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## Tragic vision in the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald

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### Abstract

The tragic vision of Fitzgerald's novel is the result of first world war. In all works of Fitzgerald, we find ambition and struggle and the failure of the modern American society. The essays which were written by Fitzgerald having the experiences of the crisis of life. These essays are collected by Edmund Wilson in the book named "The Crack-up". The theme of Fitzgerald's novel is illness, sadness and mental tortures. Fitzgerald was the first novelist of the post war period who has written about contemporary experiences. The source of Fitzgerald's tragic vision was his sense of past. The past which was full with dissatisfied dreams. The basics of his heroism lies in his power of love. The war brought a disorder and confusion in the society. This confusion brought chaos and disturbed the life of common people as well as the writers including Fitzgerald. Pessimism prevailed in the society and there was a scenario of faith and unfaith. This pessimism brought hopelessness in American society. The people were filled with the feeling that the war has snatched from them the age-old values of life. Fitzgerald's novels are based on his own experiences. "Sometimes" he once said, "I do not know whether I am real or whether I am character in one of my novels. The main message, that we find in Fitzgerald's novels, is that American dream is a major theme and American dream is correct.

**Keywords:** - Tragic vision, World War, Social Unrest, Wealth, Ambition.

### Introduction

More than any other gifted writer of his generation, Fitzgerald is committed to the society. Fitzgerald's work is a criticism of the life of the period between two world wars. He pursues his own vision and is loyal to himself in presenting things as they are. It was the war, of course, that was largely responsible for his tragic vision. This war (first world war) which brought chaos in the society. This war disturbed the life of the common people as well as the life of the writers including Fitzgerald who began to apprehend total destruction of human race. This war destroyed whole scenario of American life. The great result which came was the culture of commodity. Pessimism prevailed in the air and the man was hesitating between faith and unfaith. The whole atmosphere was steeped in the

terrors of darkness, destruction and death. It is therefore, no accident that Fitzgerald's millionaires are as damned as Thomas Hardy's peasants. [1]

### **Aim of study**

Through this paper I want to convey F. Scott. Fitzgerald's views on the futility of the American dreams. The idea that you can get everything with money prevailed in American society. To Become rich by hook or by crook corrupted American Society. People strive for that which out of reach. They did not have the idea that all the money in the world could not replace the emptiness that comes from unrealized dreams, Fitzgerald became successful in depicting of moral decay of American society.

Like William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway, Fitzgerald feels that war wrenches from man his age-old-values. The world war 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> poured a deep impact on American society. The writers have written more about the war than peace. This war brought chaos, disease, millions of deaths and abolism of American ideals for above. His cry is for justice which he finds wanting in society. The war has dislodged the writers, given them an unaccepted and disillusioning education and left them entirely rootless. Fitzgerald became part of the post war atmosphere of shock. His first novel 'This side of paradise' is more a representation of restlessness than a coherent assertion of revolt. It stands at the beginning of the decade fame 'Literature of revolt'. [2]

This side of paradise pins appropriately to the exact movement in American life. It is more a representation of restlessness than a clear declaration of revolt. This is the first novel of the post-war written by the authors of new generation. The novel portrays the real picture of the sexual, social and literary restlessness among the younger generation. This side of paradise is admired because of its qualities that pin it closely to an exact movement in the American life. The whole "prepostures farrago of this book is animated with life." [3] At one point in This Side of Paradise, Amory cries out: "My whole generation is restless." [4] This book depicts the victory of young generation over all illusions. Amory Blaine confesses that war has no effect on him:

But it certainly ruined the old background, sort of killed individualism out of over generation....I'm not sure it did not kill it out of the whole world. Oh! Lord, what a pleasure it used be to dream I might be really a great dictator or writer or religious or political leader....and now even a Leonard da Vinci or Lorenzo de Medici could not be a real fashioned bolt in the world. Life is too huge and complex." [5]

The root of Fitzgerald's heroism is to be found as it sometimes in his tragic heroes. Amory Blaine, is an idealised projection of young Fitzgerald. He undergoes a series of emotional and spiritual cries. His

quest epitomised that of rising generation and his gesture of revolt however identified, awoke many echoes. Amory remains as wistful and imaginative but his will is not clouded by sentiment. He feels that he has sacrificed his youth to dead gods, to the false ideals of the past. This side of paradise is conventional. Fitzgerald visualises the story through the eyes of protagonist, Amory Blaine. The general impression left with the reader is, as Paul Rosenfeld has rightly put it, that “Fitzgerald does not sustainedly perceive his girls and men for what they are, and tends to invest them with precisely the glamour with which they in pathetic assurance rather childishly invest themselves.” [6]

The Beautiful and Damned, Fitzgerald’s second novel, is a solid and honest study of decadence. This novel is an attempt to explore the social and personal pressures that contribute to the disintegration of human life. In The Beautiful and Damned, Fitzgerald’s major theme is the meaninglessness of the life. The novel shows the decay of the hero, Antony Patch,

“a man of delicate organization in revolt against the inexplicable tragedy of existence”. [7]

Gloria says; ‘There is only one lesson to be learned from life any way.... that there’s no lesson to be learned from life.’ [8] This novel shows how he and his beautiful wife are ruined on shoals’ dissipation. Fitzgerald’s point of view towards his hero and heroine, Anthony Patch and Gloria was too wavering and inconsistent. Anthony is a weak, spoiled rich boy, but writer is struggling to give his history tragic dimensions. Anthony Patch and Gloria are really tragic characters. The following paragraph is clearly intended to elevate poor Anthony and Gloria to stature of tragic characters: “Beneath the sordid dress and near the bruised heart of this transaction there was a motive which was not weak but only futile and sad. In the search for happiness, which search is the greatest and possibly the only crime of which we in our petty misery are capable, these two people were marked as guilty chiefly by the freshness and fulness of their desire. Their disillusion was always a comparative thing--- --they sought glamour and colour through their respective worlds with a steadfast loyalty----sought it and it alone in kisses and wine, sought it with the same ingenuousness in the wanton moonlight as under the bold sun of inviolate chastity. Their fault was not that they doubted but that they believed”. [9]

Two of Antony’s friends, Richard Carmel and Maury Noble, who are first presented as men of promise, follow the same pattern of deterioration as Anthony and Gloria. Both Richard and Maury compromise their idealism by the end of the novel. In the end of the novel, we find the climax of Fitzgerald’s tragic vision. In the final scene, some fellow passengers report that Anthony has “been a

little crazy, ever since he got his money, and that Gloria looks ‘sort of dyed and unclean’. [10] Gloria is punished by mere loss of youth and beauty: Anthony “by the utter fatuity of wealth”. [11]

The Great Gatsby, most famous work of Fitzgerald, is an investigation of American dreams. In the America of Gatsby, the reality is inarticulate and frustrated. Gatsby is a man of imagination given solidity and exactness. The main problem with Gatsby was that he could not realise that he is living a life of dream. He was sure that Daisy would come to him if he becomes equal to Tom in earning money. Gatsby is a man of imagination in America. He is a sad figure. The Gatsby, thus offers some of the surest and closest criticism of American dream. A set of symbols pervades the entire book. The tragic awareness did more to release the full potential of Fitzgerald’s genius.

Tender is the night is more realistic novel. It reveals the “extraordinary maturity of perception of underlying causes of human failure.” [12] The theme of the novel is Dick’s futile attempt to synthesise the two irreconcilable worlds in his personal, social and professional relationship, one man’s private agony, however, gradually, assumes universal significance in Tender is the Night. The novel deals with the failure of a dream of love. The tragic awareness releases the full potential of Fitzgerald’s genius. Dick Diver possesses the quality of a real tragic hero. He is to be the modern middle -class American: raised to heroic stature and then destroyed by an excess of virtue and by his fatal gift of charm.

The last tycoon is again the example of Fitzgerald’s tragic awareness. This is undoubtedly ‘a commentary on the ultimate debasement of American dream. [13] Destruction prevails in the novel; the hero loses his battle with Schizophrenia; Wylie write’s character reaches a dead end. Minna Davis is dead and quickly forgotten; Pete Zarvas attempts suicide; Katheen has been educated to the end that she might read Spengler.[14] In this novel Fitzgerald attempted to make clear the promises of American life. But it is very unfortunate that he died of a heart-attack with half -finished novel. The tragic sense gives him not only subject matter, but also helps him to overcome another difficulty.

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