,\textsuperscript{10} but the charge of superficiality is a much more serious one. Fitzgerald did admit, and his biographers have duly recorded the admission, that he wrote \textit{The Beautiful and Damned} too quickly, but there is perhaps another explanation. Most critics assert that we are confused when we read the novel because Fitzgerald was confused when he wrote it, and Milton R. Stern gives us a reason for the author's confusion. It stems, according to Stern, from Fitzgerald's ignorance of his subject, specifically, "the objective facts of failure and the ruin of health through dissipation."\textsuperscript{11}

Whatever the reasons, the book has serious flaws and the critics recognized them from the very beginning. Very often critics would praise the novel for its treatment of a certain specific aspect of the American scene, then damn it for its seemingly confused overall intent, and this critical attitude continues today. Henry Dan Piper, for example, is impressed by the scene in which Anthony tries to sell his "Heart Talk" while becoming progressively drunker. He says, in fact that
another effective drunk scene, the journey from pawnshop to pawnshop was the source for a similar chapter in Jackson's *Lost Weekend*.\textsuperscript{12}

Let us now examine the novel to determine just how controlled and effective its characters and narration are. "May Day," an important short story that Fitzgerald wrote just before he began to work on his second novel, has similar themes and techniques, as well as similar problems. An examination of "May Day" will aid us in understanding the problem of tone in *The Beautiful and Damned*. In fact, Piper believes that the story was originally intended to begin the novel which eventually became *The Beautiful and Damned*.\textsuperscript{13} Piper bases his belief on a letter Fitzgerald wrote to Maxwell Perkins in which he says that he is going to break up the beginning of his novel and "sell it as three little character stories to *Smart Set*."\textsuperscript{14} "May Day" is the only work *Smart Set* published around this time (Spring, 1920) which fits this description. It is obvious, then, that this story, of higher quality than most of Fitzgerald's commercial fiction of the same period, and evidence of its author's early concern with the themes of deterioration and chaos which were explored so effectively in *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is the Night*, was the germ of the idea in Fitzgerald's mind which later blossomed into *The Beautiful and Damned*.

"May Day" demonstrates clearly that the problem of tone in Fitzgerald's work is not confined to his second
novel, and as in *The Beautiful and Damned*, the problem is difficult to pin down. Piper's assertion, mentioned above, however, takes on greater significance when we see just how closely the story parallels both the novel, and significantly, Norris's *Vandover and the Brute*. Fitzgerald might have met with more justifiable critical success had he followed his original conception of the novel and not abandoned it for what became *The Beautiful and Damned*.

Stated in general terms, the story has the weaknesses of *The Beautiful and Damned* and the strengths of *The Great Gatsby*. It has the structural tightness and symbolic overtones of the latter, while retaining the flawed characterization and fuzzy intent of the former. Both "L.ay Day" and *The Beautiful and Damned* present the decline of a sensitive, unproductive and self-indulgent character: one, Anthony, in great detail, the other, Gordon, in a successfully foreshortened fashion. To counterpoint them, Fitzgerald presents Edith Braden and Gloria Gilbert, two beautiful women "sans merci," who are greatly concerned with appearances, both their own and others. The "other woman" in Anthony's life is Dot Raycroft who, we are told, symbolizes the "increasing carelessness" with which Anthony conducts his affairs. Significantly Anthony misjudges her, feeling incorrectly
that she has "a passive acceptance of all things."
(p.326) Jewel Hudson, whose name seems reminiscent of
the meretricious picture of New York in 1919 that Fitz-
gerald presents in "May Day," is similarly misjudged by
Sterrett. "She's not at all the flabby sort of person
you'd expect,"16 says Gordon after Jewel has inaugurated
a low-key blackmail scheme against him. These parallels
could be greatly expanded, but enough have been shown to
establish the overall similarities of characterization
of the two works.

The most significant parallels, however, lie in the
similar deficiencies of the two works--their inconsistent
tones. The lower classes in both are treated with con-
tempt, but in "May Day" this snobbery is mitigated at
least in part by the presentation of the social elite
as similar to the lower classes in substance, if not in
appearance. This phenomenon is most fruitfully explored
by examinations of the soldiers who appear in both works.
One of the narrative strands of "May Day" deals with two
enlisted men, Privates Rose and Key, who wander around
the city looking for liquor and become involved in
senseless violence. Clearly these men exhibit a lack of
both intelligence and sophistication, but later we see
Peter Hummel and Phillip Dean, two Yale-educated members
of the elite who are in the city for a fraternity dance,
act the same way. Hiding in a broom closet in Delmonico's, Rose and Key drink stolen liquor and participate in a senseless raid on the editorial offices of a socialist newspaper, while Hummel and Dean throw hash and threaten waiters in a restaurant on Columbus Circle and then lurch into various hotels demanding champagne at dawn. Just as the identities of the two soldiers are hidden beneath their uniforms, the identities of Hummel and Dean are merged with the "Mr. In" and "Mr. Out" signs they hang around their necks. Fitzgerald attempts to show the depravity and chaos of post-war New York, but is the author's purpose maintained with consistency? The initial description of one of the soldiers provides a clue:

The taller of the two was named Carrol Key, a name hinting that in his veins, however thinly diluted by generations of degeneration ran blood of some potentiality. But one could stare endlessly at the long, chinless face, the dull, watery eyes, and high cheek bones, without finding a suggestion of either ancestral worth or native resourcefulness. 17

The irony here misfires. Can we conclude anything but snobbery on Fitzgerald's part when we consider that the names with which Fitzgerald endows this character are two prominent Maryland ones, one of which was Fitzgerald's own? The author was proud of his own distant family ties to Francis Scott Key, and by giving the name to a char-
acter whom we are to see as anything but aristocratic, he allows his personal feelings of superiority, which run counter to his theme, to surface. Fitzgerald will later use this technique of ironical incongruous names in a more visual way in *The Great Gatsby* with a street-corner dog seller who "bears an absurd resemblance to John D. Rockefeller." In *The Great Gatsby*, however, Fitzgerald is able to puncture the plutocracy of America by showing similarities between its members and street vendors, while in *The Beautiful and Damned* he seems to be trying to endorse the aristocracy. Similarly, we cannot ignore the physical ugliness of Key compared with the attractiveness of Dean. Certainly Dean appears healthy and well-dressed, but he is also handsome. The ironic essential similarity of the two groups falls apart when we are forced to view one group as handsome and the other ugly. It is not until *The Great Gatsby* that Fitzgerald was able to manage this technique successfully. While in that work the reader is reminded that although Daisy is charming, she is essentially corrupt, there is not such careful delineation here.

In *The Beautiful and Damned* we can see a similar treatment of enlisted men, indeed of the lower classes in general, but Fitzgerald does not seem even to have made much of an attempt to present similarities with the
upper classes, specifically Anthony, for ironic purposes. In the beginning of Book III, on Anthony's journey south on a troop train, we are presented with a panoramic view uncommon for Fitzgerald. Through Anthony's eyes we glimpse the lower classes of many nationalities in uniform. A Sicilian is described as "inanimate protoplasm reasonable by courtesy only" (p.315), and there seems to be no discernable difference in attitude of narrator and author. Anthony's three tent mates are

a flat faced, conscientious objector from Tennessee, a big, scared Pole, and [a] disdainful Celt ... [who] sat in the tent door whistling over and over to himself half a dozen shrill and monotonous bird calls. (p.329)

Very often Anthony's fellow soldiers are described only by their nationalities. When some men are dry shaved for punishment, we are told only that the men are "three Italians and one Pole." (p.331) This is but an example of evidence of Fitzgerald's own snobbery. It occurs outside Anthony's consciousness, and is not commented upon by the narrator. It is merely a dispassionately recorded event, more snobbish than sociological. Moreover, the only excuse we can make for Fitzgerald is that he is attempting something like Norris's naturalism, which often entails a view of the sordidness of lower class life. Indeed, we see Anthony becoming slightly adapted to his environment; on the day of his train ride
his hunger overcomes his revulsion for Army fare, and he finds it "surprisingly palatable." However, it seems clear that by identifying the lower classes almost solely by national origin, and by making them all unattractive, stupid and animal-like, Fitzgerald is indulging himself and sacrificing real naturalism and authorial integrity of purpose to some vague feeling of elitism. How can we be enraged at the cruelty of Army officers when their victims, such as "the Italian, Baptiste," who is killed by a horse, (p.339) are described as little better than animals? Do we feel the ironic detachment of author or narrator in the description of Anthony's recitation of "Atalanta in Calydon" in the rifle pit to "an uncomprehending Pole" (p.337)? The ultimate point here seems not to be similarity, but, indeed, differences between classes.

This snobbery visible in the narration, as well as in some of the characters, can often be traced back to the author himself. On their wedding trip Anthony and Gloria pay a visit to Mt. Vernon, giving Gloria an opportunity to rail against "the animals" (p.167) who by visiting the house are corrupting it and despoiling its memories. We might simply dismiss her attack until the author presents us with a little tableau which seems to reinforce her snobbery, rather than undercut
it. Just as Gloria has finished lamenting the fact that the "animals" cause her to smell peanuts instead of magnolias,

a small boy appears beside them and, swinging a handful of banana peels, flings them valiantly in the direction of the Potomac. (p.167)

What conclusion can we draw other than that Fitzgerald feels that, indeed, places like Mt. Vernon should be reserved for sentimentalists and romantics like Gloria? There is no evidence of any ironically detached suggestion that Anthony and Gloria, too, are corrupting the place. Much later in the novel, when Gloria is ill with pneumonia, she cries out in her delirium that she would sacrifice "millions of people ... swarming like rats, smelling like all hell," for one really exquisite palace "on Long Island or in Greenwich." (p.394) We must assume, to phrase it as Fitzgerald might, that this is the "essential Gloria," as we must when she writes to Anthony about poor people "too dirty to live." (p.360) But we cannot be entirely confident that this is a detached presentation on Fitzgerald's part when early in the novel he has made events seem to substantiate the correctness of this attitude.

To add to the confusion there is some dialogue in the "Symposium" chapter in which Maury Noble asserts
that Gloria has been endowed with a timeless wisdom:

these things the wise and lovely Gloria
was born knowing, these things and the
painful futility of trying to know any-
thing else. (p.257)

We might charitably conclude that Maury is a fool for
crediting Gloria with so much wisdom, but we know from
an exchange of letters between Maxwell Perkins and
Fitzgerald that the author intended Maury to be a mouth-
piece for his own ideas.\textsuperscript{19} It is difficult for a reader
to accept a character who is clearly elitist and bigoted,
but whose "wisdom" is praised by other characters with
the authority of the author. Moreover, Fitzgerald never
really demonstrates what this wisdom amounts to, other
than having Gloria say that the only lesson to be learned
from life is that "there is no lesson to be learned from
life." (p.255)

In addition to their treatments of class differences,
both "May Day" and The Beautiful and Damned deal with
racial minorities, especially Jews. One scene in "May
Day" depicts a Jewish street-corner orator being beaten
by a mob of soldiers. Although we are unquestionably
led to condemn the soldiers' brutality, the picture of
the Jew does not engage our sympathy. He speaks poorly
("Look arounja, look arounja!"), and the method of de-
scription of his beating is extremely detached:

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At this point the little Jew's oration was interrupted by the hostile impact of a fist upon the point of his bearded chin, and he toppled backward to a sprawl on the pavement. 20

It is difficult to detect any anger seething beneath the surface of this narration; rather the tone seems an almost blase treatment of a quaint event. Similarly *The Beautiful and Damned* presents many views of the American Jew in the same light. Both Anthony and the narrator view the Jewish ghetto of New York City from a train. The narrative reads,

> From the tenement windows leaned round, moon-shaped mothers, as constellations of this sordid heaven; women like dark imperfect jewels, women like vegetables, women like great bags of abominably dirty laundry. (p.283)

Anthony's reaction to this scene is strikingly detached:

> 'I like these streets,' observed Anthony aloud. 'I always feel as though it's a performance being staged for me ... you often get that effect abroad, but seldom in this country.' (p.283)

There is no suggestion of anything but an unbridgeable cultural and social gulf between these people and Anthony and his narrator, and the latter two seem indistinguishable in tone.

The lack of observable differentiation in tone between character and narration occurs several times in the novel and seems to be evidence that Fitzgerald was not yet able to avoid the appearance of authorial bigotry.
in his writings. We can dismiss Tom Buchanan's rantings in *The Great Gatsby* about the imminent intermarriage of blacks and whites as clearly bigoted and intended by Fitzgerald to be scorned because we are presented with a consistent portrait of Tom Buchanan as a fool. When Maury Noble mentions "black beginning to mingle with white" (p.255), however, we are hesitant to conclude as we immediately do about Buchanan because Maury is not presented as a fool, and as said above, we need only to point to the Fitzgerald-Perkins correspondence to prove it.

To return to the treatment of Jews in *The Beautiful and Damned*, there are many other examples in the narration which we can point to to substantiate the assertion of bigotry, or at least condescension, on Fitzgerald's part. For example, Jews are presented as loud, ill-mannered and vulgarly dressed. (p.25)

Fussell demonstrates Fitzgerald's incipient awareness of important social themes, specifically economic inequality, in "May Day," citing the chaotic scene in Child's Restaurant as evidence, but it is difficult to do the same for *The Beautiful and Damned*. Joseph Bloekman, the chief Jewish character in the novel, is important to the theme for his own economic rise counterpoints Anthony's fall, but there is little sympathy elicited
for him as a victim of prejudice. When he first appears, Bloeckman is presented as an obvious social inferior to Anthony and his friends. He is over-dressed, speaks in ludicrously stilted phrases, and has no common conversational ground with his dinner companions. Later, however, he seems to become somewhat more assimilated into upper-class gentile culture; he becomes more relaxed, dresses with more restraint and changes his name to "Black" in an apparent denial of his cultural heritage. (Similarly, another Jew in the novel, Rachel Barnes, is an Episcopalian.) He is still, however, a Jew, and at the end of the novel, when he beats up a drunken Anthony, we are intended to notice that he strikes out at Anthony simply because Anthony calls him a "Goddam Jew." Later when Bloeckman tells a waiter that Anthony has tried to "blackmail" him (p.437), we can infer that he is afraid that Anthony might have exposed his racial background.

What lies behind this denial of one's heritage? One critic points to the passage early in the novel which deals with the beginnings of the social season of the masses in New York City.

Jewesses were coming out into a society of Jewish men and women from Riverdale to the Bronx and looking forward to a rising young broker or jeweler and a kosher wedding; Irish girls were casting their eyes, with license at last to do so, upon a society of young Tammany politicians,
pious undertakers, and grown-up choir-boys. (p.31)

The critic, Milton Hindus, asserts that this is evidence that Fitzgerald was

never quite reconciled to being Irish, and never faced up to that racial self-hatred which affects the Irishman in America as powerfully as the Jew (the figure of the Jew, by the way, seems to have had a curious fascination for Fitzgerald's imagination). 22

The implication is that Fitzgerald is trying to mask his own feelings of ethnic inferiority by presenting Jews who do the same. At any rate, as Hindus writes, it is difficult to find a more "obnoxious, aggressive, or abominable character [than Bloeckman] unless it is Meyer Wolfshiem [of The Great Gatsby, who is also, of course, Jewish] in Fitzgerald's fiction." 23 It is an unfortunate use of irony to show the depths to which Anthony has fallen by creating a situation in which a Jew appears superior to Anthony, who had previously regarded Jews as quaint, but grotesque.

Another aspect of "May Day" which helps to bring into clearer focus the problems in tone of The Beautiful and Damned is the characterization of Edith Braden. The presentation of this prototype of the flapper is consistent and detached, paralleling one side of the confused characterization of Gloria Gilbert in The Beautiful and

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Damned. The focus of Edith's character is her thoughtless egocentricity; like Gloria early in the novel, she wishes to talk about nothing but herself, and she seems to have little substance. Dean describes her as "a sort of pretty doll ... if you touched her she'd smear." Later she becomes enraged at Peter Hummel, her escort, for trying to embrace her—not for his taking of an uncalled-for liberty, but because he slightly disarranges her hair. She receives a narcissistic pleasure from the contemplation of her own beauty:

She dropped her arms to her side until they were faintly touching the sleek sheath that covered and suggested her figure. She had never felt her own softness so much nor so enjoyed the whiteness of her own arms. 'I smell sweet,' she said ... "I'm made for love."*

The love she means, however, is merely the excitement that romance may afford her. Later, while visiting her brother at the socialist newspaper where he works, she raises her skirts to show her silk stockings, and says, "Aren't they cunning?" This while the editors are worried about an attack on the office by a group of drunken soldiers. It is clear that Fitzgerald is using Edith to depict the excessive self-regard and thoughtlessness of the wealthy. It is possible that her portrait is consistent because she appears in a short story and consequently her character need not be as rounded as
Gloria's should be in The Beautiful and Damned. Perhaps Fitzgerald lost control of Gloria's character because he tried to go beyond what he had achieved with Edith, with muddled results. Moreover, it is when the distance from author to character diminishes that she becomes less effective. This occurs when Fitzgerald adds elements to Gloria's character beyond what he had already created in Edith and at the same time eliminates the thematic schema which gave significance to Edith's actions.

Let us first examine the ways in which Gloria resembles Edith. Like Edith, and in fact like Roselind in This Side of Paradise, whose major concern is whether her legs will be able to become "slick and brown in the summer,"26 Gloria is narcissistic; Maury's first report to Anthony about her is that she talked about her legs. (p.48) In addition Gloria can be unreasonable and petulant. When Anthony is courting her, she becomes infuriated and humiliates him because he has tried to kiss her too passionately. (pp.114-5) Later, after they are married, she flies into a rage because a waiter brings her a tomato stuffed with chicken rather than the invariable celery. While on their wedding trip, Gloria amazes Anthony with her unwillingness to cope with such a simple task as sending out the alundry. (p.164) All these incidents are treated with detachment; Gloria is
shown to be petulant and very demanding. It is as if, as the dominant image pattern associated with her, the sun, suggests, she expects the world to revolve around her. (Later we see the same imagery used to delineate Daisy in The Great Gatsby. In addition, in The Beautiful and Damned we see Gloria carelessly wreck the couple's new car, a motif which is developed into a metaphor for irresponsibility in The Great Gatsby.)

Another aspect of Gloria’s character which goes beyond Edith Braden’s and is presented with detachment is her childishness. She chews gum-drops (p.101), buys a doll (p.226), and weeps with great sentimentality over the kicking of a kitten Anthony describes. (p.291) In fact she cannot bear the thought of having a child when the possibility that she is pregnant occurs. (p.204) This after a child-like discussion with Anthony several months before in which they delineate which features each parent should contribute to the appearance of the child they plan someday to have. This conversation ends when Gloria dissolves into tears after hearing Anthony suggest that her neck is too long. Much of this may be mere silliness, but at least Fitzgerald seems to be keeping his distance.

Fitzgerald reverts to a device reminiscent of This Side of Paradise to introduce Gloria, or at least the
the concept of Gloria. In "A Flash-Back in Paradise" (pp.27-30) we are introduced to "Beauty" whose beauty of body is "the essence of her soul." She is the "unity" for which philosophers have been seeking, apparently the truth/beauty equation which Anthony, when the tone of the book changes, is to disavow by selling his prized Keats letter. The form of this section is a dialogue between "Beauty" and "The Voice," who advises "Beauty" in Mencken-esque terms that she will be a "susciety girl." "Beauty," "her eyes turned, as always, inward upon herself," asks if she will be paid. The voice replies, "Yes, as usual --in love." Miller correctly concludes that

Although the episode might astonish the reader with the 'cuteness' and eccentricity of the imagination of the author, the scene seems to conflict with the novel's generally serious purpose and realistic tone.27

It is, however, undeniable that the scene provides an accurate sketch of Gloria as she appears in the first half of the book. Stern notes the reference to her self-absorption which he feels is her essence.28 As we shall see, however, the detachment of the early part of the book gives way to a qualified sympathetic treatment at the end.

The "Flash-Back" is not the only place in the novel where "the concept of Gloria" is introduced before the character actually is. Anthony tells Geraldine the story
he has composed of "The Chevalier O'Keefe" whose downfall is caused by his devotion to feminine beauty. This seems to foreshadow what Sklar says is "Fitzgerald's purpose, to make us see how much Anthony is controlled by Gloria." Fitzgerald does this by presenting Anthony as being without will and having Gloria influence him by speaking as she does in "Symposium" about the meaninglessness of life. Moreover she displays as her "entire solace and justification," "the magnificent attitude of not giving a damn." (p.226) Sklar is quite right when he observes that this aspect of her character is very much at odds with her sentimentality, and, it could be added, with her high value of her own beauty.

Another difficulty we might observe in Fitzgerald's presentation of Gloria is his exaltation of her beauty. Although treated with detachment in the "Flash-Back," in other places she is described with purple prose:

Out of the deep sophistication of Anthony an understanding formed, nothing atavistic or obscure, indeed scarcely physical at all, an understanding remembered from the romancings of many generations of minds that as she talked and caught his eyes and turned her lovely head, she moved him as he had never been moved before. The sheath that held her soul had assumed a significance—that was all. She was a sun, radiant, growing gathering light and storing it—then after an eternity pouring it forth in a glance to that part of him that cherished all beauty and all illusion. (p.23)
Initially we must admit that this is Anthony's perception and not the narrator's and that there is the suggestion that Gloria's beauty is an illusion, but we cannot overlook the sun imagery, used here to give a significance to her beauty, and that the effect she has on Anthony is described in quite serious language. The general intent of the passage is to involve us in the importance of the romance. Indeed, at this point in the novel, Fitzgerald would like us to believe, as Maury does, that Gloria represents

The outer signs of the cut-and-dried Yale prom girl and all that--but [she is] different, very emphatically different. (p.49)

If we accept the notion of the original conception of Gloria as a corrosive influence on Anthony (She does say early in their courtship that she is unable to understand "why it's impossible for an American to be gracefully idle," (p.65) and Anthony agrees), then we must admit that Fitzgerald loses control of her character later in the novel. Piper asserts that

Fitzgerald began the novel having Anthony a victim of fate--with Gloria the providential instrument of his destruction--a dea ex machina. [She is sent by 'The Voice.'] But during the course of the novel, he becomes absorbed in their relationship. He comes to look at their unhappy marriage, their need for each other, their struggle to hold a marriage together as a doomed and tragic one.30
The text bears out this assertion of a change in focus. It is Gloria who prevents Anthony from becoming a war correspondent (p.206), and who mocks him about trying to write, but soon after Anthony is described as being tired with "the world's weight he had never chosen to bear." (p.218) From this point on, Anthony and Gloria both participate in the chaos and decline of their lives, and the book seems to become the story of a marriage, "a tragedy of modern married life." Whereas once Gloria was for Anthony the "end of all restlessness" (p.107), by the middle of the novel Anthony "dreaded being alone with Gloria." (p.286) Further, they are both responsible for forgetting to cancel the lease on their summer house, and their combined "inertia" prevents them from firing Tana (p.237), both of which acts cost them a great deal of money.

Their expenses seem equally shared--

"Two rents a good part of the time, clothes, travel--why, each of those springs in California cost about four thousand dollars. That darn car was an expense from start to finish. And parties and amusements and--oh, one thing or another." (p.288)

Moreover, it is Anthony who prevents Gloria from seeing Bloeckman about "getting into the movies." (p.215) In fact at this point in the novel, they are clearly equally responsible for their inactivity--
They attained nothing. Inevitably they attained nothing ... It was a triumph of lethargy. (p.215)

If this were not enough to demonstrate a fundamental change in intent, we need only look at Gloria's actions toward the end of the novel. She is more responsible than Anthony, worrying about how to get money for food, while his concern is to pawn his watch so he can buy liquor. (p.429)

Even though Fitzgerald's intent for Anthony's and Gloria's relationship seems to change as the novel progresses, he continues to characterize Gloria as childish and self-absorbed in a tone that is no longer wryly detached as it was during the courtship; now he seems to be attempting to enlist our sympathies for Gloria, but at the same time condemning her for her petulance and excesses. Perosa observes that Gloria "refuses to accept the effects of time." When she is told by Bloeckman that she is too old to play the part of an ingenue (p.403), she experiences "emotions too profound, too overwhelming for any consolation." She realizes that her eyes are tired and bewails the loss of her pretty face, without which she does not want to live. Yet several pages before this the narrator observes that all Gloria wants is "to be a little girl, to be efficiently taken care of." (p.394) The problem is that it is difficult to be
a tragic little girl. In demonstrating her feelings on the unhappiness of her position, Fitzgerald writes

She wondered if they were tears of self-pity, and she tried resolutely not to cry, but this existence without hope, without happiness, oppressed her, and she kept shaking her head from side to side, her mouth drawn down tremulously in the corners, as though she were denying an assertion made by someone, somewhere. She did not know that this gesture of hers was years older than history, that, for a hundred generations of men, intolerable and persistent grief has offered that gesture, of denial, of protest, of bewilderment, to something more profound, more powerful than the God made in the image of man, and before which that God, did he exist, would be equally impotent. It is a truth set at the heart of tragedy that this force never explains, never answers--this force intangible as air, more definite than death. (p.474)

The key word here, of course, is tragedy, and it leads us to a discussion of the most important tonal problem of the novel: does Fitzgerald attempt to imbue the revolt of Gloria and Anthony with tragic significance? The passage quoted above suggests that he does by phrasing Gloria's dilemma as timeless and asserting that it is set "at the heart of tragedy." Years after The Beautiful and Damned was published, Fitzgerald wrote his daughter that Gloria is "trivial and vulgar." He also wrote in his notebook that the novel which finally became Tender is the Night would be "unlike The Beautiful and Damned ... the break-up will be caused
not by flabbiness but by really tragic forces." We would agree with the author in his assessments of both works. Clearly he does not create tragedy in *The Beautiful and Damned*, but he does from time to time seem to believe that that is what he has done.

Again it is helpful to return to "May Day," this time to examine Gordon Sterrett's characterization. In a contemporary article on Fitzgerald, Paul Rosenfield wrote that the author of "May Day" created the story with "an air of almost glacial impersonality," and the result brings "the bitter ... taste of decay fully to the mouth." Although we have seen that from time to time the personality of the author does in fact intrude into "May Day," Rosenfield's statement about decay is not difficult to accept in the case of Sterrett. Piper asserts that Sterrett's trouble, which culminates in his suicide, is caused by his "inability to distinguish between money and morality." Sterrett mistakenly feels that money will free him from his entanglement with Jewel Hudson. In fact, at one point, while asking Phillip Dean for a loan, he is accused by Dean of being "sort of bankrupt--morally as well as financially." Sterrett's reply is significant: "Don't they usually go together?" Richard Sklar observes that Sterrett is a victim of his own weakness, that poverty is "not a cause but a result."
This is no doubt true, and moreover, we should determine whether it is true for Anthony Patch as well, or whether Hoffman is correct in saying,

The tragedy of the 1920's--or one of them--for Fitzgerald was the need of money in order to keep the moment of beauty and illusion alive, to keep it for oneself.\textsuperscript{38}

The central line of plot development in \textit{The Beautiful and Damned} leads toward the resolution of the question of whether Anthony will recover his inheritance. We must concern ourselves here with the question of tone in the presentation of the events leading up to (and following) that resolution. Specifically, do Anthony's attitude and actions constitute tragic decline, or is he merely, as Stern phrases it, not a " decadied hero," but merely "a slob?"\textsuperscript{39}

We must look at Anthony's attitudes toward society and money-making, those things which he rebels against while waiting for his money, to see if Fitzgerald endows them with any validity. Cross asserts,

\begin{quote}
Enamoured of money, yet contemptuous of those who make it, Anthony's dilemma is precisely Fitzgerald's own.\textsuperscript{40}
\end{quote}

This perceptive comment is an important indication of the basis of the confused tone, in fact the central contradiction of Anthony's character. We can accept a character whose ideas are muddled, but in this case it is not clear that the author recognizes it. Anthony
feels that the sanest way to lead his life is to avoid participating in the economic system; this is his rebellion, and yet it takes the form of mere hedonism, the manner in which Anthony and Gloria live while waiting for Adam Patch's money. Anthony is content to spend money, but he refuses to earn it. Indeed, the money he wishes someday to spend has been made by his grandfather on Wall Street, the very place where Anthony works for several days until he finds it too distasteful. (p.231) Fitzgerald seems to agree. He presents all the clichés about Wall Street through a young bond salesman who seems to believe in them implicitly. Anthony listens to

"breathless anecdotes of the fortunes stumbled on precipitously in the Street by a 'butcher' or a 'bartender,' or a 'a darn messenger boy, by golly!'" (p.230)

One man's success symbolizes "the aspirations of all good Americans." (p.330) Justifiably Anthony revolts against the crassness of Wall Street, but the effect of the satire is diminished when we realize that Anthony still wants this money, even though he does not want to be the one to make it. In addition, of course, we must remember that Anthony's alternative to his Wall Street job is to stare silently at the ceiling, and simply lie around the house "utterly miserable." (p.231) His revolt, then, merely takes the form of sullen inactivity.
Miller asserts that Fitzgerald has fumbled with this kind of presentation:

If Fitzgerald wished to treat the theme of revolt sympathetically, presumably he wanted the reader to disagree with what is being revolted against, but also to see some positive justification for the rebels. By making life 'meaningless' he has succeeded in depriving the revolt of its significance. 41

It is interesting to note that the chief spokesman for this theory of inactivity is Maury Noble, who, by the end of the novel, in direct contrast with Anthony, is making every effort to amass a fortune. Maury "sells out," but seems no less reprehensible for doing so than the slovenly Anthony who refuses "to submit to mediocrity, to go to work" (p.449), but destroys himself through a deluded decadence.

Furthermore even if we overlook Anthony's hypocrisy in wanting his grandfather's money, we cannot overlook the basic fact that his expectations invalidate his thesis of meaninglessness. He is living for something--the money--and at the same time he condemns Maury for doing the same. "I used to think he was so brilliant" Anthony says of Maury when he hears of his financial success. (p.409) In fact, early in the novel Anthony justifies his manner of living by citing Maury's ideas on "The Meaninglessness of Life" and wishes to "emulate the feline immobility of Maury and wear proudly the culminating wisdom of the
numbered generations." (p.54) There are, however, no positive alternatives to inactivity presented. Caramel writes, but he is a hack with limited vision; Paramore is a social worker, but a prig when sober and a buffoon when drunk. Hence Fitzgerald seems to present Anthony with no way out; he is trapped and yet wants to live gracefully with money, in this chaotic world.

Fitzgerald has written himself into this dilemma by his confusion about what constitutes aristocracy. Sklar points out that although Fitzgerald was influenced by Mencken when he wrote *The Beautiful and Damned*, he missed one of Mencken's main points—that "an aristocracy founded solely on money is not an aristocracy at all but a plutocracy." At the beginning we might assume that Fitzgerald will make the distinction because of the satirical view of Adam Patch he presents. Patch is clearly a plutocrat who has amassed vast sums by crushing his opponents in financial affairs, and he is anti-intellectual enough to have a view of history similar to Henry Ford's belief that it is "bunk." Also, like Ford, he is prudish—he causes his grandson to be named for the man who founded the Society for the Supression of Vice in New York City. However, when we read on, we find we never really are presented with any aristocrats to contrast with Adam Patch. Anthony feels that
on some misty day he would enter a sort of glorified diplomatic service and be envied by princes and prime ministers for his beautiful wife. (p.171)

But even this seems predicated on mere status, and more importantly, appearance. Furthermore, due to Anthony's and Gloria's inertia, this goal is unreachable. Is it possible that Fitzgerald is presenting us with people he knows are merely slobs? Is Gloria closer in character to the people she sees and approves of in the meretricious night club? (p.71) (We should remember that "The Voice" described "a susciety girl" as "a sort of bogus aristocrat" (p.29.) Fitzgerald clearly seems to assert that Anthony and Gloria are superior to the masses, and that, as Edmund Wilson wrote, "the only sane way for them to act is to forget organized society and live for the jazz of the moment." But if Anthony and Gloria believe in the concept of the aristocracy, as they obviously do, and Fitzgerald seems to agree, why do we never see any aristocrats, and more importantly, how can Anthony and Gloria say the world is meaningless on the one hand and feel they want to live in it gracefully on the other? We are left confused, feeling as Mizener does, that Anthony and Gloria are not people who want the opportunities for "fineness" that wealth provides; they are only people who want "luxury." They are "less beautiful and damned than Fitzgerald would have us believe."
Another character whose presentation adds to the confusion is Richard Caramel. It seems obvious that Fitzgerald is giving us a parody of himself in the initial impression we get of Caramel. His first novel, The Demon Lover, has the same title as the one Fitzgerald very nearly chose for The Beautiful and Damned. His reading habits are similar to Fitzgerald's in his Princeton days (p.21), and he acts in bookstores the same way the young Fitzgerald did when This Side of Paradise was first published. (p.142) He is even quoted in a review as saying the very thing (p.189) that Fitzgerald wrote on a sheet attached to This Side of Paradise when it appeared at a booksellers' convention. Caramel is optimistic and enthusiastic, but his yellowing eye suggests limited vision. To reinforce the validity of the ideas in the "Symposium" scene Fitzgerald has Caramel fall asleep while Noble remains wide awake. The names of each character, Caramel and Noble, furthermore, suggest the author's tone. Later we see that Caramel is concerned with writing for the movies and is making vast sums as a result. In a rather unsubtle passage Caramel even suggests This Side of Paradise is "shoddy realism." (p.420) Why then does Fitzgerald have Anthony feel that "he would change places with Dick unhesitatingly?" (p.423) Anthony relishes the success of a third-
rate author, but is unwilling to work on Wall Street because that would be selling out.

This question of "selling out" leads us to the end of the novel, the part which seems to have received the most critical attention. Anthony receives the thirty million dollars when the will is overturned, and he and Gloria sail to Europe. But Anthony has suffered a breakdown, and by now Gloria looks "sort of dyed and unclean" (p.448) to the passengers on the ship. At the conclusion Anthony thinks of the "hardships and tribulations he had gone through" (p.448), and he reflects that he had not submitted to "mediocrity." He had not gone to work. In the last line Anthony says to himself, "It was a hard fight, but I didn't give up and I came through!" (p.449)

Many critics have failed to perceive Fitzgerald's ironic presentation of Anthony's "triumph." Lehan says,

They have lost youth and beauty and have only thirty million dollars to take its place. Fitzgerald would like us to believe they are damned.47

Rosenfield says Fitzgerald "welched" by showing that his hero "had won out."48 These comments overlook the obvious—that Anthony and Gloria are ruined by the time they receive their money. In fact the very act of waiting has been ruinous. Perosa is correct when he speaks of a "reversal of moral judgment" at the end;49 Anthony
is clearly being shown as a fool in taking pride in his refusal to go to work. Miller observes that the deterioration of Anthony in Gloria is "the more complete because it is the subject of common gossip," pointing to the effective change in point of view at the end. Stern's analysis of the irony is that we are supposed to see that

money cannot buy back the joy of which it was supposed to be the invulnerable guarantee.51

Stern also cites the epigraph in the frontispiece of the novel ("The victor belongs to the spoils") as further, and convincing, evidence of Fitzgerald's ironic intent at the end.

Clearly there is irony at the end. However, it cannot be argued that the entire book is ironic. We see at the end Fitzgerald's condemnation of Anthony's fatuous claim of victory for his refusal to go to work, but earlier in the novel, Anthony had been portrayed as a sensitive man who was essentially above the crass machinations of Wall Street. We are never presented with a constructive alternative to hedonism and inactivity. Yes, there is irony at the end of The Beautiful and Damned, but it is imposed. It is not a natural outgrowth of the ideas of the novel; in fact it seems to contradict them.
IV

CONCLUSION

This paper has been an examination of influences upon and the flaws in Fitzgerald's second novel, The Beautiful and Damned. It is clear that the novel suffers from muddled characterization and contradictory ideas, due in large part to the haste in which it was written. We know, for example, that at one point Fitzgerald wrote fifteen thousand words of the book in three days. This type of speed can only result in flaws, especially in a book of the scope of the present one. A careful examination yields numerous contradictions such as the narrator's statement on the top of page 332 that Anthony worried little and was glad to be alive, while on the bottom of the same page we find Anthony is "filled with terror."

It should be pointed out, however, that there are a number of positive aspects to the book. Fitzgerald's portrayal of the gradual decline of Anthony and Gloria, for example, is both convincing and vivid as are the views of some of the minor characters, such as Muriel Kane. His handling of the problems of wealth, and the
lack of it, lead directly to the more successful treatments of the same subjects in *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender is the Night*. 
FOOTNOTES

I. BACKGROUND


3 Turnbull, p.117.


7 Piper, p.87.

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