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**Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald and the “Roaring Twenties”**

Thesis

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2007

Univerzita Pardubice  
Filosofická fakulta  
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

## **Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald a „bouřlivá“ dvacátá léta**

Diplomová práce

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2007

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V Pardubicích dne 30.1.2007

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### **Abstract:**

The primary aim of this diploma paper is to prove justifiability of Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald to hold a role of one of the most important spokesmen of his time – the exceptional Jazz Age. It will be achieved through a detailed analysis and comparison of primary sources, *This Side of Paradise*, *The Beautiful and Damned* and *The Great Gatsby*, and also secondary sources, which dwell on both Fitzgerald's life and work or on American history. In individual chapters the reader is successively acquainted with those aspects, which influenced American history in extensive way – emancipation of women, technological progress, movie industry or prohibition, to mention just a few of them.

### **Abstrakt:**

Hlavním cílem této diplomové práce je dokázat oprávněnost Francise Scotta Key Fitzgeralda zastávat roli jednoho z nejdůležitějších představitelů své doby, tedy amerických „zlatých dvacátých let.“ Bude tak docíleno pomocí podrobného rozboru, a zároveň porovnávání, jak primárních zdrojů, *Na prahu ráje*, *Krásní a prokletí* a *Velký Gatsby*, tak i sekundárních zdrojů, které se zabývají autorovým životem a dílem, ale také dějinami Spojených států amerických. V jednotlivých kapitolách je čtenář postupně seznámen s těmi jevy, které ve velké míře ovlivnily americkou historii. Například emancipací žen, vývojem technologie, filmovým průmyslem či prohibicí.

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## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my thanks to Mgr. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D. for her helpful advice and for providing me with useful materials. My thanks also go to Michael Kaylor Ph.D. for simply being Michael Kaylor Ph.D., for his professional and exceptional style of teaching and for his beneficial influence on my knowledge in the field of academic writing and literary and cultural studies. Finally, I am grateful to Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald himself for his literary endowment and his works, which made my writing of the thesis interesting and enriching experience.

## Introduction

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (appendix 1), one of the key members of the so-called “lost generation” and one of the most significant writers of the United States of America. And a so called Jazz Age, a period which prominently affected American history. These two mutually nourished each other. Fitzgerald’s novels and short stories are broadly autobiographical writings interlocked by the author’s perception and understanding of life surrounding him and are, nowadays, considered a valuable historical and social document of the days in the 1920s. Arthur Mizener vindicates Fitzgerald’s competence to stand as a spokesman of his own period by following words:

Fitzgerald’s habit of accepting the values available in his world – largely, no doubt, because of his deep need to live out in the actual world whatever values he committed himself to – makes him, in this respect, a very conventional and representative man of his time. (Mizener, 1972: 10)

And Fitzgerald testifies the autobiographical features of his works in his essay, *The Echoes of the Jazz Age*, from 1931:

Yet the present writer<sup>1</sup> already looks back to it [Jazz Age] with nostalgia. It bore him up, flattered him and gave him more money than he had dreamed of, simply for telling people that he felt as they did, that something had to be done with all the nervous energy stored up and unexpended in the war. (Fitzgerald 1931: 329)

On the other hand, in Fitzgerald’s person, the Jazz Age detected its own supreme icon, whose fate extensively resembled the fate of the twenties. In both cases, the years of immense abundance, vanity and immoderation must have, naturally, terminated in a tragedy. In 1929, The United States suffered the consequences in the form of the Wall Street Crash. Fitzgerald’s personal doom also rooted in an intemperate lifestyle. His life ceased in frequent alcohol deliriums, which had had, in smaller or larger extent, influence on his literary production, and which, consequently, lead to his early death in 1940.

Reading Fitzgerald’s work without sufficient knowledge of the time in which it was written, its historical background, social changes and cultural events, would, most

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<sup>1</sup> By “present writer” Fitzgerald obviously refers to himself. This persuasion can be based also on the Czech translation of the essay *Ozvěny Jazzového věku* translated by Leonid Křížek, Carl Sinclair and Marta Sinclair, published in the Czech translation of *The Crack Up*

likely, leave the reader with an impression of Fitzgerald being nothing but a good love story writer. It is, therefore, reasonable to acquaint the reader with conditions which significantly shaped Fitzgerald's work and thus give him an opportunity to fully appreciate the author's literary heritage.

To accomplish this aim, the thesis is focused on an analysis of the crucial factors, which, undeniably, affected the 1920s, and, hence, Fitzgerald's motives, inspiration and writing. It ruminates on those examples, which seemed to interest or fascinate Fitzgerald to such extent that he considered them pivotal and included them in his works.

The first part of the paper, *The Look into the Twenties*, is devoted to an overall outline of the Jazz Age. It embraces the basic facts, which enable the reader to gain essential knowledge of the background of the twenties.

One of the most significant changes of the period was the developing status of women, which became the topic of the first chapter. It discusses the changing role of women in contrast to the Victorian times, acquaints the reader with the conception of a flapper and also offers a broad description of woman's fashion.

Concerning the subject, the second chapter is closely linked to the women's question since it focuses on the rapid changes in the views on sex and sexuality. The speedy shifts are analyzed through a comparison of sexuality conception in Fitzgerald's debut, *This Side of Paradise* (1920), and his best known novel, *The Great Gatsby* (1926). There are only five years between the publishing of these two books; however, the evidence of the rapid changes, concerning the sexuality, is quite obvious. Furthermore, this chapter also touches the issue of birth-control and abortion, which appeared in *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922). Last part of this chapter refers to an automobile as an important factor influencing Americans' sexual life for it provided more intimate and private space.

The third chapter is assigned to technological development since technology had a great influence on people's lives in many aspects. This section successively discusses the impact of an automobile, telephone and electricity. Apart from discussing the general influence of these technological achievements, the car is delineated not only as a means of transport, but also as expression of wealth and a social class; the telephone



then, as a tool helping to conceal illegal business and other corrupt matters, and electricity as another possible expression of people's affluence.

*Mass culture and consumerism* is a title of the fourth chapter. Consumerism became a modern "philosophy" in the 1920s America and this section is focused on the phenomena which affected and modified it in a considerable manner – advertising and moving pictures. An advertisement then is primarily approached from the point of view of its captivating language, which seemed to be one of the factors, which interested Fitzgerald in a great deal and which reflected, to a certain degree, in *The Beautiful and Damned*.

The moving picture is inspected in the light of its impact on the conception of beauty and body culture. However, this subchapter also deals with the movies as a phenomenon, which remarkably influenced Americans' leisure time and, furthermore, and with the way how it contributed to the blurring differences among social classes.

The fifth chapter, *Modern life*, is divided into three sections – *Modern Party*, *Modern language*. The parties of the twenties are, then, analyzed through a comparison with the parties of the late nineteenth century. The modernity of the twenties is, furthermore, proved on the language, which some of the Fitzgerald's protagonists use, their diction and vocabulary usage.

Although politics does not reflect much in Fitzgerald's books, the sixth chapter touches the problematic of the Prohibition and also immigration. Both matters influenced America on a great scale and both appeared in the authors work.

The last chapter is devoted to the issue, which appears to be one of the principal subjects in Fitzgerald's work – the American dream and values.

The thesis is, primarily, aimed at Fitzgerald's first three novels: *This Side of Paradise* (1920), *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922) and *The Great Gatsby* (1925). The debut, *This Side of Paradise*, was heavily influenced by the author's life and became a popular success. It, basically, tells a story of Amory Blaine, a student of the *Princeton University*, and his gradual life and love-life disillusionments.

The theme of this author's debut, seeking of life meaning, is even more deepened in Fitzgerald's second book, *The Beautiful and Damned*, which was, however, on the contrary to *This Side of Paradise*, considered to be Fitzgerald's least acknowledged novel. It is also based on the author's life experience, where his

marriage to Zelda Sayre becomes a crucial source of inspiration. It tells a story of a young couple, Anthony and Gloria Patch and their successive decline caused by alcoholism and their inability to find a steady position within the society and a sense in their lives.

*The Great Gatsby* is the author's shortest novel, however, it is, nowadays, considered the best and the most conducted novel of the five that Fitzgerald wrote. From a basic point of view, this book is about a bootlegger<sup>1</sup>, Jay Gatsby, who tries to regain love of his ex-lover, Daisy Buchanan, who rejected to marry him for his poor background. He does so by exhibiting his enormous possession. Fitzgerald here, for the first time, uses a third-person narrative – the story is told by Nick Carraway, Gatsby's neighbor, whose narration is, to some extent, influenced by his opinions. It only depends on the reader, how trustworthy and impartial he finds the Nick's interpretations.

Fitzgerald, as mentioned above, wrote five novels altogether. The one following the success of *The Great Gatsby* is called *Tender Is the Night* (1934) and was the last Fitzgerald's novel which he managed to finish. His very last piece, *The Last Tycoon* (1941), remained incomplete, because of the author's premature death.

This thesis analyzes Fitzgerald's first three novels. The choice was not a mere coincidence. Although *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned* are both set in the years immediately preceding the 1920s, they excellently document the beginning of the many changes that later, in the Jazz Age, exploded and flourished. Therefore, they give the reader a good opportunity to better understand the events of the following years, the Jazz Age.

*The Great Gatsby* is set in the year 1922 and gives a true picture of this roaring period in its full florescence, embracing also the issue of prohibition, immigration and social class division.

Originally, the secondary aim of the thesis was to highlight the autobiographical elements in Fitzgerald's work. However, after studying all the primary and secondary sources, it is obvious that the author's work is constituted purely of his experience. Analyzing such details and facts could become, considering its extensiveness, topic of

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<sup>1</sup> Bootlegger – a someone who makes or sells illegal liquor  
([www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/bootlegger](http://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/bootlegger))

another thesis. This diploma paper is entirely focused on Fitzgerald's work from the point of view of the novelist's literary heritage

## **A Look into the Twenties**

“Jazz Age”, “Golden Age”, “Roaring Twenties” ... there are many expressions for the period covering years between 1920 and 1929 in The United States of America. The mentioned attributes, jazz, golden and roaring, are convenient and all have its substance.

The appellation “golden” well characterizes the great abundance of money and wealth in general. Considering the period, it could seem strange that while most European nations were still recovering from destructions caused by the World War (1914-1918), “America was going on the greatest, gaudiest spree in history...” (Fitzgerald cited in Mizener, 1972: 52)

One of the reasons coming forward is that the United States had not joined the war until April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1917 and that the war had not affected them directly. Fights and bombing were in motion mainly on European continent and avoided the American. For that reason, the States had more time and better prerequisites for economical and general progress.

Tired of war and world responsibilities, Americans were eager to return to normal life. They turned their backs on Europe and concentrated on building a free and prosperous society. (Green [et al.]: 477)

In the words of the President Calvin Coolidge, “The chief business of the American people is business.” (An outline of American History: 244)

The “turning backs” could, in one way, indicate to establishing high taxes on goods from foreign countries, which compelled American people to buy only American products.

Another possible cause had its roots in the American “Progressive movement” during the years preceding the war. Then general dissatisfaction led leaders of the movement to enforce important political, economical and social reforms, which later extensively improved economy, electoral system and other political issues:

The Progressive movement came to an end in about 1917. Starting in the early 1920s, new changes took place in our way of life. More people had more money than ever before. (Schwarz, O’Connor: 394)

The abundance, wellness and prosperity maybe included more people than ever before, however, not all of them. Black people were often among the less fortunate part of society. Although slavery had been abolished by the President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War in 1863, and black people were emancipated, their position in the American society during the twenties was still unstable and insecure. “The Parkers [a black family] had improved their lot, but they still lived outside Detroit – and, in many ways, outside America.” (Nash [et al.]: 500) During the war, there was a shortage in labor, therefore, black Americans were employed. When the war finished, most of them, however, failed to maintain their job positions:

The Parkers were forced to leave their apartment for housing in a section just outside the city near Eight Mile Road. This black ghetto had dirt streets and the shack had no indoor plumbing and no electricity, only a pump in the yard and an outhouse. (Nash [et al.]: 499)

One of the problematical issues of the 1920s was dealing with a growing number of immigrants. Concern about this matter was warrantable. People from various parts of the world, but good deal from the war-ruined Europe, were arriving to the United States to seek better living conditions. Statistics were cogent, the year 1921, for example, registered around 800 thousand immigrants. (Green [et al.]: 482)

Many Americans felt the need to defend traditional values in the face of many changes that were taking place. The effort to resist change took many different turns. One such case was the revival of the Ku-Klux-Klan. (Green [et al.]: 483)

Originally, members of the Ku-Klux-Klan were geared towards black people only, but in the year 1916 the organization regenerated and reconstructed. Existence of the Ku-Klux-Klan did not make life easier not only for the black part of the American society, but “The Klan lashed out against minorities – Catholics, Jews, immigrants and blacks.” (1.483) The members of the Klan were calling for “100-percent Americanism”. (An outline of American History: 251) Apart from the radical Ku-Klux-Klan movement, other methods leading towards lessening the amount of immigrants were pursued:

Anti-immigration sentiment was codified in a series of measures, culminating in the Immigration Quota Law of 1924 and a 1929 act. These laws limited the annual number of immigrants to 150,000, ... . (An outline of American History: 251)

In the time of immense alternations, the need to defend traditional values, which had been unstoppably dying, also evinced in the endeavor to enforce *The Eighteenth Amendment* and later more elaborated *Volstead Act*, which, finally, went into effect in January 1920. These two laws are better known as the “Prohibition”.

This Act [the *Volstead Act*], which was to go into effect on the same day as the Eighteenth Amendment, stated that any beverage containing one-half of one percent alcohol was to be considered intoxicating liquor. (Green [et al.]: 484)

The Prohibition meant a ban on manufacture, sale or transportation of intoxicating liquors as well as on buying and drinking it. (Green [et al.]: 484) The attribute “roaring” could, apart from other things, signify eventful affairs which this law developed. Asserting of these new laws was very difficult. Alcohol became a “forbidden fruit” and gave an opportunity to organized crime.

Prohibition, although intended to eliminate the saloon and the drunkard from American society, served to create thousands of illegal drinking places called “speakeasies,”<sup>1</sup> [appendix 2] and a new increasingly profitable activity – the transportation of liquor, known as “bootlegging”. (An outline of American History: 252)

Critics have not agreed on consequences which the Prohibition had brought. To most of them, and to a majority of Americans, to whom alcohol was a social habit, it proved futile: “It seemed to most of the observers; however, that prohibition brought crime, corruption, and a laxness in those essential taboos on which society rested.” (Knoles: 73)

Nevertheless, to a conservative part of a society, which was against any kind of immoral behavior and which strongly claimed for the promotion of the acts, the Prohibition meant a kind of victory. “To some Prohibition was more than a protest against Demon Rum. It also was a defense of the old rural America against the threat of urbanization and social change.” (Green [et al.]: 484)

If the twenties were an outstanding period in the history of the world, it was, definitely, a crucial time for the female part of a society. A new era dawned. In the

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<sup>1</sup>Speakeasy - An illicit bar selling bootleg liquor (<http://local.aaca.org/bntc/slang/slang.htm>)

preceding decades, in the nineteenth century, a role of a woman was evident - being a good wife, mother and housewife. This was to be changed. One of the most important issues was a fight for suffrage in national elections. It, broadly, launched in 1915, when Carrie Chapman Catt became a president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Her campaigns took place to help promoting a woman's position within a society. ([www.womenshistory.about.com/library/bio/blbio\\_catt\\_carrie\\_chapman.htm](http://www.womenshistory.about.com/library/bio/blbio_catt_carrie_chapman.htm))

[President] Wilson had earlier opposed the vote for women, and many people still argued that the vote would make women less feminine, more worldly, and less able to perform their primary tasks as wives and mothers. (Nash [et al.]: 495)

The war, in this respect, was an accelerating factor. While men had gone to war, women replaced them in their job positions and proved that they are a sufficient substitution, and that they can hold a different role than that of a housewife. As a result, their struggle for equality then begun to be more visible and radical. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment was added to the Constitution of the United States. "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." (Green [et al.]: 804, *The Constitution of The United States*) Henceforward, women felt more confident and more equal to the male part of the society:

After the war, they were neither content nor willing to return to their earlier subservient roles. More than 20 percent of the total work force was women – women who now had the vote. For the first time, women had the status of full citizens. (Green [et al.]: 496)

The twenties are also often referred to as the second industrial revolution with electricity as its great assistant. "In 1912 only 16 percent of the American people lived in electrically lighted homes. In 1927 the number had risen to 63 percent." (Green [et al.]: 490) This fact, naturally, brought considerable improvements. Women, who were now, owing to their changing status, spending less time on housework, found electric devices, such as washing machines, electric irons, vacuum cleaners, toasters, refrigerators, to list just a few, essential equipment in their homes.

An automobile became another symbol of the period. Consequences of growth

of the automobile industry, in the second decade of the twentieth century, were boundless.

The auto changed American life in myriad ways. It led to the decline of the small crossroads store as well as many small churches because the rural family could now drive to the larger city or town. The tractor changed methods of farming. Trucks replaced the horse and wagon and altered the marketing on farm products. Buses began to eliminate the one-room school, because it was now possible to transport students to larger schools. The automobile allowed young people for the first time to escape the chaperoning parents. (Nash [et al.]: 504, 505)

The car producers were prosperous. In particular, Henry Ford became an extolled and exemplary businessman with his extraordinarily successful Ford Motor Company. Cars, but mostly Fords, were an inseparable accessory of many American families. “Between 1920 and 1929, the number of registered cars jumped from 8 million to 23 million, and about 20 percent of all Americans now owned a car.” (Green [et al.] :491) The success of Ford cars was visible.

At the close of 1923 there were 6,221 passenger cars in the city, one for every 6.1 persons, or roughly one for every three families. Of these 6,221 cars, 41 per cent. were Fords; 54 per cent. of total were cars of models of 1920 or later, and 17 per cent. models earlier than 1917 (Lynd: 253)

Car certainly made American cities, its surroundings, villages and the States as a whole, smaller or better accessible. However, the twenties also witnessed contracting of the world around them by a great growth of number of telephones in homes. “The telephone, first demonstrated in 1876 was found in 13 million homes by the end of the 1920s.” (Nash [et al.]: 506) Then America became a unity. Businessmen from New York could easily establish a subsidiary company in Saint Louis or San Francisco, because getting connected with them via telephone and run business based miles away was now a matter of seconds.

Another thing making people united was radio and its broadcasting. Its commercial success was visible or, better to say, hearable: “Five hundred stations took to the airwaves in 1922 alone. By the end of the decade, people in all sections in all country were humming the same popular songs.” (Nash [et al.]: 506)



Songs and music - not groundlessly is the second decade of the twentieth century called the "Jazz Age". Jazz was often understood as a revolt to the old fashioned style of music. The discordant sound was shocking to older generations as well as to the devotees of harmonious classical music rooted in Europe. Unacceptable for many people was also the fact that jazz originated within the black part of a society.

Although black musicians such as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington made the new music popular and had white as well as black fans, many white Americans remained generally uncomfortable about black culture. (Green [et al.]: 496)

For Negro people jazz meant more than a fashionable music style. For them it was also a way to express themselves. Black musicians, coming from New Orleans, played music which gave them freedom, the artistic, cultural as well as the personal. Jazz helped them to find their way how to penetrate into the American society. Jazz was, in many ways, resembling the twenties. It was innovative, shocking, fresh, riotous and revolutionary. That is why it managed to capture the spirit of the twenties so credibly. (Green [et al.]: 496)

Apart from musicians with their latest hits, it was also motion or moving pictures (movies) and their protagonists, who became a hot topic of the 1920s parties. The film industry recorded a great magnification and development. Hollywood was an industrious, earnest place in which serious artists and clever experts strove hard to perfect new instrument for popular pleasure. (Knoles [et al.]: 123) During the twenties, going to a cinema became an ordinary and necessary part of a social life. Forty million viewers a week went to the movies in 1922, and by 1929, that had increased to over 100 million." (Nash [et al.]: 506) The popularity of movies, probably, rooted in the years preceding the war and during the war itself. There are two possible reasons. As Robert Sklar claims one of them is that movies then were silent. Consequently, watching them did not demand any literacy or knowledge of English language. This fact caused popularity of the moving pictures even among the immigrant part of citizens. (Sklar: 14, 30) The first talking movie was not introduced until the year 1927. It was called The Jazz Singer. The second reason coming forward are genres. A film was helping people to get through hard times, therefore, comedy was the most popular genre in the beginnings of the movie era; however, it prevailed cherished in the twenties as well.

(Sklar: 17) Renowned examples of comedy stars are, for instance, Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd or a couple Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. The popularity of films and its protagonists was considerable.

The movies produced heroes for the masses. Stars such as Rudolph Valentino, Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, and Clara Bow were the romantic ideals for many people. (Green [et al.]: 494)

All the mentioned aspects of the early decades in American culture individually influenced a dominating feature of the era, consumerism. Movies, cars, electrical gadgets, modern assembly line, mass production of goods, to remind just several of them, gave rise to a “clash of cultures” (Nash [et al.] :507), which so deeply embedded in peoples lives. Inside Americans, old-fashioned values were struggling with the new fashionable ones, leaving the people with discomposed feelings and opinions.

But this new culture, which emphasized consumption, pleasure, upward mobility, even sex, clashed with traditional values of hard work, thrift, church, family, and home. Still, many Americans feared that new cultural values, scientific breakthroughs, and new ideas like bolshevism, relativism, Freudianism, and biblical criticism threatened their familiar way of life. (Nash [et al.] :507)

People of the 1920s were busy with getting rich, with their pleasures and pastimes, with savoring of the latest conveniences, partying and dancing Charleston in the night clubs, or with gossiping about their precious movie stars. They, frequently, did not realize that while their old-fashioned values were gone, they have not managed to replace them with new values which would bring back some more respectable meaning of life than that of wealth and pleasure. This carelessness and imprudence often resulted in lost personal dreams and emptiness in peoples lives.

This theme is repeatedly emphasized in the work of Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald who, in a letter from 1925, wrote:

America’s greatest promise is that something is going to happen, and after while you get tired of waiting because nothing happens to people except that they grow old. [...] The young people in America are brilliant with second-hand sophistication inherited from their betters of the war generation who to some extent worked things out for themselves. They are brave, shallow, cynical, impatient, turbulent and empty. I like them not. (Fitzgerald cited in Green [et al.]: 495)

Many more characteristic features of the extraordinary “Golden Age” are depicted in Fitzgerald’s work. Both sides of life of Americans, the one of abundance, wealth and recklessness, as well as the one of emptiness and searching the sense of life. Fitzgerald’s main protagonists are often rich and live opulent lives. Nevertheless, their lives often cease in misfortune, similarly to the life of Fitzgerald himself or to a lifespan of the great and overflowing twenties.

## **1. From a woman to a flapper**

### **1.1. Changing roles**

The end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century witnessed women who were asserting their independency on men's superiority. This pressure could be differentiated according to the aim of the independency into two streams. Firstly, in the last years of nineteenth century, women promoted freedom based on educational and economical self-reliance. Such woman, generally called the new woman, no longer wanted to feel subordinate to men concerning the financial matters. She wanted to proof that she is well capable of earning her living. They [women] were professionally trained, career and role conscious, and usually self-supporting for a major part of their lives." (Bordin) This attitude was, unquestionably, a revolt to a preceding conception of a woman, whose role was more or less of a care taker and a housewife. Following quotation gives the reader cursorily, however, an apposite description of a role of a woman during the Victorian times:

We know that it is utterly impossible for the wife of a labouring man to give up work, and, what is called take care of herself, as others can. Nor is it necessary. The back is made for its burthen. It would be just as injurious for the labourer's wife to give up her daily work, as for the lady to take to sweeping her own carpets or cooking the dinner. (Flanders: 16)

The new women maintained a totally different position, and this kind of freedom promotion prevailed, time to time weakening or intensifying, during the whole twentieth century, in essence, it can be claimed that this attitude was a similar to the one of present-day women.

The second form of alternation in women's lives, as Ruth Bordin says, was a direct consequence of the new woman movement, however, was more oriented towards freedom related to moral behavior of women. This approach could be observed in the years following the World War and mainly during the 1920s. On one hand, these women often wanted to be materially secured by their husbands, but desired personal freedom on the other. Their primal stress or concern was not laid on promotion of

financial independence, but on personal and private matters. These women were, generally, popularized as flappers<sup>1</sup>. (Bordin) (Appendix 3)

The Jazz Age flapper defined the phalanx in the 1920s. The flapper was more intent on sexual and personal freedom and taking charge of her life in terms of manners and morals, the right to drink or wear short skirts, for example, than a vocation. (Bordin)

Considering this distinction, woman protagonists in Fitzgerald's works, are more presented as flappers rather than new women.

According to this study of Fitzgerald's New Women<sup>2</sup>, the females in his novels are not the new women at all, but they would have liked to be. ... The women of Fitzgerald's transitional era ... consistently appear to long for autonomy while experiencing themselves as powerless without a male protector. (Fryer cited in Wexelblatt)

In most cases, Fitzgerald's women are dependent on their partners, husbands or parents. They do not work, do not educate themselves, but fully exploit the money ensured by somebody else. They take a full advantage of the economical independence to shop their fashionable clothes or make-up. They drive up-to-date cars and spend evenings at parties, dancing to swing, drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes.

From this point of view, Gloria Patch, one of the main protagonists of *The Beautiful and Damned*, will stand as an appropriate example of such woman, of the flapper. Throughout the book, she is fully dependent on her husband, Anthony Patch, and his money. During the period of the couple's financial crisis, she urges on Anthony to find work he would regularly go to. However, that is, basically, her entire endeavor to improve their financial resources. Most likely, her attempts to succeed as an actress are, more or less, resulting more from her keenness to be admired for her beauty rather than from an effort to increase the couple's income.

Interesting is the character of Muriel Kane. What makes her distinguished is not only the way she speaks, using fashionable words, neither the way she behaves, but it is her remarkable evolution and development. She is introduced as one of Gloria's woman

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<sup>1</sup> Flapper - A stylish, brash, hedonistic young woman with short skirts & shorter hair (<http://local.aaca.org/bntc/slang/slang.htm>)

<sup>2</sup> Fitzgerald's New Women: Harbingers of Change; written by Sarah Beebe Fryer. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press. 1988

friends, who Fitzgerald describes as a woman vamp. She was a good example of a flapper:

She [Mauriel] was in her element: her ebony hair was slicked straight back on her head; her eyes were artificially darkened; she reeked of insistent perfume. She was got up to the best of her ability as a siren more popularly a vamp – a picker up and a thrower away of men, an unscrupulous and fundamentally unmoved toyer with affections. (Fitzgerald, 1922: 89-90)

Anytime she appears in the book, she, in a way, lights up the scene or situation, either by her positive attitude to life, by her diction or by her eccentric behavior.

The final chapters portray Muriel as a self-confident and matured woman with a certain destination in her life, working for the American Red Cross, dating men, and being very satisfied with her life.

The feature of a dependant woman is present also in other writings. For example in *The Great Gatsby*, the person of Daisy Buchanan, a wife of wealthy Tom Buchanan, is a fitting example of financial expediency. Her distant young romance with Jay Gatsby, then poor soldier, had been ruptured by her refusal to marry him because of his inability to fortune her. Later in her life she marries Tom Buchanan, a man who is, on the contrary to young Gatsby, rich enough to satisfy her economical requirements. The same fate of a refusal awaits the protagonist of *This Side of Paradise*, Amory Blaine, when he, after a romance with Rosalind Connage, is turned down for the same reasons for which Daisy had not married Gatsby.

AMORY: (Quickly) Rosalind, let's get married- next week.

ROSALIND: We can't.

AMORY: Why not?

ROSALIND: Oh, we can't. I'd be your squaw in some horrible place.

AMORY: We'll have two hundred and seventy-five dollars a month all told.

[...]

ROSALIND: I can't Amory. I can't be shut away from trees and flowers, cooped up in a little flat, waiting for you. You'd hate me in a narrow atmosphere. I'd make you to hate me. (Fitzgerald, 1920: 237-240)

Fitzgerald apparently liked to portray women who were dependent in all kinds of ways. Another significant woman character portrayed in *The Beautiful and Damned* is

Dorothy, Anthony's lover from the time when he was a soldier, serving at the Camp Hooker. At a certain point in their love relationship, Dot becomes afraid that Anthony might leave her, and she starts to emotionally blackmail him by hinting of taking her own life. Reasons for her suicidal thoughts can be also apprehended as a sign of dependency, since she tells Anthony that there is no sense in life without him. Her dependency, however, is not of the financial origin, but more of the affective one.

Notwithstanding the difference between the new woman and the flapper, these women had one intention they shared. They wanted to free themselves from men's superiority. (Bordin, chapter 1)

But common to all generations of the New Woman was an emphasis on an independence from male control. For example, Daisy Miller, one of [Henry] James's American heroines, asserted, I've never allowed a gentleman to dictate to me or to interfere with anything I do. (Bordin, chapter 1)

Flapper became one of the inseparable symbols of the "Roaring Twenties". This type of a woman is well depicted in a poem by Dorothy Parker, *The Flapper* ([http://www.geocities.com/flapper\\_culture](http://www.geocities.com/flapper_culture)) (appendix 4) The reference to Fitzgerald's name in this poem is felicitous. The novelist was excellent in description and portrayal of flappers, embracing their looks, the way they dressed, put their make-up on, or how they talked and behaved. Many a moments of flappers coming under spotlights was at popular parties where they were in their element. An example of such parties, where flappers play a highly visible role is, for instance, in *The Great Gatsby*, in which the whole third chapter is dedicated to a description of such social gathering, but predominantly of its visitors, including their looks as well as behavior. The following textual moment taken from *The Great Gatsby* can refer to the line in the Parker's poem: "All spotlights focus on her pranks." Flappers liked to attract attention of other people by their outlandish manners:

The groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath; already there are wanderers, confident girls who weave here and there among the stouter and more stable, become for a sharp, joyous moment the centre of a group, and then, excited with triumph, glide on through the sea-change of faces and voices and colour under the constantly changing light. (Fitzgerald, 1925: 27)

Parties were usually very lively, where music, most presumably fashionable jazz hits, played loudly, and where alcohol and cigarettes became a commonplace. But what was more important, they were a commonplace for women as well. It was no longer scandalous to see a drunken woman or a woman with a cigarette. Such women are almost ever-present in Fitzgerald's stories.

She [a drunk girl at Gatsby's party] had drunk a quantity of champagne and during and during the course of her song she had decided, ineptly, that everything was very, very sad – she was not only singing, she was weeping too. ... A humorous suggestion was made that she sings the notes on her face, whereupon, she threw up her hands, sank into a chair, and went to a deep vinous sleep. (Fitzgerald, 1925: 34)

Fitzgerald, though, shows inebriated women in other situations than parties are. Thusly, he makes obvious, how fast the expansion of alcohol among the female part of a society was and how naturally were drunken women accepted. It became ordinary and no more surprising to meet girls under the influence of alcohol. This situation is, for example, in *This Side of Paradise*, where drunken Amory meets a woman in a bar. It is obvious that the woman had drunk too much alcohol before. She started talking to him:

'Take me home!' she cried.

'Hello!' said Amory, blinking.

'I like you,' she announced tenderly.

'I like you too.'

...

'Fella I was with's a damn fool,' confided the blue-eyed woman. 'I hate him. I want to go home with you.'

'You drunk?' queried Amory with intense wisdom. She nodded coyly.

(Fitzgerald, 1920: 196)

## 1.2. Fashion

Sadie – With the French at war, what will we do for our new fashions?

Minnie – Well always be sure to be in style if we wear just a little less. (Held cited in Armitage: 81) (Appendix: 5)

This illustrated joke by John Held, Jr. was broadly exact description of women's approach towards fashion at the beginning of the twentieth century. Style, fashion and looks in general, were another important recognition sign of women flappers. Fashion became a significant vehicle of expression of the great changes women were going through. It seemed as if they wanted to say: Here we are, new and different and we are



not afraid to show it!” Women felt that after the many alternations in behaving and in their position within a society, they also wanted to break conventions in manners of clothing, hair styles or even make-up. They did not intend to be oppressed by the old-fashioned customs. Therefore, they threw away tight nineteenth century corsets and replaced it with short, baggy dress, they cut their hair, smoothed and dyed them and they also started to use striking eye-shades and to contour their eyes with black eye-pencils. These eccentricities supported their feeling of newly gained freedom and simultaneously shocked the girls’ mothers and members of older generations:

Among women and girls, however, skirts have shortened from the ground to the knee and the lower limbs have been emphasized by sheer silk stockings; more of the arms and neck are habitually exposed; while the increasing abandonment of petticoats and corsets reveals more of the natural contours of the body. (Lynd, 159)

Except from the style of the woman vamp Muriel, Myrtle Wilson’s style also gave a true picture of fashion in 1920s. Myrtle is one of the important woman characters in *The Great Gatsby*. She was a mistress of Tom Buchanan, Daisy’s husband, and was immodestly taking advantage of his money as she let him buy her, except many other things, the trendiest clothes. In the second chapter, a party takes place in a flat rented by Tom. It serves for Tom’s and Myrtle’s secret meetings.

Mrs. Wilson had changed her costume sometimes before, and was now attired in elaborate afternoon dress of cream-coloured chiffon, which gave out a continual rustle as she swept about the room. (Fitzgerald, 1925: 21)

Considering that chiffon is a semi-transparent material, Myrtle was “sweeping about” the room in very audacious dress that would make a woman of the nineteenth century faint. Also Myrtle’s sister, Catherine, was trying to keep up with the style. When she [Catherine] moved about there was an incessant clicking of innumerable pottery bracelets jingled up and down upon her arms” (Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, 20) Fitzgerald also comments on Catherine’s hair style by describing it as sticky bob of red hair and her eyebrows plucked up and then drawn again at a more rakish angle. In the third chapter of the same novel, Nick Carraway’s<sup>1</sup> observation of the visitors arriving at

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<sup>1</sup> Nick Carraway is the narrator of the novel, *Gatsby*’s neighbor and a friend and, also a cousin of Daisy Buchanan

the party also gives us an apt description of the popular fashion style. He, for example, notices that verandas are gaudy with primary colours, and hair bobbed in strange ways, and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile (27). Nick also makes a remark about red-haired young lady or heavily beaded eyelashes (34)

## 2. Sexuality

### 2.1. Changing attitudes

The most important factor changing the view on sexuality was an argument of a German physician and neurologist Sigmund Freud. “Freud’s theory that sexuality was an essential part of being human interested both men and women during the 1920s.” (Green [et al.]: 496)

They [Victorians] saw sex everywhere and they denied it everywhere. We twentieth century post-Freudians, in the third stage of sexual change see it everywhere and affirm it everywhere. (Katherine Kish Sklar: 541)

With the skirts shorter, dresses more transparent and sleeveless, and with face-contours highlighted with mascaras, eye-liners, rouges, and lipsticks, women disposed of the old role of housewives and became sexual objects.

The flourishing of film, jazz, flappers, modern art and modern dance testified to the daring sexual culture of the age. Josephine Baker<sup>1</sup> (appendix 6) appeared semi-nude in cabaret shows across Europe. (Stearns: 253)

Ruth Bordin in her book, *Alice Freeman Palmer*<sup>2</sup> *The Evolution of a New Woman*, talks about freedom with which she [A. F. Palmer] accepted sexual attraction as a major factor in her relationship with George Palmer (Bordin). However, the author also indicates that although Palmer’s mindset towards sexual liberty was, for the major part of the American society of the late nineteenth century, very revolutionary, the real change of the attitude towards sex started with the birth of the flapper.

She [Palmer] would meet her lover clandestinely in a hotel room or the stateroom of a ship, but she did not invite discovery, as might the 1920s flapper, of these violations of accepted conventions. (Bordin)

The generation of the early twentieth century, but mostly the flapper generation broke many taboos of the Victorian America. Premarital sex, birth-control methods and

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<sup>1</sup> Josephine Baker (1906-1975) A black dancer, singer, sex symbol of the Jazz Age, famous for her ‘Banana dance’ in the movie *Siren of the Tropics*, but also a civil rights activist (refused to perform in clubs that would not let black people in and also adopted twelve multiethnic orphans) Served in the French Red Cross during the World War II

<sup>2</sup> Alice Freeman Palmer (1855–1902) She was an American educator and one of the leading defenders proponents of higher education for women in the United States.

abortion were still not a standard, nonetheless, they were accepted more freely and the taboos seemed to be more relaxed. (Lynd, 112) The different view on sex and issues linked to sexuality in the nineteenth and the twentieth century was immense and also interesting enough to attract general attention of common people, historians, as well as literary writers. In his autobiographical essay *Echoes of The Jazz Age* from 1931, Fitzgerald foreshortened the impact of the growing sexual awareness on literature in a rather witty but resourceful way:

We begin with the suggestion that Don Juan leads an interesting life (Jurgen, 1919); then we learn that there's a lot of sex around if we only knew it (Winesburg, Ohio, 1920), that adolescents lead very amorous lives (This Side of Paradise, 1920) that there are a lot of neglected Anglo-Saxon words (Ulysses, 1921), that old people don't always resist sudden temptations (Cytherea, 1922), that girls are sometimes seduced without being ruined (Flaming Youth, 1922), that even rape often turns out well (The Sheik, 1922), that glamorous English ladies are often promiscuous (The Green Hat, 1924), that in fact they devote most of their time to it (The Vortex, 1926), that its a damn good thing too (Lady Chatterley's Lover, 1928), and finally that there are an abnormal variations (The Well of Loneliness, 1928, and Sodom and Gomorrah, 1929). (Fitzgerald, 1931: 332-333)

Moreover, his opinion on the impact of literature on the sexual sub-consciousness of the youth appears in *This Side of Paradise*: "She had begun as he had, with good looks and an excitable temperament, and the rest was the result of popular novels...." (Fitzgerald, 1920: 73)

Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* was one of the first frank exposures of what was really happening within the young post-war society. Basically, it is a novel which portrays riotous life of university students and young people in general. It caused a fulmination of the older generations, which found the novel highly offensive. In this literary and largely autobiographical debut, Fitzgerald exposes, with all the sincerity typical of him, a sexual life of the novels main protagonist, a student of the Princeton University, Amory Blaine. What really caught the public's attention, however, was Blaine's unashamed sex life." (Blackwell) The author depicts not more than situations where the characters are kissing and hugging, nonetheless, the very fact that young people have *any* kind of sexual experience at all was scandalous enough. (Blackwell) Throughout the book, there are many, as Fitzgerald put it, petting moments, which

appeared disgraceful to the parents of the young growing up generation. And Fitzgerald must have known what the book was going to cause.

None of the Victorian mothers - and most of the mothers were Victorian - had any idea how casually their daughters were accustomed to be kissed. Servant-girls are that way, says Mrs. Huston-Carmelite to her popular daughter. They are kissed first and proposed to afterward. (Fitzgerald, 1920: 65)

Having in mind that premarital sex was, in the Victorian era, prohibited; it is comprehensible why *This Side of Paradise* caused so much commotion.

A heavy taboo, supported by law and by both religious and popular sanctions, rests upon sexual relationships between persons who are not married. There appears to be some tentative relaxing of this taboo among the younger generation, but in general it is as strong today as in the county-seat of forty years ago. (Lynd, 112)

In the year 1919, when *This Side of Paradise* was being written, and even in 1920 when it was published, the “sexual revolution” of 1920s had still been in its first principles. Therefore, in the first Fitzgerald’s novel, a reader can still perceive slight confusion of the young, who, on the one hand, feel curious and avid for a new kind of adventure, but somewhat diffident and uncertain, on the other. As if they knew that what they do is in contradiction of what they had been taught. One of the parts of the second chapter, *Babes in the Woods*, is introduced as follows: “Isabelle and Amory were distinctly not innocent, nor were they particularly brazen.” (Fitzgerald, 1920: 72) Even the title *Babes in the Woods* indicates the lost or, at least, confused feelings of juveniles acquainting themselves with an entirely new world of sexual experience. These feelings might arise from a struggle between values instilled by their parents and values favored among youth, which are, after all, much more exciting. During a ball, Amory and Isabelle are very keen on meeting each other. When they meet, they are very excited and eager to kiss; however, they try to pretend the opposite at first:

[. . .] and when her eyes, white and starry, proclaimed to be ingénue most, Amory was proportionately less deceived. He waited for the mask to drop off, but at the same time, he did not question her wearing it. She, on her part, was not impressed by his studied air of blasé sophistication. . . . But she accepted his pose - it was one of the dozen little conventions of this kind of affair. (Fitzgerald, 1920: 73)

Later after the dinner and some dances, they found themselves sitting in a room, apart from the party, and were approaching the moment to kiss each other for the first time. “Isabelle, I’m going back to college for six long months, and why shouldn’t we – if I could only just have one thing to remember you by-”. (Fitzgerald, 1920: 76) However, when they are about to kiss, they are interrupted by newcomers. Their affair is over. When Isabelle arrives home, and is asked if she and Amory had had a time in the den her reaction is:

In her eyes was the light of an idealist, the inviolate dreamer of Joan-like dreams. No, she answered. I don’t do that sort of thing any more; he asked me to, but I said no. (Fitzgerald, 1920: 77)

Isabelle is, obviously, aware of the reality that her behavior is a little immoral, and withholds her actual feelings from others. Nonetheless, her last word in this part is: “Damn!”, which expresses her real state of mind. Also the phrase “any more”, in the previous citation, indicates that post-war youth is becoming tempestuous in very early age. It must be taken into account that Isabelle was only sixteen years old.

As stated before, the 1920s were a time of rapid changes considering the attitudes towards sexual intimacy which unavoidably influenced everybody. These changes were also noticeable in the author’s works. *The Great Gatsby* was published in 1925, only five years after *This Side of Paradise*; nevertheless, Fitzgerald skillfully expressed how rapid the transformation, during these five years, in sexual behavior, was. One of the topics of *The Great Gatsby* was infidelity. The author did not have to detail sexual acts of his characters; he rather referred to a general acceptance of the fact that infidelity, in 1920s, had its position within the American society. An introduction of the issue of adultery in *The Great Gatsby* comes in the very first chapter. It is when Nick Carraway visits The Buchanans and learns about Tom’s affair with some woman from New York. The news is revealed by Jordan Baker, a friend of Tom’s wife Daisy:

‘This Mr. Gatsby you spoke of is my neighbor’ – I began.  
‘Don’t talk. I want to hear what happens.’  
‘Is something happening?’ I enquired innocently.  
‘You mean to say you don’t know?’ said Mrs. Baker, honestly surprised.  
‘I thought everybody knew.’  
‘I don’t.’  
‘Why’ – she said hesitantly, ‘Tom’s got some woman in New York.’  
‘Got some woman?’ I said blankly. (Fitzgerald, 1925: 12)

Jordan's inquisitiveness might seem rather disgraceful in this situation, but it proves that unfaithfulness was considered something what made people curious rather than shocked. It even seems that Jordan finds the situation distracting, what more, she possibly would like to glean some new information to excel at party gossips. Nick, on the contrary, seems perplexed and uneasy and he does not know how to behave after the conversation. His feelings might well represent Fitzgerald's view and embitterment towards such changes in the society. The author's feelings are obvious in his essay:

By 1926 the universal preoccupation with sex had become a nuisance. (I remember a perfectly mated, contented young mother asking my wife's advice about having an affair right away, though she had no one especially in mind, because don't you think its sort of undignified when you get much over thirty?) (Fitzgerald, 1931: 334)

From the conversation between Jordan and Nick is evident how fast transformation in society's consciousness was. In addition to that, when the party at Tom and Myrtle's flat takes place, it is clear that infidelity is not, by many people, judged as something immoral. There is even a slight description of sympathizing feelings for the two betrayers.

Catherine leaned close to me and whispered in my ear: 'Neither of them can stand the person they're married to.'  
'Can't they?'  
'Can't *stand* them.' She looked at Myrtle and then at Tom. 'What I say is, why go on living with them if they can't stand them? If I was them I'd get a divorce and get married to each other right away. [. . .] 'You see,' she cried triumphantly. She lowered her voice again. It's really his wife that's keeping them apart. She's a Catholic, and they don't believe in divorce. (Fitzgerald, 1925: 22-23)

## 2.2. Birth-control and abortion

Following citation from the novel *The Beautiful and Damned* will indicate a rudiment of a substantial alternation, which had radically changed lives of many women and consequently of many families in following decades. It is an excerpt from a chapter called *Symposion* and it catches a part of a dialogue between Gloria and Anthony:

A: 'Is it certain?'

G: 'I don't know anything. I've always hated obstetrics, or whatever you call them. I thought I'd have a child some time. But not now. Do you want me to have it?' she asked listlessly.

A: 'I'm indifferent. That is, I'm neutral. If you have it I'll probably be glad. If you don't--well, that's all right too.'

[...]

A: 'You'd think you'd been singled out of all the women in the world for this crowning indignity.'

G: 'What if I do!' she cried angrily. 'It isn't an indignity for them. It's their one excuse for living. It's the one thing they're good for. It is an indignity for me.' (Fitzgerald, 1922: 182-183)

Gloria's consideration of an abortion and her consequent decision to undergo the operation was rather revolutionary, if a reader regards the time. She represents a woman, whose values momentarily changed. She is one of low number of women who were thinking of a child murder, as the abortion was referred to in the 1917 issue of the *Birth Control Review*. (Sauer: 61) Such view was traditionally Christian; nonetheless, most Americans shared a similar opinion. (Sauer: 61) However, as the following citations claim, Gloria was not the only woman decided for the abortion, the issue of parenthood-control methods was slowly becoming a point of interest among the American society.

Americans of the 1900–1930 still seemed to retain divergent attitudes towards abortion. On the one hand, all of the limited abortion literature of the period remained highly critical of abortion. [...] On the other hand, writers continued to observe that a sizeable segment of the population did not share their sentiments. (Sauer: 61)

Traditionally, voluntary control of parenthood is strongly tabooed in this culture, as is all discussion of sexual adjustment involved in mating, but this prohibition is beginning to be somewhat lifted, [...] (Lynd: 123)

During the 1920s no break with traditional morality could be found in the American literature, but in the 1930s, a major breakthrough occurred in the history of American abortion attitudes occurred. (Sauer: 61)

### **2.3. Intimacy of an automobile**

Among the many factors that influenced the sexual mores was also an expansion of the automobile industry. However strange it might seem to contemporary youth,



Murray S. Davis in his review on a book, *The First Sexual Revolution: The Emergence of Male Heterosexuality in Modern America* written by Kevin White, claims:

White also ignores the effects of popularization of the automobile in the 1920s among young middle-class heterosexuals. A young man with a car now could take his flapper sweetie away from a scrutiny of her family to some place where the couple could pet in privacy, an option that his father as a young man did not have (Davis: 218)

In *The Echoes of the Jazz Age*, Fitzgerald writes:

As far back as 1915 the unchaperoned young people of the smaller cities had discovered the mobile privacy of the automobile given to young Bill at sixteen to make him self-reliant. (Fitzgerald, 1931: 330)

Similar serviceability of an automobile of which Fitzgerald speaks about in his essay is, for example, evident in *The Beautiful and Damned*. When Anthony and Gloria, at the very beginning of their relationship, meet at a dance party, they both long for intimacy. They recede from the restaurant and from their companions and when they walk in the streets, Amory is impatient:

‘Let’s take a taxi and ride around a bit!’ he suggested, without looking at her.  
‘Oh, Gloria, Gloria!’

A cab yawned at the curb. As it moved off like a boat on a labyrinthine ocean and lost itself among the inchoate night masses of the great buildings, among the now stilled, now strident, cries and clangings, Anthony put his arm around the girl, drew her over to him and kissed her damp, childish mouth. (Fitzgerald, 1922: 95-96)

Another textual moment similar to this one appears in *This Side of Paradise* where Fitzgerald describes secret professionalism of popular daughters:

But the P.D. [popular daughter] is in love again... it was odd, wasn’t it? – that though there was so much room left in the taxi the P.D. and the boy from Williams were somehow crowded out and had to go in a separate car. Odd! Didn’t you notice how flushed the P.D. was when she arrived just seven minutes late? (This Side of Paradise: 66)

Another allusion on the car as a helping factor for young peoples private lives is in the very same chapter, *Petting*. Amory gives his company to one of the ‘P.D.s’:

‘Why on earth are we here?’ he asked the girl with the green combs one night as they sat in some ones limousine, outside the Country Club in Louisville.

‘I don’t know. I’m just a full of the devil.’

‘Let’s be frank – we’ll never see each other again. I wanted to come out here with you because I thought you were the best-looking girl inside.’ (Fitzgerald, 1920: 67)

Reversals in the general attitude towards sex, during the twenties, were immense. As demonstrated in this chapter, being sexually attractive was not a sin and was less denounced. Kissing became popular and was not necessarily followed by a marriage. Premarital sex or even an extra-marital one became less exceptional and, finally, issues concerning parenthood control and abortion started to be less tabooed.

Among the many factors, which influenced these changes in attitudes, was also the mentioned use of cars; however, it was also advancement in technology in general that played a distinct role. In 1920s, there was a great expansion of various technological comforts that allowed young people to have more contended intimate life. But the expansion of technology is a topic for the following chapter.

### **3. Technology**

The nineteenth century was witnessing a so called industrial revolution. However, as Guy Reynolds claims in his introduction to *The Great Gatsby*, it was not until the early twentieth century, when the inventions of the previous decades became popularized and widely utilized: electricity, cars, telephones, movies or photography. (Reynolds: VII) Not very often does Fitzgerald portray his characters actually utilizing these prosperity outcomes. His description of material modernity is more directed towards the consequences these things had on people's lives, behavior, thinking, relationships and other aspects of life of the American society. This chapter is predominantly devoted to the impact of an automobile, telephones, photography and electricity. The influence of technological progress can be, to some extent, perceived in *This Side of Paradise* as well as in *The Beautiful and Damned*, however, this study is, particularly, aimed at *The Great Gatsby*, since this novel is the best demonstration of Fitzgerald's fascination with modern technology. Moreover, regarding the time setting, *The Great Gatsby* will stand as the best example, for it could be considered the most modern of these three titles.

#### **3.1. Automobiles (appendix 7)**

'Why on earth do you need to know what's changing this country?' said a lifelong resident and shrewd observer of the Middle West. 'I can tell you what's happening in just four letters: A-U-T-O!' (Lynd: 251)

Obviously, an automobile had a great influence on the modern society. As was presented in the previous chapter, among many other advantages, a car gave the privilege of seclusion and privacy to young people, which might have been one of the reasons that made popularization of car so swift. However, the biggest benefit of an automobile was, naturally, a prospect of mobility. "It's a fine thing for people to get out that way on Sundays. No questions about it. They see different things and get a larger outlook." (Lynd: 260) This is a claim of an older man, who had spent his day off by traveling around in a car. It serves as an evidence that automobile had also changed the way people spent their free time. They could go for trips out of a city or a village, their experience and opportunities became broader and more interesting. (Lynd: 260) Last but not least, traveling around became more comfortable than ever before. In *The Beautiful*

*and Damned*, it was not, most likely, just a coincidence that Anthony's idea of buying an automobile came to his head after Fitzgerald let both, him and Gloria, travel home from Rye to New York by a train:

On the crowded train back to New York the seat behind was occupied by a super-respiring Latin whose last few meals had obviously been composed entirely of garlic. They reached the apartment gratefully, almost hysterically, and Gloria rushed for a hot bath in the reproachless bathroom. (Fitzgerald, 1922: 157)

Fitzgerald, obviously, stresses the discomfort of traveling by train and, as can be seen in the following citation, highlights the advantages of owning a car. After the apparently unpleasant journey, Anthony decided:

'I've got it,' he was exclaiming as though he had just caught a mouse.  
'We'll get a car.'

[...]

'Give me a second to explain, can't you? just let's leave our stuff with Dick and just pile a couple of suitcases in our car, the one we're going to buy – we'll have to have one in the country anyway - and just start out in the direction of New Haven. You see, as we get out of commuting distance from New York, the rents'll get cheaper, and as soon as we find a house we want we'll just settle down. (Fitzgerald, 1922: 157-158)

Anthony's logical justification which he employs in the sentence well have to have one in the country anyway makes it clear that living in a village did not have to mean being separated from the city life anymore. Owning a car became a matter of course. Such conclusion can be drawn also from the following citation where Lynd explains how a car became an elementary part of people's lives:

As, at the turn of the century, business class people began to feel apologetic if they did not have a telephone, so ownership of an automobile has now reached the point of being an accepted essential of normal living. (Lynd: 253)

People living in a village, on suburbs or within a commuting distance out of the central urban area, could now more easily and comfortably travel to the central city not only to their occupations, but also to do shopping or to socialize. When Anthony and Gloria moved to Marietta, they stayed in contact with their friends from New York and could still join parties there. In addition, the distance became less a problem also for business people. For instance, one day, Joseph Bloeckman, who works in a film industry, stops

at Anthony and Gloria's house to ask Gloria to join him on his business trip to some distant town in the New York state. Such trips could be now more frequent and popular, as well as a representative part of a business activity. When Bloeckman and Gloria return, she excitedly says to Anthony: "Dearest!" she cried. "We've been for the best jaunt - all over New York State." (Fitzgerald, 1922:195) Even the New York State was now small enough to get all over it in less than one day.

As Julian Cowley asserts, the 1920s were, generally, time when many people became rich and wanted to parade their possessions to others. This tendency applied to automobiles as well. (Cowley: 100)

[. . .], a car is not just a vehicle for physical mobility, for moving from one place to another, it is also a symbol of social mobility, with large, flamboyant automobiles declaring the superiority of their drivers over the owners of more mundane ones. (Cowley: 88-89)

*The Great Gatsby* seems to serve as a great example, since there are many occasions where a car is an indicator of a social status of the owners. Fitzgerald often pictures it as a fashionable accessory rather than simple means of transport:

When Myrtle Wilson chooses a taxi at the train station, the new lavender cab is just one among many waiting for passengers. Here, the selection of this particular vehicle over four others makes the point that she is not really interested in transportation. Myrtle is, in effect, buying a commodity: new as opposed to used; a super-feminine lavender versus an ordinary blue or black. (O Meara)

When Nick, in the third chapter, describes Gatsby's majestic mansion, he also mentions Gatsby's automobiles. They, similarly to the house, are manifest signs of the protagonist's enormous wealth.

On weekends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station-wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains. (Fitzgerald, 1925: 26)

As said in the introduction to the 1920s, half of the cars owned by people in the twenties were popular Fords. Through *The Great Gatsby* Fitzgerald makes it clear that its main protagonist was far wealthier than rest of the people in the story. That is, most probably, why Gatsby's name is connected with the English Rolls-Royce, which was

not as common as Fords. From this example it follows that a car is, again, a sign of a social status, in Gatsby's case, the car is means of impressing Daisy.

When Fitzgerald, through the eyes of Nick Carraway, detailed the description of Gatsby's Rolls-Royce, it was quite obvious that cars were made not only to transport people, but also to comfort them. Emphasis was also imposed on the design of the car and its devices:

It was a rich cream colour, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hat-boxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of wind-shields that mirrored a dozen suns. Sitting down behind many layers of glass in a sort of green leather conservatory, we started to town. (Fitzgerald, 1925: 41)

Considering fortune, the difference between Nick and his much wealthier neighbor Gatsby can be also noticed when the reader compares the cars of these two characters. In an introduction to *The Great Gatsby*, Guy Reynolds says:

Again at one point Nick complains that his own car is old: I had a dog – at least I had him for few days until he ran away – and an old Dodge and a Finnish woman, who made my bed and cooked breakfast and muttered Finnish wisdom to herself over the electric stove. (p.4) With this one adjective [old] Fitzgerald reveals a world where a young man can already own a car and, even more tellingly, where he can bemoan its age. (Reynolds: IX)

What Reynolds wanted to stress was the fast progress and expansion of the automobile industry. Cars which were, probably, considered exclusive at the beginning of the century, were now, in the year 1922<sup>1</sup>, seen as old and unfashionable. However, in addition to the study of a car as an expression of a social status, Nick's vehicle is also a sign of his standing within a society. His old dodge, in comparison to Gatsby's Rolls-Royce, indicates that the gap between the two protagonists, considering their social position, was noticeable.

One more interesting moment when Gatsby's car becomes a centre of attention is when Gatsby and Nick drive to New York. On their way, they meet a limousine where people of black complexion are its passengers. Nick recounts: I laughed aloud as the yolks of their eyeballs rolled towards us in haughty rivalry." (Fitzgerald, 1926: 44) This situation might be comprehended quite ambiguously. Either the colored travelers

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<sup>1</sup> 1922 – year when the story of *The Great Gatsby* takes place.

feel haughty because, although they are black, they can already possess such car as limousine is (Carter), or it is simply because they see the contest between the limousine and Gatsby's Rolls-Royce. In the latter case, cars would once more become means of fortune demonstration.

### 3.2. Telephones (appendix 8)

“In making us a homogeneous people, announced a telephone advertisement in 1915, the telegraph and the telephone have been important factors.” (Fischer: 163) Telephones, similarly to cars, made America and the rest of the world smaller and better reachable. There are many situations where Fitzgerald has his characters organizing their daily matters through the telephone. As in *The Beautiful and Damned*, where Gloria calls long-distance to arrange Muriel's visit, or where she makes an appointment with Mr. Joseph Black and is connected with him after talking to two telephone ladies. Furthermore, when Anthony wants to see his mistress, Dorothy, he simply calls her to arrange the meeting. Even the bad news of Anthony's disinheritance is revealed to him via telephone. Owing to the prevalence of the telephone, New York is shrinking as the rest of the world is. (Reynolds: XI) Communication is improved, people are interlinked.

Telephone companies complained about frivolous use of telephones and told their users to be businesslike. Their machines were, after all, important. Not until the 1920s did the phone companies catch on to what people really wanted from this wonderful new machine. They wanted to be drawn into a kind of living tether with one another. (Fischer and Carroll cited in Lienhard)

Also Zelda Fitzgerald described the telephoning vogue quite characteristically:

‘We're having some people,’ everybody said to everybody else, ‘and we want you to join us,’ and they said, ‘We'll telephone.’ All over New York people telephoned. They telephoned from one hotel to another to people on other parties that they couldn't get there – that they were engaged. [...] (Zelda Fitzgerald cited in Mizener)

However, in *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald gives the telephone another dimension. There are many times when the telephone is used, especially by Gatsby, who uses it for his mysterious business conversations. Throughout the whole book, Gatsby remains behind a shadow of mystery. There are rumors circling around him and his background, education, his occupation and origins of his wealth. Also Gatsby's

telephone conversations are enigmatic and contribute to Gatsby's obscurity. The reader never hears Gatsby's telephone dialogues. Gatsby is always interrupted to have someone on the line. During the party in the third chapter, he must even leave the scene twice to arrange his phone calls: "Almost at the moment when Mr. Gatsby identified himself, a butler hurried towards him with the information that Chicago was calling him" (*The Great Gatsby*: 32) A few pages later, the butler comes again: "Philadelphia wants you on the phone, sir." (*The Great Gatsby*: 35) In the introduction to *The Great Gatsby*, Reynolds also points out the revealing moment of nature of Gatsby's business:

Most significantly, Nick gains the vital clue to Gatsby's criminality in Slagel's aborted phone call from Chicago. 'Young Parke's in trouble,' he said rapidly. They picked him up when he handed the bonds over the counter. They got a circular from New York giving 'em the numbers just five minutes before. What d'you know about that, hey? You never can tell in these hick towns –' (Fitzgerald cited in Reynolds: X)

On the one hand, Gatsby's telephone is displayed as a means of concealing illegal business conversations, but on the other hand, it gives Nick and the reader the opportunity to expose Gatsby's criminal background. Taking in consideration what the advertisement publicized at the beginning of this subchapter claims, Fitzgerald, on the contrary to the positive contribution of the telephone, "sardonically notes the criminal usage of technology." (Reynolds: XI) "Gatsby can only maintain his shady contacts back in the Midwestern towns of Detroit and Chicago because the telephone has now shrunk the United States." (Reynolds: XI)

Regardless Fitzgerald's rather ironic depiction of telephone misuse, the important point that the author also makes obvious is that business could be, in those days, pursued more smoothly with the telephone in the office.

Moreover, the telephone in *The Great Gatsby* also conceals the immoral relationship between Tom and his mistress Myrtle. In the first chapter, it is now Tom who leaves the scene to arrange a phone call, which is, apparently, from his mistress. Jordan Baker, who is one of the witnesses of this situation, says: "She [Myrtle] might have the decency not to telephone him at dinner time." (Fitzgerald, 1925: 12) Once again, Fitzgerald points out the immoral assistance of this modern and popularized device that the telephone in the 1920s, definitely, was.



### 3.3. Electricity

“Fitzgerald was born<sup>1</sup> into the America of the horse, gaslight and railroad, but by 1925 the world was made of electricity, cars and telephones.” (Reynolds: VII) The many technological changes that occurred during his life must have been, inevitably, reflected in the writers work. Although electricity had been introduced to American homes long before the time in which Fitzgerald’s stories take place, its expansion and serviceability was rather slow and, according to the study of Mr. and Mrs. Lynd, it was not until the middle twenties that most homes were provided with electric light:

Over 95 per cent of Middletown’s houses were without electricity in 1890; by 1916, 60 per cent were using electricity for lighting purposes, and in June, 1925, 99 per cent of the homes were wired and presumably at least lighted by electricity. (Lynd: 98)

The growth of electricity usage meant more electrical devices to be used at homes. Electric irons, vacuum cleaners, curlers and so on. (Lynd: 172). According to Reynolds, Fitzgerald was very much influenced by this technological progress: “The impress of such technological modernity is felt throughout the text.” (Reynolds: VI) Although Fitzgerald did not very frequently mention these modern gadgets upon their actual use, still, the reader can feel how affected Fitzgerald was by the many modern appliances which surrounded the Golden Age in a great degree. Reynolds comments on *The Great Gatsby* text:

Even on the very first page of the text, Nick Carraway’s narrative introduces us to a world of insistent modernity and technological innovation. He compares Gatsby’s heightened sensitivity to the promises of life to that of seismograph, one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. (Reynolds: VI)

Even comic touches often depend on such notation: There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butlers thumb.(p.26) (Reynolds: IV)

The comic touch connected with description of technology, which Reynolds talks about, can be also sensed or perceived in *The Beautiful and Damned*, particularly in Anthony’s

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<sup>1</sup> Fitzgerald was born in 1896

attitudinal portrayal of Joseph Bloeckman: “I detest these underdone men, he thought coldly. Boiled looking! Ought to be shoved back in the oven; just one more minute would do it.” (Fitzgerald, 1922: 89) The oven is not mentioned here in the context of an actual cooking process, in spite of this, or rather *for* this reason, the reader might get the feeling that this appliance must have been considered a quite common gadget, if it comes to Anthony’s mind out of thin air.

If there was something what really impressed Fitzgerald, it surely was the growing and expanding presence of electric lighting. It is not only that he mentions electric lamps very frequently, but he pays a lot of attention to light in general. Reynolds claims: “Most readers remember the novel tremendously atmospheric, but the ambient effects rest on Fitzgerald’s precise details of light and colour.” (Reynolds: VII) Although Reynolds speaks solely about *The Great Gatsby*, detailing of lights and shadows applies also to other Fitzgerald’s works. Following excerpts from *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned* should serve as sufficient evidence: “Her voice was full of laughter, laughter undefined as the varying shadows playing between fire and lamp upon her hair. O Lord!” (Fitzgerald, 1922: 60) Use of colors was Fitzgerald’s typical technical device. For this author, the atmosphere of ever-present and changing light is very characteristic: “Anthony moved about, magician-like, turning the mushroom lamp into an orange glory. The stirred fire burnished the copper andirons on the hearth-” (Fitzgerald, 1922: 57) Describing Anthony’s move as magician-like might indicate that electric lighting was still not a commonplace and that turning on a lamp can be compared to a magic. Another atmospheric moment is from *This Side of Paradise*: “Amory reached above their heads and turned out the electric light, so that they were in the dark, except for the red glow that fell through the door from the reading-room lamps.” (Fitzgerald, 1920: 76) Also the light in the following excerpt gives the situation an exceptional spirit:

Anthony, sitting at one end of the sofa, examined her profile against the foreground of the lamp: the exquisite regularity of nose and upper lip, the chin, faintly decided, balanced beautifully on a rather short neck. On a photograph she must have been completely classical, almost cold - but the glow of her hair and cheeks, at once flushed and fragile, made her the most living person he had ever seen. (Fitzgerald, 1922: 57)

By 1925, the year of publishing of *The Great Gatsby*, the electric lighting was, as stated above, more or less a matter of course. Simply depicting lamp-light was no longer topical or attractive and turning a switch lost its magical effect. It is most likely for this reason that Fitzgerald, in *The Great Gatsby*, gives the electric lighting and light effects in general, more complex dimension than that of plain brightness. Reynolds proposes following question:

Is Gatsby a natural being, a genuine bringer of sunshine? Or is the light he brings to Daisy (and Nick too) artificial – a lighting effect produced by money rather than personality? (Reynolds: IX)

In the fifth chapter Nick recounts:

When I came home to West Egg that night I was afraid for a moment that my house was on fire. Two o'clock and the whole corner of the peninsula was blazing with light, which fell unreal on the shrubbery and made thin elongating glints upon the roadside wires. Turning a corner, I saw that it was Gatsby's house, lit from tower to cellar. (Fitzgerald, 1925: 52)

Gatsby's house itself was a demonstration of his wealth and lavishness. When Nick claims that the whole corner of peninsula was blazing with light, he, of course, means the electric light which was coming of the Gatsby's mansion, however, this glaze can have its symbolic meaning. It can be compared to a glaze of gold – wealth. Therefore, it could represent Gatsby's money, which was famed not only in that corner of the peninsula, but in whole New York City. Following textual moments can stand as assistance to this theory:

At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundred feet of canvas and enough colored lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden. (p.26)

Here, the lights were brought for Gatsby's opulent parties, and were also an illustration of the organizers richness. Also next citation appears to support the conception of electric light being a symbol of wealth: "We'll go down-stairs," interrupted Gatsby. He flipped a switch. The gray windows disappeared as the house glowed full of light. (p.61) Or when Nick one night leaves the Buchanans he recounts that "They [Buchanans] came to the door with me and stood side by side in a cheerful square of light." (Fitzgerald, 1925, Chapter 1)

On the contrary, when Fitzgerald introduces Myrtle, a working-class woman, her first appearance in the novel is “the thickish figure of a woman blocked out the light from the office door” (p.17) This suspiciously negative description flows as from the attribute “thickish,” but also the fact that she blocked out the light might be Nicks, and thus Fitzgerald’s, comment on her lower-class origin and hence her, comparing to Gatsby’s wealth, lack of money. Gatsby and the Buchanans are surrounded by electric lights and she, Myrtle, blocks it.

#### **4. Mass Culture and consumerism**

In the Victorian America, a puritan way of life was promoted. People sought pleasure and enjoyment in actually refusing it. Warren I. Susman claims: “In the 1870s, William Graham Sumner<sup>1</sup> said that hard work and self-denial equaled capitalism; the savings bank depositor was the true hero of civilization!” (Susman: 111) This attitude was to be changed in its foundations: “Now the world really seemed to break in two: the American learned that he was largely to think of himself as a consumer.” (Susman: 111) Also in the study of Mr. and Mrs. Lynd, consumerism is considered to be a fundamental alter in peoples attitudes towards money spending:

The American citizen’s first importance to his country is no longer that of citizen but that of consumer. Consumption is new necessity. The way to make a business boom is to buy. (Lynd: 88)

##### **4.1. An advertisement as an assistant of consumerism (appendix 9)**

An advertisement became a very influential device in inducing people to become a part of a consumerist chain. This was no surprise, since promotion of products became much easier with the popularization of radio, popular magazines and newspapers, which were, unquestionably, important auxiliary means of advertising phenomenon. (Lynd: 81) Moreover, Susman explains why the advertisement diffused so easily:

After all, there were the cartoons and comics, increasingly visual advertising, and motion pictures. There were also great tabloids, newspapers like The Daily News in New York...” (Susman: 111)

Considering *The Beautiful and Damned*, apart from the textual moments where Fitzgerald mentions predominantly magazines as a source of advertisements, he excellently captures an important advertising device – the language. Interesting part is when Anthony seeks work. He reads an advertisement in newspapers: “YOU CAN

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<sup>1</sup> William Graham Sumner – 1840-1910 – a Yale professor of political and social science; ‘known for his provocative ideas and rigorous intellectual standards. In his lectures and writings, Sumner became one of the leading proponents of laissez-faire economics and Social Darwinism, opposing all government efforts to regulate business or to combat social inequality.’ (<http://us.history.wisc.edu/hist102/bios/14.html>)

SELL!!! Why not earn while you learn? Our salesmen make \$50-\$200 weekly.” (Fitzgerald, 1922: chapter *Another Winter*) The language is concise, clear and alluring. At the meeting of people who reacted to this advertisement, there is an agent discoursing on what kind of work the advertisement offers. Regarding diction and attractiveness of a good advertisement, this man’s speech seems to be a perfect parallel to the above mentioned newspapers announcement:

‘This bright and sunny morning you picked up your favorite newspaper and you found an advertisement which made the plain, unadorned statement that you could sell. That was all it said - it didn’t say what, it didn’t say how, it didn’t say why. It just made one single solitary assertion that *you* and *you* and *you*’ - business of pointing - ‘could sell. (Fitzgerald, 1922: 331-332)

The man’s language is, similarly to the advertisement, clear, alluring and concentrated on attracting the listeners. That is why it can be understood as an equivalent to the intention of newspapers advertisements, which are to attract its readers. Fitzgerald was aware of the impact of advertisement devices.

Except the language, the author also seems to stress, through the person of the speaker, that a good advertisement should be commercially attractive, considering its form or appearance: “He was rather small and rather pretty, with the commercial rather than the thespian sort of prettiness.” (Fitzgerald, 1922: 331) Moreover, the power of the advertising business, or rather the ability to manipulate, seems to be portrayed in the way the agent manipulates his audience:

With perfect assurance the young man had taken his listeners in hand and his words when they came were steady and confident and of the school of straight from the shoulder. (Fitzgerald, 1922: 331)

Besides underlining the aspects of advertisements in the above scene, Fitzgerald here also highlights that selling of the consumer products has now become something that must be learned and refined; that selling is now a question of art. Courses where salesmen were trained in new techniques of marketing and new ways of persuasion of consumers or buyers became not only popular, but also necessary. (Cowley: 100)

In *The Great Gatsby*, an advertisement even becomes one of the symbols central to the story. The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg which is an image on a billboard that

propagates a practice of an oculist from Queens, appears to George Wilson as the eyes of God:

‘God knows what you’ve been doing, everything you’ve been doing. You may fool me, but you can’t fool God!’  
Standing behind him, Michaelis saw with a shock that he was looking at the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg, which had just emerged, pale and enormous, from the dissolving night.  
‘God sees everything,’ repeated Wilson.  
‘That’s an advertisement,’ Michaelis assured him. (Fitzgerald, 1925: 102)

The strong affect of the billboard also fell upon Nick, since he recounts: “[...] and now I turned my head as though I had been warned of something behind. Over the ashheaps the giant eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg kept their vigil [...]” (Fitzgerald, 1925: 79) Furthermore, Reynolds also thinks that when Daisy compliments Jay Gatsby by saying ““You resemble the advertisement of the man’ [...] ‘You know the advertisement of the man –.”” (Fitzgerald, 1925: 76), she, actually, refers to the advertisement of T. J. Eckleburg. (Reynolds: 118, note 15) Even though it might not have been Fitzgerald’s intention, through the advertisement of T. J. Eckleburg, reader can sense the enormous response that the advertisement business has had in those days. This thesis is admissible also for Julian Cowley, who claims:

Doctor Eckleburg’s advertising hoarding is a realistic detail from the consumer culture of the 1920s. [...] The hoarding assumes potent significance at the end of the novel when George Wilson mistakes the eyes for those of an omniscient God. Fitzgerald seems to suggest that consumerism and materialism have taken the place of spiritual values in modern America and have become pervasive. (Cowley: 23)

The advertisement brought a certain kind of uniformity – women wanted to have same home appliances, people ate what the advertisement asserted to be healthy, they watched movies which the advertisement told them to watch, listened to same popular songs and everybody desired to look fashionable and trendy. And the consumerism nourished. According to Mr. and Mrs. Lynd, the advertising in general, including movies, press or radio had had a great impact on “[...] habits of thought as to what things are essential to living and multiplying optional occasions for spending money.” (Lynd: 81-82)

When Gloria yearns for a new squirrel coat – “[...] I could think of nothing except how I wanted a gray squirrel coat [...]” (Fitzgerald, 1922: 328) – it is an evident sign of her consumption habit. Also the following excerpt shows Gloria’s shopping desire and favor of consumerism: “[...] she had known that it was all hers, every shop and all it held, every adult toy glittering in a window, all hers for the asking.” (Fitzgerald, 1922: 361)

*The Great Gatsby* is often regarded as a guide to consumerism of the twenties. Reynolds says:

At the heart of *The Great Gatsby* is a central insight: Fitzgerald’s near-clairvoyant understanding that the twentieth century was to be structured by consumerism, financial speculation and the rise of the leisure class. (Reynolds XII)

When Daisy, in *The Great Gatsby*, expresses herself that Gatsby resembles the advertisement of the man (p.76), Reynolds asserts:

This is surely a devastating moment, since it means that the doomed romance of Daisy and Gatsby is largely founded on her love for shirts and his capacity to remind her of the advertising image of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg: a passion founded on appearances and the consumerist self. (Reynolds: XIII)

Myrtle Wilson is another exemplary embodiment of a consumerist. Through the novel the reader can feel that her relationship with Tom is also influenced by Tom’s ability to provide her with the consumerist items. “We see Myrtle buying various items, but should recognise that in turn she is, in a sense, being bought by Tom Buchanan.” (Cowley: 24) This can be perceived in the second chapter, when Myrtle, Tom and Nick travel to New York: “At the news-stand she bought a copy of Town Tattle and a moving picture magazine and in the station drugstore some cold cream and small flask of perfume.” (p.18) A dog will top these items later on: “‘I want to get one of those dogs,’ she said earnestly. ‘I want to get one for the apartment. They are nice to have – a dog.’” (p.19) Remarkable is when Myrtle says: “they are nice to have”, which might indicate why she wants the dog so much. It seems that the animal was going to be nothing more than a part of her leisure-class image, which she enjoyed to the fullest when being with Tom. Having a dog was, presumably, fashionable in those days. Even animals became a part of the consumerist chain.



## 4.2. Moving pictures

Moving pictures became one of the most influential mass culture technologies that the beginning of the last century recorded. It gave people possibility to escape from their everyday lives and join different ones – either full of romance, wit or adventure. One advertisement from *Saturday Evening Post* declares:

Go to a motion picture . . . and let yourself go.  
[...] They [movies] take you completely out of yourself into a wonderful new world . . . Out of the cage of everyday existence! If only for an afternoon or an evening – escape! (Saturday Evening Post advertisement cited in Lynd: 265)

In *This Side of Paradise*, when Amory visits a movie show, the “escapism” from the real life can be sensed from the atmosphere that the protagonist details. The fact that people left reality behind and indulged into a “pseudo-reality” is in the following scene fully evident, the spectators, certainly, *are* “letting their selves go”:

After supper they attended the movies, where Amory was fascinated by the glib comments of a man in front of him, as well as by the wild yelling and shouting.  
‘Yoho!’  
‘Oh, honey-baby—you’re so big and strong, but oh, so *gentle!*’  
‘Clinch!’  
‘Oh, *Clinch!*’  
‘Kiss her, kiss ‘at lady, *quick!*’  
‘Oh-h-h——!’

A group began whistling ‘By the Sea,’ and the audience took it up noisily. This was followed by an indistinguishable song that included much stamping and then by an endless, incoherent dirge. (Fitzgerald, 1920: 48)

Interesting point that Amory makes when describing the atmosphere is, when he mentions “the row of upper classmen in front.” (p.48) It might indicate that movies were blurring the differences between social classes. Not only that Amory, although being a student, could afford going to the same kind of entertainment as people from upper classes, but, moreover, the portrayed behavior of the audience was not distinguished by the social origin of the people. Everybody watched one movie and had similar emotional reactions to it, regardless their social class. The “upper class men” that Amory mentions, however, were still not very common visitors of the moving pictures. At the very beginning of movie theatre shows, the performances were,

particularly, visited by lower classes rather than the more affluent ones. In the first chapter of his cultural study of a film, *Movie-Made America*, Robert Sklar says:

Then, in 1893, came Edison's kinetoscope peep show, and in 1896, large-screen motion projection. [...] The urban workers, the immigrants and the poor had discovered a new medium of entertainment without the aid, and indeed beneath the notice, of the custodians and arbiters of middle-class culture. (Sklar: 4)

In addition, Steven J. Ross submits following figures, which support Sklar's assertion:

A survey conducted in New York in 1912 found that 70 percent of audiences were blue-collar workers, 25 percent clericals, and 5 percent business class. During the next several years, the class composition slowly changed as entrepreneurs opened elegant "movie palaces" that attracted more middle class patrons. Yet, as late as 1924, the Motion Picture Theatre Owners' Association insisted that 80% of the movie patrons were either poor or only moderately well. (Ross: 337)

Ross also claims that "many scholars had held that mass culture lulled the working classes into believing they were happier than they really were [...]" (Ross: 334) This might be one of the reasons for the rather unbalanced number between lower and higher social class visitors; the people from lower classes, most likely, had more reasons to "escape" from their real lives than those of upper classes.

In *The Beautiful and Damned*, Fitzgerald also gives a true picture of the significant impact of the movie industry. He does so through the person of Richard Caramel, who is a promising literary author. He writes his debut, a novel called *The Demon Lover*, which is a great accomplishment, but becomes even more successful after the plot is bought by William Jordan, a man who works in the movie industry. Caramel's novel after being transformed into a movie presentation changes into a blockbuster. The fact that Fitzgerald, probably, intended to emphasize was the belittling popularity and prosperity of literature as a whole. In other words, position of literary writers became more difficult, because they had to struggle with the increasing popularity of the movies, which were, after all, much easier to "consume" than novels, and were, as discussed in the introduction into 1920s, comprehensible even to illiterate people or immigrants. The predominance of movie industry over the literature can be sensed in the following excerpt from *The Beautiful and Damned*:

‘D’you remember Caramel, Richard Caramel? I believe you met him one night.’  
‘I remember. He was writing a book.’  
‘Well, he sold it to the movies. Then they had some scenario man named Jordan work on it. Well, Dick subscribes to a clipping bureau and he’s furious because about half the movie reviewers speak of the ‘power and strength of William Jordan’s ‘Demon Lover.’ Didn’t mention old Dick at all. You’d think this fellow Jordan had actually conceived and developed the thing.’ (Fitzgerald, 1922: 186)

Another point made by Fitzgerald in the same novel is that he stresses the fact that movie industry, as Stephen Vaughn claims, was often dominated or controlled by Jewish people. (Vaughn: 40) Joseph Bloeckman successively becomes a very prosperous businessman, working for *Films Par Excellence*. He is of Jewish origin and Fitzgerald seems to stress this fact very often. And he does so in a rather negative way:

He was a stoutening, ruddy Jew of about thirty-five, with an expressive face under smooth sandy hair--and, no doubt, in most business gatherings his personality would have been considered ingratiating. (Fitzgerald, 1922: 88)

Moreover, it is, most likely, not a pure coincidence that the movie producer, from Fitzgerald’s last and unfinished novel, *The Last Tycoon*, Monroe Stahr, is, also of Jewish origin. Robert Sklar describes Stahr as “a great producer, a Jewish parvenu.” (Sklar: 242) However, Fitzgerald does not portray Stahr in such negative way as in the case of Bloeckman.

Quite confusing moment in *The Beautiful and Damned* is when Muriel Kane attempts to develop a conversation with Maury Noble. Considering, on the one hand, the modern personality of Ms. Kane, her liveliness and tendency to acclaim everything that is modern, and on the other hand, the character of Mr. Nobel, who finds predilection for long literary discussions with Anthony, it seems that in the following dialogue these two must have misunderstood each other:

With becoming modesty Muriel ceased her motions and turned to Maury, what he had ‘seen’ this year. He interpreted this as referring to the dramatic world, and they had a gay and exhilarating exchange of titles, after this manner:  
MURIEL: Have you seen ‘Peg o’ My Heart’?  
MAURY: No, I haven’t.  
MURIEL: (Eagerly) It’s wonderful! You want to see it.  
MAURY: Have you seen ‘Omar, the Tentmaker’?  
MURIEL: No, but I hear it’s wonderful. I’m very anxious to see it. Have you seen ‘Fair and Warmer’?

MAURY: (Hopefully) Yes.  
MURIEL: I don't think it's very good. It's trashy.  
MAURY: (Faintly) Yes, that's true.  
MURIEL: But I went to 'Within the Law' last night and I thought it was fine. Have you seen 'The Little Café'?... (Fitzgerald, 1922: 90)

The question is whether Muriel and Maury are both talking about drama or motion pictures. But from Fitzgerald's allusion that Maury only 'interpreted this as referring to the dramatic world' it is presumable that the author again demonstrates the clash of these two kinds of entertainment. Modern Muriel is speaking about up-to-date movies, Maury, on the contrary, about theatre plays.

Moments where Fitzgerald refers to the movie culture in *The Great Gatsby* are not infrequent. For example when Myrtle goes to New York with Nick and Tom, she buys a "moving-picture magazine." (p.18) In addition, in the seventh chapter, when Daisy asks "Where are we going?" (p. 80), the first suggestion is the movies.

Yet, Fitzgerald also refers to the fact that movies, their heroes and heroines influenced the attitude towards beauty and body culture.

The raising emphasis on physical attractiveness which was closely connected with the movie industry was discernible, for instance, in *The Beautiful and Damned*, when Gloria tries to succeed as an actress. Although Fitzgerald portrayed her as remarkably beautiful, she is decently rejected, because the film producer is looking for somebody of younger appearance: "We had the test run off yesterday afternoon, and Mr. Debris seemed to think that for the part he had in mind he needed a younger woman." (Fitzgerald, 1922: 353) Gloria understands that it was her withering beauty that caused the refusal and cries: "'Oh, my pretty face,' she whispered, passionately grieving. 'Oh, my pretty face! Oh, I don't want to live without my pretty face! Oh, what's happened?'" (Fitzgerald, 1922: 354)

That the attractiveness and people's appearance started to matter is also claimed in the study of Mr. and Mrs. Lynd:

[...] "You've got to spend money to earn money," or in the words of Dorothy Dix, "The world judges us largely by appearance. If we wish to be successful we have got to look successful." (Lynd: 162)

Also Robert Sklar asserts that people's visual aspect played, at the beginning of the twentieth century, an important function:

Hollywood's emphasis on the body was a matter of business as well as philosophy or pleasure. Players photographed as if they were about twenty pounds heavier than their actual weight. Physical trim had to be maintained, through exercise and massage, not only to look well, but also to perform difficult tasks like riding and running, often again and again for retakes. The heightened awareness of the body was enhanced by knowledge of its worth in dollars. (Sklar: 81)

Tom Buchanan's body will stand as an adequate example. Not only is he depicted as a strong man, with an athlete-like figure and trimmed muscles, but also the way Fitzgerald describes him in the following excerpt seems to resemble a scene of some movie where Tom represents a Hollywood star:

The front was broken by a line of French windows, glowing now with reflected gold and wide open to the warm windy afternoon, and Tom Buchanan in riding clothes was standing with his legs apart on the front porch. [...] Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body—he seemed to fill those glistening boots until he strained the top lacing, and you could see a great pack of muscle shifting when his shoulder moved under his thin coat. It was a body capable of enormous leverage—a cruel body. (p. 6-7)

Here, the stress on Tom's body is obvious, but it is also discernible that Fitzgerald intended and tried to employ technical devices of the movies. The importance does not lie only upon Tom's muscles. Important is also the way how Fitzgerald captures the mood of this movie-like scene. The manner with which the author, through Nick's perspective, observes Tom "standing with his leg apart on the front porch" could, more or less, stand for a cinematic scene. Previously discussed light again plays notable part.

Furthermore, Guy Reynolds believes that *The Great Gatsby* and the way Fitzgerald constructs the narrative is widely influenced by cinema, motion pictures and photography. (Reynolds: XIII-XIV) In the following extract, similarly to the one mentioned above, where Tom's body plays a distinct role, here it is the strange first sight of Gatsby himself as Nick observes him:

But I didn't call to him [Gatsby], for he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone—he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. (p. 16)

## **5. Modern life**

### **5.1. Modern party**

This part is devoted to the way people spent their leisure time. However, since most new or modern leisure activities came hand in hand with the rapid technological progress, they had been, in larger or smaller extent, embraced in previous chapters. It is a matter of course that general spread of an automobile or popularity of motion pictures enabled people to spend their free time more variously than in years before these technological achievements. Therefore, this section is not concentrated on these components, but principally on parties that people participated in. The selection of this theme is not coincidental. Parties became a very popular way of entertainment, and Fitzgerald, particularly in *The Great Gatsby*, masterly captured their mood and in this way he managed to highlight the many differences between the parties of the 1890s and 1920s.

Growing popularity of parties during the beginning of the twentieth century was quite evident:

The leading newspaper in Middletown in 1923 reported for the months of January, July, and October respectively eighty-two, 104, and 155 parties of all kinds, including picnics, dinner parties, and so on, as over against eight, thirty-one, and fourteen in the corresponding three months in 1890. (Lynd: 278)

While organization of a party in 1890s included an exact record of invited guests, the callers of Gatsby's parties came, more or less, randomly. According to the Lynds, following list of visitors, which is from a party of late nineteenth century, would not be so customary in the twenties:

Among the many present at the surprise party were Grandma Walker, Mrs. C. P— and family, S. C— and family, John W— and family, Isaac B— and family, James W— and family and S. H— and family. (Lynd: 280)

The Lynds wanted to stress that a major part of party participants of the nineties was whole families. These were later, during the first decades of the twentieth century, displaced either by couples or groups of acquaintances. But what is also evident from the citation is that hosts of former parties had, probably, exact knowledge of their guests. On the contrary, when Nick comes to his neighbor's party, he assesses many

guests who, seemingly, had not been invited at all: “I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby’s house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited—they went there.” (p. 27)

Nick also raises the idea that the visitors at Gatsby’s parties have somehow mistaken the party with an entertainment of then popular amusement parks<sup>1</sup>. Visitors come and leave in no specific time and have fun without meeting the owner. Nick claims: “Sometimes they came and went without having met Gatsby at all, came for the party with a simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission.” (p. 27) People behaved as if they visited some amusement park with no particular rules.

Moreover, Nick’s reference to the amusement parks also seems to resemble the mood of Myrtle’s party, in the second chapter of *The Great Gatsby*, where, as Nick mentions, “People disappeared, reappeared, made plans to go somewhere, and then lost each other, [...]” (p. 25)

In the parties of the 1920s, there seemed to be no definite structure as it had been typical for the parties of the late nineteenth century. In the following party report from the year 1890, there is no reference to such spontaneity that could be perceived at the parties of the 1920s. As Mr. and Mrs. Lynd claim, this kind of party “would hardly be so acceptable” (Lynd: 280) in the twenties:

A pleasant surprise was held last night at the elegant residence of Oliver J— in honor of the fortieth anniversary of the birth of Mrs. Ella J—. [...] After dinner a season of song and prayer was had, after which the house was made to ring with music. . . . Mr. McC— favored us with a song, *A Thousand Years of My Own Columbia*. (Lynd: 280)

Contrary to such social gathering is what Nick observes at the party held by Gatsby. The organized form disappears and spontaneity is quite obvious:

There was dancing now on the canvas in the garden; old men pushing young girls backward in eternal graceless circles, superior couples holding each other tortuously, fashionably, and keeping in the corners – and a great number of single girls dancing individualistically or relieving the orchestra for a moment of the burden of the banjo or the traps. By midnight the hilarity had increased. A celebrated tenor had sung in Italian, and a notorious contralto had sung in jazz, and between the numbers people were doing ‘stunts’ all over the garden, while happy, vacuous bursts of laughter rose toward the summer sky. (p. 31)

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<sup>1</sup> Amusement parks were extremely popular in America between the beginning of the twentieth century and late 1920s. Examples of such parks were, for instance, Steeplechase Park and Luna Park, both at Coney Island in New York, which were attracting many people at the time Fitzgerald was writing *The Great Gatsby*. (Cowley: 103)

From Nick's observation, it can be well perceived that popular music and dancing became an inseparable part of entertainment of the early twentieth century. "Dancing is today a universal skill among the young [...]" (Lynd: 282) Dance of 1890s was rather a part of more formal occasions, balls. (Lynd: 282) The modern dance was, presumably, a part of the revolt against the old-fashioned and sophisticated standards.

[...] the 1920s was a time period of change and of freedom. The men and women that participated in this revolution of dance went along their own guidelines and rules. Appearances were changed and new forms of dance were becoming popular. Dance in general was an important part of people's lives. ([www.ilstu.edu/~lmerri/uhigh/1920's/Homepage.htm](http://www.ilstu.edu/~lmerri/uhigh/1920's/Homepage.htm))

In *The Echoes of the Jazz Age* Fitzgerald claims: "The word jazz in its progress toward respectability has meant first sex, then dancing, then music." (Fitzgerald, 1931: 331-332) It can be, therefore, deduced that music at the parties of the nineties served in a completely different manner than in the twenties. Comparing the above examples of two different parties, in the nineties, music was played to please ears of guests, and, conversely, in the twenties, it served as a device to provoke or revolt through dancing.

Organization of parties in the 1920s seems to be based on the fact that its visitors, sooner or later, become, actually, disorganized and captivated in the merrymaking of the rest of the "crowds". Thus, in this sense, the opulent parties arranged by Jay Gatsby could be compared to the years between 1920 and 1929, which were, according to a phrase in Fitzgerald's essay "the most expensive orgy in history" (Fitzgerald, 1931: 337) By detailing Gatsby's parties, the author might have wanted to imply the correspondence between this kind of revelry to the revelry of the entire Jazz Age period.

Once, Fitzgerald claimed that "Parties are a form of suicide" (Fitzgerald cited in Mizener: 57) The above mentioned Gatsby's party finishes dramatically – drunken women are fighting with their partners and, furthermore, Nick is, when leaving the party, a witness of a "bizarre and tumultuous scene" (p. 35) - a car accident. The whole "Jazz Age party" terminated in similarly dramatic sentiment on Black Friday in 1929.



## 5.2. Modern language

The 1920s were a period of extricating from old-fashioned rules and establishing progressive ones. Revolutionary transformations were notable in an American's lifestyle, including thinking, judgments, image or behavior. Women, flappers, wanted to shock with their bobbed hair, short skirts and a lighted cigarette. Gentlemen, most likely, boasted about the many women they had managed to kiss at a party. The indications of overall transformations were omnipresent. Modernity and tendency towards changes was conspicuous also in young Americans' use of vocabulary and diction. As if they wanted to emphasize the radical revolution also via language. "The question was not only what could and ought one communicate, but also *how* could one communicate at all?" (Susman: 111) Therefore, slang became one of the means of expressing the modern lifestyle and this tendency was evident also among the literary authors:

It was not until the early 1920's that slang had gained the interest of popular writers. It was during the post-World War I era that society gained new attitudes about slang. There was now a demand for entertainment, mass media, and slangy fiction. (Bullard)

Some Fitzgerald's characters give the reader an opportunity to sense this kind of "language modernism." The author realized that slang was a cultural expression which helped to give his readers an idea of the spirit of the period in which he lived. As Judith S. Baughman says, among the lists including the popular songs, the football players, the top debutantes or the hobbies, Fitzgerald also provides a list of "the slang expressions of a given year", because "he felt that all these names and phrases belonged to the year and helped to reveal its momentary color." (Baughman)

A British lexicographer, Eric Partridge affirms that there are, generally, at least fifteen reasons for why people use slang. (Fox) This is one of the reasons Partridge offers: "In sheer high spirits, by the young in heart as well as by the young in years; 'just for the fun of the thing'; in playfulness or waggishness. (Partridge cited in Fox) This seems to be the case of Muriel Kane from *The Beautiful and Damned*. She was not the only character using slang and modern way of speech, however, it is her energetic temperament that creates her diction to seem perfectly natural and, therefore, most remarkable. Whenever she appears on the scene, her language is very trendy. Upon

Muriel's introduction to the readers, the author makes a remark that "her conversation was also timely" (Fitzgerald, 1921: 79): "'I don't care,' she would say, 'I should worry and lose my figure'" – and again: "'I can't make my feet behave when I hear that tune. Oh, baby!'" (Fitzgerald, 1921: 79-80) Furthermore, when Gloria arranges Muriel's visit over the telephone, Fitzgerald writes that Muriel "ended the conversation characteristically by saying 'All-ll-ll righty. I'll be there with bells.'" (Fitzgerald, 1921: 169) Muriel's slang and diction is an inseparable part of her sprightly image, which might indicate the similarly sprightly mood of the post war years that reflected, among others, also in people's speech.

On the contrary, when Daisy Buchanan, from *The Great Gatsby*, so many times utters the then popular word – "absolutely"<sup>1</sup>, it seems that she uses slang not in the cheerful manner as Muriel does, but rather when she tries to conceal her true feelings, therefore, use of this slang word sounds insincere and artificial and, although it might not have been Fitzgerald's intention, can be understood as an indicator to the insincerity of the period, where people hid behind impressive cars, dress, houses, but also behind their words.

Here is a textual example of Daisy's "absolute" situation. She is trying to disguise her miserable state of mind, while her husband is, most likely, on the phone with his mistress:

'I love to see you at my table, Nick. You remind me of a—of a rose, an absolute rose. Doesn't he?' She turned to Miss Baker for confirmation: 'An absolute rose?' This was untrue. I am not even faintly like a rose. She was only extemporizing, but a stirring warmth flowed from her, as if her heart was trying to come out to you concealed in one of those breathless, thrilling words. (Fitzgerald, 1925: 11)

There are more moments, which might not be a mere coincidence, when Fitzgerald uses the word "absolutely" if he wants to hint to hypocrisy. For instance when Owl Eyes observes Gatsby's library, he is astonished that the books are "absolutely real – have pages and everything" (Fitzgerald, 1925: 30) They are not imitations. Moreover, when Nick has a conversation with Daisy, he says:

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<sup>1</sup> Absolutely – became popular during the twenties as an affirmative expression (<http://local.aaca.org/bntc/slang/slang.htm>)

The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. [...] I waited, and sure enough, in a moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face [...] (Fitzgerald, 1925: 13)

There are many more modern expressions which are used by Fitzgerald's characters and they all give readers opportunity to familiarize with the mood of this revolutionary period.

## **6. Prohibition and Hundred per cent Americanism**

In his essay *The Echoes of the Jazz Age* Fitzgerald claims: “It was characteristic of the Jazz Age that it had no interest in politics at all.” (Fitzgerald, 1931: 330) This author’s persuasion is obvious also in his writings since it seems that he does not refer to political issues frequently. Nevertheless, there are two matters, which affected the 1920s America to a great extent. And Fitzgerald managed to delineate their impact and repercussion. One of the issues is the Prohibition; the other is general stance towards immigrants, which was, broadly, formulated in the quota laws from the years 1921, 1924 and 1927 (Green [et al.]: 480-482) The sub-chapter *Hundred per cent Americanism* deals not only with the problematic of immigration, but also with widespread attitude towards the Afro-American people.

### **6.1. Prohibition**

If one looks at the prohibition from time distance, it is apparent that the effort, which was, admittedly, to maintain and protect traditional values, was one of the slips that the American government has made. It, paradoxically, gave rise to what it initially intended to prohibit:

Many citizens simply paid no attention to the law. Many officials, who felt that it [the Prohibition] could not be enforced, did not even try to make it work. This kind of thinking led to a blasé<sup>1</sup> attitude toward law in general. (Green [et al.]: 485)

Apart from others, Fitzgerald’s novels have one thing in common – the presence and drinking of alcohol. In *This Side of Paradise*, the reader finds Amory in the middle of his alcoholic carouse when the prohibition comes into effect:

The advent of prohibition with the “thirsty-first” put a sudden stop to the submerging of Amory’s sorrows, and when he awoke one morning to find that the old bar-to-bar days were over, he had neither remorse for the past three weeks nor regret that their repetition was impossible. (Fitzgerald, 1920: 200)

However, a few pages later, Amory is offered a drink. Fitzgerald registers the ineffectiveness of the new law: “‘Amory,’ said Alec exuberantly, ‘if you’ll jump in

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<sup>1</sup> Synonyms for “blasé” are, for example apathetic, bored or indifferent (<http://thesaurus.reference.com>)

we'll take you to some secluded nook and give you a wee jolt of Bourbon.'"(Fitzgerald, 1920: 233) People found the way to drink alcoholic beverages too easily.

In *The Beautiful and Damned*, Anthony's wealthy grandfather, Adam Patch, who "has that morning made a contribution of fifty thousand dollars to the cause of national prohibition" (Fitzgerald, 1922: 243), comes for an unexpected visit to Anthony's house and is shocked when he sees a rather unpleasant scene of nine young people apparently in a state of high inebriation. The endeavor to raise the moral state of Americans, which the old Adam Patch is an embodiment of, seems futile. The younger generation does not appear to share the old beliefs, and indulges in alcohol revelry. Similar recollection appears in *The Echoes of the Jazz Age*, where Fitzgerald says:

Silver-haired women and men with fine old faces, people who never did a consciously dishonest thing in their lives, still assure each other in the apartment hotels of New York and Boston and Washington that 'there's a whole generation growing up that will never know the taste of liquor.' (Fitzgerald, 1931: 332)

The reality was contrary and Fitzgerald adds that teenagers "know the taste of gin or corn at sixteen" (Fitzgerald, 1931: 332)

As Fitzgerald writes in his letter to Mr. Scribner, *The Beautiful and Damned* is set in the years between 1913 and 1921. (Fitzgerald in Turnbull, 1963: 145) This also is a proof that the prohibition did not meet the expectations, since the reader is a witness of Anthony's gradual decay caused, among others, by his alcoholic addiction. In the last chapters Anthony drank frequently and heavily, although the prohibition had been enforced on in January 1920 as is mentioned in the introduction to the 1920s.

That the practice of the new law was very complicated is also visible in *The Great Gatsby*. Logical consequence of the prohibition was an increase of criminality and organized crime. It gave rise to places called "speakeasies" where the outlawed alcohol was sold. "In 1925 there were apparently one hundred thousand speakeasies, as unlawful drinking dens were called, in New York alone." (Cowley: 101) Producing and selling outlawed alcohol became prosperous for many gangsters. One of the most famous ones connected with organized crime and bootlegging is, probably, Al Capone (Green [et al.]: 484) Bootlegging seems to be the main source also of Jay Gatsby's enormous wealth. (Cowley: 101) His frequent connections with Chicago and Philadelphia over the phone, his hesitation to speak about his occupation – "when I

[Nick] asked him what business he was in he answered “That’s my affair,” before he realized that it wasn’t the appropriate reply.” (Fitzgerald, 1925: 58) And, finally, Nick’s telephone conversation with one of the Gatsby’s accomplices, Slagel, after Gatsby’s death is the last clue to revelation of origin of Gatsby’s fortune:

“This is Slagle speaking. . . .”

“Yes?” The name was unfamiliar.

“Hell of a note, isn’t it? Get my wire?”

“There haven’t been any wires.”

“Young Parke’s in trouble,” he said rapidly. “They picked him up when he handed the bonds over the counter. They got a circular from New York giving ‘em the numbers just five minutes before. What d’you know about that, hey? You never can tell in these hick towns – “

“Hello!” I interrupted breathlessly. “Look here – this isn’t Mr. Gatsby. Mr. Gatsby’s dead.”

There was a long silence on the other end of the wire, followed by an exclamation . . . then a quick squawk as the connection was broken. (Fitzgerald, 1925: 106)

After this dialogue, Nick, as well as the reader, can be sure that the protagonist’s background has a criminal core.

The “blasé” attitude towards the alcohol ban, which is mentioned in the citation at the beginning of this section, is obvious throughout the whole novel. Gatsby’s parties are renowned all around the New York City. Nick observes that champagne is being served there and also comments on drunken women and other participants, who were, apart from ordinary people, also famous movie stars. It seems that alcohol is everything but prohibited. Everybody knows that drinking it is illegal; however, everybody goes to Gatsby’s parties and drinks it.

Nick also speaks about a man, whom he calls “Owl Eyes”, and who claims that he has “been drunk for about a week now” (Fitzgerald, 1925: 30) That it was easy to acquire “giggle water<sup>1</sup>”, as the alcohol was referred to sometimes, is perceptible also from the fact that, despite the restrictions of the prohibition, it was still possible to remain in a state of inebriation for more than a week without any serious troubles or difficulties. (Cowley: 27) Although Nick gives Owl Eyes his nickname because of the man’s “owl-eyed spectacles”, this comparison to an “owl” might not be based only on the spectacles because the expression “owled”, or “be boiled as an owl” was, as

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<sup>1</sup> Giggle water – alcohol (<http://home.earthlink.net/~dlarkins/slang-pg.htm>)

Edmund Wilson writes, the slang word for drunkenness. (Edmund Wilson cited in Lane, O'Sullivan: 246)

## **6.2. A Hundred per cent Americanism** (appendix 10)

As analyzed in the introduction to the twenties, the negative approach towards black people pursued by *Ku-Klux-Klan* diffused also to immigrants who were arriving to the United States to seek better life conditions. The rejecting attitude could be, to a limited extent, understandable. The number of immigrants was really high-reaching.

Such mood was reflected in most Fitzgerald's work. Whether Fitzgerald could be considered to have racist inclination, or whether he only tried, and, certainly, managed, to capture the negative stance towards people, who were not "a hundred per cent Americans", could become a topic for another thesis. This section analyzes the examples, where the author expresses the general sentiment of the "a hundred per cent American" society towards the "others". "An obvious response is not to excuse Fitzgerald but to suggest that the United States during the writer's lifetime was racist and anti-Semitic in many respects [...]" (Margolies)

The anti-Semitism, which Alan Margolies mentions, can be perceived through many moments, for instance, in *The Beautiful and Damned*. Description of Joseph Bloeckman cannot be understood in different way but an unfavorable one:

He was a stoutening, ruddy Jew of about thirty-five, with an expressive face under smooth sandy hair--and, no doubt, in most business gatherings his personality would have been considered ingratiating. [...] I detest these underdone men, he [Anthony] thought coldly. Boiled looking! Ought to be shoved back in the oven; just one more minute would do it. (Fitzgerald, 1922: 88)

Another moment rather denouncing the Jews is when Fitzgerald mentions two Jews who "passed him, talking in loud voices and craning their necks here and there in fatuous supercilious glances" (Fitzgerald, 1922:30).

Also in *The Great Gatsby* Fitzgerald's negative portrayal of the Jews does not cease. The Jew character of this story is Meyer Wolfshiem, Gatsby's friend, who is, according to analysis in Margolies' essay, depicted more like an animal than a human being:

Others question the portrayal of Meyer Wolfshiem, suggesting that it reflects the opinions of those who believed that Jews were less than human, more like animals: “A small flat-nosed Jew raised his large head and regarded me with two fine growths of hair which luxuriated in either nostril. After a moment I discovered his tiny eyes in the half darkness.” (55) (Margolies)

The rather negative description also turns to people of Greek origin. (Margolies) The following excerpt seems to capture the exact mood of the years immediately preceding the Jazz Age, were the immigrants were seen as undesirable and unwelcome aliens. In *This Side of Paradise*, Fitzgerald writes:

When Amory went to Washington the next week-end he caught some of the spirit of crisis which changed to repulsion in the Pullman car coming back, for the berths across from him were occupied by stinking aliens--Greeks, he guessed, or Russians. He thought how much easier patriotism had been to a homogeneous race, how much easier it would have been to fight as the Colonies fought, or as the Confederacy fought. And he did no sleeping that night, but listened to the aliens guffaw and snore while they filled the car with the heavy scent of latest America. (Fitzgerald, 1920: 149)

However, the adverse attitude was not focused only on Jews. It is interesting that it was Fitzgerald, who first called the twenties Jazz Age (Turnbull: 224) knowing that jazz music is “black music”, yet, he did not mention black people in his novels almost at all. If he did so, he called them “negroes” as in *The Beautiful and Damned* or “bucks” as in *The Great Gatsby* and other works, for which he was criticized: Must all male Negroes in your books and stories be called ‘bucks’?” wrote Earl W. Wilkins in a letter addressed to Fitzgerald. (Wilkins cited in Margolies)

Tom Buchanan, from *The Great Gatsby*, seems to be an embodiment of a racist mood of the novel. In the first chapter, he talks about a book written by Goddard, *The Rise of the Coloured Empires*, he is, according to Margolies, actually referring to a book written by Lothrop Stoddard:

Most critics believe that in mentioning “‘The Rise of the Coloured Empires’ by this man Goddard,” Fitzgerald was thinking of Lothrop Stoddard’s *The Rising Tide of Color* (1920). [...] Stoddard had suggested that the population of the world was changing, and that the white world was becoming outnumbered. “There can be no doubt that at present the colored races are increasing very much faster than the white,” Stoddard had written (7). Stoddard believed in white solidarity and restricting the immigration of nonwhites. He also believed that of three racial groups-Alpines, Mediterraneans, and Nordics – the last were



superior. Thus he also advocated restricting the immigration into the United States of people from Southeastern and Eastern Europe. (Margolies)

Stoddard, and thus Tom Buchanan, most likely, expresses the widespread feelings of the American society, which Fitzgerald managed to depict.

Last point of this sub-chapter is devoted to color symbolism in *The Great Gatsby*, particularly to white color. Fitzgerald uses this color very frequently. Besides the fact that white, in its substance, represents innocence, and according to many essays it does so in *The Great Gatsby*, it can also represent purity and cleanliness. The question is what kind of cleanliness Fitzgerald refers to. In the first chapter, everything around the Buchanans seems white:

Across the courtesy bay the white palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water, and the history of the summer really begins on the evening I drove over there to have dinner with the Buchanans. (Fitzgerald, 1925: 6)

Also “the windows were ajar and gleaming white” and Daisy’s childhood was white, as well as her and Jordan Baker’s dresses. Considering Tom’s inclination to mentioned Nordicism, the white color might be allusion to his white race preference.

Furthermore, Nick encounters “long white cake of apartment houses” when he, in the second chapter, goes to New York with Tom and Jordan. Moreover, he also speaks about “white chasms” of New York and when he goes to city with Gatsby he, again, refers to the white color:

Over the great bridge, with the sunlight through the girders making a constant flicker upon the moving cars, with the city rising up across the river in white heaps and sugar lumps all built with a wish out of non-olfactory money. (Fitzgerald, 1925: 44)

All the above observed “white moments” might be understood as an expression of what the most part of the American society wished for – the society liberated or “cleaned” from the people who are not “a hundred percent American.”

Whether this is a possible understanding or not does not decrease Fitzgerald’s faithful and accurate description of the “anti-immigrant” and “anti-black” spirit of the *Jazz Age*.

## **7. American Dream**

The last part of the thesis is devoted to the conception of American Dream as it appears in Fitzgerald's work. The many changes discussed in all previous chapters must have had, unquestionably, impact on Americans' values and, consequently, on their personal dreams. This seems to be one of the important topics in Fitzgerald's work.

Originally, the American dream was, as can be understood from *The Declaration of Independence* the very right to live free and happily, no matter the person's origin. Thomas Jefferson writes:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness – [...] (*The Declaration of Independence* cited in Smith: 46 )

Yet, it depends on what is comprehended under the conception of happiness. People's dreams are closely connected with their values and needs, and since these change, hand in hand, with the ageing society, the dreams, indisputably, must change with it. If, in the Victorian era, happiness meant self-denying, at the beginning of the twentieth century, and particularly in the twenties, people's needs and dreams noticeably altered, as altered their values, and happiness became more connected with abundance and financial and materialistic provision. Jim Cullen calls this "a dream of upward mobility" (Cullen: 59) At least, money and the "upward mobility" is what many characters in Fitzgerald's books seek and consider it their "pursuit of happiness." That financial security became a vital element in people's lives is evident, for example, in *This Side of Paradise*, where Rosalind rejects to marry Amory, because he does not prove the ability to secure her financially. Similarly, in *The Great Gatsby*, Daisy Fay refused to wed Jay Gatsby because he was a poor soldier. In addition, later in the story, Daisy's ecstatic outburst over Gatsby's expensive shirts also reflects her primary value – money:

Suddenly with a strained sound, Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily. "They're such beautiful shirts," she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. "It makes me sad because I've never seen such – such beautiful shirts before." (Fitzgerald, 1925: 59)

Gatsby even confirms Daisy's obsession with riches by claiming that: "Her voice is full of money" (Fitzgerald, 1925: 76) In all these cases, abundance of money, wealth and affluence appear to represent people's then biggest dreams and a life target. Yet, Fitzgerald seems to criticize this tendency, since all these characters appear, or during the story become, somewhat hollow. An appropriate example is, for instance, the decay of Anthony and Gloria Patch, which grounds from the fact that they limit their lives only to hoping to inherit money from Anthony's grandfather. Their life loses any other meaningful dimension. And when, finally, Anthony "achieves" this dream, and inherits the money, it is, unfortunately, too late:

Their dream is realized, but only when it is too late. The slow and inexorable passing of time has made this victory *in extremis* a hollow one. With a touch of dramatic irony, the reversal of fortune overtakes the two characters only when their initial situation has been reversed. Anthony, sophisticated and blasé at the beginning is now an empty shell who goes to Europe with a doctor at his side. Sparkling Gloria, who used to divide people into clean and unclean, now herself appears "sort of dyed and *unclean*." (Perosa: 53)

As Jay Gatsby himself, so his dream seems to represent the purity. Although Gatsby tries to achieve his happiness through wealth, his intentions are distinctly of romantic backdrop. Nonetheless, despite this, neither Gatsby does achieve his longing. The green light, which flashes from Daisy's dock over the lake, represents Gatsby's symbol for hope and promise. Nick spots Gatsby how "he stretched his arms toward" the light, and this light, the Gatsby's desire to win Daisy back, is never reached, and remains a dream.

Gatsby never reached what he desired. Neither did Gloria and nor did Anthony. Cullen claims: "We never reach the coast we think we see. Still we go on dreaming." (Cullen: 182) These words seem to resemble the last sentences of *The Great Gatsby*:

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter – tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And one fine morning –  
So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.  
(Fitzgerald, 1925: 115)

The dream of never ending carelessness and abundance of the twenties was similarly unreachable and met with the resistance of reality, as did the many characters of the 1920s.

## Conclusion

When Fitzgerald died, on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1940, his person, as well as his work, seemed to be predestined to vagueness and obscurity. However, with progress of time, interest in his works and life, which were both filled with failure and tragedy, began to rise, and Fitzgerald began to be more appreciated. (Parini: 41)

An early negative criticism of Fitzgerald's work pre-eminently derives from what Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury summarize in their historical study of American literature. And that is, that to many critics, Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald represents not more than a "fashionable chronicle", who was absorbed in the modern time that he lived in too deeply to be able to give a true picture of it and to reflect it reliably and authentically. (Ruland and Bradbury: 280)

Nevertheless, after studying and analyzing primary sources, especially Fitzgerald's first three novels, as well as many secondary sources dealing with American history, the author's work and life, this thesis proves Fitzgerald's immeasurable importance not only in the literary field but, furthermore, it validates that the novelist's works serve as significant documents of the period that altered *The United States of America* in many ways.

Fitzgerald's literary strength, and the fact that his works are still popular, seems to ground from his capacity for giving the readers possibility to read his novels on various levels. To some readers the novels can appear as love stories with rather unhappy-endings. Amory is rejected by his dreamed up love, Anthony and Gloria dissipate their love in a money chase, and Jay Gatsby dies without achieving what he desired – love of Daisy.

However, Fitzgerald's works are much more than that. More attentive readers can sense the actuality and authenticity of it. *This Side of Paradise* captures the post war mood in America and delineates years preceding the boom of the following roaring period and also the lost and confused feelings of youth. *The Beautiful and Damned* documents the growing confusion of people by many occurring changes and modernization. It is a novel which makes obvious how people, in that time, struggled to find meaning of their lives. The novel is filled with details alluding to the ever present novelties, including new songs, cars, modern language, and new attitudes to life or new values.

*The Great Gatsby* seems to be a mixture of both preceding novels, however, far more elaborated and polished. Furthermore, it can be also understood, as Julian Cowley suggests, as a social satire. It mocks the ridiculous values of most people, predominantly the rich ones. Daisy, and not only her, stands as an embodiment of shallowness, greed and hypocrisy which were the characteristics that seemed to prevail in that time, and which Fitzgerald himself very much detested.

Fitzgerald managed to eternalize or capture the period, which from many aspects could be assumed a foundation for what The United States of America appear to be nowadays – a strong country with efficient economics, fresh, innovative and revolutionary culture, setting pace to the rest of the world. As discussed in individual chapters, the emancipation of women, technological progress, consumerism, modernity of movie industry or changing values are the aspects that still remain America's strong traits.

As mentioned before, Fitzgerald's novels continue to be popular even among contemporary readers. The reason for this might also result from the fact that many a problems and issues that Fitzgerald depicted in his novels were to a great extent predictive and can be compared to issues of today's modern world. The position of women within society is still changing, the emancipation, which played an important role for women population of the twenties, has not weakened. Similarly, the then modern technology, with its impact on the American population can be compared to today's influence of the many technological conveniences. In the twenties it was traveling by car, a telephone and a phonograph, today it is space tourism, Skype and an MP3 player.

Furthermore, above all, Fitzgerald masterly managed to delineate the influence of the many changes of the twenties that affected people's values. With alternating generations, changing priorities is a never-ending process often causing disapproval of the older generation with the behavior of the decisive and resolute younger one. Fitzgerald succeeded in capturing the revolutionary mood of the twenties; however, as every change often comes along with feelings of uncertainty and bewilderment, also this sentiment was impressively expressed in the author's novels. Fitzgerald's novels are through and through intertwined with details that give the reader impression of the

authentic novelty and modernity of the time and give us an opportunity to familiarize with the hectic era of the unforgettable Jazz Age.

## Resumé

Americký „Jazz Age“ nebo „Golden Age“ je do českého jazyka často překládán jako „zlatá dvacátá léta“. Pro přívlastek „zlatý“ je více důvodů. Dalo by se říci, že „zlatá“ byla i z toho hlediska, že dala literárnímu světu jednoho z významných amerických autorů – Francise Scotta Key Fitzgeralda (1896-1940).

Ačkoliv literární hodnota románů a povídek tohoto spisovatele nebyla, bohužel, zcela oceněna za jeho života, o to více stoupal zájem o autorovo dílo i jeho nevázaný život po jeho předčasné smrti, jenž byla, zcela jistě, do určité míry zaviněna jeho rozmařilým způsobem života. Fitzgeraldův osud se ve velké míře shoduje s osudem slavných amerických dvacátých let. Poválečná doba byla plná stejné hýřivosti, marnivosti a bouřlivosti, kterou prožíval i sám spisovatel. I konec obou osudů se podobá. Fitzgeraldův život skončil srdečním záchvatem, zlatá dvacátá léta zase krachem na Wallstreetské burze (1929). I pro tuto podobnost se Fitzgeraldovi podařilo zachytit a zdokumentovat dobu, ve které žil, tak dobře, že dnešní čtenář, má jedinečnou příležitost nahlédnout do doby, která položila základy vzniku Ameriky, jakou ji známe dnes.

Fitzgerald stihl za svůj krátký život napsat, kromě mnoha velmi zdařilých povídek, pět románů, z nichž poslední zůstal nedokončen. Jeho prvotinou se stal úspěšný román *Na prahu ráje* (1920), následovala kniha *Krásní a prokletí* (1922), jež byla kritiky odsouzena, poté vrcholné dílo *Velký Gatsby* (1925), *Něžná je noc* (1934) a *Poslední magnát* (1941), vydaný až po Fitzgeraldově smrti.

První dvě díla vystihují náladu a situaci, která těsně předcházela roku 1920 (i když druhý zmíněný román končí až rokem 1921), a proto umožňují čtenáři pochopit co zapříčinilo změny v následující bouřlivé době a co těmto změnám předcházelo. Fitzgeraldova nejúspěšnější kniha *Velký Gatsby* se odehrává v roce 1922 a je vynikajícím průvodcem „jazzového věku“, jenž byl v té době v plném rozkvětu. Díky těmto rysům se právě tyto tři knihy staly primárními zdroji pro tuto diplomovou práci.

Hodnota, oblíbenost a síla Fitzgeraldova umění spočívá, mimo jiné i v tom, že autor čtenářovi nabízí možnost číst jeho knihy v několika rovinách. *Na prahu ráje*, *Krásní a prokletí* i *Velký Gatsby* zůstanou pro mnohé smutnými, ne-li tragickými příběhy nevydařené lásky. Hrdina první knihy, Amory Blaine, je odmítnut svoji vysněnou láskou Rosalindou. V druhém románu, Anthony Patch a jeho manželka Gloria promarní svoji lásku v honbě za dědictvím a v alkoholismu. Snad nejtragičtěji končí

Velký Gatsby. Jeho hlavní protagonista, Jay Gatsby, oddal svoji existenci snu o životě se svou bývalou láskou, Daisy Fay. Aniž by se jeho sen vyplnil, Gatsby na konci románu umírá.

Je-li však čtenář pozornější, Fitzgeraldovy knihy se pro něj stanou, mimo jiné, i historicko-společenskými dokumenty, které pojednávají o době začátku dvacátého století. Základem pro takovýto čtenářský zážitek je, samozřejmě, nutná znalost alespoň obecných reálií. Ty jsou zběžně popsány v první části této práce.

Podrobným rozbořením jak primárních, tak sekundárních zdrojů, a jejich porovnáním, se tato práce snaží čtenáři dokázat hodnotu Fitzgeraldových děl právě z hlediska historicko-kulturního.

Dvacátá léta v Americe byla obdobím velkých změn zasahujících do ekonomiky, politiky, kriminality, technologie, společenského života, společenského postavení žen, módy, společenských hodnot a do mnoha jiných oblastí.

Dá se říci, že období dvacátých let se stalo milníkem pro ženskou část populace. Viktoriánské pojetí o postavení a povinnostech žen se od základu měnilo. Moderní žena, takzvaná „flapper“ neboli „zabec“, již netrávila svůj čas starostí o domácnost a rodinu, naopak, Fitzgerald vykresluje své hrdinky jako nekonvenční mladé dámy s hodnotami, které se značně liší od hodnot jejich „viktoriánských“ matek. Kouří cigarety, pijí alkohol, stylově užívají slangové výrazy, svůj volný čas tráví na divokých večírcích, kde tancují Charlestone a flirtují s přítomnými pány. Šaty, které ženu devatenáctého století zahalily téměř od hlavy až k patě, se ve dvacátých letech nápadně „zmenšily“ a zprůhledněly. Ženy odhalily své nohy a paže, zkrátily své vlasy a podtrhly svoji krásu výrazným a vyzývavým líčením. Zásadní změna vězela zejména v tom, že ženy svou emancipaci a extravagantní chování dávaly neostyšně najevo. I Fitzgeraldovy literární hrdinky působí velmi suverénně, moderně a bezostyšně.

Ke značným změnám došlo i v pojetí sexu a sexuálního chování. Stejně jako se ženy nebály otevřeně se zapojovat do společenského života, a celkově se více veřejně prosazovat, i o sexu se začalo mluvit otevřeněji a tím se stal méně tabuizovaným tématem. K tomuto velkou mírou přispěl i známý psychoanalytik Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), který si tehdy troufl tvrdit, že sexuální pudy jsou naprosto přirozené a lidské, což měla prokazovat i jeho proslulá psychoanalýza snů. Už ve Fitzgeraldově prvotně vyvolala otevřenost týkající se právě sexuality velký rozruch. Starší generace



se jevila šokována ne tím, že sexualita je přirozenou součástí lidského života, ale spíše onou otevřeností a přímostí, jakou se o ní mluvilo a jaký „špatný“ vliv tato otevřenost měla na mládež dvacátých let. Jak Fitzgerald sám píše v *Na prahu ráje*, samotné líbání vyvolávalo u „viktoriánských matek“ pohoršení. Ale Fitzgerald nezůstává pouze u líbání. Ve *Velkém Gatsbym* se součástí děje stává i mimomanželský vztah dvou postav, Toma Buchanana a Myrtle Wilson. Je ale zřejmé, že autor se tak snaží vystihnout úpadek morálního chování mnohých Američanů žijících v této době.

Zlatý věk byl zlatým i co se týče technologického rozvoje. Například elektřina se rychle rozšiřovala do mnoha domácností. Fitzgerald věnuje elektrickému osvětlení velkou pozornost. Zejména v *Krásných a prokletých* a *Velkém Gatsbym* vnáší světelné efekty do jeho příběhů zvláštní atmosféru, která je znatelná od začátku do konce. Navíc by se mohlo zdát, že jas elektrického světla se ve *Velkém Gatsbym* stal symbolem pro jas peněz a bohatství. Dům zámožného Gatsbyho je neustále plný světla, zatímco Myrtle, žena z pracující vrstvy, světlo zastiňuje.

Další mimořádné změny přinesl automobil. Nejenže naprosto změnil způsob jakým lidé trávili volný čas, přeměnil dosavadní vzhled krajiny, měst, vesnic a cest, a obchodníkům umožnil rozšířit obchody do vzdálenějších měst, ale auto se také stalo místem, kde se odehrávaly tajné a intimní schůzky neposlušných dcer a jejich nápadníků, jako je tomu například v *Na prahu ráje*. Mimoto Fitzgerald také klade jasný důraz na skutečnost, že automobil byl jakousi propagací majitelova bohatství a známkou jeho sociálního postavení. Tento jev je patrný ve *Velkém Gatsbym*, kde se tento moderní dopravní prostředek stává jedním z ústředních motivů tohoto románu. Duchovním otcem automobilového průmyslu se stal Henry Ford (1863-1947) a jeho úspěšná firma „Ford Motor Company“. Více jak polovina vlastníků aut jezdila v typicky černém Fordu. Jelikož Gatsby byl zdaleka jedním z nejbohatších a nejvznešenějších postav v celém románu, i jeho auto se muselo lišit od aut průměrně i nadprůměrně zbohatlých Američanů. Gatsbyho vozem byl anglický Rolls-Royce.

Ačkoliv Fitzgeraldova fascinace moderní technologií je ve jeho díle zřejmá, autor zároveň jakoby upozorňuje na záporné jevy, které s sebou přináší. Například i přes všechn jasný pokrok, který s sebou automobil přinesl, je to právě auto, jenž je ve *Velkém Gatsbym* příčinou smrti Myrtle a potažmo i hlavního protagonisty. I to jak autor ve stejném díle ve třetí kapitole popisuje hrůznost dopravní nehody, může být

naznačením, že pokrok, ať už v jakémkoliv směru, přináší i negativní stránky.

Podobným příkladem se stává i tehdy neméně populární telefon. Fitzgerald upozorňuje na to, že tento přístroj, přes všechny klady, přinesl do lidského života takovou anonymitu, která Gatsbymu umožnila vést své nelegální obchody alkoholem; nadto ale také umožňuje Tomu Buchananovi a jeho milence domlouvat si své nemorální schůzky mnohem jednodušeji, bez větších problémů.

Ekonomický rozkvět a technologický pokrok měl přímý vliv na Američany i v tom ohledu, že jim poskytl mnohem větší výběr co se týká zboží. Rychlejší výrobní linka znamenala více výrobků. Většina lidí v té době měla tolik peněz, že si tyto výrobky mohla dovolit a lidská touha vlastnit a vyrovnat se vlastnictvím svému okolí ve „zlatých dvacátých letech“ rostla právě s těmito narůstajícími možnostmi. Konzum se projevil na módě, automobilech, domácích spotřebičích, domech, a v podstatě na všem, co prokazovalo majetnost svých vlastníků. I tato moderní konzumní tendence se stala terčem Fitzgeraldovy kritiky.

Kromě toho se ale spisovatel zaměřuje i na jev, který spotřebu stylových a moderních produktů ovlivňoval – reklamu. V *Krásných a prokletých* pak zdůrazňuje styl jazyka, užívání atraktivních slov a celkovou jazykovou přitažlivost a manipulační sílu reklamy, která je její podstatou. Stejná moc reklamy se objevuje i ve *Velkém Gatsbym*, kde se jedním z ústředních symbolů tohoto románu stává billboard propagující činnost očního lékaře T.J. Eckleburga. Oči na tomto billboardu jakoby pozorovaly a hodnotily jednání lidí kolem. Jedna z postav, George Wilson, je dokonce touto reklamou natolik ovlivněn, že ji považuje za ztělesnění Boha. Síla a vliv reklamního průmyslu je tedy více než jasná.

Stejně jako reklama pronikl do každodenního života i film. Jako Muriel Kean v *Krásných a prokletých*, lidé podleli módě „všichni viděli všechno“. Sdíleli si jména filmů, dojmy z nich, názory. Fámy o životech filmových hvězd se staly náplní rozhovorů všech, kteří se snažili splynout s moderní dobou.

Film do lidských životů zasáhl i tím, že začal ovlivňovat pohled na lidskou krásu. Filmoví hrdinové se stali vzorem. Ani krásná a všemi obdivovaná Gloria Patch do filmového průmyslu nepatří, protože díky svému věku nesplňuje přísné požadavky stanovené tehdejšími ideály krásy. Naopak Tom Buchanan je, tak jak ho Fitzgerald popisuje, zosobněním hollywoodského ideálu.

Kino se stalo jedním z prvních míst, kam za stejnou zábavou chodili lidé z různých sociálních vrstev, což nebylo do té doby zcela obvyklé. To že film pomohl alespoň na chvíli sjednotit lidi nehledě na to z jaké společenské třídy pocházejí, je zřetelné ve scéně, kdy se sám Amory Blaine stává filmovým divákem. Nekomentuje děj filmu, ale obecnost, které s ním film sleduje.

Je samozřejmé, že jak automobil tak film změnili způsob jakým lidé trávili svůj volný čas. Fitzgerald však často detailně popisuje i jiný styl zábavy, který v té době vynikal svou divokostí a extravagancí – populární večírky. Častým zevrubným popisem těchto zábav autor nejenže zachycuje jejich neopakovatelnou atmosféru, ale zároveň tak vystihuje celkovou atmosféru dvacátých let. Nevázanou, divokou a veselou. Většina večírků, které spisovatel popisuje, má špatné následky – hádku, bouračku, vydědění. Divoký večírek „jazzového věku“, který trval devět let, měl podobné následky – burzovní krach.

Moderní doba vyžadovala moderního člověka. Moderní člověk se nejen moderně oblékal, myslel a jednal, ale i moderně mluvil. Slangové výrazy byly jen dalším projevem tolika změn, které se v této době odehrávaly. Pro nové věci a jevy vznikala nová slova. I to Fitzgerald vnímal a i to se mu podařilo čtenáři přiblížit. Kdykoliv se skrz naskrz moderní Muriel Kean objeví na scéně čtenář je svědkem proudu „trendy“ slov a vyjadřování.

Jak Fitzgerald sám tvrdil ve svém eseji *Ozvěny jazzového věku*: „Pro Jazzový věk bylo charakteristické, že se o politiku vůbec nestaral.“ (Fitzgerald, *Prasklina*, 1931: 11)

Zákon o prohibici byl ale něčím, co ovlivnilo dvacátá léta v Americe ve velké míře. Dnes je již všeobecně známo, že tento zákon byl politickým omylem tehdejší americké vlády. Zákaz výroby, prodeje a pití alkoholu byl ve svém důsledku kontraproduktivní. Zakázané ovoce chutná nejlépe, alkohol zakázaným ovocem byl a Fitzgerald poukazuje na to, jak špatně se tento zákon vymáhal a že nebyl nikdy důsledně uveden do života. Důkazem jsou jak nevázané party pořádané Gatsbyem, tak i fakt, že je Amorymu nabízen pašovaný alkohol těsně po zavedení prohibice. Právě pašeráctví alkoholu, neboli „bootlegging“, byl dalším důsledkem prohibičního zákona a se stal zdrojem příjmů mnoha gangsterů. Ve Fitzgeraldově tvorbě byl takovým gangsterem samotný Gatsby.

Dalším problémem pro americkou vládu byla imigrace. Negativní přijetí přistěhovalců americkými občany se ve Fitzgeraldových románech projevilo pejorativním popisem zvyků a osob těchto menšinových skupin. Zejména z popisu Židů, ať už Josepha Bloeckmana z *Krasných a prokletých* nebo Meyera Wolfshiema ve *Velkém Gatsbym* bylo možno vycítit, jak Amerika dvacátých let přijímala tyto přichozí imigranty.

Změny které probíhaly v životech Američanů se nevyhnutelně musely projevit i na lidských hodnotách, prioritách a snech. Stejně tak jako žádnému z Fitzgeraldových hrdinů se nepodařilo splnit svůj sen, ani Spojeným státům americkým se jejich „zlatý“ americký sen nesplnil. Rozbil se o realitu života, tak jako se rozbil sen Anthonyho a Gatsbyho.

Díla Francise Scotta Key Fitzgeralda, jak se tato práce snaží dokázat, jsou pro dnešního čtenáře autentickým průvodcem převratných dvacátých let dvacátého století.

Hodnota jeho prací však spočívá i v tom, že jeho díla jasně překračují hranice doby o které psal. Dnešní čtenář se může s hrdiny románů tohoto autora často ztotožnit, chápat je nebo mu mohou alespoň někoho nebo něco připomínat. Ať už je to vliv moderní technologie na dnešní mládež a společnost, emancipace žen nebo hledání osobních snů, sebe sama a smyslu života.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

***Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald***



Appendix 2

***Speakeasy***



***Flappers and fashion of 1920s***



***Dorothy Parker***

**THE FLAPPER**

*by Dorothy Parker*

The Playful flapper here we see,  
The fairest of the fair.  
She's not what Grandma used to be, --  
You might say, *au contraire*.  
Her girlish ways may make a stir,  
Her manners cause a scene,  
But there is no more harm in her  
Than in a submarine.

She nightly knocks for many a goal  
The usual dancing men.  
Her speed is great, but her control  
Is something else again.  
All spotlights focus on her pranks.  
All tongues her prowess herald.  
For which she well may render thanks  
To God and Scott Fitzgerald.

Her golden rule is plain enough -  
Just get them young and treat them  
rough.

[http://www.geocities.com/flapper\\_culture](http://www.geocities.com/flapper_culture)



**"Easily answered" by John Held Jr.**



**EASILY ANSWERED**

*Sadie*—With the French at war, what will we do for our new fashions?

*Minnie*—We'll always be sure to be in style if we wear just a little less.

Easily Answered. *Judge*, July 22, 1913. Permission of JB&R, Inc.

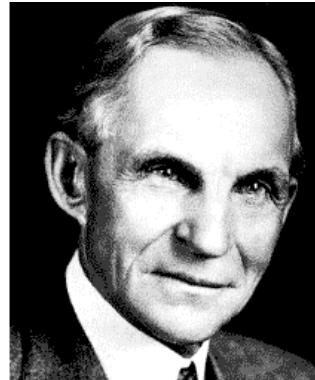
Appendix 6

**Jordan Baker – one of the sexual symbols of the 1920s**



Appendix 7

***Cars of the 1920s***



Henry Ford ( 1863 - 1947 )  
Henry Ford ( 1863 - 1947 )



Ford (Model T)



Rolls Royce – Gatsby, probably, used to own a similar type of car

***Telephones***



An Advertisement

## BATH ROBES

are gifts one will enjoy

### For Christmas

A new line of robes that are warm and pretty. Made of heavy Eiderdown in pleasing patterns. Colors of rose, tan, blue and lavender. \$5.00 \$6.50 & \$7.50.

#### QUILTED SILK ROBES

Quite new and attractive are these new silk robes of changeable satin. They will make a wonderful Christmas gift that will be remembered for many years. Colors of blue and rose. \$15.00 and \$16.50.

#### CORDUROY MORNING ROBES

Made of a very good grade of corduroy, neatly trimmed with hand embroidery yarn designs. Slip on and off like a dress. Colors of rose, brown and blue. \$6.85

# CHRISTMAS

## Is Now Only 22 Days Away

### and only 18 Shopping Days left.

The Store of the Christmas Spirit

#### PLAID BLOUSES ARE ALL THE RAGE NOW

Let us show you our line of blouses. You will like these warm heavy coats, large or small plaids, Jersey band around bottom to hold it good and snug. \$5.00 & \$7.50

#### THIS LITTLE FELLOW WILL NOT GET COLD



for he is dressed in a "Bradley" outfit. "Bradley" knit wear is known and recognized as the best the country over. We have "Bradley's" for men, women and children, at a price you can afford to pay.

Slip into a "Bradley"—and out of doors.

#### RUBBER BOOTS

Hunters and trappers: The "Converse" Hip Boot is guaranteed to give you satisfactory service. Our stock is new, no old or age-worn boots. "Converse" boots are made to fit the same as shoes. This gives you extra wear, for they will not crease or crack. \$6.50

#### MAKE THE CHILDREN HAPPY WITH A DOLL



Here are two cute little dolls. Children will surely like these. They can drop them or throw them around and they will not break.

We have dozens of other kinds on display and you are sure to find one that will please you.

25c 50c 75c \$1.00 \$1.50 & \$3.75

#### ZIPPER BOOTS

For women and children, this new patented fastener boot is the ideal foot covering for cold weather.

No buckles, no snaps, no laces, just pull up on the fastener and the boot is locked. Will not come unfastened until released.

Zipper Boots are warm lined to protect your feet from the cold.

Children's size	\$3.50 & \$4.00
Ladies' sizes	\$5.00

#### HANDKERCHIEFS

make good gifts. No one has enough handkerchiefs, and that is the reason they are always acceptable. Our line is complete, every kind and color.

5c 10c 15c 25c & 50c

#### CHRISTMAS CANDLES

A large assortment of decorative candles



neat designs and colorings. 5c 10c & 15c each. Candle holders for Christmas trees.

#### SHERBET GLASSES

New style, iridescent glass, either high or low, very best grade thin blown glass. Set of six \$3.00 Other style at \$3.50

#### GRUB TRAYS

A very useful as well as handsome gift. Either silver or copper finished metal tray and scraper. Per set \$1.00

#### MUSIC ROLLS

Just the thing for the children who take music lessons. Keeps the music sheets from being soiled or wet. \$2.50 \$3.95 & \$6.90

#### COASTER SLEDS

The kids will enjoy a new sled this Christmas. "Let it be a "King of the Hill," the fastest, speediest sled made. All sizes for the little tots up to big children.

\$1.29 \$1.69 \$2.11 and up to \$3.29

#### ARTIFICIAL FRUIT

as natural as the real fruit, all kinds, pears, peaches, apples, plums, etc., each 10c

#### TINKER TOYS

Novelty wooden toys that the children like—such as Tinker Jump Ropes, Follow-Me-Tinker and many other Tinker Toys. 50c 60c & 75c

#### FRUIT BOWLS

Very attractive colored fruit bowls, both with permanent or detachable base, blue, yellow and red, each \$1.35

#### JUVENILE VIOLINS

Large enough to learn to play a tune and yet inexpensive. The children will enjoy one of these for Christmas \$1.25

#### YOUR WINTER NEEDS

can all be taken care of at this store. The best line of winter goods we have ever had is now on display and we can convince you that our prices are as reasonable as the city prices and in many cases cheaper.

Men's sheep skin lined coats and vests—Ladies', Men's and Children's sweaters. Ladies and children's coats (closing at 1/2 price). Blankets, comforters, outing flannel, wool flannel, 1 buckle overshoes for men women and children, heavy bootwear for men, in fact everything to keep you warm.

# SOLOMON'S

Buy It In  
Culver Your  
Home Town

79

***A 100 % Americanism***



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## ÚDAJE PRO KNIHOVNICKOU DATABÁZI

<b>Název práce</b>	Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald and the "Roaring Twenties"
<b>Autor práce</b>	Tereza Lilingová
Obor	Učitelství anglického jazyka
Rok obhajoby	2007
Vedoucí práce	Mgr. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.
Anotace	Analýza motivů a témat tzv. jazzového desetiletí ve Fitzgeraldově díle a způsobů, jimiž autor reflektuje specifičnost této epochy.
Klíčová slova	Francis Scott Fitzgerald This Side of Paradise The Beautiful and Damned The Great Gatsby Jazz Age Roaring Twenties 1920s History of the United States of America