

The Decline of Moral Values in the Jazz Age as Reflected in Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned*

Hassan Al-Marwan

B. A. & B. Ed, University of Mosul, Iraq

M. A, Andra University, India

DOI: 10.53032/tcl.2020.4.6.06

Abstract

The Beautiful and Damned, first published by Scribner's in 1922, is F. Scott Fitzgerald's second novel. It provides a portrait of the Eastern elite during the Jazz Age, exploring New York café Society. As it is in his other novels, Fitzgerald's characters are complex, especially in their marriage and intimacy relationships. The book is believed to be largely based on Fitzgerald's relationship and marriage with Zelda Fitzgerald.

Keywords- Elite, Relationship, Wealth, Class, Marriage

Introduction

The Beautiful and the Damned is F. Scott Fitzgerald's second book, published in 1922, which portrays the lives of a young, wealthy, and pleasure seeking couple, Anthony and Gloria Patch. Anthony is heir to a massive fortune, and Gloria, a mid western debutant, is marrying up: together they Ritz it up like in classic Jazz Age style, dining and drinking wildly, going to shows, philosophizing with friends, and spending lavishly while waiting for Anthony Patch's grandfather to kick the bucket. At the novels' start the patch due have it all together, and seem happy in their own solipsistic and holistic ways. But their prodigal ways get the best of them, and their lives begin to unravel.

It tells the story of Anthony patch (a 1920s socialite and presumptive heir to a tycoon's fortune), his relationship with his wife Gloria, his service in the army, and alcoholism. Toward the end of the novel, Fitzgerald's references himself via a character who is a novelist by quoting this statement given after the novel. "You know these new novels make me tired. My God! Everywhere I go some silly girl asks me if I've read ' This side of paradise' Are our girls really like that? If it's true of life, which I don't believe, the next generation is going to the dogs. I'm sick of all this shoddy realism". Exploring the decadence of Jazz Age New York through a fictionalized version of his own marriage to Zelda Fitzgerald, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* includes an introduction by Geoff Dyer in Penguin Modern Classics.

The Creative Launcher

An International, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English

www.thecreativelaucher.com

Anthony Patch and his wife Gloria are the essence of Jazz Age glamour. A brilliant and magnetic couple, they themselves at life with energy, is thrilling. New York is a playground where they dance and drink for days on end. Their marriage is a passionate theatrical performance; they are young, rich, alive and lovely and they intend to inherit the earth, But as money becomes tight, their marriage becomes impossible. And with their inheritance still distant, Anthony and Gloria must face reality. They may be beautiful- but they are also damned Gloria joins in the waiting for the heritance. She is taking Anthony's world for her own, and they both take life as it comes. The finality of their destination is clear long before the end is reached. Their expectation could not rest on weaker foundations. In a highly dramatic scene, Adam Patch, the old millionaire, who is a prohibitionist and a supporter of a Victorian moral code, visits them at the climax of a drunken party. The blow proves fatal for him and for the hopes of Anthony and Gloria as well, because they are disinherited.

The similar character traits belonged to Anthony and Gloria, and then it leads them to their fall. At the end of the story they finally get what they want from the inheritance; however, it is too late since Anthony is insane already. Their downfall is due to their character traits. On the other hands, the public response is important to know how popular the work is. Many people say that Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* is the favorite novel of all time. It offers the most pertinent moral lesson for the reader. Steve and Marigold dislike the novel. The characters are unattractive. The major character, Anthony Patch, is a predictable and annoying character. It also needs more time to read because of hundred pages so that it is boring.

Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* is a famous autobiographical novel, but it does not win an award. It is an interesting novel. It can be seen from the way the writer combines the structural elements of the novel to help the reader understands through those structural elements which include characters and characterization, theme, plot, setting and style.

This novel consists of two major characters and fifteen minor characters. The major character has good characterization so that the reader is able to feel what they did. The minor support major characters so that the novel looks alive. Anthony Patch and Gloria are persons who are really annoying. The writer feels the real Anthony by reading the novel. It looks like a disgusting couple. The novel also uses progressive plot (straight plot). Each event causes the next event, so that it arranges orderly. The theme is about morality, meditation of love, money and decadence. It is how people live without knowing the meaning of true happiness. Fitzgerald takes the setting almost in United States to support the novel. It relates with the two settings that complete the theme. It is setting of place which is New York City and environs, and the vicinity of a military training camp in South Carolina. The setting of time is 1920s. In this year, United State enters to the Depression Era.

The language style in this novel also supports the intended idea and aim of the narrator. The text and the dialogues that the narrator has organized use the simple, comprehensible,

The Creative Launcher

An International, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English

www.thecreativelaucher.com

vigorous and straightforward English. It makes its reader understand the social background of this novel.

The Beautiful and Damned is an autobiography of F. Scott Fitzgerald's life. This is the second of three autobiographies. The reader can follow the life of Fitzgerald from his autobiographies. The reader is also introduced to the history of United States society in 1920s. In this novel, we are introduced to the social mobility condition which happens to the main character. Based on the fact, the writer tries to break down the problem in Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* by using socio- cultural approach.

Themes:

The Beautiful and Damned is at once a morality tale, a meditation on love, money and decadence, and a social documentary. This thematic dualism is created and sustained by an over arching consistency of tone and delivery. There exists a rare balance between Anthony's poetic commentary and immediate circumstance, and the wider context of the novel, creating two equally significant levels to the text that complement each other synergistically. Were it not for the intensity of Anthony and Gloria's fall we would not find ourselves sufficiently discouraged from complacency, and moral laxity as for the novel to have any great effect were it not for the all encompassing despondency- the sheer breadth of depravity exposed in the novel – we would not be able to comprehend the extent to which a society may be steeped in such a transparent vice. Ultimately, it becomes apparent that the novel concerns the lurches of a lethargic society, trying desperately to find a cause for which to progress. In deed, it is significant that the only diligent reformer of the novel- the only man who has found a cause to which he may commit –is Anthony grandfather, who be longed to the previous generation, which has now been replaced by the present directionless one. Equally, and on a more personal level, the novel is about the ephemerally of all life

On the surface, *The Beautiful and Damned* might more accurately be said to be a study of the atmosphere of failure. Through chapter after chapter, one finds Anthony and Gloria overwhelmed by nothing more substantial than the depressing, claustrophobic ambience of the world in which they find themselves. They are constantly fleeing places- their apartment, their summer house, parties –trying to escape their own emotions and sense of frustration. Similarly, they escape into alcohol, fleeing the sense of desperation and failure that surrounds them like an ever-growing shroud.

The thrust of the novel is blunted by Fitzgerald's ambivalence. At times, Anthony is portrayed as an admonitory example of the man without purpose, a representative figure of his generation. At other times, he is more sympathetically portrayed as a man who will not compromise with a brutal and meretricious world. The focus of Fitzgerald's criticism shifts correspondingly. In the end, the reader is moved by Anthony and Gloria's pathos rather than by their tragedy, and the moral message of the novel is shortchanged by the frailty of its underlying sentiment.

The Creative Launcher

An International, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English

www.thecreativelaucher.com

Theme is most dramatically expressed through character, and Fitzgerald used the personal vision of the world. In his five novels and 160 stories, he portrayed a wide range of characters. Though he may be most closely identified with his debutantes, college boys, and ambitious young men seeking the fulfillments promised by wealth, social standing, and personal happiness, he also provided memorable portraits of the other kinds of people. Because they are drawn from his own experience, many of Fitzgerald's characters manifest recognizably Fitzgeraldian qualities. His men often combine ambition for early success with the desire for romantic love and the achievement of an ideal life. They often lack the hardness to fulfill their dreams. Certain of Fitzgerald's male characters are actually weak, but the majority of the men portrayed by Fitzgerald fail because the objects of their pursuit do not and cannot measure up to the men's conceptions of them. Because the quests of Fitzgerald's best male characters usually are played out in the real world, their objects, their dreams, are assailed by inevitable change and loss, so that youthful beauty fades; innocence hardens into cynicism; and aspiration fade when tested against harsh experience. "Can't repeat the past?" [Gatsby] cried incredulously. "Why of course you can!" (Fitzgerald, 1951, p. 116) Gatsby is wrong but his faith makes him unforgettable.

Women like Fitzgerald's female characters scarcely existed in American fiction before 1920. The best of his heroines are brave, determined, beautiful or attractive, intelligent (but not educated), and chaste. These young women, many of them still in their teens, also understand that their lives depend upon the marital choices they make. Fitzgerald clearly admired attractive, independent, unconventional women, but he also tended to treat his most fully developed women characters rather critically. Many of his complex female characters are incapable of sharing the lofty dreams and aspirations of the men who love them.

Fitzgerald was not a purely objective reporter or chronicler of the Jazz Age and the 1930s but instead brought a strong moral perspective to his work. His central characters undergo processes of self-assessment (Amory Blaine, for example), or they judge others (Nick Carraway), or they are judged by Fitzgerald himself, who constantly measured the behavior of characters against implicit standards of responsibility, honor, and courage.

One of this writer's main methods was his adaption of a standpoint that the critique Malcolm Cowley labeled Double Vision, the discernment of events both as an outsider and as an insider. One of the paramount and mainly recognizable embodiments of double vision in Fitzgerald's work is the narrator of *The Great Gatsby*, Nick Carraway, who both takes part in and explains the action of the novel. In the second chapter Nick describes himself as "an entangled" in as well as a "watcher" over the events and his position as both insider and outsider remains intact throughout the novel.

For many of young expatriate writers, the American Dream –the belief that aspiration could be fulfilled through imagination and hard work –seemed dead or at least terribly corrupted. They thus moved to Europe, which appeared to offer a freer, more stimulating, and

The Creative Launcher

An International, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English

www.thecreativelaucher.com

perhaps less hypocritical environment. Although Fitzgerald lived abroad for nearly six years and was one of the major American writers to emerge during 1920s, he did not share the disillusionment with or contempt for their country of certain expatriate Americans. Instead, he was unabashedly patriotic, believing that America remained the land of opportunity, of idealism, of great potentialities and possibilities. For Fitzgerald the American Dream was connected with the country's history, which he called in a note accompanying material for *The Love of the Last Tycoon* "the most beautiful history in the world." (Fitzgerald, 1978 p. 332)

In his novels and stories, Fitzgerald revealed not only the fulfillment of the American Dream but also the many ways it could be debased and distorted. His most evocative protagonists –among them Jay Gatsby and Dick Diver –share that quality of the idea and willingness of the heart defined by Fitzgerald as quintessentially American. Although they are frequently disappointed in their quests, it is not finally the dream that fails them but instead something else: some weakness or corruption in themselves or others. In *The Great Gatsby*, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams" (Fitzgerald, 1951, p. 6) that destroys him: his own purity about the differences between the new and old wealth, and the solidity and negligence of the Buchanans.

In *Tender is the Night* Dick Diver's pursuit of the American Dream of success and fulfillment is defeated by weakness in himself, and in his final unfinished novel, *The Love of the Last Tycoon*, Fitzgerald develops a protagonist who has achieved the American Dream of success and fulfillment and then makes explicit both the imaginative and historical validity of his twenty –year investigation of the American Dream. In 1940 Fitzgerald wrote in a letter to his daughter: "Life is essentially a cheat and its conditions are those of defeat. . . . the redeeming things are not 'happiness and pleasure' but the deeper satisfactions that come out of struggle." (Assadi, 2006, p. 54) This short sentence sums up Fitzgerald's point about the American Dream.

More than any other author of his era, with the probable exception of Theodore Dreiser, Fitzgerald was conscious about the influence of money on American life and character. As he wrote solemnly about money, ambition, and love, which were generally undividable in his work, he has been labeled a materialist by his critics. He has been considered as an uncritical venerator of the wealthy, a view disseminated by Ernest Hemingway at 1936. It will be of conspicuous importance to see what was in money that a resourceful man of Fitzgerald's personality and mentality was so earnestly after.

Fitzgerald wrote about the rich, but his understanding of the effects of money on character was complex. His works reflect his ambivalence of attitude: his attraction to and his distrust of the rich. For Fitzgerald, money was an important part of the American Dream because it provided not just luxuries but also opportunities unavailable to less affluent people. Money therefore had its obligation. As once Fitzgerald told Hemingway in his 16 July, 1936

The Creative Launcher

An International, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English

www.thecreativelaucher.com

letter of reply to *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*: "Riches have never fascinated me, unless combined with the greatest charm or distinction." (Fitzgerald, 1994, p.302) Wealthy people who wasted or perverted the opportunities that their money gave them were objects of Fitzgerald's disappointment or disapproval. In *The Beautiful and Damned* Anthony Patch's expectations of an inheritance cause him to waste his talents and life. Fitzgerald clearly understood that money had the power to corrupt its possessors, just as it had the potential to increase their fulfillment.

Fitzgerald's reaction to money was wrought by his family's vague social status in St. Paul and by his contact to the sons and daughters of the wealthy at prep school and Princeton. In a March, 1938 letter to Anne Ober about Scottie Fitzgerald's forthcoming private –school graduation ceremony, Fitzgerald wrote "... we will watch all the other little girls get diamond bracelets and Cord roadsters. I am going to costumers in New York and buy Scotty some phony jewelry so she can pretend they are graduation presents. Otherwise, she will have to suffer the shame of being a poor girl in a rich girl's school that was always my experience –a poor boy in a rich town; a poor boy in a rich boy's school; a poor boy in a rich man's club at Princeton. So I guess she can stand it. However, I have never been able to forgive the rich for being rich, and it has colored my entire life and work." (Fitzgerald, 1972, p. 357)

Fitzgerald's sense of being excluded from the freedom and opportunities provided by money had been further intensified by his inability to marry Zelda right away because of his failures in New York following his army discharge. Because Fitzgerald's response to wealth was complex, mixing resentment and strong attraction, his fictional treatment of his material is both profound and extensive. Beside, Fitzgerald with his great sense of pattern was trying to find a way through which he could impose order on the chaotic world he was living in. Therefore, he might have assumed in the safe and proud world of the rich above the hot struggles of the poor he could get what he had always been seeking.

Fitzgerald employed a financial metaphor, Emotional Bankruptcy, to label a theme that pervades his work. He believed that people have a fixed amount of emotional capital and that when his capital is depleted by reckless expenditure, it cannot be replaced. Fitzgerald developed this idea from his own struggles with money, personal relationship, and internal and external impediments to his work. During the 1930s he confided in his notebooks, "I have asked a lot of my emotions –one hundred and twenty stories, the price was high, right up with Kipling, because there was one little drop of something not blood, not a tear, not my seed, but me more intimately than these, in every story, it was the extra I had. Now it is gone and I am just like you now." (Fitzgerald, 1993, p.92)

In *The Crack –Up* he described his sense of Emotional Bankruptcy through financial metaphors, declaring that "like a man over –drawing at his bank, he felt a vast irresponsibility toward every obligation, a deflation of all my values" (Fitzgerald, 1993, pp.77-78) In his statement he suggested that both he and his countrymen, engaged in quests for the

The Creative Launcher

An International, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English

www.thecreativelaucher.com

quintessential American Dream of success, wealth, and happiness, must almost inevitably exhaust their energies and resources.

Most significantly, Dick Diver, having given too much to too many people, fades from once –brilliant psychiatrist to failed small –town doctor in *Tender is the Night*. The final sentences of the novel is a much –admired example of Fitzgerald's perfectly controlled tone and rhythm as he conveys Diver's Emotional Bankruptcy and obscurity: "perhaps, so she [Nicole Diver] liked to think, his career was biding its time, again like Grant's in Galena; his latest note was post- marked from Hornell, New York, which is some distance from Geneva and a very small town; in any case he is almost certainly in that section of the country, in one town or another." (Fitzgerald, 1996, p. 321)

Critical Analysis of the Beautiful and Damned:

Zelda's direct character portrayal in *the Beautiful and Damned*, as the distracted socialite wife, however, is treated with careful language and she is depicted as being influenced into Anthony's lifestyle. In initial discourse between the two, she asks, rhetorically: "you drink all the time, don't you?" To this, Anthony agrees, and presupposes everyone is the same, which Gloria oppose by saying she only drinks occasionally, and even then, only "two or three". They marry, and as they age, their superlative beauty fades and life descends in to an alcohol- fuelled melodrama. With this demise, Gloria becomes corrupted in to Anthony's alcoholism : she goes beyond her "limit Kofi four precisely timed cock tails" per evening, and is a key figure in the party that Anthony's grandfather in advertently witnesses, prompting his writing them out of his wealthy legacy.

In portraying Gloria this way, Fitzgerald's appears to absolve his wife of responsibility for what would, ultimately, contribute to their ominous fates. Author and essayist, Geoff Dyer (2004), says that the tragedy of *the Beautiful and Damned* shows the distinct awareness of the consequences of pouring "into them selves... a delicate poison". He goes on to say that "an ominous note is struck when for a wedding present [a friend] gives them an " elaborate drinking set" and says that this is symbolic of their nuptials. Fitzgerald's fixation with "beauty gone foul and revelry remembered in disgust". For me, Dyer's keen and eloquent insights cut straight to the heart of the novel, and his examples exemplify the key turning points to the couple's damnation. Moreover, I think this self –indicting sentiment is particularly evident a midst a party, in the "Broken Lute Chapter. Fitzgerald describes the couple's hedonistic party as "one of those incidents in which life seems of upon the passionate imitation of the lowest forms of literature". It is ironic, however, that literature is imitating what Fitzgerald seems to feel is the lowest form of life.

Fitzgerald's, self admitted, shallow short stories paid for his lifestyle, but contributed to extended periods of producing little work of merit (Shepard, 2005, p. 72). Until constructing the often-touted perfect American novel, the progression of his skills as a writer clearly shape and progress. *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned* show that, early on,

The Creative Launcher

An International, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English

www.thecreativelaucher.com

Fitzgerald was exemplarily skilled in eliciting senses of atmosphere and social dynamic: depicting contemporary social imagery with an expansive command of English, in which he found its most romantic tones. However, the structural flimsiness and unclear storylines in the "quest novels", as Fitzgerald called them, show his growing development as a complete writer (Fitzgerald, quoted in *Rowland Book Collections Editors*, 2010).

In his first two novels, Fitzgerald experiments with interspersing play lets, to break up the standard prose format, which work with a mixture of success. When brought into the *Beautiful and Damned*, Fitzgerald inserts a first person extra... digenetic narrative into the script's directions, which leads the reader's imagination around the dialogue –heavy scene.

The "egotist" character, it could easily be argued for a number of reasons that Fitzgerald's sense of lost faith and isolation are written into the character of Jay Gatsby. Shepard (2005, p. 65) thinks that, " gives his track record for recycling experiences in his fiction ... it is highly likely that he included some of his hurt... in the book". The legitimacy of this claim can be backed up by the fact that Gatsby discards his family to create a new ego; he has a half finished educational record and represents newly acquired money; he feels his life is set on a "rock of the world [that] was founded securely on a fairy's wing"; and, importantly, has a sense of yearning and sense of loss towards a person with whom he had an intense bond.

In this newly distanced style of prose, Fitzgerald juxtaposes a personal sentiment with the significance and moral credentials of acquiring the American Ideology. The "green light", which shines so emotively for Gatsby as a fixation point for Daisy, also, symbolically, reflects on the new breed of middle and upper class America. Tom is unaware of the importance and beauty within his possession, because he is complacent, as is his class's established wealth and political dominance. His caste in life, educationally, financially and politically, is sociologically representative of the institution a lazed upper classes in America, still tainted by blockheaded views towards women, politics, science and race. Gatsby is the converse of the same echelon of wealth; he epitomizes newly earned wealth, a well as its illicit connotations. I think Fitzgerald suggests, by Gatsby's attitudes towards Daisy, that possessors of new money possess a twist to social convention and offer liberal and modernist attributes.

When, in *the Beautiful and Damned*, Anthony and Dick respond to Mrs. Gilbert's suggestion that she was " way too old to flirt with", they are described as laughing "one bar in three four time". This musical terminology emboldens the rhythmic pattern of laughter and reveals subtle nuances in their reaction. One bar of three four would be a brief, metronomic, synchronized, three –beat chuckle, which, to me, conveys a sense of awkward, forced laughter, used to alleviate tense discourse. Furthermore, in a later chapter entitled "Gloria", Fitzgerald describes the petty quarrels of Anthony and Gloria as a "lugubrious fugue", exquisitely capturing the desperation

The Creative Launcher

An International, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English

www.thecreativelaucher.com

of recurring problems in their marriage, juxtaposing senses elicited from music into a real – world context.

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 111, 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 area 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 his train ride his hunger overcomes his revulsion for Army fare, and he finds it "surprisingly 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, Baptist, "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 Caldon" in the rifle pit to "an uncomprehending pole"

The Creative Launcher

An International, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English

www.thecreativelaucher.com

(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 ré-énforce 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 appear[v] 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.39). 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 mouthpiece for his own ideas. 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* deals with racial minorities, especially Jews. One scene in "May Day" depicts a Jewish street- corner orator being beaten by a mob of soldiers' brutality, the picture of the Jew does not engage our sympathy. He speaks poorly ("look arounja, look arounja!"), and the method of description of his beating is extremely detached:

At this point the little Jew's oration was interrupted by the hostile impact of a fist Upon point of his bearded chin, and he Toppled backward to a sprawl on the pavement. It is difficult to detect any anger seething beneath the surface of this narration; rather the tone

The Creative Launcher

An International, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English

www.thecreativelaucher.com

seems an almost blasé 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 ranting 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 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)

Conclusion

F. Scott Fitzgerald second novel, *the Beautiful and Damned* explores many of the same themes and subjects that would animate his later work, including *Tender is the Night* and *The Great Gatsby*. This novel deals with the mysteries and complexities of marriage, taking as its focus the relationship of heir and bon vivant Anthony Patch and his wife Gloria, a couple that critics believe reflect many autobiographical elements of the flamboyant flapper Zelda. 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*.

References

- Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Beautiful and Damned*. Scribner's. 1922.
 Drabble, Margrett. ed. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. OUP. 1985

The Creative Launcher

An International, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English

www.thecreativelaucher.com

Bishop, John Peale. *An Analysis of the Contextual Influences of F. Scott Fitzgerald's Work*. Penguin Books 2011.

Shepard, *This Side of Paradise and The Beautiful and Damned* (2005) Free ebook from [http:// many books. Net/](http://manybooks.net/) The Beautiful and Damned.

[http:// www. Gutenberg, net.](http://www.gutenberg.net)

Anne, R.G. *Color in Fitzgerald's Novel*. Bruccoli and Clark. D.C.: NCR Microcard Editions. 1971.

Fitzgerald, F.S. *Afternoon of an Author*. Edited by Arthur Mizener. New York: Scribners. 1958.

Fitzgerald, F.S. *Quoted in F. Scott Fitzgerald. The Critical Reception*. Edited by Bryer. Burt Franklin. 1978.

[www. Ccsenet.org/ells](http://www.ccsenet.org/ells) English Language and Literature Studies Vol.5, No 2; 2015

Prigozy, R. *The Cambridge companion to F. Scott Fitzgerald*. Cambridge University Press. 2002.

Fitzgerald, F.S. *Tender is the Night*. Text established by Bruccoli. London: Everyman. 1996.