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Historicity in Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned*

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Birendra Prakash Oli has completed his thesis entitled “Historicity in Fitzgerald’s *The Beautiful and Damned*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2066/05/02 B.S. to 2067/01/26 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voice.

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “Historicity in Fitzgerald’s *The Beautiful and Damned*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Birendra Prakash Oli has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This thesis on Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* tries to shed a light on the characteristics of jazz Age in America which was a time of drunkenness, parties, flappers, and other sordid and decadent facets explored, enjoyed, or reviled. Fitzgerald takes these things and his own experiences using them as fictional gems, thus blurring the line between history and fiction. In addition, Fitzgerald shows his concern over the fate of the younger generation of the Twenties in America through his criticism. He warns the younger generation against the danger of their hedonistic life through Patch Anthony's damnation in the novel because he presents the characters who disregard the values of hard work, investment, and self-restraint. On the contrary, they actualize their new acquired freedom in parties, in drinking bootleg liquor, in their dancing mania, accompanied by the new rhythm of jazz music symbolizing their freedom. Thus, this study examines that these things are historicized in this novel.

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I. F. Scott Fitzgerald as a Representative Writer of Jazz Age

This research work studies Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* from the new historical perspective as it blurs the line between history and fiction by intermingling historical realities with fictional elements. Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* reflects the real picture of the Jazz Age in America during the early twentieth century, when there was a tendency to embrace technological development. Moreover, this is also known as Great Depression period when people fled away from America to escape the hardships. Fitzgerald places fictional characters – the couple Anthony Patch and Gloria Gilbert in the real time of the period. The couple drifts into a lifestyle far beyond their means, which leads them to crisis. This novel represents the time of Great Depression in America through the fictional characters' self-indulgence. So, how Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* becomes a historical document is a researchable issue.

Anthony, the only heir of his wealthy grandfather, Adam Patch, is a young Harvard University graduate who lives on money left by his father and disdains work because he believes nothing is equal to his supposed abilities. He marries the beautiful Gloria Gilbert, and they sink into a pointless and destructive life, squandering their income in an endless round of parties and extravagant expenses. This shows the contemporary materialistic way of life in America. When Grandfather, an inflexible and intolerant reformer, makes a surprising entry into a party, he writes Anthony out of his will. Following his death, the Patches must sue to claim the inheritance which lured them into destruction. At novel's end, though they triumph, the cost has been too high as Gloria's beauty has been coarsened, and Anthony's mind has exhausted by worry and drink. And this shows the contemporary state of alienation and frustration.

Anthony and Gloria are selfish, self-indulgent characters who begin the novel with some perverse appeal but quickly deteriorate under the influence of greed, excess, and alcohol. As they move through their pointless round of pleasures, they demand wilder and stronger stimulation, but this only contributes to their downward path. A strong sense of morality runs through all Fitzgerald's works, and in *The Beautiful and Damned* it is related to the modern theme and style. So, this novel historicizes the situation of the twentieth century America.

Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1896. His father, Edward, was from Maryland, with an allegiance to the Old South and its values. Fitzgerald's mother, Mary (Mollie) McQuillan, was the daughter of an Irish immigrant who became wealthy as a wholesale grocer in St. Paul. Both were Catholics. In 1908, when Francis was twelve, the family returned to St. Paul and lived comfortably on Mollie Fitzgerald's inheritance. Fitzgerald attended the St. Paul Academy; his first writing to appear in print was a detective story in the school newspaper when he was thirteen.

During 1911-1913 he attended the Newman School, a Catholic school in New Jersey, where he met Father Sigourney Fay, who encouraged his ambitions for personal distinction and achievement. As a member of the Princeton Class of 1917, Fitzgerald neglected his studies for his literary apprenticeship. He wrote the scripts and lyrics for the Princeton Triangle Club musicals and was a contributor to the *Princeton Tiger* humor magazine and the *Nassau Literary Magazine*. On academic probation and unlikely to graduate, Fitzgerald joined the army in 1917 and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the infantry. Convinced that he would die in the war, he rapidly wrote a novel *The Romantic Egotist*.

In June 1918 Fitzgerald was assigned to Camp Sheridan, near Montgomery, Alabama. There he fell in love with a celebrated belle, eighteen-year-old Zelda Sayre,

the youngest daughter of an Alabama Supreme Court judge. The war ended just before he was to be sent overseas; after his discharge in 1919 he went to New York City to seek his fortune in order to marry. Unwilling to wait while Fitzgerald succeeded in the advertisement business and unwilling to live on his small salary, Zelda broke their engagement.

In the fall-winter of 1920 Fitzgerald commenced his career as a writer of stories for the mass-circulation magazines. Working through agent Harold Ober, Fitzgerald interrupted work on his novels to write moneymaking popular fiction for the rest of his life. *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920) and *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922) are collections of the best of his short stories about the early twenties. In these collections, "The Saturday Evening Post" became Fitzgerald's best story, and he was regarded as a "Post writer." His early commercial stories about young love introduced a fresh character: the independent, determined young American woman who appeared in "The Offshore Pirate" and "Bernice Bobs Her Hair." Fitzgerald's more ambitious stories, such as "May Day" and "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz," were published at the time.

Scott Fitzgerald is an American writer of the "Lost Generation" as his best works form a kind of spiritual history of this generation (High143). He is viewed as the spokesman for the Jazz Age, America's decade of prosperity, excess, and abandon, which began soon after the end of World War I and concluded with the 1929 stock market crash. As such, in his novels and stories, Fitzgerald examined an entire generation's search for the elusive American dream of wealth and happiness. His fictional work spanned the years between World Wars I and II. The pervasive themes of Fitzgerald include moral corruption, profligate behavior, agnosticism, selfishness, narcissism, egocentrism, and of course, a sick obsession with money and alcohol.

These themes permeate all too well throughout the beautifully written *The Beautiful and Damned* and *This Side of Paradise*. Fitzgerald's first novel, *This Side of Paradise* (1920) describes this new generation. This novel made the young Fitzgerald famous almost overnight because by now people had grown up to find all gods dead, all wars fought, and all faiths in man shaken. After a couple of years while he was in Westport, Connecticut with his wife for summer vacation, he wrote his second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922). When Zelda became pregnant they took their first trip to Europe in 1921 and then settled in St. Paul for the birth of their only child Frances Scott (Scottie) Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald expected to become affluent from his play, *The Vegetable*, in the fall of 1922 they moved to Great Neck, Long Island, in order to be near Broadway. The political satire – subtitled “From President to Postman” – failed at its tryout in November 1923, and Fitzgerald wrote his way out of debt with short stories. The distractions of Great Neck and New York prevented Fitzgerald from making progress on his third novel. During this time his drinking increased. Fitzgerald was an alcoholic, but he wrote sober.

His reputation as a drinker inspired the myth that he was an irresponsible writer; yet he was a painstaking reviser whose fiction went through layers of drafts. Fitzgerald's clear, lyrical, colorful, witty style evoked the emotions associated with time and place. When critics objected to Fitzgerald's concern with love and success, his response was: “But, my God! it was my material, and it was all I had to deal with” (12). The chief theme of Fitzgerald's work is aspiration – the idealism he regarded as defining American character. Another major theme was mutability or loss. As a social historian Fitzgerald became identified with The Jazz Age. It was an age of miracles, art, excess and satire.

The Fitzgeralds went to France in the spring of 1924 seeking tranquility for his work. He wrote *The Great Gatsby* (1925) during the summer and fall in Valescure near St. Raphael. The Fitzgeralds spent the winter of 1924-1925 in Rome, where he revised *The Great Gatsby*; they were en route to Paris when the novel was published in April. This novel is considered by many critics to be one of the great twentieth-century novels. Through the eyes of Nick Carraway, the narrator, we see both the glamour and the moral ugliness of the twenties. Nick's neighbour is Gatsby, a rich and successful man – possibly a criminal. But Gatsby has spent his whole life dreaming of his childhood sweetheart. He gives large expensive parties at his home.

The novel combines symbolism with psychological realism. The descriptions of the house, the parties, the music and the guests give them a “symbolic glow”. They seem to be part of an unreal world. *The Great Gatsby* marked a striking advance in Fitzgerald's technique, utilizing a complex structure and a controlled narrative point of view. Fitzgerald's achievement received critical praise, but sales of *Gatsby* were disappointing, though the stage and movie rights brought additional income.

The Fitzgeralds returned to America to escape the distractions of France. After a short, unsuccessful stint of screen writing in Hollywood, Fitzgerald rented “Ellerslie,” a mansion near Wilmington, Delaware, in the spring of 1927. The family remained at “Ellerslie” for two years interrupted by a visit to Paris in the summer of 1928, but Fitzgerald was still unable to make significant progress on his novel. At this time Zelda commenced ballet training, intending to become a professional dancer.

Another commercial disappointment, *Tender Is the Night* (1934) reflected the disillusionment and strain caused by the Great Depression and Zelda's gradual deterioration from schizophrenia and eventual breakdown. These events scarred Fitzgerald, contributing to a deep, self-reproaching despair that brought his career to a

near standstill during the mid-1930s. Fitzgerald described his tribulations in detail in the three confessional “Crack-Up” Essays of 1936, which brilliantly evoke his pain and suffering. Trying to start anew, he became a motion picture scriptwriter and began *The Last Tycoon* (1941), a novel based on his Hollywood experiences, which remained unfinished when Fitzgerald died in late 1940.

Fitzgerald went to Hollywood alone and earned a great deal of money during the late Depression years; although Fitzgerald paid off most of his debts, he was unable to save. His trips east to visit Zelda were disastrous. In California Fitzgerald fell in love with movie columnist Sheilah Graham. Their relationship endured despite his benders. After MGM dropped his option at the end of 1938, Fitzgerald worked as a freelance script writer and wrote short-short stories for *Esquire*. He began his Hollywood novel, *The Love of the Last Tycoon*, in 1939 and had written more than half of a working draft when he died of a heart attack in Graham’s apartment on December 21, 1940. Zelda Fitzgerald perished in a fire in Highland Hospital in 1948.

F. Scott Fitzgerald died believing himself a failure. The obituaries were condescending, and he seemed destined for literary obscurity. The first phase of the Fitzgerald resurrection – “revival” does not properly describe the process – occurred between 1945 and 1950. By 1960 he had achieved a secure place among America's enduring writers: *The Great Gatsby*, a work that seriously examines the theme of aspiration in an American setting, defines the classic American novel.

A master of the short story and the novel of manners, Fitzgerald is recognized by the public and literary critics alike as one of the most important writer of his time. Fitzgerald had a prophetic vision because from the very beginning he had a feeling that the twenties would end badly, both for himself and for America. He noted, “All the stories that came into my head had a touch of disaster in them” (qtd. in High 143).

His second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922), was a pivotal book in his career. It is a novel which reflected the Jazz Age, so it is very much a novel of its times. In this regard Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury view that the very title of the novel suggests “the touch of disaster” that Fitzgerald would find in all the works he narrated (275). Fitzgerald is known for his depictions of the Jazz Age (the 1920s). With the glamorous Zelda Sayre (1900-48), Fitzgerald lived a colorful life of parties and money-spending. At the beginning of one of his stories Fitzgerald wrote the rich “are different from you and me” (24). This privileged world he depicted in such novels as *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922) and *The Great Gatsby* (1925), which is widely considered Fitzgerald’s finest novel.

In *The Beautiful and Damned* Fitzgerald did not try to offer more of the same but struck out in a new direction which anticipated key aspects of his later fiction. This is longer than *This Side of Paradise*, but, despite some digressions, it is more focused and coherent. Its style moves towards that integration of romantic and modernist elements which will come to such dazzling fruition in Fitzgerald’s next novel, *The Great Gatsby* (1925). The theme of *The Beautiful and Damned*, like that of Fitzgerald’s fourth novel, *Tender is the Night* (1934), is the decline of a man and of a marriage: it traces Anthony Patch’s wooing and wedding of the beautiful Gloria Gilbert and his subsequent descent into alcoholism, poverty and breakdown. At the end of the novel, he is a rich man as a result of a large legacy that has come to him after years of legal wrangling, but he has done nothing with his life and seems mentally enfeebled. Marvin Mudrick views that Fitzgerald’s novels like *The Beautiful and Damned* “provoke nostalgic hyperventilations, and images of plummy pathos” (292).

Literary naturalism questioned hidebound religion and put great emphasis on heredity and environment. Reacting to recent scientific discoveries, Charles' Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and theories of biological determinism was popularized by French novelist Emile Zola and their influences can be found in the works of George Eliot and Thomas Hardy. In the United States, Frank Norris and Dreiser, among others, emphasized the animal nature of human beings and the struggle for survival in their lives. Though he does not view the novel totally as a naturalistic novel, Alan Margolies finds some resemblance as he says:

While every aspect of *The Beautiful and Damned* does not resemble naturalistic novels of the time, Fitzgerald's portrayal of the lower classes, his description of Anthony's relationship with Dorothy Raycroft, and Anthony's later mental deterioration echo the writing of Norris and Dreiser. Both Gordon Sterrett of 'May Day' and Anthony Patch come from a background similar to that of Vandover in Norris's *The Vandover and the Brute* and each suffers a decline in fortune.

(xvii)

While comparing the novel with his next novel *This Side of Paradise*, Nicolas Tredell talks about the beauty and techniques of the novel as he writes:

Beauty, the novel suggests, will be incarnated in Gloria Gilbert. Despite such flourishes, however, the narrative techniques of *The Beautiful and Damned* are more sparing than those of *This Side of Paradise*. It relies largely on an omniscient narrator who focuses primarily on Anthony and secondarily on Gloria and who sometimes enters the minds of other characters. There is, however, a short but significant first-person narrative. (6)

Scott Fitzgerald's fictions generally confine themselves to claiming either that Hollywood's demands and seductions interfered with Fitzgerald's already strained efforts to write "serious" fiction or that Hollywood studios have mostly botched their adaptations of his work. However, *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922) shows that the relationship between film and Fitzgerald's fiction is more complicated and more important than generally acknowledged both for his work and, more broadly, for fiction written during the cultural ascendancy of Hollywood film. Jonathan Enfield writes:

Although in recent decades scholars have generally seen *The Beautiful and Damned* as a tonally incoherent, failed novel and therefore have given it relatively little attention, I would argue that its very tonal incoherence actually makes it worth studying. Once one understands film's previously unacknowledged but crucial role in provoking and conditioning that incoherence, one can recognize the unappreciated extent to which Hollywood film shaped Fitzgerald's "serious" fiction beginning quite early in his career. Indeed, as a hyper-precise. (672)

Although these above-mentioned critics have analyzed the novel from various perspectives, they have not yet bothered to study the novel from the new historical perspective. Hence, this researcher seeks to examine this. So, this research work tries to study Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* in order to analyze the historicity of the text. New Historicism provides insight to study the historicity of the text.

New Historicism is a theory applied to literature that suggests literature must be studied and interpreted within the context of both the history of the author and the history of the critic. The phrase was first coined by Stephen Greenblatt around 1980.

The theory arose in the 1980s, and with Greenblatt as its main proponent, became quite popular in the 1990s. Unlike previous historical criticism, which limited itself to simply demonstrating how a work was reflective of its time, New Historicism evaluates how the work is influenced by the time in which it was produced. It also examines the social condition in which the psychological background of the author, the books and theories that may have influenced the author, and any other factors which influenced the work of art. All works are biased.

The New Historicism, as the literary movement, has come as a reaction to literary formalism. Specifically, leaders of the movement describe themselves as unhappy with the exclusion of social and political circumstances – commonly known as the “context” – from the interpretation of literary works; they are impatient with the settled view that a poem is a self-contained object, a verbal icon, a logical core surrounded by a texture of irrelevance. Thus the New Historicism in literary study has emerged as a response not to literature but to literary studies. It has been called forth not by the subject matter under study – not by actual poems, novels, plays – but by the institutional situation in which young scholars now find themselves.

New Historicism focuses on the way literature expresses and sometimes disguises power relations at work in the social context in which the literature was produced, often this involves making connections between a literary work and other kinds of texts. Literature is often shown to “negotiate” conflicting power interests. New historicism has made its biggest mark on literary studies of the Renaissance and Romantic periods and has revised notions of literature as privileged, apolitical writing. Much of new historicism focuses on the marginalization of subjects such as those identified as the poor peasants, witches, the insane, heretics, vagabonds, and political prisoners.

The major characters in the novel are engaged in one kind of selfishness or the other. They seem bent on securing a good material life at any cost without regard to morality. They try to secure good material life by expecting a huge fortune from their grandfather and involve themselves in flashy parties. So, as these characters are engaged in creating fiction about themselves and their lives, they entertain only illusion, which causes depression in their lives. This is what Fitzgerald exposes in the novel.

This study has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outline of the work, a short introduction to Scott Fitzgerald and a short critical response. Moreover, it gives an overall general outline of the entire work. The second chapter tries to briefly explain the theoretical modality that is applied in this research work. It discusses new historicism in a greater detail.

On the basis of the theoretical framework established in the second chapter, the third chapter analyzes the text at a considerable length. It analyzes how Fitzgerald exposes the evils of capitalistic society. It sorts out some extracts from the text as evidence to prove the hypothesis of the study – By intermingling historical realities with fictional elements, Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* blurs the line between history and fiction. And finally, the fourth chapter is the conclusion of the work.

II. Historicity of Text

New Historicism is a theory applied to literature that suggests literature must be studied and interpreted within the context of both the history of the author and the history of the critic. The phrase was first coined by Stephen Greenblatt around 1980. The theory arose in the 1980s, and with Greenblatt as its main proponent, became quite popular in the 1990s. Unlike previous historical criticism, which limited itself to simply demonstrating how a work was reflective of its time, New Historicism evaluates how the work is influenced by the time in which it was produced. It also examines the social condition in which the author moved the psychological background of the author, the books and theories that may have influenced the author, and any other factors which influenced the work of art. All work is biased.

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The movement has gained rapid acceptance in English departments. It already has its classical texts, for instance, Stephen Greenblatt’s *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, and Louis Adrian Montrose’s uncollected essays on Shakespeare, especially the one entitled “Shaping Fantasies”. It has its own

journals published by the University of California Press. Its special methods of interpretation are practiced by a large number of critics in England and America. Jonathan Dollimore, Jane Tompkins, Don E. Wayne, Walter Benn Michaels, Catherine Gallagher, Arthur F. Marotti, Jean E. Howard, Stephen Orgel, Annabel Patterson, and Peter Stallybrass are some among others. It has set off an enthusiasm of historical research. Younger critics have begun to comb through parliamentary reports, religious tracts, labor statistics, and dusty stacks of ephemera published by contemporaries of the great English and American writers. Slightly older critics have begun, as it were, to retool themselves – to “rehistoricize” their scholarship for the new market conditions.

Fredric Jameson’s style of neo-Marxist historicism as practiced in *The Political Unconscious* (1981) has been described as “new,” but Jameson locates the grounds of his argument not in historical research but in recent theory; he is “historicist” only in respecting the past as past while seeking to make it serve the present. The winds of doctrine in university English departments in the last quarter of this century have not been favorable to anyone who suggested the possibility of transcendence.

Within the ranks of the New Historicism, literature is considered to be one of the social forces that contribute to the making of individuals; it acts as a form of social control. Although most New Historicists are scrupulous to distinguish themselves from Marxist critics, the fact remains that the central task of the New Historicism is the same as that of Marxist criticism: first to call into question the traditional view of literature as an autonomous realm of discourse with its own problems, forms, principles, activities, and then to dissolve the literary text into the social and political context from which it

issued. In fact, the New Historicism tries explicitly to solve the theoretical difficulty in Marxist criticism of relating the cultural superstructure to the material base. Its claim to newness might be put in terms of its claim to having solved that problem.

New Historicists and their critics acknowledge the importance of literary text but they also analyze the text with an eye to history. Literature and history are inseparable. In this respect, New Historicism is not totally new because majority of critics between the 1950s focused on the work's historical content and based their interpretations on the interplay between the text and historical contexts. The historical criticism of 1980s was not the same. In this connection, Abrams writes:

In place of dealing with a text in isolation from its historical context, new historicists attend primarily to the historical and culture interpretations and evolutions. This is not to an ear lies king of literary scholarship for the views and practices of the historicists differ markedly from those of former and intellectual history as a “background” to account for the characteristics subject matter of literature at a particular time and place. (182-834)

New historicists differ from older historicists. The old historicists based their historical research on experience and were confident to excavate and define the events of the past, whereas New Historicism accepted history only as a cotemporary activity of narrating or representing the past. It has the conception of ‘histories’ an ongoing series of human construction. It is difficult to understand the text without some sense of time and place in which it is

composed, and it is difficult to understand the context without trying to understand historical development. Because historical criticism considers how military, social, cultural economic, scientific, intellectual, literary and every other kind of history might help us to understand the text, author as well as the literary environment. New historicism views history as a social science and the social sciences are being treated as properly historical phenomenon distinct from the history that is relevant to it because literature is part of history and cannot be separated from it without loss. New historicists regard text in materialist terms, as object and event in the world. Again Abrams emphasizes:

History is not a homogeneous and stable pattern of facts and events which can be used as the “background” to explain the literature of an era or which literature can be said simply to reflect or which can be adverted to (as in an earlier Marxist Criticism) as the “material” conditions that, in a simple and unilateral way, particularities of a literary text. In contrast to such views, a literary by new historicists to be “embedded” in its context, as and interactive component within the network of institutions. Beliefs, and cultural power relations, practices and products that in their ensemble constitute what we call history.

(184)

New Historicists, like old historicist, are interested to establish the relationship between literature and history. Moreover, they focus on examination how literary text reflects, shapes and represents history. Literature, according to New Historicists, does not “reflect history as a mirror.” Literature, therefore, does not behave passively towards history. It

rather “shapes and constitutes historical change. Literary texts can have effect on history on the social and political ideas and beliefs of their time”

(Brannigan 170). This is to say that literature and history are inseparable.

Literature is a constructive part of history in the making of history itself.

Despite their differences, different literary critics and schools of criticism assumed that the categories of literature and history are intrinsically separate. They viewed one of the two poles history or literature as superior to the other. New Historicism emerged as a reaction against such assumptions. So the object of study of New Historicists is “not the text and its context, not literature and its history, but rather literature in history” (Brannigan 170). Louis Montrose, a prominent New Historicist critic, views literature and history as fully interdependent. He argues that the key concern of New Historicist critic is “the historicity of texts,” he means that all texts are imbedded in specific historical, social and material context. Literary texts too are the material products of the specific historical conditions. Literary texts, therefore, must be treated along with its historical context. Likewise, by “the textuality of histories,” he means that, “access to a full authentic past” is never possible (Montrose 410). This is to say that all our knowledge and understanding of past exist only in the realm of narratives. Literary texts too have vital role in mediating history. Literary texts, in this sense, work as a vehicle for representation of history. It reveals the processes and tensions by which historical change comes about.

The New Historicism, according to Peter Barry, is influenced by Derrida’s view that “history is nothing outside the text, in the special sense that everything about the past is available to us in textualised form [. . .]”

(175). This is to say that every facet of reality is textualised. New Historicists, therefore, are interested in history as represented and recorded in written documents. In other words, history-as-text is the key concern of New Historicists. “History,” for the New Historicists, writes John Braining “is only that which is written”. He further writes that new historicists are interested in “the manner in which it is recorded, whether by this is by means of a Shakespearean drama or a merchants’ diary [. . .]” (158). This is to view history as dependent upon a number of texts including literature so they read historical context as anthropological narratives and literary text. Since the events and attitude of the past exists solely as writing, new historicist pay equal attention to all the written documents. They make parallel reading of literary and non-literary text, usually at the same literary period. Stephen Greenblatt, the guiding force of new historicism, says that new historicists are involved in “an intensified willingness to read all of the textual traces of the past with the attention traditionally conferred only on literary text” (qtd. in Hawthorn 197). This is to say that they see literary text and the historical document as expressions of the same historical movement. In this sense they give equal weight to literary and non-literary texts.

For the new historicists, the production of literary text is a cultural practice. We cannot make an absolute distinction between literary text and other cultural practices. According to Greenblatt, art “does not simply exist in all culture, it made up along with other products, practice discourse of a given culture” (504). Greenblatt, thus, states that all types of art, including literature, are embedded within the social and economic circumstances in which they are produced and consumed. But these circumstances are not stable in themselves.

So, literary texts are considered as part of a larger circulation of social energies. In the words of Greenblatt, there can be “no art without social energy” (503). Literary works for them are products of a particular culture and at the same time they influence that culture. Culture, for the new historicists is:

A hermetic system of science, complete in itself and that any notion of reality to history was an effect of this system and determined by representation. Representation whether called literary cultural or textual are the agencies of power. (Brannigan 172)

Written texts, therefore, are the products of social, cultural and political forces. So, texts reflect and engage with the prevailing values and the ideologies of their own time. The texts form a discourse which regularly shapes and determines the views, values and action of the society and culture in which it is fostered. In this sense, all forms of power and control, for new historicists, operate through the medium of textual representation. Louis Montrose, in his study of Elizabethan drama, focuses on how Elizabethan culture involves bringing oppositions and otherness into visibility so as to reinforce the norms of the dominant Elizabethan power. This type of cultural structure is dispersed across a whole range of texts, from literature to travel writing. Montrose, thus, sees the impossibility of subverting the dominant culture when he says that “a text creates the culture by which it is created, shapes the fantasies by which it is shaped, begets that it is begotten” (qtd. in Brannigan 169). Montrose emphasizes that literary texts act out concerns of ruling class by reproducing and renewing the power discourses which sustain the system. Furthermore,

literary texts police those dominant ideas of a particular time by representing alternatives or deviations as threatening.

The new historicists tend to examine widely different texts in order to show that those texts play a key role in mediating power relations within the state. Literature, along with other written sources raises the possibilities of subversion against the state only to contain, and make safe that subversion. According to Greenblatt each play of Shakespeare thought its representation of means “carries charges of social energy onto the stage; in its term revises that energy and returns it to the audience” (505). Greenblatt views that text of all kinds offer us glimpses of subversion, but only in order to contain subversive elements effectively. So, all texts are discourses which are involved in power relations. These representations are, therefore, used “to produce subversion only in order to contain that subversion” (Brannigan 172). This shows the texts have the subversive nature. These representations, according to new historicists, serve to ratify the existing social order. Literature, therefore, plays a part in constructing a society.

Literary texts circulate with other text in a particular period to construct and save the power relations of society. Literature participates in forming the dominant ideological assumptions of particular time. Literature, in this sense, has a deep relationship with the mission of colonialism, gender operations, slavery, criminality or insanity. This kind of view of literature challenges the humanist idea that literature could teach human beings valuable lesson in moral and civic behaviour. Literature was not a benevolent teacher; it was rather a loyal watch-dog. Patrolling the fences of a conservative social order, new historicist critics have examined the ways in which Shakespeare’s plays

performed vital roles in support of state and church ideologies. Since his work was involved in the business of power and state ideology, new historicist has tried to politicize Shakespeare. Greenblatt thus sees the literary works as construed by differing social discourses. Shakespeare, through these plays, helped to maintain the stability and power of the state. Shakespeare, in this sense, was the guardian of state rather than the teacher of morals.

New historicists argue that any knowledge of the past is necessarily mediated by the text. To put it differently, history is in many respects textual. This view of history means to suggest that there can be “no knowledge of the past without interpretation; just as literary text needs to be read, so do the facts of history” (Bennett and Royle 133). In this sense, knowledge comes through interpretation, and this interpretation is subjective. The new historicist contained that history is only knowable in the sense that literature is thought to be interpretation, argument and speculation. It follows then both literature and history must be viewed subjectively. The traditional historicist posited one or another master narrative. New historicism, according to Don E. Wayne, “is the apparent absence of such a narrative” (794). The old historicist saw unity, homogeneity and totality in history. The new historicist on the contrary, found contradiction, heterogeneity and fragmentation in the history. There is no single history; rather multiplicity of histories. New historicist claimed that there is no single Elizabethan world-view.

According to new historicist, “the idea of uniform and harmonious culture is a myth imposed on history and propagated by ruling classes in their own interest” (Seldon 105). So, the New Historicists focus not in history but in histories. New historicism, thus, is characterized by as Louis Montrose says, “a

shift from history to histories” (411). This is to say that history is not a homogeneous and stable pattern of facts and events. New historicists assert that historians, like the authors of literary texts, possess a subjective view. They too are informed by the circumstances and discourses specific to their era. So they can no longer claim that their study of the past is detached and objective. According to new historicists, we cannot transcend our own historical situation; we are shaped by conditions and ideological formations of our own era. Greenblatt says that in all of this text and documents he never found a free and pure subjectivity. For Greenblatt, “the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society” (qtd. in Selden 170). So, the focus is on the free subject.

Hence, human being can never “escape history even if this history is regarded as multiple and in a process or unceasing transformation” (Bennett and Royal 144). We, therefore, cannot avoid the history is made manifest in our subjective force and actions, in our beliefs and desires (Montrose 394). Our knowledge and understanding is part of history. So our “own voice,” claims Stephen Greenblatt, is the “voice of the dead”. The voices of the dead are “heard in the voices of living” through the “textual traces” (Greenblatt 496). Hence, we can never have a disinterested and objective interpretation, evaluation or creation of text. The interpretation thus tends to be subjective.

History, for the new historicists is “less a determinate pattern of cause and effect than a random contingent of force, in which causes and effects were to constructed by the observer rather than taken as given” (Eagleton 197). History, in this regard, is an interpretation of fact using our subjectivity. Any

reading of history, for the new historicists, “depends upon the translatability of the past into the present” (Salkeld 60). The past is interpreted and made intelligible. But different people interpret the past in different ways. The translation is never a straight forward process. It remains relative to the conditions in which interpretations are made. Hence, there can be any versions of the same event of the past. New historicists, contends Terry Eagleton, treat the history as:

A form of narration conditioned by the narrator’s own prejudices and preoccupation, and so itself a kind of rhetoric of fiction.

There was no single determinable truth to any particular narrative or event, just conflict of interpretations whose outcome was finally determined by power rather than truth. (197)

History, therefore does not occupy a status of a set of fixed, objective facts. History can never avoid human fabrication. It is, like literature, a period of subjective mind. The narrator can be trans-historical figure. So his own historicity affects his narrative. The prejudices and preoccupation of the narrator get involved in any writing of history. History, in this sense, is a kind of fiction. There can be many interpretations of the same event, or many versions of history. The existing power structure determines which version is true and which one is false. History, thus, can never be written in pure form. It always gets molded with human fabrication. In this regard, there is no such a distinction as history and literature; or to put it in Eagleton’s words there is no “hard-and-fast opposition between fact and fiction” (197).

To sum up, alternatives offered by new historicism include a return to empirical scholarship, revivals of the critique of ideology, studies of how

material conditions determine writing and publication, research on gender, race, and class in the production of literature, and inquiries into the structural affinities of representational and social systems. At its best, new historicism reminds us of issues we have forgotten or repressed, expands the canon we study, and provides new methods for literary and cultural interpretation.

History has usually been male, European, and middle or upper class. In various ways these movements like new historicism and other post modern theories have insisted on reading the intersection of the literary and the aesthetic with the renewed historical and the political lens. Each in turn has been divided by its response to the poststructuralist revolt. The need to affirm the experience and identity of female, African-American, and non-European writers have, some argue, a priority over the philosophical deconstruction of identities and representations. The following chapter analyzes the text Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* in detail basing on the arguments discussed above.

III. Blurring the Line between History and Fiction

This research on Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* tries to see the American history in the form of fiction. This novel, in this sense, is an example of fiction as history and history as fiction. History and historical facts are presented in the novel through its narrative. The novel depicts the socio political agenda of the country through the fictional characterization. By fictionalizing the historical events, Fitzgerald suggests that history, once it takes the form of words, can be viewed as a fictional entity. Historical events are presented in the form of details that support fiction. This seeks to show the situation of American people caught in the grip of materialistic life. So, Fitzgerald recreates the history by fictionalizing the events, thus blurring the line between history and fiction.

Since the 1920s, America was characterized by broad and drastic change. A study of American literature of the decade demands careful consideration of the history of the times. This is especially needful; for the literature of a period often furnishes historians with data by which they make their evaluations of any given era. Literature as an index to an age is vividly seen in the works of F.Scott Fitzgerald. Spokesmen in many fields of endeavor, from fashion to sociology, have chosen Fitzgerald's fiction as a basis for scrutinizing American history of the third decade of the twentieth century. But to discover the degree which the history of the Jazz Age and the picture of life presented in Fitzgerald's writings requires further evidence.

The rapid social change taking place at that time has caused the emergence of a generation gap between the pre-war and post-war generations. The pre-war generation which is still strongly attached to the Victorian tradition and manner of living lives in a period of inhibitions. Hence, those of the pre-war period are basically moral in both their ideas and actions. On the contrary, the younger generation, spoiled

by the prosperity of the post-war period, seems to be quite loose in their manners and moral, when they are judged by standards retained from the earlier time. As a consequence, these two world views, reflecting fundamentally different visions of society and self, are moving into conflict in America of the 1920s.

Fitzgerald becomes mature exactly in that period of transition. This maturity seems to give him wisdom to evaluate what he continually observes in his life time and to give it something of a judgment. As a sensitive observer who himself is engrossed in the life of that period, Fitzgerald obviously has a thorough grasp of his observed material and feels compelled to convey as much of the meaning of experience as possible. Thus, in the midst of the prevailing confusion and uncertainty, Fitzgerald, the moralist, attempts to preach at the younger generation through this novel *The Beautiful and Damned*.

The purpose of this thesis is to furnish such evidence by examining and evaluating the accuracy with which Fitzgerald's work reflects his age, that is, the degree of the reality and illusion of history in his work. Consideration of the history of the time will be limited, first, primarily to the cultural history of the period, and, second, to those facets of the period which are dealt within the principal themes of Fitzgerald's fiction. Fitzgerald declares that the one duty of a sincere writer is to set down life as he sees it as gracefully as he knows how. If he successfully performs this task; we should readily accept the confirmation of the press obituaries that he was the historian of the Jazz Age.

The Jazz Age was a time of drunkenness, parties, flappers, and other sordid and decadent facets explored, enjoyed, or reviled. The time heralded in great works by literary giants, music that crossed race lines, and lives lived in ignorant bliss and happiness, unaware of the dark times later to come: "The Great Depression." It was

during those times of booze and inhibitions that authors like F. Scott Fitzgerald made their indelible mark upon the world, taking their own experiences and using them as fictional gems. The novel *The Beautiful and Damned* is clearly such an example, for it mirrors Fitzgerald's own life with his wife, Zelda. The pages tell a story of a young man, Anthony Patch, and his clueless but lovely wife, Gloria, and their dramatic decline into a muddied world filled with alcoholism, transparent friendships, and a constant desire for more in a materialistic manner. Patch is a man of leisure; he has no work skills nor has any drive to obtain any, for he places all of his faith on the will of his sick but internally strong grandfather Adam Patch, who lives in New York City amid a whirlwind of status, the privileged, and the socially acceptable intellectuals. His friends, Maury and Richard Caramel, are his rocks of stabilization but they too give in to the luxurious pleasures from time to time.

To show the historicity of the Jazz Age, Fitzgerald brings his own personal elements of his life. He dramatizes his time through the fictional characters who represent the Jazz Age. Before he began the novel, Fitzgerald told a friend in a letter that it "concerns the life of one Anthony Patch between his 25th and 33rd years (1913-1921). He is one of those many with the taste and weaknesses of an artist but with no actual creative inspiration. How he and his beautiful young wife are wrecked on the shoals of dissipation is told in the story" (qtd. in Parini iii). The young people of the privileged class during the Jazz Age were influenced by its effects. They used to enjoy night after night, danced till dawn, fueled by money, alcohol, and a taste for fun. Anthony Patch and his wife Gloria are the epitome of 1920s glamour. Attractive and wealthy, they have access to all of their era's opportunities for adventure. And yet, as the couple soon finds, while their lifestyle offers its share of carefree amusement, it yields just as much power to ruin them. Languishing in pampered boredom as they

await Anthony's much-anticipated inheritance, the couple finds no purpose for their life and turns to recklessness. This self-destructive behavior affects them, which reflects the sobering vision of the dark side of the Jazz Age. Patch begins a downward spiral from the outset, and his decline is closely linked with that of his wife, Gloria.

One of the first things that Fitzgerald does in his bid to blur the line between history and fiction in *The Beautiful and Damned* is that he blends real situation of the Jazz Age with fictional characters. He provides real date of that period to historicize the text. The very first chapter of the novel offers the readers the real year: "IN 1913, when Anthony Patch was twenty-five, two years were already gone since irony, the Holy Ghost of this later day, had, theoretically at least, descended upon him" (3). Then Fitzgerald mentions the month and the year under the title "Afternoon". He writes: "It was October in 1913, midway in a week of pleasant days, with the sunshine loitering in the cross-streets and the atmosphere so languid as to seem weighted with ghostly falling leaves" (16). Similarly, he uses the real places of America as setting such as New York and others. Not only that but Fitzgerald gives the days as well, like under the section "Dissatisfactin" in Book One as he writes: "On Thursday afternoon and Anthony had tea together in the grill room at the Plaza" (61). Thus, Fitzgerald frequently mixes real events with fictional elements.

The author's selection of the title itself reflects the damned era, that is, Jazz Age. Through this fictional work Fitzgerald seems not to resist the temptation to transcribe reality in his fiction, almost literally at times. The sad story of Anthony and Gloria Patch parallels the tales of Dick Caramel and Maury Noble, two highly promising friends of Anthony Patch from Harvard, both of whom follow the same pattern of excess and disintegration. Idealism, in each case, turns sour, and there intelligent young men soon find themselves, like the Patches, obsessed by

materialism. In this regard, *The Beautiful and Damned* occasionally reads like a cautionary tale for young capitalist.

Fitzgerald presents his characters as typical, and this novel can easily be read as an indictment of an era that this author is usually thought to celebrate. From the beginning, Fitzgerald was suspicious of his times, “the greatest, gaudiest spree” in history, which he rightly imagined would elicit “the death struggle of the old America” (123). By the “old America” he meant the hand-nosed, righteous practical world of Anthony Patch’s wealthy grandfather, whose stupendous fortune he hopes to inherit. Anthony, although he has enough for a comfortable existence, moves to New York to wait for his grandfather to die so that he can inherit several million dollars.

In the beginning, Patch seems an innocent, a dreamer who has lost touch with the real world through his privileged upbringing. He leads quite a luxurious life as even his bathroom is furnished with inexpensive paintings and library:

The bathtub, equipped with an ingenious bookholder, was low and large. Beside it a wall wardrobe bulged with sufficient linen for three men and with a generation of neckties. There was no skimpy glorified towel of a carpet—instead, a rich rug, like the one in his bedroom a miracle of softness, which seemed almost to massage the wet foot emerging from the tub. (11)

Fitzgerald describes Patch’s favourite place of fantasy in the bathroom of his beloved New York apartment. “It was his pride, this bathroom. He felt that if he had a love he would have hung her picture just facing the tub so that, lost in the soothing steamings of the hot water, he might lie and look up at her and muse warmly and sensuously on her beauty” (11). As a carefree bachelor, he enjoys this fantasy of sensual gratification. It seems appropriate, given his mentality, which he would decide to

write a book about the “history of Middle Ages – an era of gallant Knights in pursuit of idealized young maidens” (15). This reflects the attitude of the people of the Jazz Age.

After Anthony Patch meets Gloria Gilbert, the story develops. She is a fresh-faced thrilling incarnation of the flapper, one of those thoughtless, iconoclastic young women whom the Jazz Age worshipped. Gloria “took all the things of life for hers to choose from and apportion, as though she were continually picking out presents for herself from an inexhaustible counter” (62). She is also a girl of tremendous nervous tension and of the most highhanded selfishness. She is obsessed with getting a good tan, and drinks with abandon and drives recklessly.

The work ethic that her parents take for granted is, to her, ludicrous. She does not care if her friends work at all. She retorts: “I don’t see why they should; in fact it always astonishes me when anybody does anything” (66). This attitude does not, as it should, appall Anthony. Indeed, it works insidiously to cause his downfall, although the fault lies with him as well. He has never fully imagined an adult life for himself, and he never will.

It seems inevitable that Anthony Patch and Gloria Gilbert should be drawn to each other, thus mingling fantasies and idealizations. She likes him because he is “so clean [. . .] sort of a blowy clean, like I am” (131) and he likes her because she is just “beautiful” (69). It’s all very superficial, but the compacted power of their mutual fantasy is compelling for them. The problem is that marriage is not the easiest way for the narcissistic to find happiness. Gloria views that “marriage was created not to be a background but to need one. Mine is going to be outstanding. It can’t, shan’t be the setting – it’s going to be the performance, and the world shall be the scenery” (147).

The Beautiful and Damned is the evocation of place and time. The Jazz Age comes to life under Fitzgerald's quick pen. He calls up the crowded streets, the music, and the excitement of young peoplemaking their way in the world, the cocktail parties, the cars, the clothes – the pop and fizz of life itself – better than any other writer of the period. The parties that are given by the novel's principal characters “occur in a cottage in Connecticut like the ones the Fitzgeralds rented in Westport in May, 1920” (55). Thus, the novel explores the self-destructive extravagance of his time.

Crude reality keeps intruding upon the Patches, and they are forced to think briefly about earning a living. Anthony clings to the notion of writing his book about the Middle Ages and Gloria ponders becoming an actress. Meanwhile, they spend money like water. The hope of Anthony's massive inheritance from his grandfather Adam Patch becomes a fantasy that sustains them, a lure that pulls them forward into future. Without it, the marriage itself would be without foundation.

This dreamy couple remains willfully childless, wishing to remain childlike themselves, if not downright childless. Lethargy soon overwhelms them, with the expected consequences. Gloria “lulled Anthony's mind to sleep” (191). She realizes that Anthony has become “capable of utter indifference towards her, a temporary indifference, more than half lethargic” (276). This terrifies her as it should. She tries, unsuccessfully, to stir him into further fantasies, but nothing works. He is too far gone.

Only now and then do the Patches rise to their old level of fantasy, imagining a future that sounds like a childhood rapture:

That spring, that summer, they had speculated upon future happiness—
how they were to travel from summer land to summer land, returning

eventually to a gorgeous estate and possible idyllic children, then entering diplomacy or politics, to accomplish, for a while, beautiful and important things, until finally as a white-haired (beautifully, silkily, white-haired) couple they were to loll about in serene glory, worshipped by the bourgeoisie of the land. (277)

The good times commence when Anthony's grandfather dies. Fitzgerald writes with some drollness with their increasingly irregular, increasingly dissipated life that they hope rested.

Before long, the "radiant hum" of their marriage grows dim. Their original conception of marriage, needless to say, is horribly flawed; he hopes to play the role of temporarily passionate lover and she becomes his permanent mistress. However, both are condemned by their own egotism and their ability to see that love is merely a form of self-gratification. Their irrational dependence as a dream of future wealth is wholly misguided, even corrupt.

In *The Beautiful and Damned* Fitzgerald vividly depicts the agony of Anthony under the waste land of the Jazz Age in America. Anthony is clearly a lonely quester in an American city which has become a wasteland of sterile values. Anthony cannot endure the recognition of restlessness, living in the generation of restlessness, and wishes to get the peace of living by doing nothing but by escaping from it. Anthony and Gloria, who lived in the First World War and the postwar time and society, made up a new illusion in their hearts instead of avoiding the restlessness to cling to the certainty. It was an intangible shadow of restlessness and solitude flowing at the bottom of the jazz Age that Anthony tried to wipe away. In this connection, the meaningless view of life is perceived in the conversation between three men:

MAURY: I know—with intellectual lyrics that no one will listen to.

And all the critics will groan and grunt about “Dear old Pinafore.”

And I shall go on shining as a brilliantly meaningless figure in a meaningless world.

DICK: (Pompously) Art isn’t meaningless.

MAURY: It is in itself. It isn’t in that it tries to make life less so.

ANTHONY: In other words, Dick, you’re playing before a grand stand peopled with ghosts.

MAURY: Give a good show anyhow.

ANTHONY:(To MAURY) On the contrary, I’d feel that it being a meaningless world, why write? The very attempt to give it purpose is purposeless. (23)

Therefore, under such a meaningless modern society Anthony wanted to cling to the party, and on the other hand, Gloria does not cling to her eternal youth and beauty. The meaningless is the illusion which Anthony believed as the most certain thing. The tragedy and disillusion are always promised for those who believed the illusion. They have the damned destiny on their back ever since he believed in the illusion. In other words, they are damned because they dedicate their youth to falsity. Gloria cannot reconcile herself with the loss of her beauty, and Anthony clings perversely to empty illusion that these qualities are unchanging.

Anthony and Gloria feel in their youth that life is meaningless. In this respect, as Edmund Wilson says, it is evident that Fitzgerald, in *This Side of Paradise*, tried to discover “a meaning in life”, while in the *The Beautiful and Damned*, he feels “the meaninglessness of life” (15). This attitude emerges clearly in a conversation as follows:

‘There’s only one lesson to be learned from life, anyway,’ interrupted Gloria, not in contradiction but in a sort of melancholy agreement.

‘What’s that?’ demanded Maury sharply.

‘That there’s no lesson to be learned from life.’

After a short silence Maury said:

‘Young Gloria, the beautiful and merciless lady, first looked at the world with the fundamental sophistication I have struggled to attain, that Anthony never will attain, that Dick will never fully understand.’

(255)

Youth of Anthony and Gloria has been lost ever since they believed that life is meaningless. In fact, as Robert Sklar says, *The Beautiful and Damned* “might as well be about the ‘Stone Age’ as the ‘Jazz Age’” (17). In the mental aspect, Anthony and Gloria lived in the Stone Age of America. Sailing on the sea toward what he naively assumes will be a new life, Anthony is broken old man muttering to himself. To win the hollowest of victories, he has devastated himself. At the conclusion of this novel Fitzgerald describes as follows:

Only a few months before people had been urging him to give in, to submit to mediocrity, to go to work. But he had known that he was justified in his way of life—and he had stuck it out stanchly. Why, the very friends who had been most unkind had come to respect him, to know he had been right all along. Had not the Lacys and the Merediths and the Cartwright-Smiths called on Gloria and him at the Ritz-Carlton just a week before they sailed?

Great tears stood in his eyes, and his voice was tremulous as he whispered to himself.

‘I showed them,’ he was saying. ‘It was a hard fight, but I didn’t give up and I came through!’ (449)

At the end of the novel, this sad young Anthony regards his lost youth as a road to the triumph of a hard fight. As for Anthony, living on the lost paradise was a very strict ordeal to transcend ‘the meaningless of life’. A major theme in *The Beautiful and Damned* is that life is meaningless.

In this way, Fitzgerald paints vividly the portrayal of the lost paradise of the Twenties in America as an imaginative young artist through *The Beautiful and Damned*. However, Fitzgerald’s hero, Anthony lives in the world of illusions, and at the end of the novel, he awakes clearly from his illusion and taste the bitterness of corrupt reality in the Jazz age of America.

The novel shows Fitzgerald’s concern over the fate of the younger generation of the Twenties in America. Through Anthony’s damnation in *The Beautiful and Damned* he tries to warn the younger generation against the danger of their hedonistic life. The values of hard work, investment, and self-restraint which used to be cherished no longer attract the youth’s attention. On the contrary, they actualize their new acquired freedom in parties, in drinking bootleg liquor, in their dancing mania, accompanied by the new rhythm of jazz music symbolizing their freedom.

Success can mean many things. It is often associated with money, wealth, fame, achievement, good life, and others. In *The Beautiful and Damned* Fitzgerald relates the American Dream of success to the idea of wealth. He explains clearly the effect of wealth on Anthony's life and how wealth itself becomes destructive and ruins his life.

Being the only grandson of a multimillionaire has inevitably made Anthony dream that some golden day he will inherit most of his grandfather's money. The

dream has already filled his mind early in his life and has developed along with his growth that it becomes a kind of obsession in him. It appears again and again in his conversation with his wife, Gloria:

I think we ought to travel a lot. I want to go to Mediterranean and Italy. And I'd like to go on the stage some time. [. . .] And then some time when we have more money we'll build a magnificent estate, won't we? Oh, yes, with private swimming pools. Dozens of them. And private rivers. Oh, I wish it were now. (137)

Unfortunately, Anthony's good life and the prospect of a great inheritance have apparently paralyzed him, in a sense that they have caused him to lose his motivation to work.

In the Twenties, the time of Anthony's life, "It is estimated that a person earning \$ 6,000 or more a year was in a select income group, approximately the upper five percent of the population" (Bogart 5). Anthony's income is about seven thousand a year, the interest of money inherited from his mother. With that amount of money young Anthony, living after the mode of the true man of leisure, can get whatever he wants— good apartment, expensive clothing, good food, and other forms of enjoyment. Like other youths of his time Anthony is full of disillusionment. He thinks that money can buy everything, thus guarantee his happiness. He believes that in that period the new institutions of commercial leisure—amusement parks, vaudeville, and spectator sports—suggested that fun could be bought like anything else.

Anthony's good life—which symbolizes the prosperity of the decade—has made him think that he does not need to commit himself to work. "I do nothing, for there's nothing I can do that's worth doing" (65). Obviously young Anthony believes in the futility of effort; that is why he does not understand "why people think that

every young man ought to go down-town and work ten hours a day for the best twenty years of his life at dull, unimaginative work, certainly not altruistic work” (65).

Without working Anthony has been able to live above average, that is why the idea of work is apparently out of his mind.

Actually, Anthony's conviction of the futility of effort, of the wisdom of abnegation has only started in his early Twenties. This conviction has been confirmed by the philosophies he has admired as well as by his association with Maury Noble, and later with his wife, Gloria (284). This fact indicates that Anthony's conviction of the futility of effort is also shared by his contemporaries. Apparently, Anthony and his contemporaries merely adopt this philosophy to justify their pleasure-seeking lives.

In fact, M. Cowley, the chronicler of the Twenties, also notices that the younger generation of the period “had grown up in the years when middle-class Americans read Herbert Spencer and believed in the doctrine of automatic social evolution” (26). Consequently, young men and women of Fitzgerald's time believe that “the world would improve without their help” (26). In a way, this serves as a kind of excuse for their careless way of life.

During the decade urban life became more and more fascinating, especially for young people, that living in the city becomes their dream. The growth of the city has also tempted the newly married couple, Anthony and Gloria, to come in search of happiness together. Just like other members of the young generation of the time, they regard New York as “the city of luxury and mystery, of preposterous hopes and exotic Dreams” (282). As a big city, New York is certainly the place where the American dream is exposed daily through the media and the way of life of its rich inhabitants. Moreover, New York also offers its inhabitants so many opportunities for amusements such as nightclubs, speakeasies, movies, and theatres. Therefore, like

those who settle in big cities, Anthony and Gloria are tempted to conform to an urban standard and way of living. The glamorous life around them has unavoidably poisoned their mind in such a way that they bitterly determine to live as they do, believing that their dream will come true.

The trouble is that Anthony and his wife take leisure almost as a way of life. They spend most of their time to enjoy life fully, drifting from one place to another, going to parties and getting drunk with their friends almost every night, and enjoy other forms of entertainments.

[. . .] they had loitered, restive and lazily extravagant, along the California coast, joining other parties intermittently and drifting from Pasadena to Coronado, from Coronado to Santa Barbara, with no purpose more apparent than Gloria's desire to dance by different music [. . .] (191).

They simply live for now because they do not believe in the future. For them “This is life! Who cares for the morrow?” (70). That is why, they neglect work at all. What they seek is the pleasure of the present, to live for their private selves and for immediate self-expression. Actually Anthony has realized that “he had been futile in longing to drift and dream; no one drifted except to maelstroms, no one dreamed, without his dreams becoming fantastic nightmares of indecision and regret” (282). Nevertheless, Antony and Gloria have decided "Not to be sorry, not to lose one cry of regret, to live according to a clear code of honor toward each other, and to seek the moment's happiness as fervently and persistently as possible” (226). This deviant attitude seems to be common among the youth in the period of transition.

The great development of mass media such as magazines, television, radio, movies and advertisements has made the American dreams rise beyond the bounds of

reality. Through these media the clichés of the American good life are bombarded. Advertisements of various products increasingly confuse many young people of what they are actually after in their life. Success is interpreted in different ways. Car, for example, which is very popular at that time, not only offers faster transportation but also status. More than that, it also gives the image of being successful. That is why Anthony and Gloria decide to buy a new car. The idea of having a car has already excited them and made them forget momentarily about their problems. They do not care if their new roadster only provides them with instant satisfaction for it is the pleasure of the moment that they really seek.

It is also indicated that the development of moving picture industry in America has influenced young people of that time. In addition to their popular entertainment appeal, movies exerted a tremendous influence in shaping the values and attitudes of the American people. Gloria announces, “I want to be a successful sensation in the movies; “I hear that Mary Pickford makes a million dollars annually” (213). Mary Pickford is one of the silent screen leading figures in the Twenties. Apparently, due to the growth of moving picture industry, many young people are interested to become movie stars which are relatively a new profession at that time. Certainly it is the glamour and excitement of that celebrity—a person who becomes famous through the mass media—that they seek because it offers admiration and envy.

The widespread distribution of mass media has made celebrities very popular among the American society. They often become interesting subjects of discussion, and even models—especially for the youths. The popularity of these celebrities is generally regarded as a symbol of success. Accordingly, it is momentary, like news itself, which loses its interest when it loses its novelty. (117). Nevertheless, people

dream to be admired and envied like those celebrities. The idea of becoming an actress appeals to Gloria very much but Anthony objects to her intention:

‘But it's so silly! You don't want to go into the movies—moon around a studio all day with a lot of cheap chorus people.’

‘Well, I can't see how you'd object to my trying.’

‘I do though. I hate actors.’

‘Oh, you make me tired. Do you imagine I brave a very thrilling time dozing on this damn porch?’

‘You wouldn't mind if you loved me.’ (214)

Apparently Anthony still believes in the old values, especially those concerning women's role in society. That is why he objects to the idea of Gloria becoming an actress. He seems to think that just being in love is enough for a woman. Thus he expects Gloria to stay at home and make herself pretty when he comes home.

The younger generation of the Twenties no longer believes that success can be achieved only by starting very low. From the beginning Anthony has considered himself to be the elect; hence, he considers that he “would one day accomplish some quite subtle thing that the elect would deem worthy” (3). Apparently, Anthony dreams to be a booster, an up lifter, which is experienced by some lucky Americans at that time, including his grandfather. He wants to strike himself rich without having to work hard. That is why Anthony always wishes his grandfather to die so as to grab his fortune. It seems that through Anthony's intention to leave work at all to achieve his goal Fitzgerald wants to show one among other signs of the decline of the American dream of upward mobility.

The fact that Anthony is disinherited forces him to face the reality of his life. So far he has accustomed to enjoying a life of leisure, therefore, even though he

realizes that things have changed, it is very difficult for him to accept the reality that he has to commit himself to work.

In the early days of his marriage with Gloria “seventy-five hundred a year had seemed ample for a young couple, especially when augmented by the expectation of many millions” (390). Now that the value of the dollar decreases, the same amount of money they receive has less purchasing power. Therefore, living within their income has become impossible. Meanwhile, Anthony counts that their capital will last for about another seven years, if they keep loafing. Moreover, the payment of their lawyer's retaining fee of fifteen thousand dollars shows the fact that their bankruptcy is startlingly obvious.

The promise of money inherited from his grandfather has spoiled Anthony in such a way that to think of starting from “wreck” is a horror for him. He says:

Here I am, thirty-two. Suppose I did start at some idiotic business.
Perhaps in two years I might rise to fifty dollars a week—with luck.
That's if I could get a job at all; there's an awful lot of unemployment.
Well, suppose I made fifty a week. Do you think I'd be any happier?
Do you think that if I don't get this money of my grandfather's life will
be endurable? (408)

Nevertheless, Anthony attempts to become a salesman. In the Twenties salesmanship becomes increasingly important because of the changes in the structure of society: the sifting emphasis from capitalist production to consumption. Being a successful salesman needs personal magnetism, a quality which supposedly enables a man to influence and dominate others. Unfortunately Anthony lacks this quality, thus his attempt to succeed in this field is wrong.

Failing in achieving success as a salesman, Anthony joins the army. Just like his contemporaries, Anthony sees war as something glorious. For that reason he wants to seek fame as a war hero. Anthony's contingent happens to be sent to the Southern Camp, meaning that he has to leave Gloria alone in New York. This really is something for Anthony because since their marriage he never stays away from his wife for more than a night. He finds this as a kind of freedom, a freedom from his dependency on her.

Anthony's weakness and dependency on women is also shown through his relationship with Dorothy Raycroft, an innocent girl from a poorer background. Anthony finds in her a new excitement and stimulus which enable him to regain his self-confidence. Once again he believes that he is still admired. Anthony feels he is somebody in front of her. Anthony's affairs with Dorothy Raycroft are actually an inevitable result of his increasing carelessness about himself. He lacks the ability to decide what is good for him:

He did not go to her desiring to possess the desirable, nor did he fall before a personality more vital, more compelling than his own, as he had done with Gloria four years before. He merely slid into the matter through his inability to make definite judgments. (324-325)

Anthony dreams to succeed in the army but his affair with Dorothy has ruined his dream. He often breaks the military discipline in order to meet her. Finally, he is caught by a military policeman and his rank is reduced without trial. Again this incident shows his carelessness in achieving his goal, if he has one at all. Obviously, this phenomenal carelessness marks the decline of the American dream of individual achievement.

In this way, *The Beautiful and Damned* is a historical novel as it captures the Jazz Age's vulgarity and dazzling promise. While doing so, the novel launches a devastating satire on the the age in which the rich in New York spend nightlife recklessly, and squander talent without any ambition; it is also a shattering portrait of a marriage fueled by alcohol and wasted by wealth. Fitzgerald has created a satirical yet poignant portrait of the generation, not only for his contemporaries, but for all future readers. This is what the writer historicizes through this fictional work.

IV. Conclusion

Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned* shows the historicity of the text and the textuality of the history as it weaves historical reality of the Jazz Age in a thread of the textual form. The novel which was written in the early twenties is a reflection of the undisciplined, irresponsible, fast-paced living of the younger generation of the period, Jazz Age. The novel, with its inclination for the portrayal of material reality and with its sensitivity to social experience, proves to be important literary evidence for Americans as well as for historians to reconstruct the confusing decade of the twenties, which is known as more popularly the "Jazz Age". Though this period superficially appears as a time of peace and prosperity, the reality beneath seems to be quite contradictory. Through some literary evidence published during that period, it can be seen that the decade of the Twenties is in fact marked by sharp contrasts between: certainty and insecurity, stability and confusion, content and discontent, and conformity and rebellion.

Through Anthony's damnation Fitzgerald tries to warn the younger generation against the danger of their hedonistic life. Apparently he believes in the power of this novel to communicate his concern over the fate of the younger generation. As the author becomes more mature, he no longer advocates the pleasure-seeking morality of the youth that he has himself set in his previous novel *This Side of Paradise*, because he has been able to prophesy its tragic outcome. His maturity itself comes with his awareness of the dangers of the irresponsible youthful life. That is why he feels responsible to save the younger generation from the coming damnation.

Apparently, Fitzgerald expresses his view of American women of the period. He exposes their materialistic attitude as he even equates them with leeches that suck everything out of their man and leave them impotent. No wonder that he blames the

beautiful Gloria for the “damnation” of her own life and that of her husband Anthony. Nevertheless, there is a feeling in Fitzgerald's works that the author himself admits women's superiority over men. Gloria Gilbert and Daisy Fay, then known as flappers—free-spirited women who love life—who become the dominating symbol of the Twenties, are fine examples of this type of women, beautiful, independent, irresponsible, and men-suckers. Throughout the novel Fitzgerald seems to suggest that during the Jazz Age beauty serves as a magic wand for women to take everything they like from life.

As the “prophet” of the Jazz Age Fitzgerald not only condemns his generation but also provides it with a way out. Despite his personal doubt, the writer suggests that work is the only salvation for the young people to avoid damnation. Even though they work simply to forget that there is nothing worthwhile to work for, they must work. The activity is expected to occupy much of their time and energy so as not to give them any opportunity to loaf about.

In this way, the study shows that the novel *The Beautiful and Damned* as a document of the Jazz Age exposes the attitude the young, rootless post-war generation who live intent only on the pursuit of wealth and decadent pleasure which is reflected through Anthony Patch's marriage to the beautiful but selfish Gloria. The novel is also a vivid portrait of early twentieth-century New York and the sights and sounds of the city's burgeoning night life.

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