



F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned*

New Critical Essays

Edited by **WILLIAM BLAZEK, DAVID W. ULLRICH,**
and **KIRK CURNUTT**

F. Scott Fitzgerald's second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*, has frequently been dismissed as an outlier and curiosity in his oeuvre, a transitional work from the coming-of-age plot of *This Side of Paradise* to the masterful critique of American aspiration in *The Great Gatsby*.

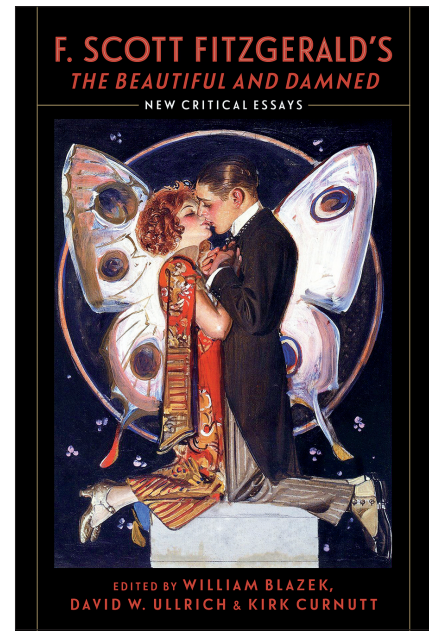
The Beautiful and Damned belongs to a genre that is widely misunderstood, the "bright young things" novel in which spoiled and wealthy characters succumb to decay because of their privilege and lack of purpose. Set between 1913 and 1922, Fitzgerald's longest novel touches on many of the decisive issues that mark the passage from the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era into the Jazz Age: conspicuous consumption, income inequality, yellow journalism, the Great War, the rise of the movie industry, automobile travel, Wall Street stock scams, immigration and xenophobia, and the fixation with youth and aging.

Published to coincide with the novel's centennial in 2022, this collection approaches *The Beautiful and Damned* for its insights more than its faults. Prominent Fitzgerald scholars analyze major themes and reveal unappreciated issues with attention to history, biography, literary influence, gender studies, and narratology. While acknowledging the novel's shortcomings, the essayists illustrate that *The Beautiful and Damned* has much more to say about its milieu than previously recognized. This collection provides a guide for understanding Fitzgerald's aims while demonstrating the richness of ideas that this novel explores, alongside the anxieties and ambitions that reverberate within it.

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