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Faculty of Arts and Philosophy**

**The Disintegration of the American Dream  
in the Short Stories of Francis Scott Fitzgerald**

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## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

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### Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Práce se zaměří na zobrazení amerického snu ve vybraných povídkách od F. S. Fitzgeralda (např. Winter Dreams, The Jelly-Bean, The Rich Boy). V teoretické části studentka objasní situaci v americké společnosti ve 20. letech 20. století a podrobně charakterizuje americký sen (autorka např. vysvětlí vztah mezi ambicí a americkým snem). Analytický celek se bude soustředit na zobrazení amerického snu ve vybraných povídkách, studentka především pojedná o otázce deziluze nebo o různých interpretacích amerického snu a pokusí se vystopovat podobné a rozdílné prvky, s kterými texty pracují. Práce bude založena na kvalitních sekundárních zdrojích a zakončí ji přehledné shrnutí daných zjištění.

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Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním své práce v Univerzitní knihovně.

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Martina Šlechtová

## **Poděkování**

Na tomto místě bych ráda poděkovala vedoucímu práce, Mgr. Michalu Kleprlíkovi, Ph.D., za jeho laskavou pomoc při jejím zpracování.

## **NÁZEV**

Rozpad amerického snu v povídkách Francise Scotta Fitzgeralda

## **ANOTACE**

Práce se zabývá fenoménem amerického snu a jeho historickými, kulturními a sociologickými kořeny v kontextu tří povídek amerického spisovatele F. Scotta Fitzgeralda.

První část práce je rozdělena na čtyři kapitoly a jejich menší podkapitoly. Úvodní kapitola hovoří o historických okolnostech vzniku amerického snu a jeho provázanosti s postavou státníka Benjamina Franklina. Druhá kapitola obsahuje stručnou biografii amerického spisovatele F. Scotta Fitzgeralda a srovnání témat jeho děl s těmi v pracích Theodore Dreisera a Ernesta Hemingwaye. Třetí kapitola se zabývá jednotlivými komponenty, které dohromady tvoří americký sen. Čtvrtá kapitola přináší výsledky psychologického výzkumu, zkoumajícího vliv ambic na dosažení životních cílů.

Druhá část práce se věnuje analýze rozličných úryvků ze tří povídek F. Scotta Fitzgeralda. Zkoumá, jakým způsobem jejich protagonisté využívají svých ambic v cestě za americkým snem.

## **KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA**

americký sen, Fitzgerald, ambice, cíle, materialismus

**TITLE**

The disintegration of the American Dream in the stories of Francis Scott Fitzgerald

**ANNOTATION**

The work deals with the phenomenon of the American Dream and its historical, cultural and sociological roots in the context of three short stories by the American writer F. Scott Fitzgerald.

The first part is divided into four chapters and their smaller subsections. The opening chapter speaks about the historical circumstances of the American Dream and its interconnectedness with the figure of Benjamin Franklin. The second chapter contains a brief biography of the American writer F. Scott Fitzgerald, comparing the themes in his writing with those in the works of Theodore Dreiser and Ernest Hemingway. The third chapter deals with the individual components forming the American dream. The fourth chapter presents the results of a psychological research examining the impact of ambition on the achievement of life goals.

The second part is devoted to the analysis of various excerpts from three short stories by F. Scott Fitzgerald. It examines the manner in which their protagonists use their ambition in the quest for the American Dream.

**KEYWORDS**

The American Dream, Fitzgerald, ambition, goals, materialism

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## INTRODUCTION

The thesis aims to analyze the concept of the American dream in the context of three short stories by the American writer F. Scott Fitzgerald. After finding out that there were only a few available texts examining the subject in depth, the author of this thesis decided to study this phenomenon in detail. She was also motivated to find out whether this concept was not just a myth, and what was going on in the minds of individuals who, despite various adversities, were able to work their way up the social ladder and fulfill their dreams.

The first part is divided into four main chapters. At the beginning, the reader will be introduced to the historical context which gave rise to the idea of the American Dream, and its interconnectedness with the figure of perhaps the most famous American self-made man, Benjamin Franklin. Then will be explained the impact of the American Civil War on the changes in thinking and way of life in the New World, including the requirements imposed on the modern man. The impact of migration on society in the United States and the constant efforts of the government to 'americanize' the outlanders will be also discussed.

The second chapter will provide a brief biography of the aforementioned author F. Scott Fitzgerald who significantly contributed to the popularization of the American Dream in world literature. Furthermore, the themes in Fitzgerald's work will be compared to the writing of his contemporaries, Ernest Hemingway and Theodore Dreiser.

The third chapter talks about the individual components of the American Dream. First we will see how it was displayed in the works of the American authors at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. It will be followed by a list of strengths and weaknesses of the concept, and an explanation of the American approach to wealth and materialism. This chapter also describes the consequences of an individualistic approach, asserted by many aspiring self-made men on their way to success.

The fourth chapter provides an analysis of the socio-psychological research, conducted by scientists from the United States. This part will describe the influence of social class, age, personal ambitions and character traits on the achievement of the individual's life goals.

The second part of the thesis will work with the analysis of Fitzgerald's stories, called *Winter Dreams*, *The Rich Boy* and *The Jelly-Bean*. The aim of this section is to apply the prior findings to the three aforementioned stories. By means of plot evaluation, it will be decided whether the three protagonists have the ability to fulfill their potential and which instruments and character traits they use in their quest for the American dream. The final conclusions will be drawn at the very end of each analysis.

## 1. The Background of the American Dream

This part of the thesis describes the crucial components of the American Dream. It consists of four main sections which are divided into several subparts. The first section starts with *The historical and theoretical framework*. It is closely followed by the second part, *A comparison of F. S. Fitzgerald, E. Hemingway and T. Dreiser*. The third part of the thesis is called *American Dream and what it is made of*, with *Ambition as a foundation of the American Dream* being the last part.

### 1.1. The Historical and Sociological Framework

#### 1.1.1. The Beginnings of the American Dream, and Benjamin Franklin

Although the idea of the American Dream is persistently linked with the United States, its roots, according to the British economic historian Richard H. Tawney, can be traced to the 15th century in the emerging capitalism of the rich commercial centers such as Venice, Florence, and Flanders.<sup>1</sup> As the German sociologist Max Weber claims in his groundbreaking study *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, written in 1904-1905, modern capitalism merely boomed in the areas of Europe under the strong influence of the Protestant church.<sup>2</sup> While Catholics believed the accumulation of wealth to be a sign of avarice – i.e. one of the seven deadly sins, together with pride, lust, gluttony, sloth, anger, and envy<sup>3</sup> – Protestants, according to Weber, “developed the notion that working diligently was a way to honor God, and economic success was in turn a sign of God’s favor.”<sup>4</sup> It is therefore not surprising that the emerging middle class, composed mostly of businessmen, artists, and bankers,<sup>5</sup> gravitated more toward the new Protestant sects than to traditional Catholicism, professed mostly by the land owning aristocracy.<sup>6</sup>

When the religiously persecuted Protestants started leaving England after 1620, they brought with them to the New World the so-called Protestant work ethic. It is a set of moral principles based on thrift, discipline, hard work, and individualism.<sup>7</sup> As Weber asserts, it was precisely these qualities that helped especially Calvinists to gain a central position in the emerging American capitalism.<sup>8</sup> North America was then still a largely unexplored territory in which the European colonizers could find everything they needed for their new life – wood to build cabins, drinking

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1 David Westby, “Protestant Ethic,” *Public Services Home Page*, last modified February 1, 2016, <http://mb-soft.com/believe/txn/protesta.htm>.

2 Westby, *Protestant Ethic*.

3 Christopher Kaczor, “The Sin of Greed,” *Catholic Answers*, accessed March 21, 2016, <http://www.catholic.com/magazine/articles/the-sin-of-greed>.

4 Christina Johnson, “Religion, Profit, and Expansion,” *Brown Blogs*, accessed March 21, 2016, <http://blogs.brown.edu/atlanticworldreligion/religion-profit-and-expansion/>.

5 Flint Johnson, “Merchant Class in the Renaissance: Definition & Overview,” *Study*, accessed March 21, 2016, <http://study.com/academy/lesson/merchant-class-in-the-renaissance-definition-lesson-quiz.html>.

6-8 Westby, *Protestant Ethic*.

water, land for farming or grazing land for their cattle.<sup>9</sup> There was no king who could cheat the colonists of their property, and so they – unlike the warlike Indians, who did not understand the concept of ownership and the importance of respecting written agreements – did not feel bound by any obligations.<sup>10</sup> In her book, *American Literature and Culture 1900-1960*, the American author Gail McDonald explains that the approach of each newcomer group to the settlement of colonizers differed dramatically: “[...] *The first of these settlers, the Puritans, saw themselves not as leaving Eden but setting about to build a new Eden. Other settlers, less spiritually driven, came for the money to be made from exploitation of the rich national resources.*”<sup>11</sup> McDonald adds that over time, the latter group, motivated by a desire for success, numerically exceeded the Puritans.<sup>12</sup> The future United States therefore embarked on the path of materialism that has been dominating them up until now.

Americans wanted to do equally well and erase the boundaries between the firmly established social hierarchies they had known from Europe. American historian L. John Van Til confirms this. In his article, *The Idea of Equality in America* (1978), he claims that the development of local society was affected mainly by the ideas of social equality, promoted by the British philosopher John Locke.<sup>13</sup> However, it was crucial to find diligent self-made men who would spread these ideas, and whose example other people would follow. In his book *The European Dream*, American economic theorist Jeremy Rifkin points out that many of these individuals recruited from the ranks of Protestant immigrants, who “*hitched Calvin’s religious vision to Enlightenment notions of science, private property rights, and capitalist market relations, creating the uniquely American Dream.*”<sup>14</sup>

According to the American author Carla Mulford, we could probably find the most famous self-made man in Benjamin Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.<sup>15</sup> Formerly a Boston printer, Franklin managed to climb from the career of a successful newspaper publisher to Congress due to his hard work. He became popular when he began publishing his bestselling *Poor Richard’s Almanack* in 1732. This publication, issued for the long period of 26 years and selling annually up to 10,000 units just in America,<sup>16</sup> offered “*a plethora of little pieces of advice about saving money, working hard, using time well, and observing charitable thoughts towards others.*”<sup>17</sup>

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9 Gail McDonald, *American Literature and Culture 1900-1960* (London: Blackwell, 2007), 61.

10 McDonald, *American Literature*, 61.

11 McDonald, *American Literature*, 61-62.

12 McDonald, *American Literature*, 62.

13 L. John Van Til, “The Idea of Equality in America,” *Foundation for Economic Education*, published May 1, 1978, <http://fee.org/articles/the-idea-of-equality-in-america/>.

14 Jeremy Rifkin, *The European Dream: How Europe’s Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream* (New York: TarcherPerigee, 2005), 139.

15 Carla Mulford, *The Cambridge Companion to Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 146.

16 Charles Augustus Goodrich, *Lives of the Signers to the Declaration of Independence* (New York: William Reed & Co., 1829), 267.

17 Mulford, *The Cambridge Companion*, 147.

In his books, Franklin was constantly returning to the instructions on how to control one's material destiny through thrift, hard work and a simple life,<sup>18</sup> warning at the same time against confidence in false dealers, contentiousness, betting, lending and drinking.<sup>19</sup> He also believed that schoolchildren should rather learn practical subjects than the academic ones.<sup>20</sup> According to Allan Kulikoff of the University of Georgia, what Franklin's persona represents for most Americans today is a mix of myths and facts, but he is admired as the inventor of the lightning rod, and as someone who made it from a poor Philadelphia teenager to the representative of the fulfilled American Dream.<sup>21</sup> Besides, Franklin himself was well aware of it in his days,<sup>22</sup> claim authors Harold Bloom and Blake Hobby. In the book *The American Dream*, they add that at the end of the 18th century, Franklin was the most famous man in the whole Western world.<sup>23</sup>

### 1.1.2. Changes in Life After the Civil War and in the First Half of the 20th Century

In her book *American Literature and Culture 1900-1960*, the American Literature Professor Gail McDonald asserts that the modernization of the United States started with the change of thinking after the traumatic events of the Civil War.<sup>24</sup> Due to the defeat of the South and the approval of the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in January 1865, slavery was effectively abolished in the whole country,<sup>25</sup> and Blacks were granted their freedom. In the following years, the requirements for the 'new man' began to increase: the person should ideally have ten times more stamina, energy and willpower than his predecessors.<sup>26</sup> According to McDonald, the pressure on the American psyche escalated with the growing number of citizens who began to complain of nervous disorders.<sup>27</sup> The nation was growing in both power and wealth; the frontier line was receding and new territories were inhabited – all that with the aim of accelerating the development and keeping the American Dream of constant progress alive.<sup>28</sup>

However, the biggest changes in the United States occurred in the 20th century – especially after the end of the WWI. With the beginning of the so-called New Era began a period of great economic changes, prompted by extending electricity and oil in urban areas.<sup>29</sup> But obviously, not

18-19 Mulford, *The Cambridge Companion*, 147.

20 Mulford, *The Cambridge Companion*, 148.

21 Allan Kulikoff, "Benjamin Franklin and the American Dream," *The Georgia Workshop in Early American History and Culture*, accessed April 3, 2016, <http://colonialeseminar.uga.edu/Ben%20Franklin%20and%20the%20American%20Dream.pdf>.

22 Harold Bloom and Blake Hobby, *The American Dream* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 24.

23 Bloom and Hobby, *The American Dream*, 24.

24 McDonald, *American Literature*, 13.

25 "13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution," *Web Guides*, last modified November 30, 2015, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/13thamendment.html>.

26-27 McDonald, *American Literature*, 13.

28 McDonald, *American Literature*, 43.

29 "The New Era," *Boundless*, last modified March 15, 2016, <https://www.boundless.com/u-s-history/textbooks/boundless-u-s-history-textbook/the-roaring-twenties-24/the-new-era-185/the-new-era-1010-6976/>.

everyone was thrilled by such a radical reformation of the local society. Although the American novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald tries to depict this period as one endless party, many Americans were disgusted by modern art, modern thinking, and everything that smacked of a little novelty.<sup>30</sup> Even the language of the public sphere in America became crowded with claims of novelty,<sup>31</sup> says professor McDonald, adding: “*Fashion magazines promoted a seasonal change of look. Historical shifts in the expectations of a gender or race were registered by titles like the New Negro, and the New Woman evolved into the flapper.*”<sup>32</sup> While everything outwardly pointed to a pluralistic society open to experimentation, the United States experienced a backlash of racist behavior, isolationist tendencies, nativism and puritanism after the end of the WWI.<sup>33</sup> The Ku Klux Klan was restored, and it gained millions of followers in 1923.<sup>34</sup> The Prohibition Act was introduced in 1919, and after the imposition of the immigrant quota in 1924, the United States began admitting only 3 percent of each nationality,<sup>35</sup> McDonald describes. But for the average American, life indeed changed – they could buy more affordable cars,<sup>36</sup> listen to the radio, dance to jazz bands or sweeten the family atmosphere with their favourite gramophone records.<sup>37</sup> The occurrence of the recorded psychic disorders simultaneously increased, especially in the case of the so-called neurasthenia, which was “*an umbrella diagnosis; the disease was commonly understood to be a reaction to the stimuli of modern life,*”<sup>38</sup> McDonald observes.

It was at that time when a new philosophical movement, initially formed in the 1870s, started to emerge: the so-called pragmatism.<sup>39</sup> According to Douglas McDermid from the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* web page, this movement paradoxically influenced non-philosophers, especially those in the field of law, education, politics, sociology, psychology, and literary criticism.<sup>40</sup> It claimed that “*an ideology or proposition is true if it works satisfactorily, that the meaning of a proposition is to be found in the practical consequences of accepting it, and that unpractical ideas are to be rejected.*”<sup>41</sup> The most prominent representatives of this trend were American philosophers William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952).<sup>42</sup> McDermid notes that Dewey's ideas had been influencing American intellectual life for a half-century, but after his death, Pragmatism lost much of its power.<sup>43</sup> However, a certain kind of pragmatism can be traced even at the core of American thinking. Kenneth Dautrich and David A. Yalof, the authors of the book *American Government: Historical, Popular, and Global Perspectives, Brief Version,*

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30-31 McDonald, *American Literature*, 150.

32 McDonald, *American Literature*, 150.

33-37 McDonald, *American Literature*, 150.

38 McDonald, *American Literature*, 13.

39 Christopher Hookway, “Pragmatism,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, published August 16, 2008, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pragmatism/>.

40-43 Douglas McDermid, “Pragmatism,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed April 8, 2016, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/pragmati/>.

assume that Americans are generally convinced that an individual is solely responsible for their material success.<sup>44</sup> During the tough times of the Great Depression, the role of patron was assumed by the federal government, which supported artists through the government agencies, prompting them to raise awareness or national identity and ‘Americanness’.<sup>45</sup> It could be hereby concluded that the Americans were not as free in their actions as they thought.

### **1.1.3. The Immigrants and the Changes in the Working Conditions in the 20th Century**

Between 1840-1920, 37 million people emigrated to the United States,<sup>46</sup> which had a significant effect on urban development.<sup>47</sup> There were only 4,000 inhabitants living in Chicago in 1837, but in 1890, it had grown to 1 million.<sup>48</sup> According to the analysis of historical records concerning population growth in the United States (see appendix A), published in June 1994 by Michael R. Haines of the National Bureau of Economic Research, “*by the two decades prior to World war I, about one third of total increase originated in net migration.*”<sup>49</sup> Natural birth rate in the United States had been proportionally decreasing since the early 18th century, for both black and white residents.<sup>50</sup> In her book *American Literature and Culture 1900-1960*, professor Gail McDonald of Goldsmiths, University of London, explains that for the refugees, the approaching view of New York harbor seemed like a gateway to free life and escape from indigence or oppression.<sup>51</sup> Not only did they seek asylum from political upheavals, but also better opportunities for farming, business, and employment opportunities in the New World.<sup>52</sup>

In the first half of the 20th century, the assimilation of foreigners was one of the goals of the United States’ public policy – hence the myth of the Melting Pot.<sup>53</sup> In reality, many quotas were introduced against foreigners, starting with the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 and ending with the near total ban on the entry of immigrants in 1924.<sup>54</sup> According to McDonald, these measures pointed to “*the mixture of racism, xenophobia, politics, suspicion, and plain ignorance that sometimes prompts policy decisions. They are often also a measure of economic constraints, such as competition for jobs and housing or pressure on the nation’s infrastructures and services.*”<sup>55</sup> From time to time, various civil societies appeared in the United States, aiming to crush all ‘undesirable groups’, such as eg. Roman Catholics.<sup>56</sup> Such behavior is rather strange in a country that de facto

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44 Kenneth Dautrich and David A. Yalof, *American Government: Historical, Popular, and Global Perspectives, Brief Version* (Boston: Wadsworth Publishing, 2011), 14.

45 McDonald, *American Literature*, 151.

46-48 McDonald, *American Literature*, 19.

49 Michael R. Haines, “The Population of the United States, 1790-1920” (historical paper no. 56, 1994), Abstract.

50 Haines, “The Population of the United States”, 12.

51 McDonald, *American Literature*, 20.

52 Haines, “The Population of the United States”, 12.

53-55 McDonald, *American Literature*, 20.

56 McDonald, *American Literature*, 20.

stands and falls with immigration. But whether one was an immigrant or considered themselves a 'real American', the early 20th century saw an outstanding improvement to their formerly miserable working conditions;<sup>57</sup> child labor was banished,<sup>58</sup> and the minimum wage was established.<sup>59</sup> The eight-hour working day and two weeks of vacation was a standard.<sup>60</sup> "*Taking the long view, then, it appears that many of the goals sought by labor reformers in the period 1900-1960 have, in principle if not always in practice, been met,*"<sup>61</sup> adds the professor, noting that a declaration of war is generally the best thing for business improvement.<sup>62</sup> She explains that in the years following the conflict, there was always a significant upsurge in labor activity.<sup>63</sup> During the Second World War, when men left for the battlefield, women had to replace them e.g. as switchboard operators, telegraphers, mechanics, and drivers.<sup>64</sup> The American website *History.com* specifies that "*by 1945 nearly one out of every four married women worked outside the home.*"<sup>65</sup> When most women returned to households in the 1950s and a 'baby boom' happened, only 37% of American women decided to stay at work.<sup>66</sup>

## **2. A comparison of F. S. Fitzgerald, E. Hemingway and T. Dreiser**

### **2.1. F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Influence of Ambition on his Life and Work**

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald is now rightly regarded as one of America's most distinguished writers of the so-called Lost Generation. He was born on September 24, 1896 on the outskirts of the best residential district in Saint Paul, Minnesota. This fact, however insignificant it may sound, is absolutely crucial for understanding his personality. Throughout his whole life, Fitzgerald was fighting his feelings of inferiority because he was neither rich nor poor enough. From his father's side, which represented "*breeding – right instincts, good manners, the need for 'honor, courtesy, courage'*",<sup>67</sup> Fitzgerald was related to the famous American poet Francis Scott Key (1779-1843),<sup>68</sup> who wrote the lyrics to the 1814 US national anthem, 'The Star-Spangled Banner'.<sup>69</sup> Money was brought to the Fitzgerald family by the McQuillans, Fitzgerald's maternal relatives, scornfully described by the author as "*straight 1850 potato-famine Irish*"<sup>70</sup> without proper manners. In his

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57 McDonald, *American Literature*, 20.

58-63 McDonald, *American Literature*, 92.

64 Joyce Bryant, "How War Changed the Role of Women in the United States," *Yale.edu*, accessed April 13, 2016, <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/2002/3/02.03.09.x.html>.

65 "American Women in World War II," *History.com*, last modified 2010, <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/american-women-in-world-war-ii>.

66 "Why 26% of U.S. women still choose not to work," *CNN.com*, last modified August 13, 2013, <http://money.cnn.com/2013/08/13/news/economy/women-work-force/>.

67 Arthur Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald and His World* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 1972), 6.

68 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 5.

69 "This Day in History," *History*, accessed April 17, 2016, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/key-pens-star-spangled-banner>.

70 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 6.

book, *Scott Fitzgerald and His World*, literary critic Arthur Mizener explains that the teenage Scott was under the impression that he did not belong anywhere and that he was oscillating somewhere on the edge of the social hierarchy.<sup>71</sup> Thence sprang Fitzgerald ambitious nature and his desire for a better status. Because of these characteristics, he soon turned his high school classmates against himself, prompting them to print a plea in the school magazine, which asked volunteers to “*poison Scotty or find some means to shut his mouth.*”<sup>72</sup> He acted with equal ambitiousness even after his admission to Princeton. However, Fitzgerald did not turn out to be a very good student. He was already failing three school subjects at the end of the first semester,<sup>84</sup> and on the top of it, he had a reputation of being an alcoholic.<sup>73</sup> The only thing he excelled at since elementary school was the passion he put into his ambitions, and the intensity of his commitment.<sup>74</sup> At that time, the future famous writer met his femme fatale. Ginevra King was a beautiful Chicago socialite who later became the inspiration for the impassible Judy Jones, the heroine of Fitzgerald’s short story *Winter Dreams*.<sup>75</sup> Mizener claims that Fitzgerald was utterly fascinated by the girl, or merely by the ideals she represented: “*She moved through the world with the ease and assurance of a lifetime of wealth, of social position taken for granted, of parties and proms she had always dominated as if by divine prerogative.*”<sup>76</sup> For Guinevere, however, Scott was at best just one of her many admirers.<sup>77</sup> Their two-year relationship definitively came to an end in January 1917, when the girl's father came down on the lovestruck young man with these fateful words: “*Poor boys shouldn't think of marrying rich girls.*”<sup>78</sup> This quote eventually became famous when Fitzgerald used it in his masterpiece *The Great Gatsby*. When he was subsequently fired from Princeton, he felt as if the door to success was slammed right in his face.<sup>79</sup>

Because he could not handle money and did not trust the way it was made,<sup>80</sup> Fitzgerald joined the army in October 1917<sup>81</sup> to become, in his own words, “*the world's worst second lieutenant*”.<sup>82</sup> At a country dance in Alabama, he got acquainted with the local judge's daughter, Zelda Sayre,<sup>83</sup> who later became a model for the character of Daisy Buchanan from his most praised novel, *The Great Gatsby*.<sup>84</sup> For Scott, Zelda was a good replacement for Ginevra King – she looked similar,

71 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 12.

72 Harold Bloom, *F. Scott Fitzgerald* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2002), 9.

73 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 27.

74 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 10.

75-77 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 27.

78 Joe Erbenraut, “Ginevra King, Fitzgerald’s ‘Gatsby’ Inspiration And His First Love, Was Quite A Gal (Photos),” *Huffington Post*, published May 10, 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/10/ginevra-king-fitzgerald-gatsby\\_n\\_3253488.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/10/ginevra-king-fitzgerald-gatsby_n_3253488.html).

79 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 31.

80 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 56.

81 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 116.

82-83 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 36.

84 Lisa Hix, “The Great Gatsby still gets flappers wrong,” *Collectors Weekly*, published May 3, 2013, <http://www.collectorsweekly.com/articles/the-great-gatsby-still-gets-flappers-wrong/>.



was equally vain and continued to shock him with her sexual rampancy.<sup>85</sup> Unfortunately, she also suffered from hereditary emotional instability,<sup>86</sup> and her perceived rebelliousness was confined only to the safety of her small-town home, where she could fight against her father's strict rules.<sup>87</sup> Their marriage was a catastrophe; they were repeatedly unfaithful to each other,<sup>88</sup> spending money with foolish extravagance<sup>89</sup> and partying wildly. When their daughter Scottie was born, Zelda found her a burden in their lifestyle.<sup>90</sup> She was jealous of Scott's literary success,<sup>91</sup> and at one point even accused him of a homosexual tryst with his friend Ernest Hemingway,<sup>92</sup> who in turn branded her a distraction to her husband's writing.<sup>93</sup> Soon thereafter, Zelda started to show symptoms of schizophrenia, and in April 1930, she had to be hospitalized in a psychiatric ward.<sup>94</sup> But life worsened for her husband as well – he was unable to keep money and his longtime alcohol problem escalated to epic proportions. In her article, *F. Scott Fitzgerald's Little Drinking Problem* (see appendix B), the American literary scholar Julie M. Irwin offers us a rather depressing glance into the end of Fitzgerald's life:

At his death at the age of 44, he was a washed-up author whose books were moldering in Scribner's warehouse, fired from screenwriting jobs in Hollywood, in debt to friends, publishers and agents, supporting a wife who drifted hopelessly from mental institution to mental institution.<sup>95</sup>

A massive heart attack, which eventually killed F. Scott Fitzgerald just a few days before Christmas in 1940,<sup>96</sup> was merely an inevitable consequence of his lifestyle. However, Zelda's end was even more tragic. She died in 1948, alongside with other patients at Highland Hospital in Asheville, North Carolina, when it was allegedly set on fire by an unknown pyromaniac.<sup>97</sup>

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85 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 38.

86 Caroline Croasdale, "Zelda Fitzgerald: Love and Madness," *Americans in Paris*, published November 12, 2010, <https://uramericansinparis.wordpress.com/2010/11/12/zelda-fitzgerald-love-and-madness/>.

87 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 37.

88 Julia M. Klein, "Z: A Novel of Zelda Fitzgerald' and 'Beautiful Fools," *Boston Globe*, published May 5, 2013, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/books/2013/05/04/review-novel-zelda-fitzgerald-therese-anne-fowlery-and-beautiful-fools-clifton-spargo/NBTHpPNomRPZwhfjIG4n3O/story.html>.

89 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 56.

90 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 58.

91 "Zelda Fitzgerald," *Art Experts*, accessed April 24, 2016, [http://www.artexpertswebsite.com/pages/artists/fitzgerald\\_zelda.php](http://www.artexpertswebsite.com/pages/artists/fitzgerald_zelda.php).

92 "Ernest Hemingway and Zelda Fitzgerald," *123 Help Me*, accessed April 24, 2016, <http://www.123helpme.com/view.asp?id=19305>.

93 Evan Andrews, "10 Things You May Not Know About F. Scott Fitzgerald," *History*, published March 24, 2015, <http://www.history.com/news/10-things-you-may-not-know-about-f-scott-fitzgerald>.

94 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 117.

95 Julie M. Irwin, "F. Scott Fitzgerald's Little Drinking Problem," *The American Scholar*, Summer 1987, 415.

96 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 106.

97 Mizener, *Scott Fitzgerald*, 108.

## 2.2. Comparison of Fitzgerald, Hemingway and Dreiser

The theme of the American Dream and its disintegration appears not only in the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald, but also in the works of other American authors. It can be found mainly in the books and short stories by another representative of the 'Lost Generation', Ernest Hemingway, or in the works of the 'Naturalist' writer, Theodore Dreiser. The theme indeed 'jumps' from the pages of their books, but rather between the lines and not in such a 'roaring' form, as is the case with Fitzgerald. Apparently, it was because each author approached the theme individually and shaped it according to their own experiences and perceptions of the world. American writer Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), who was a close friend and later rival of F. Scott Fitzgerald,<sup>98</sup> issued a fundamental novel of the 'Lost Generation', *The Sun Also Rises*, in 1926. Linda Wagner-Martin, professor of literature at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, even considers this story of Hemingway's the most important of his books.<sup>99</sup> It deals with the experience of an American who left his homeland and now lives in Paris. According to Rebecca Poulter of University of Brighton, Hemingway's novel "discusses the theme of identity – how it is constructed and manipulated in terms of the 'dual allegiance of the American, who in his intellectual culture belongs to the Old World and the New'."<sup>100</sup> Even though the character of Robert Cohn opposes the American pressure for conformity,<sup>101</sup> the book's protagonist Jake Barnes says about him: "I never heard him make one remark that would, in any way, detach him from other people."<sup>102</sup> The ambition of Hemingway's hero could therefore be his effort to throw away a prescribed label of an 'American' and create a new identity of an 'independent person'. Poulter claims that it manifests e.g. in Cohn's uncharacteristical love of bullfighting,<sup>103</sup> which he sees as a "man's capacity to shape his own existence"<sup>118</sup> by their 'dancing with death'.<sup>104</sup> He is likewise typically 'un-American' in the sense that he has a hobby outside of the status quo.<sup>105</sup>

But otherwise, Hemingway was rather trying to warn against excessive purposefulness, saying that a writer could be harmed by politics, women, drink, money and ambition.<sup>106</sup> He claimed himself to be a man with no ambition whatsoever,<sup>107</sup> which could not make him more different from

98 John Updike, "Poor little rich boy," *The Guardian*, published June 21, 2003,

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/jun/21/featuresreviews.guardianreview34>.

99 Linda Wagner-Martin, *New Essays on Sun Also Rises* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1.

100-101 Rebecca Poulter, "The 'American Dream' in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, and Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun also Rises*," *Brightonline*, published November 18, 2014,

<http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/study/literature/brightonline/issue-number-five/the-american-dream-in-f.-scott-fitzgeralds-the-great-gatsby,-and-ernest-hemingways-the-sun-also-rises>.

102 Ernest Hemingway, *Fiesta: The Sun Also Rises* (London: Vintage, 2000), 39.

103-105 Rebecca Poulter, "The 'American Dream' in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, and Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun also Rises*," *Brightonline*, published November 18, 2014, <http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/study/literature/brightonline/issue-number-five/the-american-dream-in-f.-scott-fitzgeralds-the-great-gatsby,-and-ernest-hemingways-the-sun-also-rises>.

106 Gene Lyons, "Hemingway: A Life Without Consequences," *Entertainment Weekly*, published November 20, 1992, <http://www.ew.com/article/1992/11/20/hemingway-life-without-consequences>.

107 Harold Bloom, *Ernest Hemingway* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2005), 3.

Fitzgerald, in whose character this trait ‘shone’ prominently. Even the common themes in Hemingway’s writing were different; they revolved more around love, war, wilderness and loss.<sup>108</sup> Both authors, however, seem to agree on the same issue – they think that the American Dream evolved from the dream of a defeated Frontier into something poisonous.<sup>109</sup> Rebecca Poulter of the University of Brighton found that Fitzgerald’s and Hemingway’s protagonists were depicted as both the victims and the winners of a society which was closing in a ‘united front’ against those who were socially outcast, ultimately challenging the worshipped American Dream.<sup>110</sup> In the book *Ernest Hemingway*, Bloom also claims that Faulkner, Stevens, Frost and others might have been stronger authors than Hemingway, but it was he who has achieved the lasting status of a myth in American literature.<sup>111</sup>

Like Fitzgerald and Hemingway, the novelist Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) was also formed by his life experience. Born as one of thirteen children of a destitute Indiana farmer, Dreiser was a former reporter who had the chance to truly know the world of the rich and the poor. That was the reason why he felt, according to the American author Shelley Fisher Fishkin, a deep understanding for his characters and their “poverty, deprivation, failure, jealousy, and exclusion from the American dream of success; he understood the desperation that often grew out of being poor in a land of plenty.”<sup>112</sup> In his work *Political Writings*, Dreiser criticizes the fact that in the game of the fulfillment of the American Dream, the strong and cunning win most of the time, because they exploit the weaknesses of the inferior individuals and the so-called ‘equal opportunity’ to win unlimited personal privileges.<sup>113</sup> In her literary study called *Hypocrisy in Literature: The Example of Sister Carrie* (see appendix C), the American poet Alexandra Glynn cites the literary critic Robert Penn Warren. He noted that Dreiser’s novel *Sister Carrie* (1900) fundamentally differed in the view of the world from the works of his contemporaries, like e.g. William Dean Howells and Frank Norris:

What was shocking here was not only Dreiser’s unashamed willingness to identify himself with morally undifferentiated experience or his failure to punish vice and reward virtue in his fiction, but the implication that vice and virtue might, in themselves, be mere accidents, mere irrelevances in the process of human life, and that the world was a great machine, morally indifferent.<sup>114</sup>

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108 Linda Wagner-Martin, *A Historical Guide to Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 155.

109 Harold T. McCarthy, *The Expatriate Perspective: American Novelists and the Idea of America* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1974), 152.

110-111 Rebecca Poulter, “The ‘American Dream’ in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, and Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun also Rises*,” *Brightonline*, published November 18, 2014, <http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/study/literature/brightonline/issue-number-five/the-american-dream-in-f.-scott-fitzgeralds-the-great-gatsby,-and-ernest-hemingways-the-sun-also-rises>.

112 Shelley Fisher Fishkin, *From Fact to Fiction: Journalism & Imaginative Writing in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 100.

113 Theodore Dreiser, *Political Writings* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 149.

114 Alexandra Glynn, “Hypocrisy in Literature: The Example of *Sister Carrie*” (seminary work, North Dakota State University, 2010), 21.

### 3. The American Dream and What it is Made of

#### 3.1. The American Dream in Culture

The first half of the twentieth century was ruled by a general distaste for the suppression of individual entrepreneurship and competition,<sup>115</sup> claims American literature professor Gail McDonald in her book *American Literature and Culture 1900-1960*. According to her, people started to be more supportive of private ownership and exercitation of their own interests than to the ideal of worker unity.<sup>116</sup> The government supported this thinking with the assumption that, if given leeway, people will use all their opportunities to succeed, and will become the source of national strenght and progress towards equality for everybody.<sup>117</sup> The author also points out that the crossing of social class' borders has always belonged to the American perception of social mobility.<sup>118</sup> While the typical American Dream usually depicts the way to the top, American writers were rather sceptical of this curve,<sup>119</sup> says McDonald, adding:

Naturalist writers – Theodore Dreiser, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris – of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries focused on the poorest and least powerful city dwellers, and mucracking journalists exposed ugly truths about corruption in high places. They thereby kept weath, poverty, and the overt and subtle signifiers of class at the center of American fiction.<sup>120</sup>

After the Wall Street Crash of 1929, American writers' sensitivity to social problems intensified.<sup>121</sup> Many of them lobbied for peremptory change in the system and personally engaged in political matters.<sup>122</sup> As explained by Professor McDonald, it was mostly authors of the the Lost Generation – i.e. F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway – who pointed not only to the economic devastation following Black Tuesday, but also to the general waste of time, talent and money.<sup>123</sup>

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the American dream was formed especially by the film industry. As Nathanael West says in the book *The Day of the Locust* (1933), the state of California, and Hollywood especially, are repositories of failures.<sup>124</sup> “*Sunshine and movie stars lure people to Hollywood; the ‘dream machine’, as the film industry has often been called, creates but cannot satisfy the desire for lives that, like the images on the ‘silver screen’, are larger than life,*”<sup>125</sup> explains McDonald. West also suggests that those who worship false ideals – like fame, glitter and money – will be punished in an incredibly harsh way.<sup>126</sup> In Preston Sturger's 1942 film *Sullivan's Travels*, an idealistic film producer embarks on a tour across the United States to collect material for a movie about ‘real people’. He finally realises that the audience does not expect or even want

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115-117 McDonald, *American Literature*, 97.

118 McDonald, *American Literature*, 24.

119 McDonald, *American Literature*, 25.

120-121 McDonald, *American Literature*, 97.

122 McDonald, *American Literature*, 98.

123 McDonald, *American Literature*, 70.

124-125 McDonald, *American Literature*, 46.

126 McDonald, *American Literature*, 47.

reality from the movies.<sup>127</sup> McDonald points to the fact that ‘the people’ in American fiction tend to be portrayed as “*an unthinking and therefore dangerous mob.*”<sup>128</sup>

### 3.2. The Perfidiousness of the American Dream

One could reason that over the years, the idea of the American dream has become deeply embedded in the very roots of the United States. According to Professor Gail McDonald, the United States is on the one hand perceived as a country of influential thinkers and artists, a world that is not bound by tradition, and is innovative and energetic.<sup>129</sup> In the words of other thinkers, however, America as a young country “*lacks tradition, is naive, in Ezra Pound’s characterization in Hugh Selwyn Mauberley, a ‘half-savage’ country.*”<sup>130</sup> The American Dream, however, may conceal many pitfalls. McDonald is convinced that the possibility of reward implies also the existence of the possibility of punishment and failure.<sup>131</sup> She adds that the epic adventures of a traveller are always more interesting during the mid-story time of crises and temptation than in the very end.<sup>132</sup> A person in the quest for the American Dream should therefore keep on conquering new frontiers “*to replace the old, continually moving the goal,*”<sup>133</sup> writes McDonald in her work *American Literature and Culture 1900-1960*. According to author Nathanael West, the reason why the masses fail to fulfill their dreams is simple – it is caused by boredom,<sup>134</sup> which may point to depression caused by thwarted ambition. People work hard in their boring jobs, save money and have high expectations.<sup>135</sup> Where else have Americans always gone for the American Dream than to the West – to California, the land of sunshine and oranges?<sup>136</sup> But as McDonald points out with brutal honesty, people soon realise that none of the worldly goods can really satisfy them:

Their boredom becomes more and more terrible. They realize they’ve been tricked and burn with resentment. Every day of their lives they read the newspapers and went to movies. Both fed them on lynchings, murder, sex crimes, war... Nothing can be violent enough to make taut their slack minds and bodies. They have been cheated and betrayed. They have slaved and saved for nothing.<sup>137</sup>

The idea of the American Dream and the acquisition of mainstream success, McDonald says, are both more relevant to and better accepted by the ‘haves’ than the ‘have-nots’.<sup>138</sup> The tenets are connected to the American liberal individualism: only the hard-workers deserve material success.<sup>139</sup>

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127 McDonald, *American Literature*, 47.

128 McDonald, *American Literature*, 46.

129 McDonald, *American Literature*, 114.

130 McDonald, *American Literature*, 112.

131-133 McDonald, *American Literature*, 44.

134 McDonald, *American Literature*, 48.

135 McDonald, *American Literature*, 63.

136-137 McDonald, *American Literature*, 48.

138-139 McDonald, *American Literature*, 63.

### 3.3. Wealth and Materialism

In his 1840' work *Democracy in America*, French politician Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) claims that the love of wealth, either as a principal or ancestry theme, can be traced behind everything that Americans do.<sup>140</sup> According to him, material benefits are central to the national identity of the United States citizens, and also one of the country's fundamental myths.<sup>141</sup> Professor Gail McDonald of Goldsmiths, University of London, confirms de Tocqueville's words when depicting the today image of a 'stereotypical American': an obese, gaudily dressed and noisy man with a long purse.<sup>142</sup> The United States produce and use more than any other nation in the world, despite making up only 5 percent of the world's population.<sup>143</sup> McDonald is convinced that materialism in the US deepened the most in the 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>144</sup> adding:

[...] at various points, Americans were told by economists and government leaders that it was acceptable, even patriotic, to be in debt; that waste could be 'creative' insofar as what is discarded makes space for innovation; [...] that the purpose of life is pleasure; that acquisition assists progress and progress is good for democracy.<sup>145</sup>

In the 1930s, this idea was popularized in the phrase 'The American Way of Life', and it was profusely used as a form of encouragement during the war years.<sup>146</sup> Judging by the common markers of the quality of life, like e.g. property ownership, education wages, leisure spending, unemployment rate, life expectancy, literacy and so on, the United States showed improvement and progress.<sup>147</sup> Real earnings of workers in the time between the onset of World War I and the stock market crash in 1929 rose overall by 40 percent.<sup>148</sup> However, as noted by McDonald, these markers only cover a long-lasting and genuine problem, which is the social gap between the rich and the poor, which is in turn connected to the multiracial make-up of the nation.<sup>149</sup> America is not as strictly divided into social classes as e.g. Great Britain or India. Social mobility is possible and people can improve their financial position.<sup>150</sup> However, one must be able to make good use of their talents. Property, wealth and competition are in fact the main components of the local system.<sup>151</sup> Its direct consequence is this concept of wealth: provided the stock market does not crash or other disaster does not come, rich people get even richer.<sup>152</sup> A popular myth in the US claims that rich people, unlike their poorer counterparts, know how to make the system work in their favor.<sup>153</sup> "*Rich people don't go to jail; the cells are full of the poor. Because money corrupts, wealth makes it hard to be a person of integrity,*"<sup>154</sup> says McDonald. This view is connected to another issue which often

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140 McDonald, *American Literature*, 61.

141 McDonald, *American Literature*, 66.

142-143 McDonald, *American Literature*, 62.

144-146 McDonald, *American Literature*, 109.

147-148 McDonald, *American Literature*, 62.

149-150 McDonald, *American Literature*, 63.

151-154 McDonald, *American Literature*, 64.

divides Americans – the irrevocable right to own property versus morality of such ownership, which is not that clean-cut.<sup>155</sup> In accordance with his Puritan convictions, Benjamin Franklin claimed that “*the acquisition of money, and more and more money, takes place... simultaneously with the strictest avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of it.*”<sup>156</sup> Here, however, McDonald cannot ignore the differences in approach between ordinary mortals and famous historical figures. While work and play was inseparable for renowned polymaths like Leonardo da Vinci or Benjamin Franklin, among the general American population, work has always been perceived merely as “*means to an end, whether subsistence, power, comfort, security, status, or salvation.*”<sup>157</sup> Kim K.R. McKeage, marketing professor at University of Massachusetts Amherst, says that this materialistic approach peaked in the States in the 1980s.<sup>158</sup> McDonald even recalls the then popular tell-tale bumper sticker with the inscription saying: “*He who dies with the most toys wins*”.<sup>159</sup>

### 3.4. Individualism vs. Collectivism

In the words of professor Gail McDonald, the main principles of liberal individualism were essential for the formation of the American approach to work, wealth and property.<sup>160</sup> Although the term ‘individualism’ did not come in widespread use until the 1820s, the foundation for political and economic importance of working individuals were laid in the early modern era.<sup>161</sup> The fundamental document that demarcates the boundaries between the Selbst and the world is the essay *Self-Reliance*, written in 1841 by the American lecturer Ralph Waldo Emerson.<sup>162</sup> It reached such notoriety in America that its passages are familiar even to those who have never read it before.<sup>163</sup> The essay i.e. claims that “*imitation is suicide*”<sup>164</sup>, or that “*whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist.*”<sup>165</sup> But as professor McDonald notes, the demands on people begin to change over time. In the late 19th century, the trend of the independent worker was slowly disappearing, only to be replaced by the 20th-century ideal of a team-worker, who better fit in the blooming industrial and bureaucratic society.<sup>166</sup> Employers in the 20th century often wanted their workers to accommodate to the work team, rather than excel above it.<sup>167</sup> Most of the work, e.g. in factories, was done in smaller or larger groups.<sup>168</sup> It was therefore surprising that the unlimited-economy

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155 McDonald, *American Literature*, 65.

156 McDonald, *American Literature*, 67.

157 McDonald, *American Literature*, 66.

158 Kim K.R. McKeage, “Materialism and Self-Indulgences: Themes of Materialism in Self-Gift Giving,” *Association for Consumer Research*, accessed May 10, 2016, <https://www.acrwebsite.org/search/view-conference-proceedings.aspx?Id=12206>.

159 McDonald, *American Literature*, 69.

160-161 McDonald, *American Literature*, 79.

162 McDonald, *American Literature*, 80.

163-165 McDonald, *American Literature*, 81.

166 McDonald, *American Literature*, 82.

167-168 McDonald, *American Literature*, 80.

praising Social Darwinism continued to survive side by side with such cooperative enterprises as e.g. the Knights of Labor.<sup>169</sup> Cheap dime novels with titles like *Work and Win*, which could be purchased in any news-stand, only supported the idea that good things happen only to those who deserve it.<sup>170</sup> However, American Naturalist writers like Theodore Dreiser, Stephen Crane and Frank Norris thought this idea to be a cruel myth.<sup>171</sup> Yet these moods could not be erased from the thinking of the United States, because they apparently helped to raise the morale and hope of the nation in difficult times. During the peak of the Great Depression in the 1930s, the *Cavalcade* radio program regularly aired stories about famous self-made men like Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Morse or Eli Whitney.<sup>172</sup>

#### 4. Ambition as a Foundation of the American Dream

In their book *The American Dream and the Public Schools*, authors Jennifer L. Hochschild and Nathan Scovronick write that the majority of U.S. citizens are convinced that “*everyone has to right to pursue success but that only some deserve to win, based on their talent, effort, or ambition.*”<sup>173</sup> The last-mentioned trait can lead a person to triumph and satisfaction against all odds,<sup>174</sup> thinks the American journalist Preston Waters of the website *Elite Daily*. Ambitiousness tends to be overly demonized, being often mistakenly confused with greed and power-hungriness<sup>175</sup>, which most societies often connect with e.g. politicians or lobbyists.

Ambitiousness as a character trait and its correlation with the achievement of success was studied by the American psychologist Angela L. Duckworth of University of Pennsylvania. In her study called *Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals*, she examined 1,545 participants from 25 years of age and above, with all levels of education.<sup>176</sup> Duckworth wanted to find out why some people use only a small portion of their abilities, while a few exceptional individuals push themselves to their limits.<sup>177</sup> In doing so, she concluded that ambitious individuals are characterized by a whole set of attributes such as personal creativity, drive or emotional intelligence, but also personal charm, self-assurance, emotional stability, and even physical beauty.<sup>178</sup> One character trait, however, was shared by all successful people – it was grit.<sup>179</sup> Duckworth explains grit as personal perseverance and passion for long-term plans.<sup>180</sup> Such a person continues to work through all

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169-171 McDonald, *American Literature*, 82.

172 McDonald, *American Literature*, 83.

173 Jennifer L. Hochschild and Nathan Scovronick, *The American Dream and the Public Schools* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), Introduction.

174-175 Preston Waters, “Why Ambition Is More Important Than Talent,” *Elite Daily*, published November 5, 2012, <http://elitedaily.com/money/entrepreneurship/ambition-important-success/>.

176 Angela L. Duckworth, “Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92, no. 6 (2007): 1090.

177 Angela L. Duckworth, “Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92, no. 6 (2007): 1087.

178-180 Angela L. Duckworth, “Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92, no. 6 (2007): 1087.



obstacles, be it adversity or slow progress, and sees their task as a marathon; their advantage is personal stamina.<sup>181</sup> Whereas for most people, disappointment or boredom in watching the target can be taken as a sign to change their goals, a really strong-willed person will keep on pursuing their dreams.<sup>182</sup> The scientist also found that the determination has a much greater impact on success than innate talent, and that most individuals she investigated were not child prodigies but they were characterized by a unique devotion to their ambitions.<sup>183</sup> On the contrary, it was surprising that the prodigiously gifted individuals often did not end up in the highest positions of their fields.<sup>184</sup> Unsurprisingly, it was found that one of the most important predictors of achievement was intelligence,<sup>185</sup> with IQ possibly having influence on up to one third of the achieved success.<sup>186</sup> Even more important for the achievement of success can be one's "*perseverance, self-confidence, and integration toward goals*",<sup>187</sup> noted Duckworth. She also quoted her colleagues Howe, Ericsson and Charness, who claimed that innate talent is "*less important than commonly thought: 'More plausible loci of individual differences are factors that predispose individuals toward engaging in deliberate practice and enable them to sustain high levels of practice for many years.'*"<sup>188</sup> Duckworth also proved that grit differs from the need for achievement.<sup>189</sup> While those who are average achievers pursue moderately hard goals, "*individuals high in grit deliberately set for themselves extremely longterm objectives and do not swerve from them – even in the absence of positive feedback,*"<sup>190</sup> the psychologist explains her thesis. An interesting finding was that grit increases not only with the level of educational attainment,<sup>191</sup> but also with increasing age – participants between the age of 25 to 34 were lowest on the scale of grit, while those being 65 years and older were the grittiest.<sup>192</sup> "*Individuals who were a standard deviation higher in grit than average were 35% less likely to be frequent career changers,*"<sup>193</sup> Duckworth also noted with surprise that undergraduate college students who were smarter than their peers scored less on the gritty scale.<sup>194</sup>

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181-182 Angela L. Duckworth, "Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92, no. 6 (2007): 1088.

183-188 Angela L. Duckworth, "Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92, no. 6 (2007): 1088.

189-190 Angela L. Duckworth, "Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92, no. 6 (2007): 1089.

191 Angela L. Duckworth, "Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92, no. 6 (2007): 1091.

192-194 Angela L. Duckworth, "Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long-Term Goals," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92, no. 6 (2007): 1093.

## 5. The Use of Ambitions in the Stories by F. S. Fitzgerald

This part of the thesis will analyze the approach of the three protagonists of the short stories by F. Scott Fitzgerald, their ambition and its impact on achieving the American dream. Using specific examples, it will be compared whether these men have the ability to reach their dreams, how they use them, and which they are. The analysis will be executed by means of plot evaluation, and will be backed up with quotations from each story. Eventually, it will be decided whether these heroes ended up in a better or worse position than at the beginning of the story.

### 5.1. Winter Dreams

When F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote to his editor Max Perkins in June 1925, he described his short story titled *Winter Dreams* as “a sort of first draft of the *Gatsby* idea.”<sup>195</sup> Like many of the author's stories, this one also revolves around his favorite topics – a poor boy courting a rich and unavailable girl, the connection between love, ambition and money, youthful dreams of success, and what the ravages of time do to them.<sup>196</sup> It is precisely the enormous tenacity and ambition which are the main driving forces in the life of middle-class Dexter Green, the protagonist of the Fitzgerald's story. From the beginning of the tale, it is apparent that the boy will rise in the world. Although he is the son of the second best greengrocer in town and therefore does not need to work, Dexter moonlights as a caddy at the local golf course to make his own pocket money. During the long winters, when the course is closed due to snow, Dexter devotes himself to his ‘winter dreams’, in which he plans his future with unwavering faith. He thereby demonstrates a positive attitude, ability to plan and enough determination to overcome obstacles, which are generally crucial in achieving ends. According to American positivity researcher Shawn Achor, happiness as an attitude is very important because it fuels success.<sup>197</sup> As a fourteen year-old, Dexter is declared the best caddy by the club's owner, Mortimer Jones, but he abruptly quits when he gets into an argument with Jones' condescending daughter Judy. Although he receives “a strong emotional shock”,<sup>198</sup> Dexter decides to forget Judy and follow his dreams, eventually graduating from a famous university in the East. When he thinks about the way to expand his finances, he does not enter into the unsafe world of securities trading like his rich classmates. As the representative of a middle-class trader, he does not ‘build castles in the air’ but rather pragmatically ponders on the type of a service that would be in

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195 “Winter Dreams,” *Project Gutenberg SelfPublishing Press*, accessed June 5, 2016, [http://www.gutenberg.us/articles/winter\\_dreams](http://www.gutenberg.us/articles/winter_dreams).

196 “Privileged Glimpses,” *Cornell University New Student Reading Project*, accessed June 5, 2016, [http://reading.cornell.edu/reading\\_project\\_06/gatsby/glimpses/glimpses\\_past.htm](http://reading.cornell.edu/reading_project_06/gatsby/glimpses/glimpses_past.htm).

197 Kathy Caprino, “How Happiness Directly Impacts Your Success,” *Forbes*, published June 6, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kathycaprino/2013/06/06/how-happiness-directly-impacts-your-success/#619b20ac7ae2>.

198 F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Early Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc., 2015), 221.

high demand. Finally he borrows “a thousand dollars on his college degree and his confident mouth, and [buys] a partnership in a laundry, [making] a specialty of learning how the English washed fine woolen golf-stockings without shrinking them”,<sup>199</sup> which earns him a wider clientele to provide new services for. It is clear that ambition gives Dexter a purpose in life, seeing that as a 27 year-old, he already owns the largest string of laundries on the East coast. He is now a part of the upper middle class, of which anthropologists say that it is the most driven, and as a consequence, the most anxious one.<sup>200</sup>

Dexter's personal ambition shifts; he eventually sells his business, becomes a millionaire and moves to New York with the intention of settling down. However, the story offers vital evidence that he feels uneasy among the very rich; he was not born into the highest social class, and as a consequence, he has different values and outlook on life than his old-money counterparts. Dexter's disquietude is manifested when he is invited to play golf with the men he used to caddy for. He has “the sense of being a trespasser”,<sup>201</sup> even thinking about the way to befriend the group's caddies to “lessen the gap which lay[s] between his present and his past.”<sup>202</sup> The acute feeling of ‘not belonging’ deepens later that evening. When Dexter goes swimming, he encounters now all grown-up and beautiful Judy Jones, the girl he had an argument with in his childhood. She recognizes him as one of the golfers, demanding, rather than asking, whether he knows how to drive a motorboat. “[...] I wish you'd drive this one so I can ride on the surf-board behind,”<sup>203</sup> she says alongside with her introduction. Judy's words imply that she merely sees Dexter as a person who could serve her rather than someone equal. Nevertheless, he agrees, and they set a first date for the following night. The rendezvous is a disappointment; first she keeps him waiting, then she appears in a rather mundane afternoon dress, unceremoniously hollering at her maid to serve dinner. The reader gets the feeling that she seems so annoyed because she must have done this with several other men. Dexter fears that he is boring Judy but she claims otherwise, saying that she is only distraught because she broke up with her boyfriend that afternoon – all that due to his poverty. She then inquires about her suitor's social status. Dexter clearly feels the pressure of the class distinction because he openly admits that he is a “nobody”<sup>204</sup>, with his career being “largely a matter of futures.”<sup>205</sup> However, he quickly reassures Judy that he is still “making more money than any man [his] age in the Northwest.”<sup>206</sup> This behavior suggests Dexter’s feelings of inferiority and his need

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199 F. Scott Fitzgerald and James Daley, *The Early Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2015), 222.

200 Jeffrey Kluger, “Ambition: Why Some People Are Most Likely to Succeed,” *Time*, published November 6, 2005, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1126746-5,00.html>.

201-202 F. Scott Fitzgerald and Matthew J. Bruccoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald: A New Collection* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989), 221.

203 Fitzgerald and Bruccoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 224.

204-206 Fitzgerald and Bruccoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 226.

for recognition and approval from the woman he apparently singled out for his life. His new ambition is therefore to impress Judy, “*the most direct and unprincipled personality with which he had ever come in contact.*”<sup>207</sup> However, he soon finds that his girlfriend has been repeatedly cheating on him with other men. Dexter feels helpless, and the reader realizes that it is probably because none of the former strategies which he used to achieve money and status with can be applied to getting the girl of his dreams. No linear way to her heart works here, since Judy is “*not a girl who could be ‘won’ in the kinetic sense—she [is] proof against cleverness, she [is] proof against charm.*”<sup>208</sup>

After eighteen months of trying to get into Judy’s favors, Dexter finally gives up on her and moves on with a new, more attainable love interest. Irene Scheerer is a girl who could not be more different from her predecessor, and even if she is slightly boring, the two become engaged. But after some time, Dexter starts thinking about Judy again, assuming that he is “*too strong and alive [...] to die lightly*”<sup>209</sup> by Irene’s side. This signifies that Dexter likes the thrill of a chase; he vitally needs to hunt down anything he wants in order to truly appreciate its worth. And the constantly teasing and evading Judy provides this kind of excitement for him. They meet again in the University Club, only one week before the long-planned announcement of Dexter’s engagement to Irene. Judy, clad in gold and radiating charisma, comes to her former beau and directly asks him to marry her. She knows, despite Dexter’s obvious contempt for her, that he still loves her. And he does. One could deduce that the protagonist is drawn to Judy out of his personal masochism – he must like to play cat and mouse, otherwise he would not participate in it. Judy also makes it perfectly clear that she is a woman of value. British relationship coach Matthew Hussey implies that men find this attitude attractive, automatically changing their behavior for the best when they find out that the woman would not accept less.<sup>210</sup> Dexter is definitely not an exception to the rule, and because he does not find his own fiancée enough challenging, he finally succumbs to Judy’s lure.

As we find out later, Judy’s passion for Dexter, who had to terminate his engagement to Irene, only lasted one month. However, the protagonist is not bitter about the result of their affair, as he came to terms with the fact that he could never have Judy. Because he did not manage to fulfill his dream about finding a perfect American wife, Dexter shifts his ambition and plunges back into work in New York, “[...] *where he [does] well—so well that there [are] no barriers too high for him,*”<sup>211</sup> Fitzgerald describes. After some time, Dexter is visited by a man named Devlin who informs him

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207 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 226.

208 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 227.

209 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 230.

210 Marianne Power, “I’m a high value woman. That doesn’t mean I charge by the hour,” *LinkedIn*, last modified March 2, 2015, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/im-high-value-woman-doesnt-mean-i-charge-hour-marianne-power>.

211 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 234.

about Judy's shocking fate: she is married to a fellow Detroitian who abuses and cheats on her, while she stays home with their children. She is also reported to having lost most of her beauty. This story carries a strong underlying message saying that the fulfillment of the American dream is possible. The main protagonist, Dexter Green, has grown from a middle-class boy into a wealthy millionaire businessman. However, it is implied that the American Dream comes with certain cons. One of them is the loss of illusions which stems from the clash of hard reality with excessive idealism. As a young middle-class boy, Dexter romanticized the life of high society, but when he managed to climb there, he was disappointed with its superficiality. Being nouveau riche, Dexter feels he will never be truly accepted by the members of the 'Old Money'; hence his feelings of being a 'misfit'. There are other cons to the American Dream as well – one of them might be a proof that not even money is enough to keep someone happy or secure them true love.

## 5.2. The Rich Boy

F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote this short story in March 1925, when he was vacationing on the Mediterranean island of Capri with his wife Zelda.<sup>212</sup> Like his masterpiece *The Great Gatsby*, this story also discusses the influence of money on human personality.<sup>213</sup> Unlike the sympathetic Jay Gatsby who used his ambition to work his way up the social ladder, Fitzgerald refuses to sympathize with the protagonist of *The Rich Boy*, Anson Hunter. As the author later admitted, he had never been able to forgive the rich for being wealthy, which influenced his life and work.<sup>214</sup> This is eloquently proven in the prologue of the story, in which Fitzgerald claims:

Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me. They possess and enjoy early, and it does something to them, makes them soft where we are hard, and cynical where we are trustful, in a way that, unless you were born rich, it is very difficult to understand. They think, deep in their hearts, that they are better than [us] because we had to discover the compensations and refuges of life for ourselves. Even when they enter deep into our world or sink below us, they still think they are better [...].<sup>215</sup>

And Anson Hunter indeed is convinced of his uniqueness. Having been brought up in an immensely wealthy upper-class family, he is used to poorer parents' inquiring about his mother and father from a very tender age. Anson's father wants his son to acquire good concentration skills and be physically fit in order to be able to take over the family estate in the future. In other words, he wants him to cultivate his ambition which is vital in life because it encourages a person to achieve their

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212 F. Scott Fitzgerald, *All The Sad Young Men* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), xviii.

213 Mary Jo Tate, *Critical Companion to F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work* (New York: Facts On File, 2007), 185.

214 "Fitzgerald and Gatsby," *Today in Literature*, accessed June 13, 2016, [http://www.todayinliterature.com/stories.wk.asp?Event\\_Date=4/10/1925](http://www.todayinliterature.com/stories.wk.asp?Event_Date=4/10/1925).

215 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 318.

ends. An affluent individual in particular can benefit from honing this trait, as well as self-discipline, because when combined together, they can help their owner to be in control of their finances, thus preserving their estate for future generations. As the reader can guess, Anson never really develops these two traits because he evidently feels that he does not need it. He naturally expects to be given 'special treatment', and this superiority of his later prevents him from being truly successful in college. *"His aspirations were conventional enough – they included even the irreproachable shadow he would some day marry, but they differed from the aspirations of the majority of young men in that there was no [idealism and illusion over them],"*<sup>216</sup> Fitzgerald comments on the motivation of his anti-hero. According to an American journalist Jeffrey Kluger, ambition is mostly employed by the middle-class people; the poor usually cannot afford it because they are struggling to pay the bills, and the rich find ambition unnecessary.<sup>217</sup> Such is the case with Anson – he has got plenty of money to buy everything he needs, which is why an occasional spree with posh debutantes, drinking in the men's clubs and wild parties are good enough to keep him happy. When the United States join the World War I in 1917, our rich boy decides to become a naval aviator. *"[Although he runs] with the drinkers and [is not] an especially good pilot, even the instructors [treat] him with a certain respect,"*<sup>218</sup> concludes Fitzgerald, and we can easily deduce the reason for his superiors' friendliness. It must be Anson's social standing, wealth, connections, and the officers' inkling that they might use a friend like that in the future.

Anson is seen as an overly confident, convivial and bawdy man, which is why all of his friends are surprised when he finds himself a rather conservative girlfriend. Paula Legendre is a swarthy and serious young woman from a good Californian family. She is everything that he is not: solemn, sincere, thoughtful and rather emotionless. She is different from the wild, spontaneous and party-loving girls which Anson runs around with, and gives off a certain feeling of stability. The reader feels that such an attribute would be convenient for a future high-class wife and mother. Anson thinks that *"if he could enter into Paula's warm and safe life he would be happy,"*<sup>219</sup> and the writer of this story makes it perfectly clear that the protagonist's main ambition in life is to secure this woman for himself. At first he is quite successful because his girlfriend agrees to marry him. To place himself in a good light and present himself as a likely son-in-law, Anson invites Paula and her mother for a short stay in his luxurious mansion. The reader gets the idea that his every move is cunningly calculated to impress both women. He even leads them to the old photographs showing him as a popular and widely beloved person. The effect on Paula's feelings is profound – the

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216 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 319.

217 Jeffrey Kluger, "Ambition: Why Some People Are Most Likely to Succeed," *Time*, published November 6, 2005, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1126746-5,00.html>.

218 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 320.

219 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 321.

pictures make her “*jealous of his life apart from her in the past, [inspiring her] with the idea of being married immediately and returning to Pensacola as his wife.*”<sup>220</sup> She is now eager to get married to Anson and is determined to press the issue on him. Anson books a romantic dinner in a nearby restaurant and informs Paula that he will pick her up later with his limousine. However, he underestimates the gravity of events. After drinking heavily with his friends, he arrives so intoxicated that he can barely walk. Paula’s prudish cousin Jo spots him first and angrily reports his unacceptable behavior to Anson’s future mother-in-law. Paula’s mother is seriously dissatisfied and strictly forbids her daughter from bringing him back home. Paula is ashamed but also resolved to overlook Anson’s drunkenness. However, her lips thin as soon as she climbs into her fiancé’s limousine. There she finds Anson’s friends who are heavily drunk and both asleep. The reader receives a clear signal that he might be overly confident in having Paula firmly in his grasp; he is willing to throw away his long-term goal of marrying the woman he loves for a moment of pleasure. This incident also seems to confirm that he might have the goal but not the ‘drive’ to follow his dreams. When they arrive at dinner, Anson “*[talks] boisterously and somewhat offensively to the party at large for fifteen minutes, and then [slides] silently under the table [...]*,”<sup>221</sup> mortifying his fiancée even further. It is clear that Anson does not seem to care about maintaining a good personal image, since he fully expects to be forgiven all his follies. This kind of approach is dangerous – any prospective ally might be compelled to sever their connection to the ‘sinner’, as the association could harm their own reputation, position, or career. This assumption is later proven true by Paula who informs Anson that she wants to end the relationship, as it is clear that he has a ‘drinking problem’. The next day, Mrs. Legendre scolds Anson for his shameful behavior. Although he apologizes, “*he [makes] no promises, [shows] no humility, only [delivers] a few serious comments on life which [bring] him off with rather a moral superiority at the end.*”<sup>222</sup> The lovers decide to resolve their relationship, even holding an engagement party, but when Anson gets drunk again and narrowly misses the event, Paula ultimately separates from him.

For the arrogant protagonist, this is a brutal awakening. He tries to banish the unwanted feelings of guilt with wild partying, and like Dexter Green from *Winter Dreams*, he plunges back into his work again. He finally concentrates on something productive – he works strenuously eight hours a day in his Wall Street job, evidently gathering all his passions for his lost love and directing them into coming up in the world: “*[...] the combination of his influential family connection, his sharp intelligence, and his abundance of sheer physical energy [bring] him almost immediately*

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220 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 321.

221 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 323.

222 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 324.

forward.”<sup>223</sup> But he still cannot stop thinking about Paula, even if their relationship is over and she is set to be married to another man. When he happens to meet her at a casual game of bridge, he finds out that she too harbors strong feelings for him. They run away from the party together; it is clear that she expects him to ask her for her hand in marriage. Had he been a true go-getter, he would have used this seemingly last opportunity to secure Paula for himself. Instead he thinks: “No, let it wait—she’s mine...”<sup>224</sup> Once again, he lets his arrogance get the best of him, which results in Paula’s giving up on him forever. Anson receives a serious heartbreak – for three days, he keeps on crying over the end of their friendship in any place or company.

When even the flighty Dolly Karger, who Anson has been casually dating for quite a while, sees through Anson and gets married to another man, the eponymous rich boy becomes a bitter bachelor. It is clear that he feels as a victim. He has already given up on his dream of being married to a perfect woman, as he begins to lower his expectations and standards with increasing age. Hence his willingness to accept “*the prospect of marrying without romantic love [...]*.”<sup>225</sup>

However, Anson still does not manage to find a suitable wife, although he has “*a seat on the Stock Exchange, and his earned income [comes] to twenty-five thousand a year.*”<sup>226</sup> He finally finds comfort in prying into his friends’ relationships, as he arrogantly thinks that now he has enough experience to counsel them. However, he completely fails in being a success: “*Not a season passed that he did not witness the collapse of an affair that perhaps he himself had fathered.*”<sup>227</sup> But his worst mistake in his life is yet to come. When Anson discovers that Aunt Edna has been in a long-running affair with a young boy named Cary Sloane, he tries to play the moralist, threatening his aunt with reporting it to Uncle Robert and Sloane’s father. Anson is convinced that he is only clearing his uncle’s name from a great scandal, praising his own “*resourcefulness and powerful will.*”<sup>228</sup> The result of his meddling is terrible: Aunt Edna is humiliated and her lover commits suicide. Anson does not blame himself for it; he is therefore surprised when Uncle Robert decides to side with his wife, informing his nephew of the fact that he is no longer welcome in their house.

Anson feels as if all friends and acquaintances conceived hatred for him. And the reader intuitively knows that he is right; he lost other people’s sympathies due to his prejudice, superiority and almost zero empathy for their plight. He effectively cut himself out of the circle of support on which he could fall back upon in the more difficult times. They come swiftly; after the death of his mother, the family estate shrinks due to inheritance taxes and it is divided among Anson and five of his siblings. When the protagonist is at his worst, he meets his lost love again. Paula is now

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223 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 325.

224 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 327.

225-226 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 336.

227 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 335.

228 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald: A New Collection*, 340.



expecting her fourth child with Peter Hagerty, her second husband. She is glowing with happiness and happy to see Anson. The Hagertys invite him for a private dinner and he happily accepts. The meeting turns out to be quite sentimental, with the ex-lovers reflecting on their past relationship and finally making peace with each other. Meanwhile, Anson is asked by his business partners to take a long holiday; they noticed that due to his depression, he became “*a drag and a strain*”<sup>229</sup> on every transaction which he was involved in. He replies that if he leaves, he will never come back. The circle of his life closes when he is informed that Paula died in childbirth. Anson is devastated by this news, but not for long – he resolves the crisis by leaving for another party.

The story deals with the theme of poorly utilized ambitions. Anson is already rich, and so his primary aim in life is to claim Paula for himself. This almost gives us the impression that his motivations are purely selfish. He merely sees the girl as a dehumanized object of his passions. Lacking humility and acting superior, he circles aimlessly in life because he has not found any achievable goal which he could fight for; he is only interested in Paula because he cannot have her. Ultimately, he does not really want to achieve anything because he already is at the top of the social hierarchy. However, as British naturalist Charles Darwin claimed, those who do not adapt to the changing environment die or at least become inferior to those who changed.<sup>230</sup> Anson does not understand this, which ultimately leads to his downfall.

### 5.3. The Jelly-Bean

This story was first published in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s book *Tales of the Jazz Age* in 1922. It depicts the life of Jim Powell, a young man who was born into a lower middle-class family that used to be quite well-off in the past. From the very beginning, it is clear that Fitzgerald used this character as a cautionary tale of a man with no ambitions, interests or even lust for life. He calls Jim a ‘Jelly-Bean’, which is a derogatory term from the times of The American Civil War for a man who “*spends his life conjugating the verb to idle in the first person singular—I am idling, I have idled, I will idle.*”<sup>231</sup> As his parents both died before Jim was five years old, he grew up in the custody of a severe woman whom Jim called Aunt Mamie. When she makes their home a boarding house, Jim is forced to move out to a small room over Tilly’s garage, accepting the job of a grocery delivery boy. At his third party, he is humiliated by a girl who mocks him within his hearing distance for having a menial job. This incident, however unimportant it may seem, has a profound effect on Jim’s life. He becomes bitter and starts avoiding parties, preferring the world of billiard rooms and gambling to the company of people who talk behind his back. The reader feels that this attitude,

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229 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 348.

230 Stephen G. Tibbetts, *Criminological Theory: The Essentials* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2012), 68.

231 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 143.

however understandable, will eventually lead to Jim's social exclusion and the loss of important connections which are very important when a person tries to climb up the social ladder. With the outbreak of World War I, Jim Powell decides to enlist in the Navy, only to come back in his hometown after two years. He is immediately invited to a party by Clark Darrow, his rich high-school friend, and he reluctantly accepts. The two young men, Fitzgerald claims, could not be more different: "[...] while Jim's social aspirations had died in the oily air of the garage, Clark had alternately fallen in and out of love, gone to college, taken to drink, given it up, and, in short, become one of the best beaux of the town."<sup>232</sup> On the way home, he happens on a group of former friends in a convertible car. Jim immediately notices that Nancy Lamar, the girl he has been adoring for years, is with them. Clark later informs Jim that she likes to gamble as well. In recent weeks, though, she has been losing more than winning; she even had to pay off her debts with an exquisite ring. Then their conversation turns to Jim's way of life. Jim says that he helps out the local auto mechanic on afternoons, adding: "*Sometimes I drive one of his taxis and pick up a little thataway. I get fed up doing that regular though. [...] And then there's one main source of revenue I don't generally mention. [...] I'm about the champion crap-shooter of this town.*"<sup>233</sup> This example perfectly illustrates Jim's attitude to work; he despises having to work regularly because he would rather hang about in pubs or billiard rooms. It is obvious that he does not like people either, otherwise he would not mind picking up his taxi clients. His aspirations are practically non-existent; if he had some, he would be willing to work hard to make them come true. He only likes gambling because it brings a much-needed excitement into his rather bland life. Furthermore, is a cheap way to make money. Clark is rather disconcerted with the turn his friend's life has taken, saying that it would "*do [him] good to step out,*"<sup>234</sup> and talks Jim into attending a local party. All the beautiful town girls are there, which makes Jim very uneasy; he does not know how to talk to them. But when Nancy Lamar enters the room, "*his embarrassment suddenly [leaves] him and a pull of breathless interest [takes] him completely out of himself [...].*"<sup>235</sup> It is clear that this woman is so exceptional that Jim would be willing to step out of his shell for her. Clark whispers to Jim that she is only here for her bachelorette party, as she is going to be married the following day. The protagonist is deeply hurt by this news. He needs to walk out of the room to calm down. Suddenly Nancy appears on the porch; she inquires whether he knows how to remove chewing gum from the sole of her shoe. Jim "*[considers] the question in some agitation*"<sup>236</sup> – it is clear that the time has come. He knows that if he manages to take off the gum, she will be impressed by him; and from her

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232 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 144.

233-234 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 146.

235 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 147.

236 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 149.

excitement, the seeds of attraction could flourish. This is his new-found ambition: to make Nancy fall in love with him. Thanks to his knowledge of cars, he manages to scrape off the gum with gasoline. His observation was correct: Nancy is excited. When she mentions that she has been looking for Jim's friend Clark, as he promised her a dance, Jim feels that she is slipping away from him. To keep her interested, he produces a bottle of scotch from his coat. They lead a casual conversation about life. Nancy addresses Jim as 'Jelly-Bean' instead of his real name – apparently, his reputation of a loafer is well-known all around the town. It also signals that she does not see him as a likely suitor. When there is no more to say, Nancy jumps on her feet and with a quick goodbye, she slips back in the house.

It is obvious that Jim's strategy to impress her was too weak. Quite uncharacteristically, Jim decides not to give up and secure Nancy for himself. This is proven by the actions he decides to take later that night, when his friends are playing dice and Nancy is losing. Knowing that he is the town's dice champion, he suggests that he will play for her. She sportingly agrees. When he wins her money back, Nancy suddenly rises up from the table, crying out: "*I want to tell the world that Mr. Jim Powell, who is a well-known Jelly-bean of this city, is an exception to a great rule—'lucky in dice—unlucky in love'. He's lucky in dice, and as a matter of fact I—I love him.*"<sup>237</sup> Then she kisses him passionately on the mouth. This act of hers seals his love for her. He does not see, though, that Nancy was merely joking; she still loves her rich fiance and would not leave him for someone like Jim. But the eponymous 'Jelly-Bean' is suddenly full of excitement – the promise of Nancy's love has renewed his passion for life. He's been up all night, brooding about the possibility of leaving town and taking a decent job on his uncle's farm. His motivation is clear: he wants his name to be cleaned and rise in the world. "*People who weren't nothin' when my folks was a lot turn up their noses when they pass me on the street. [...] So I'm through. I'm going to-day. And when I come back to his town it's going to be like a gentleman,*"<sup>238</sup> Jim tells his friend Clark when he comes to visit him. Listening in silence, Clark makes a dubious face. It is obvious that he does not believe in Jim's promises because he has never seen him like this. Out of then sudden, he asks Jim whether he knows what happened. He does not, and so Clark tells informs him that Nancy got married early in the morning. The protagonist is badly shaken; he says that he needs to be alone. And suddenly, his future does not seem bright anymore. He lost Nancy who could have propelled him on his way top success. His motivation, his dreams and plans for the future are gone. He has no one who could act as his 'cheerleader' and he is too lazy to put effort into building a bright future for himself. And so he comes back to the life he already knows – he returns to the billiard room where he can find the old "*congenial crowd who would make all the old jokes—the ones he knew.*"<sup>239</sup>

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237 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 154.

238 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 157.

239 Fitzgerald and Brucoli, *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, 158.

It would be almost impossible for Jim to fulfill his American Dream, since he does not show enough perseverance or desire to improve his character. He would first need to muster up enough courage and willpower, conceive a workable plan and let his ambition push him forward. An ambitious person usually differs from the crowd in their willingness to change their ways. Jim Powell, however, wants somebody else to do the dirty work. He only feels 'at home' among similar 'down-and-outers' because none of them is head and shoulders above him, and what is more, he is accepted as one of them, which is a good enough substitute for his relationship with Nancy.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Drawing evidence from the three short stories by F. Scott Fitzgerald, this thesis examined the approach of the three protagonists in their search for the American Dream. Those were Dexter Green of *Winter Dreams*, Anson Hunter of *The Rich Boy* and Jim Powell of *The Jelly-Bean*. Arguing that it was crucial for an individual to show ambition, perseverance and diligence to achieve their ends, a comparative analysis was used to draw conclusions from the actions of the main characters. The goal was to ascertain whether they showed the ability to reach their dreams. It was also presumed that the idea of the American Dream represented different values for each of the characters, seeing that they came from different social backgrounds.

Dexter Green, the protagonist of *Winter Dreams*, thrives in work because of his positive attitude, ability to plan and enough determination. Originally a middle-class caddy, he decides to improve his social situation and follow his dreams. He does 'think big', but in a practical way – instead of investing in something as uncertain as bonds, he buys a string of laundries because he knows that such an every man's service will always be in demand. He proceeds gradually, using common sense, and eventually becomes the richest man in the East. It is clear that Dexter managed to achieve the evasive American Dream. However, it leaves him with a bitter aftertaste. When he tries to use the same technique to win over the girl of his dreams, he sorely fails – Judy Jones is a whimsical person ruled by feelings rather than logic. Admitting his defeat, Dexter cleverly removes himself from her life, as he feels that Judy would potentially destroy him. The passing of time proves him right. The story proves that the American Dream always comes with a price.

Then comes Anson Hunter, the anti-hero of *The Rich Boy*. Being an upper-class man, he does not see any value in humility, hard-work and ambition, since he does not need them. He already is more wealthy than an everyday person, which is why he automatically expects to be given a precedence. To reach the American Dream, Anson would need to be enough humble, persistent and ambitious, keeping eyes on his 'gains' in order not to lose them. The trouble is that he has no social aspiration but to secure the love of Paula Legendre. Being a condescending person that he is, Anson does not treat Paula with enough respect, which ultimately leads to her departure. Instead of taking responsibility for his actions, the protagonist becomes a bitter bachelor and even loses most of his money. The narrative serves as an antithesis to the idea of the American Dream.

*The Jelly-Bean* tells the story of Jim Powell who is a lower middle-class idler with no ambition or even passion for life. Because he does not like working, he only takes inferior jobs and spends his leisure time gambling. He is taken to a party where he meets a famed local beauty, Nancy Lamar. She is bound to be married, but that does not stop Jim – for the first time ever, he decides to show ambition and get the American 'dream girl'. When he impresses Nancy with removing gum

from her shoe and winning a gambling game for her, she suddenly professes her love for him. However, Jim does not see that she was only joking. Encouraged, he starts planning a brighter future – he will leave town, become rich and when he comes back, he will be the town's new wonder. When he finds out that Nancy already got married, he quickly abandons his dreams and returns back to his old life. It is obvious that someone like Jim could never achieve the American Dream, as he lacks perserverance, motivation and desire to improve his ways. The curve of his story does not ascend like Dexter's or descend like Anson's – it stays where it was at the beginning.

## 7. RÉSUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se věnovala problematice rozpadu amerického snu, který se jakožto téma často objevuje v povídkách amerického spisovatele Francise Scotta Fitzgeralda (1896-1940). Cílem práce bylo nejenom podrobně prozkoumat historické, sociologické a psychologické kořeny tohoto fenoménu, ale rovněž poznatky z nich aplikovat na životní osudy tří hlavních hrdinů Fitzgeraldových příběhů. Těmito postavami byli Dexter Green z povídky *Zimní sny* (v originále *Winter Dreams*), Anson Hunter z příběhu *Bohatý chlapeček* (v anglické verzi *The Rich Boy*) a Jim Powell z vyprávění *Flákač* (původně *The Jelly-Bean*). Technika rozboru spočívala v detailní analýze textů jednotlivých povídek a byla provedena v anglickém jazyce.

Bakalářská práce se celkem dělila na dvě hlavní části. Ta první, nazvaná *The Background of the American Dream*, byla dále rozdělena na čtyři podkapitoly, které měly čtenáři pomoci v rychlé a přehledné orientaci v textu. Zároveň si kladly za úkol podat ucelený pohled na jednotlivé komponenty, které dohromady tvoří koncepci amerického snu, a navzájem je propojit společnou myšlenkou. Úvodní kapitola první části disertační práce, v angličtině nesoucí název *The historical and sociological framework* (v českém překladu *Historický a sociologický rámeček*), se dále dělí na tři samostatné, tématicky odlišné podkapitoly.

Ta první, pojmenovaná *The beginnings of the American Dream, and Benjamin Franklin: first self-made man* (v češtině *Počátky amerického snu a Benjamin Franklin: první self-made man*), už na samém začátku vysvětlila, že fenomén amerického snu nevnikl na území Spojených států amerických, ale v komerčních centrech Evropy patnáctého století. Čtenář se také dozvěděl, že tzv. protestanská pracovní etika, kterou v 17. století přivezli do Nového světa náboženští uprchlíci, zásadně podminila rozvoj amerického kapitalismu. Tamní obchodníky, kteří se toužili vypracovat na trhu, později výrazně ovlivnilo učení nejslavnějšího self-made mana v americké historii, Benjamina Franklina. Ten dodnes zůstává vzorem pro mnoho Američanů.

Následující podkapitola, nazvaná *Changes in life after the Civil War and in the first half of the 20th century* (neboli *Změny života po Americké občanské válce a v první polovině 20. století*), hovořila o tom, do jaké míry traumatické události Americké občanské války změnily způsob života i myšlení národa. K největšímu posunu dopředu došlo zejména v tzv. Nové éře, tedy ve 20. letech 20. století. Spojené státy se staly pokrokovou zemí. Ekonomika vzkvétala a došlo k modernizaci společnosti. Tyto změny provázely i negativní aspekty: návrat rasismu, izolacionismu, nacionalismu a puritánství.

Třetí podkapitola byla pojmenována *The immigrants and the changes in the working conditions in the 20th century*, tzn. *Přistěhovalci a změny pracovních podmínek ve 20. století*. Ta začíná zmínkou, že se mezi lety 1840-1920 se do Ameriky přistěhovalo celkem 37 milionů lidí. Základním

kamenem politiky Spojených států se stala asimilace cizinců, díky čemuž se o zemi začalo brzy hovořit jako o „tavícím kotli národů“. Ne všichni Američané ale byli k imigrantům shovívaví; některé nepřátelské společnosti je potíraly. Neméně důležité bylo zmínit i revoluci v pracovní sféře: zavedení minimální mzdy, osmihodinové pracovní doby a zákazu dětské práce. Kapitola končila informacemi o odchodu žen do zaměstnání, zejména v obdobích obou světových válek.

Následovala druhá kapitola, zaměřující se na srovnání amerického spisovatele Francise Scotta Fitzgeralda a jeho dvou současníků, Theodore Dreisera a Ernesta Hemingwaye. Čtenáře mohlo překvapit, že dokonalá znalost sociální hierarchie, kterou Fitzgerald bezpochyby vynikal, byla způsobena jeho pocitem méněcennosti. Dozvěděl se, že jeho dvě osudové ženy – chladná dědička Ginevra King a manželka Zelda Sayre – měly zásadní vliv na směr, kterým se ubírala jeho literární tvorba. Tato část rovněž popisuje tragický konec manželů Fitzgeraldových: slavný autor se upil k smrti a schizofrenička Zelda uhořela ve své cele na psychiatrické klinice.

Podkapitolou Fitzgeraldovy biografie bylo srovnání jeho díla s tvorbou Hemingwaye a Dreisera. Přestože se všichni tři autoři věnovali tématu amerického snu, každý ho pojímal po svém. Zatímco Fitzgerald věřil v důležitost překračování hranic sociálních tříd, Hemingway hovořil o touze vytvořit si vlastní identitu ve světě, který po většině lidí vyžaduje konformnost. Dreiser pak popisoval těžký boj chudých jedinců, kteří touží po životní změně, se lstivými lidmi v pozici síly.

Třetí kapitola práce se jmenovala *American Dream and what it is made of*, tj. v češtině *Americký sen, a z čeho se skládá*. Obsahovala celkem čtyři menší části. Ta první, *American Dream in culture* (česky *Americký sen v kultuře*), hovořila o tom, že na přelomu 19. a 20. století panovala v Americe nechuť k potlačování individuálního podnikání a konkurence. Čtenář se dozví, že i když vláda toto chování podporovala, tehdejší spisovatelé jej kritizovali a zaměřovali se na zobrazování všudypřítomné chudoby a korupce, ale i mrhání časem, talentem a penězi. Přestože byla ve 20. století podoba amerického snu byla nejvíce ovlivněna Hollywoodem, lidé byli varováni před důsledkem vzývání falešných ideálů jako sláva, lesk a peníze.

Následovala kapitola *The perfidiousness of the American Dream*, čili v překladu *Proradnost amerického snu*. Bylo v ní posáno, jak se americký sen v průběhu věků stačil hluboce zakořenit v myšlení národa a proč je tento koncept plný nástrah. Kapitola rovněž popisovala rozšířený americký mýtus, podle kterého si materiální úspěch zaslouží jen tvrdě pracující lidé. Čtenář zjistil, že idea amerického snu je bližší majetnějším jedincům. Také se v ní hovoří o důsledku nesplnění vytyčených cílů – depresi z nenaplněné ctižádosti a pocitu nudy.

Třetí podkapitola byla věnována americkému přístupu k bohatství a materialismu, který se v zemi nejvíce prohloubil ve 20. století. Byly v ní popsány machinace vlády a ekonomů, kteří se snažili zvyšovat nákupní sílu národa tím, že se snažili občany přesvědčit, že být v dlužích je



„vlastenecké“. Přesto byl přehlížen trvalý a zásadní problém – sociální propast mezi bohatými a chudými, těsně spojená s multirasovým složením národa. Kapitola nabízela vhled do dvousečného vztahu Američanů k neodvolatelnému právu vlastnit majetek a osobnímu bohatství.

Odstavec *Individualism versus collectivism* neboli *Individualismus versus kolektivismus* nastínil, že základy pro politickou a ekonomickou důležitost pracujícího jedince byly položeny už v počátcích Spojených států. Bylo v něm vysvětleno, že mizející trend samostatného pracovníka byl na počátku 20. století nahrazen ideálem „týmového hráče“, protože většina práce se dělala ve skupinách. Přesto i nadále přežíval tzv. sociální darwinismus, podporovaný lacinými šestákovými novelami, které hlásaly, že bohatým se stane jen ten, kdo si to zaslouží.

Poslední kapitola první části bakalářské práce, nazvaná *Ambition as a foundation of the American Dream* neboli *Ambice jako základ amerického snu*, mezi sebou porovnávala výsledky bádání vědců a psychologů, kteří zkoumali vliv ambicí člověka na jeho úspěch v životě. Ambiciózní jedinci z testu vyšli jako kreativnější, šarmantnější, sebejistější a emočně inteligentnější než průměrní lidé. Cíle, které si předurčili, vnímali spíše jako maraton; jejich výhodou byla výdrž, kterou nedokázala ovlivnit ani negativní zpětná vazba. Opravdu překvapivým bylo ale zjištění, že ti nejinteligentnější jedinci v životě nutně nekončili na nejvyšších místech. Nebyli totiž motivováni tak jako jejich průměrně inteligentní, zato cílevědomější protějšky.

Druhá část bakalářské práce byla nazvána *The use of ambitions in the stories by F. S. Fitzgerald* (v českém překladu *Využití ambic v příbězích F. Scotta Fitzgeralda*). Jejím cílem bylo analyzovat chování tří hlavních hrdinů z příběhů zmiňovaného spisovatele, zjistit povahu jejich ambicí a popsat způsob jednání, jaký tyto postavy používaly při honbě za americkým snem. Nakonec bylo popsáno, zda tito tři protagonisté příběhů skončili v lepší pozici než na začátku.

Jako první byl rozebrán životní příběh Dextera Greena z povídky *Winter Dreams* (tj. *Zimní sny*), původně syna středostavovského zelináře. Ten se po absolvování vysoké školy nerozhodl investovat do cenných listin jako jeho spolužáci, ale půjčil si tisíc dolarů na koupi prádelny. Zde bylo argumentováno tím, že se Dexter zachoval jako pragmatický středostavovský obchodník; prozkoumal podmínky na trhu a chytře vsadil na praktický typ veřejné služby, která mu zaručovala trvalý zájem zákazníků. Nebylo divu, že už jako sedmadvacetiletý vlastnil největší síť prádelen na východním pobřeží Spojených států. Protože se stal milionářem, Dexter prodal svůj podnik a usadil se v New Yorku, aby založil rodinu; to ukazuje na to, že si předsevzal splnění dalšího cíle. Učarovala mu chladná kráska Judy Jones, která mu ale dávala najevo, že nevnímá jako sobě rovného. Po osmnácti měsících bouřlivého vztahu, během nichž mu Judy byla opakovaně nevěrná, se nakonec Dexter rozhodl vztah ukončit a zasnoubil se s unylou Irene Scheerer. Jenže ta ho brzy omrzela, a tak se dal opět dohromady s Judy. Z toho byl vyvozen závěr, že hrdina příběhu miloval

nade vše vzrušení z „lovu“; potřeboval si tvrdě vydobýt všechno, po čem v životě toužil, protože jen tak si toho mohl opravdu vážit. A přestože románek nakonec skončil rozchodem, Dexter sám z této „bitvy“ vyšel jako vítěz: emocionálně posílený, enormně bohatý člověk, připravený na další vztah.

Druhým analyzovaným příběhem byl *The Rich Boy*, překládaný do češtiny jako *Bohatý chlapec*. Jeho antihrdinou byl arogantní a hřmotný rentiér Anson Hunter. Protože jeho rodina patřila k nejbohatším ve městě, Anson přirozeně očekával, že se mu ve všem dostane přednostního zacházení. Zde padl argument, že mladík neprojevoval žádné ambice, jelikož je nepotřeboval; ke štěstí mu stačila jen dostaveníčka s bohatými dcerkami, pár skleniček v baru a svět pánských klubů. Vše se ale změnilo, když se zcela netypicky pro něj zamiloval do zádumčivé Pauly Legendre. Při jejím namlouvání hlavní hrdina poprvé projevil ctižádost a vynalézavost, a na krátkou dobu se mu vychytrale podařilo okouzlit i Paulinu přísnou matku. Bohužel ale neměl výdrž při sledování svého cíle; jakmile získal milenčino srdce, jeho sebejistota stoupla a cílevědomost naopak klesla. To se projevilo v momentě, kdy Anson dorazil na večeři s Paulou opilý a pozurázel její přátele. Situace vyústila v momentální rozchod páru, který se stal definitivním, když mladík nepřiřlíbil dívce očekávanou svatbu. Nakonec pochopil, že už se neožení, a našel si náhradní ambici: poskytování milostných rad cizím párům. Jenže svým pletichářstvím zruinoval život své tety Edny, a tak se od něj část rodiny odvrátila. Tím se odřízl od zdroje podpory, kterou jinak mohl využít při cestě za svými sny nebo v těžkých časech, kdy kvůli dědické dani přišel o velkou část majetku. Když se Anson doslechl, že podruhé provdaná Paula mezitím zemřela při porodu, odešel zapít svůj žal na další večírek. Rozbor příběhu se snažil prokázat, že hlavní hrdina nedokázal efektivně využít svých schopností k tomu, aby dotáhl své plány do konce, čímž si mohl splnit svůj americký sen. Navíc se odmítl přizpůsobit měnícím se podmínkám a pracovat na svém charakteru, což vedlo k jeho pádu.

Jako poslední byla rozebrána povídka *The Jelly-Bean*, do češtiny přeložená jako *Flákač*. Postava jejího protagonisty Jima Powella měla evidentně sloužit jako odstrašující příklad člověka, který nemá žádné životní sny, cíle ani touhu po životě. Když byl Jim na večíрку vysmíván kvůli své podřadné práci poslíčka, zanevřel na všechny ambice i kontakt s lidmi. Zde bylo usouzeno, že takový přístup musel vést ke ztrátě případných konexí. Nakonec ho jeho schopnější přítel Clark Darrow přemluvil k účasti na party, kde se oba setkali s divokou Nancy Lamar, která se stejně jako Jim věnovala hazardním hrám. Jim se do ní okamžitě zamiloval; bojovat o ni se ale rozhodl až po zjištění, že se dívka měla brzy vdávat. Jeho ambicí tedy bylo ji získat. Nejdřív na ni udělal dojem tím, že odstranil žvýkačku z podrážky jejího střevíčku. Když se mu pak podařilo vyhrát zpět peníze, o které přišla v hazardu, Nancy laškovně prohlásila, že ho miluje, a políbila na ústa. Jim ale její žert vzal vážně a ihned si pro sebe začal plánovat zářnou budoucnost: chtěl začít tvrdě pracovat a stát se bohatým farmářem, kterému by Nancy padla k nohám. Když se ale dozvěděl, že se Nancy ráno

vdala za jiného muže, ihned upustil od svých ambicí a vrátil se k zahálce. V analýze tohoto příběhu byl použit argument, podle kterého Jim stěží mohl uskutečnit svoji verzi amerického snu, jelikož mu chyběla potřebná motivace, výdrž a chuť riskovat. Tyto vlastnosti totiž mohou zásadně ovlivnit úspěšnost každého předsevzetí.

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## 9. APPENDICES

### Appendix A

The first appendix depicts an analysis of historical records concerning population growth in the United States. The name of the document is *The Population of the United States, 1790-1920*, and it was conducted in 1994 by Michael R. Haines of the National Bureau of Economic Research. The information concerning its bibliographic source can be found on page 37.

NBER Historical Paper #56  
June 1994

#### THE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1790-1920

##### ABSTRACT

In the 130 years from the first federal census of the United States in 1790, the American population increased from about four million to almost 107 million persons. This was predominantly due to natural increase, early driven by high birth rates and moderate mortality levels and later (after the Civil War) by declining death rates. In addition, over 33 million recorded immigrant arrivals increased the growth rate. By the two decades prior to World War I, about one third of total increase originated in net migration. A number of unusual features characterized the American demographic transition over the "long" nineteenth century. The fertility transition was early (dating from at least 1800) and from very high levels. The average woman had over seven livebirths in 1800. The crude birth rate declined from about 55 in 1800 to about 25 in 1920. This occurred prior to 1860 in an environment without widespread urbanization and industrialization in most of the nation. Mortality levels were moderate, and death rates began their sustained decline only by the 1870s, long after the fertility transition had begun. This contrasts to the more usual stylization of the demographic transition in which mortality decline precedes or accompanies the fertility transition. Internal migration in the United States was also distinctive. Over most of the 19th century, flows followed east-west axes, although this began to weaken as rural-urban migration began to supplant westward rural migration in importance. International migration proceeded in waves and changed its character as the "new" migration from eastern and southern Europe replaced the "old" migration from western and northern Europe. This paper summarizes much of what is currently known about the American population, its composition, vital processes, and location, over this crucial period of growth.

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## Appendix B

The second appendix depicts the first page of Julie M. Irwin's article, named *F. Scott Fitzgerald's Little Drinking Problem*, issued in *The American Scholar* magazine during the summer of 1987. The information concerning its bibliographic source is to be found on page 37.

# Books

## F. Scott Fitzgerald's Little Drinking Problem

JULIE M. IRWIN

Hemingway swore that Fitzgerald's downfall was all Zelda's fault. Dos Passos blamed it on Scott's impossible desire to be both a great commercial and artistic success. Fitzgerald himself blamed it on a number of things—declining book sales, a disastrous screenwriting career, Zelda's madness, a continual lack of money. Whatever the reason, by the 1930s no one could deny the direction F. Scott Fitzgerald's career had taken. He had begun as a best-selling novelist at the age of twenty-three and had written a classic American novel, *The Great Gatsby*, before he was thirty. But by Fitzgerald's mid-thirties, all of this had been drastically reversed. The depths that Fitzgerald reached in the latter part of his career were as dramatic as his early successes. At his death in 1940 at the age of forty-four, he was a washed-up author whose books were moldering in Scribner's warehouse, fired from screenwriting jobs in Hollywood, in debt to friends, publishers, and agents, supporting a wife who drifted hopelessly from mental institution to mental institution. Successes and failures, he drank through them all: first there were the drunken sprees that seemed to be a celebration of youth and vitality, later followed by the bitter, abusive drunkenness that many of his friends had come to regard as sheer self-destruction.

The Fitzgerald story is well known by now—perhaps better known than his fiction—and a sort of mystique has sprung up around him. Scott and Zelda have become mythologized in the literary memory; their marriage was a glorious and romantic legend, and they themselves, according to that legend, were somehow too elegant, too sensitive, simply too grand for this world and hence condemned to

● JULIE M. IRWIN is a June 1987 graduate of Northwestern University.

suffer because of it. This mystique was begun immediately following Fitzgerald's death. One can see it coming to life in the obituaries written about him: James Gray, for example, writing in the *St. Paul Dispatch*, noted that "there is a kind of rightness to the fact that his death came so early. Having had much of both good and bad, he had surely lived enough." *The New Yorker* echoed these sentiments in an editorial published two weeks after his death: "In a way we are glad that he died when he did and that he was spared so many smaller towns, much farther from Geneva," a reference to the last lines of *Tender Is the Night*. The popularity of this legend prompted Cyril Connolly to describe Fitzgerald as

an American version of the Dying God, an Adonis of letters born with the century, flowering in the twenties, with the Jazz Age which he perfectly expressed and almost created, and then quietly wilting through the thirties to expire—as a deity of spring and summer should—on December 21, 1940, at the winter solstice and the end of an epoch.

The Fitzgerald mystique has grown even grander today. Most of the biographies, personal reminiscences, scrapbooks, and miscellanies written about Fitzgerald attempt, in one way or another, to analyze his downfall. Some of these blame his plight on bad luck, or greed, or love; some make it a poetic irony and imply that his talent was bound up with a sort of "tragic flaw." Fitzgerald's various biographers discuss his drinking—mention of it is unavoidable—but they generally see it as a symptom of his problems rather than a problem in and of itself: he drank because he was depressed, they tell us, or because he was broke, or because Zelda was in the midst of a religious conversion. Other critics and biographers have tied Fitzgerald's drinking to his

## Appendix C

The third and last appendix depicts a section of a University essay, named *Hypocrisy in Literature: The Example of Sister Carrie*, which was written by Alexandra Glynn. In her writing, she quoted the American literary critic Robert Penn Warren. The section used in this thesis was highlighted by its author. It can be found on page 21 of her essay. As for its bibliographic source, the reader of this thesis can find it on page 37.

that is very democratic. “When a poem is read in and for itself critics must fall back upon the one constant of their situation: there is a poem being read by a human being.” (Culler 245) that is, a human being- and how does that human being be with the writer, or the others, or the characters in the book, the poem? “Whatever else is external to the poem, the fact that it addresses a human being means that what it says about human life is internal to it. The critic’s task is to show how the interaction of the poem’s parts produces a complex and ontologically privileged statement about human experience” (Culler 245).

Thus, Robert Penn Warren is not correct. Not exactly. But, that it is plausible, and his theory works so well proves the point I make here as I write about Pharisaism.

And even if Frank Norris had shocked the country with the realism of *McTeague*, he had, in the end, gratified the moral sense of America by converting the novel of greed and violence into a cautionary fable. *Sister Carrie* was different from anything by Howells or Norris. What was shocking here was not only Dreiser’s unashamed willingness to identify himself with morally undifferentiated experience or his failure to punish vice and reward virtue in his fiction, but the implication that vice and virtue might, in themselves, be mere accidents, mere irrelevances in the process of human life, and that the world was a great machine, morally indifferent.

Ultimately, what shocked the world in Dreiser’s work was not so much the things that he presented as the fact that he himself was not shocked by them. The situation was similar to that of Dreiser’s hero Machiavelli, who shocked his world not by unveiling the nakedness of power (the world knew all about that), but by regarding it with a moral detachment, by trying to delineate a physics, even a metaphysics, of power” (Penn Warren 497).