



Pedagogická
fakulta
Faculty
of Education

Jihočeská univerzita
v Českých Budějovicích
University of South Bohemia
in České Budějovice

Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích
Pedagogická fakulta
Katedra anglistiky

Bakalářská práce

Obraz ztracené generace v povídkách F. S.
Fitzgeralda

The Reflection of the 1920s in F. S.
Fitzgerald's Short Stories

Vypracovala: Adéla Grenarová
Vedoucí práce: Mrg. Alice Sukdolová, Ph.D.

České Budějovice 2013

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma *Obraz ztracené generace v povídkách F. S. Fitzgeralda* vypracovala samostatně s použitím pramenů uvedených v bibliografii.

Prohlašuji, že v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. v platném znění souhlasím se zveřejněním své bakalářské – diplomové – rigorózní – disertační práce, a to v nezkrácené podobě – v úpravě vzniklé vypuštěním vyznačených částí archivovaných pedagogickou fakultou elektronickou cestou ve veřejně přístupné části databáze STAG provozované Jihočeskou univerzitou v Českých Budějovicích na jejích internetových stránkách, a to se zachováním mého autorského práva k odevzdanému textu této kvalifikační práce. Souhlasím dále s tím, aby toutéž elektronickou cestou byly v souladu s uvedeným ustanovením zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. zveřejněny posudky školitele a oponentů práce i záznam o průběhu a výsledku obhajoby kvalifikační práce. Rovněž souhlasím s porovnáním textu mé kvalifikační práce s databází kvalifikačních prací Theses.cz provozovanou Národním registrem vysokoškolských kvalifikačních prací a systémem na odhalování plagiátů.

V Českých Budějovicích dne 26.6. 2013

Podpis studentky: Adéla Grenarová

Poděkování

Ráda bych poděkovala paní Mgr. Alici Sukdlové, Ph.D. za její rady, připomínky a podporu.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank to Mgr. Alice Sukdlová, Ph.D. for her advice, comments and support.

Abstract

The bachelor thesis focuses on particular motives in F. S. Fitzgerald's short stories (Tales of the Jazz Age) and then reflects these motives in relation to 1920s and the Lost Generation. It attempts to concentrate on themes of money and wealth and social status in the novel *The Great Gatsby* and in the short story *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*, furthermore on theme of youth and aging in the short story *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, and it also attempts to find autobiographical signs in works of authors of the Lost Generation.

Anotace

Práce se zabývá vybranými motivy povídek F. S. Fitzgeralda (Tales of the Jazz Age) a posléze reflektuje tyto motivy v obrazu 20. let 20. století v USA z pohledu představitelů tzv. ztracené generace. Práce se zaměří na tematiku vlivu peněz a sociálního postavení v románu *The Great Gatsby* a v povídce *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*, dále na téma mladosti a stárnutí v povídce *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* a na faktor autobiografičnosti děl autorů ztracené generace.

Contents

1.	Decade characteristics	7
1.1.	The Roaring Twenties.....	7
1.2.	The Cause of the Roaring Twenties and the Economic Situation	7
1.3.	New Products and Technologies.....	8
1.4.	Cultural Blooming.....	9
1.5.	The End of an Era	10
2.	The Lost Generation.....	11
3.	The Introduction of Francis Scott Fitzgerald	13
3.1.	Childhood and life	13
3.2.	Bibliography.....	15
4.	The Curious Case of Benjamin Button	17
4.1.	The Publication, the Setting, Main Characters	17
4.2.	Summary of The Curious Case of Benjamin Button	17
4.3.	The Analysis of The Curious Case of Benjamin Button	22
4.3.1.	The Setting, Narrator and Genre.....	22
4.3.2.	Mr Button's Attitude	23
4.3.3.	Benjamin's Struggle for Life	24
4.3.4.	Benjamin Button and Society.....	25
4.3.5.	Family Relations	26
4.3.6.	Benjamin Button and the Lost Generation	26
5.	The Diamond as Big as the Ritz	27
5.1.	The Publication, Setting and Main Characters.....	27
5.2.	Summary of The Diamond as Big as the Ritz.....	27
5.3.	The Analysis of The Diamond as Big as the Ritz	31
5.3.1.	The Setting, Narrator and Genre.....	31
5.3.2.	Wealth as the Main Theme.....	34
5.3.2.1.	John's Change of Attitude throughout the Story.....	34
5.3.2.2.	The Issue of the Washington Family	36
5.3.3.	The Washington's and Society	37
5.3.4.	The Question of Freedom	38
5.3.5.	The Diamond As Big as the Ritz and FSF	40
6.	The Great Gatsby	40

6.1.	The Publication, Setting and Main Characters.....	40
6.2.	The Summary of the Great Gatsby.....	41
6.3.	The Great Gatsby Analysis	46
6.3.1.	The Genre, Setting, and Characters	46
6.3.2.	Symbols and imagery	47
6.3.3.	Wealth and Society	47
	Conclusion.....	51
	Bibliography	55

1. Decade characteristics

1.1. The Roaring Twenties

The Roaring Twenties is a term sometimes used to classify the 1920s, characterizing the decade's typical cultural edge in New York, Paris, Berlin, London and other major cities during a period of continuing economic prosperity. The 1920s were an historical period of intense social and political change. For the first time, more people lived in cities than on farms. The nation's total wealth more than doubled between 1920 and 1929 so many Americans changed into rich consumer society. *"People from coast to coast bought the same goods (thanks to nationwide advertising and the spread of chain stores), listened to the same music, did the same dances and even used the same slang!"*¹ Many Americans were uncomfortable with this new, urban mass culture, for many people in the United States, this era brought more conflict than celebration. However, for a small handful of young people in the nation's big cities, the 1920s were really roaring.

1.2. The Cause of the Roaring Twenties and the Economic Situation

At the beginning of the roaring twenties, the United States were adapting from a wartime to peacetime economy. At the end of World War I, soldiers came back to the United States with wartime wages and there were many new goods on the market which to spend money on. Weapons for World War I were no longer needed and there was a temporary pause in the economy. After several years the country flourished. In this era, America became the richest state on Earth and a consumer style of life was born.

During the 1920s, many people had extra money to spend and they spent it on consumer goods. Most of Americans spent their money mostly on ready-to-wear clothes and innovative electric appliances such as refrigerators or radios. *"The first commercial radio station in the U.S., Pittsburgh's KDKA, hit the airwaves in 1920; three years later there were more than 500 stations in the nation. By the end of the 1920s, there were*

¹The Roaring Twenties [online]. last revision on 20th of June 2013 [cit. 2013-06-23]
<<http://www.history.com/topics/roaring-twenties>>

radios in more than 12 million household."² People also went to the cinema a lot, by the end of the era, three-quarters of the American population went to the cinema at least once a week. All these facts show that the economic situation of American population was getting better every day.

1.3. New Products and Technologies

Technology played a very important role in bringing the economic and cultural good times that America enjoyed during the 1920s. Mass production made technology affordable to the middle class. The invention of car was definitely the most important, a car had become a 'must-have' of the era, it was no longer a symbol of luxury. In the 1920s, mass-produced vehicles became common throughout the U.S. and Canada. *"By 1927, Ford discontinued the Model T after selling 15 million of that model. Only about 300,000 vehicles were registered in 1918 in all of Canada, but by 1929, there were 1.9 million, and automobile parts were being made in parts of Ontario near Detroit, Michigan."*³ The automobile industry's effects were widespread, contributing to such industries as highway building, motels, service stations etc.

Radio became the first mass broadcasting medium. Even though it was quite expensive it has found its way into almost every household in America. The first public radio broadcasting station opened in Pittsburgh in 1922. Radio advertising played a vital role in mass marketing. During the "golden age of radio", radio programming was as varied as TV programming today. *"Later in the decade, radios were used to broadcast everything from concerts and sermons. The radio was certainly one of the most important inventions of the 1920s, because it not only brought the nation together, but it brought a whole new way for people to communicate and interact."*⁴

²Roaring Twenties [online]. last revision on 5th of June 2013 [cit. 2013-06-23].

<<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1564.html>>

³Roaring Twenties [online]. last revision on 5th of June 2013 [cit. 2013-06-23].

<<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1564.html>>

⁴Invention: Radio [online]. last revision on 23th of June 2013 [cit. 2013-06-24]

<<http://www.angelfire.com/co/pscst/radio.html>>

There was also a great progress visible in the area of science, medicine and health. In 1921 Albert Einstein was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics. New kind of immunization discovered in 1923 protected better against diphtheria. People have been interested more in nutrition, caloric consumption and physical vitality, a significant change came in the dietary habits of Americans as a whole — less fat and meat, and more fruits and vegetables. The discovery of vitamins and their effects also occurred around the same time.

1.4.Cultural Blooming

The Roaring Twenties has influenced all kinds of cultural activities. By people having money they could afford to go to movies, to dance marathons etc. The Roaring Twenties was also known as a Jazz Age and this movement in which jazz music grew in popularity also influenced other parts of the world.

As for the music, jazz has spread throughout the nation and become very popular. Jazz bands played at dance halls like the Savoy in New York City and the Aragon in Chicago. Louis Armstrong, Joseph "King Oliver" Oliver and other musicians had become the best players of the era. With jazz came new dance called the Charleston. *"The Charleston, a lively dance with origins in South Carolina and African American styles, became immensely popular. The dance, which can be done solo, with two, or in a group, received attention after being shown in Runnin' Wild, a 1923 musical. This particular dance was introduced to Europeans in 1925. Other dances of the era included the Cake-Walk, the Turkey Trot, the Black Bottom, and the Bunny Hug. With the increased popularity of dances, events such as dance marathons were also created."*⁵

In the year of 1922 the first movie made with sound was introduced- that was The Jazz Singer with Al Jolson starring. The movie industry became a major part of American industry in general. *"Hollywood boomed, producing a new form of entertainment that shut down the old vaudeville."*⁶ Watching a movie was cheap and accessible way of cultural

⁵"The Roaring Twenties" - "The 1920's" [online]. last revision on 23th of October 2010 [cit. 2013-06-23] <http://library.thinkquest.org/C005846/The_1920/the1920.htm>

⁶Roaring Twenties [online]. last revision on 23th of June 2013 [cit. 2013-06-24] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roaring_Twenties>

experience, crowds rushed into new downtown cinemas and theatres. Sound synchronized motion pictures, or "talkies", were quickly replacing silent films between 1927 and 1929.

Prohibition also played a major role in life of many Americans. It was prohibited to produce any alcohol, including beer and wine, nevertheless it was not prohibited to drink alcohol. *"It was promoted by evangelical Protestant churches and the 'Anti-Saloon League in order to reduce drunkenness, petty crime, wife abuse, corrupt saloon-politics, and (in 1918), Germanic influences. It was enacted through the Volstead Act. The Ku Klux Klan was an active supporter in rural areas, but cities generally left enforcement to a small number of federal officials."*⁷

1.5.The End of an Era

The reason why the Roaring Twenties ended was the Great Depression. The Great Depression was caused by the Wall Street Crash in 1929. After the war ended everyone was feeling free and at liberty to do whatever they wanted and to have a good time. People were spending more and more and the banks were lending more and more out. After a period of time the banks had no more money to lend out and started to recall the loans. The people had no money to give back and forced them to sell their business and the stocks. The whole era after the Wall Street Crash is called the Great Depression which ended with Roosevelt's presidency.

⁷Roaring Twenties [online]. last revision on 23th of June 2013 [cit. 2013-06-24]

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roaring_Twenties>

2. The Lost Generation

The name of the group was first applied by Gertrude Stein, she used it to describe the people, and most of them were soldiers, of the 1920 who rejected American post World War I values. The three best known writers among The Lost Generation are F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos. The term then became popular when Ernest Hemingway used it as one of two contrasting epigraphs in his novel *The Sun also Rises* in 1926.

If we try to realize why she called this generation lost, we will find out that most of soldiers coming home from war felt vulnerable and abandoned. *“Since there were no clear reasons why they fought, they were also psychologically hurt, disillusioned and very uncertain of the future. Even those who were non-combatants felt that they were the victims of a huge stupid deception. Nothing genuine had come out of the war, which itself was such a drastic departure from customs and traditions that it was virtually impossible to return to them.”*⁸ *It was lost, first of all, because it was uprooted, by experience torn away from any tradition. It was lost because the schools and education had prepared it for another world than what existed after the war, and because the war did not prepare them for anything other than travel and thrills. It was lost because it had lost attachment to any region, because it tried to live in permanent exile. It was lost because it rejected all the older values, but as yet did not create the new ones. They lost not only all the values, but also illusions, hopes for bright future, real felling, certainties, and (as was pointed above) expectations and explanations. They also lost God.”*⁹ After the war some of them came back to Europe and some of them came to Greenwich Village in NY, which had become very popular after war. Former soldiers moved here because they did not feel comfortable in commercial world. Greenwich Village was a place where all kinds of culture were connected, theatre and music blossomed together and even old type of vaudeville theatres continued. By the 1940s the Village would be an international meeting ground for writers in nearly every genre. The Greenwich Village soon become crowded, it was just so

⁸PROCHÁZKA a kol., *Lectures on American Literature*. Praha, Karolinum 2002 ISBN 978-8-02-461996-5, p. 239

⁹PROCHÁZKA a kol., *Lectures on American Literature*. Praha, Karolinum 2002 ISBN 978-8-02-461996-5, p. 240

popular everybody wanted to live here. *“Once it could not accommodate all those people, it just expanded – women began smoking cigarettes on the streets of the Bronx, drinking beer and cocktails in Iowa and having perfectly swell parties in Seattle – America was simply going Greenwich Village.”*¹⁰ Then public was ready for young writers, although many of them moved to Paris. Paris represented a place, where many young artists, writers, journalists gathered to find a new inspiration. *“As the American colony in Paris grew, it began to dissolve - there was boredom, gossip, intrigues. Soon, quite a few Americans moved onward, looking for a place that was as yet unspoiled by themselves.”*¹¹ When returning back to homeland, writers got very excited about black art in general, like dancers and musicians, the spirituals or the blues. According to them black people were an unspoiled free soul and many artists were inspired and influenced by American jazz. The Jazz Age then became one of the icons of the 1920s.

One of the most important authors, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, in his first novel *This Side of Paradise* quite precisely described the lost generation by writing that *“members grew up to find all gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in men shaken.”*¹²

¹⁰PROCHÁZKA a kol., *Lectures on American Literature*. Praha, Karolinum 2002 ISBN 978-8-02-461996-5, p. 240

¹¹PROCHÁZKA a kol., *Lectures on American Literature*. Praha, Karolinum 2002 ISBN 978-8-02-461996-5, p. 242

¹²PROCHÁZKA a kol., *Lectures on American Literature*. Praha, Karolinum 2002 ISBN 978-8-02-461996-5, p. 245

3. The Introduction of Francis Scott Fitzgerald

3.1. Childhood and life

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was an American author of novels and short stories; he was born on September 24, 1896 in St. Paul, Minnesota and died on December 21, 1940. He is thought of as one of the greatest American authors of the 1920s and of all time in general. Fitzgerald is considered a member of so called "Lost Generation."

As for his childhood, he was born to an upper middle class Irish Catholic family; he spent his first years in Buffalo, New York attending two Catholic schools. Then family moved back to Minnesota where Fitzgerald attended St. Paul Academy. He was widening his skills and developing writer's soul in him in St. Paul's. At the age of 15 his parents sent him to high-status Newman school in Hackensack, New Jersey. Here he wrote his first short story which was even published in the school paper. At the age of 17 he graduated from the Newman school, nevertheless he continued in studies at Princeton University.

During his time spent at Princeton University he made friends with a few young men, e.g. the critic Edmund Wilson and the poet John Peale Bishop. In a company like this he didn't care much about his school results, he was more concerned about girls, especially one, named Ginevra King. Even though their relationship did not end well, she remained an inspiration for him in his novel *The Great Gatsby* (as Daisy Buchanan). In the scope of these years he had also found the "enchantment" of alcohol, this is considered the beginning of his future problems with alcoholism.

During his not very successful studies he decided to quit the school and join the army. He was hoping he will be sent to Europe to fight in World War I. In 1917 he had become a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army; right after this Scott started to write his novel *The Romantic Egoist*. The young writer considered this book "a goodbye letter" because he was expecting he was going to die in the war.

But Fitzgerald did not die because he did not even enter the war. World War I ended before he had even chance to board on the ship. At the end of his life he once wrote that one of the biggest disappointments of his life was not having seen overseas combat. This has become one of the major themes occurring in his work.

In 1918 Fitzgerald met Zelda Sayre and fell for her immediately. Soon he proposed but she refused to marry him because she was not happy with the money Fitzgerald had. Then he took a better job and started rewriting his first novel, later known as *This Side of Paradise*. It was very successful and in 1920 Zelda and Scott got married.

Fitzgerald reached the top of his popularity during the 1920s (he also named this era the Jazz Age); he was enjoying all privileges popularity provided him after the publication of *This Side of Paradise* in 1920. But the greatest triumph came in 1925 when Fitzgerald published *The Great Gatsby*. The book perfectly captured the era's moods and styles. This infusion of new money brought with it a new morality for the young social set, one less concerned with the traditional values of past generations and more interested in individualism and modernism. Policy changes in the U.S. unwittingly encouraged this new culture. Prohibition drove America's drinking population into speakeasies, underground clubs where people could enjoy their booze and the newly popular jazz music. Sexual mores loosened and youth-centric culture flourished. Women bobbed their hair and traded floor-length skirts for the flapper dresses that live on today as Halloween costumes. The Nineteenth Amendment guaranteed women the right to vote, and the speakeasies were the first place in America where it became acceptable for a woman who was not a prostitute to drink and smoke in public. Psychoanalysis became fashionable among the wealthy, which happily shed their inhibitions with Sigmund Freud's approval. The critic H.L. Mencken defined Puritanism as the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy.

A few months before the publication of *The Great Gatsby* the couple moved, same as many young writers in that time, to Paris. They decided for this change because Paris was cheaper to live in than New York. This enabled Fitzgerald to sell his work back to U.S. where papers and magazines were hungry for new talented writers and willing to pay way more money for them. Fitzgerald's writing brought in a solid income, but the couple's lifestyle took a toll. They drank heavily and fought viciously. Both flirted with other people. Zelda was also creative, pursuing both dance and writing, but her unique personality was starting to seem more unbalanced than charming. The couple, like the rest of the nation, was living on borrowed time. In October 1929 the stock market crashed, triggering the Great Depression. Six months later, Zelda suffered her first nervous breakdown.

Even though Fitzgerald never owned stock so he did not lose money after the Wall

Street Crash, the time of Great Depression became very devastating for him too. Zelda spent first half of the decade in several different hospitals in the U.S. and Europe and Fitzgerald himself soon suffered a mental crisis which he in detail covered in a three-part essay for Esquire magazine in 1936. Readers' attitude to literature had changed too, people found new forms of entertainment like radio and cinema. A movie in the cinema cost many times less than a book and those who did read, searched for different subjects (stories carrying a social message).

Fitzgerald was disappointed and frustrated by public's preference to movies; his books did not sell that much. He took a job in Hollywood as a screenwriter but soon it became clear that this field was not for him. He started to drink heavily, also began an affair with young journalist named Sheilah Graham. FSF spent the year of 1939 bouncing between freelance movie gigs, drunken benders, and hospitals. He even got fired from the set of *Winter Dreams*, an adaptation of one of his own short stories. Four days before Christmas in 1940, Fitzgerald died of a heart attack at Sheilah Graham's apartment. He was 44. His final novel, *The Last Tycoon*, was published posthumously a year later.

Not many people come to Fitzgerald's funeral. In years before his death he managed to push away most of the people he spent the golden times with. Fitzgerald earned a reputation as a symbol of the Jazz Age and his work has inspired writers ever since he was first published.

3.2. Bibliography

During Fitzgerald's life he managed to write a lot of novels and short stories which he had gathered in short story collections. The very first novel Fitzgerald wrote was *This Side of Paradise* published in 1920. The book examines the lives and morality of post-World War I youth. Fitzgerald's second novel is named *The Beautiful and Damned* from 1922 covering a story of the Eastern elite during the Jazz Age. The book is mostly inspired by Fitzgerald's relationship with Zelda Fitzgerald. The novel of *The Great Gatsby* follows as next, published in 1925 and this book is generally considered FSF's best piece of work. After a nine-year pause from writing novels he publishes *Tender Is the Night* which was the fourth and last novel completed, in passing *Tender Is the Night* was in 1998 pronounced to be 28th on the list of the 100 best English-language novels of the

20th century. FSF's last novel *The Love of the Last Tycoon* was published posthumously in 1941

In 1920 Fitzgerald wrote several short stories, the most notable of them are *Bernice Bobs Her Hair*, *Head and Shoulders*, *The Ice Palace* or *The Offshore Pirate*. One year later FSF publishes his great piece of work and that is *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, in 1922 *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz* follows. In later years Fitzgerald wrote *Winter Dreams* (1922), *The Baby Party* (1925), *The Freshest Boy* (1928), *The Bridal Party* (1930), *Babylon Revisited* (1931) or else *Crazy Sunday* (1932). These short stories and many more were gathered in short story collections: *Flappers and Philosophers* (1921), *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922), *All the Sad Young Men* (1926), *Taps at Reveille* (1936), *Babylon Revisited and Other Stories* (1960), *The Pat Hobby Stories* (1962) or *The Basil and Josephine Stories* (1973).

4. The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

4.1. The Publication, the Setting, Main Characters

Francis Scott Fitzgerald wrote the short story *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* 1922 and it was first published in Colliers Magazine on May 27, 1922. The book covers a story about Benjamin Button, a man who was born in 1860 as an old man, and as he was 'growing up' he was actually getting younger and younger. There are not many characters participating in the novella, in fact it is only the main character of Benjamin Button, his father, his wife and his son. Other characters are not that important in the scope of story. The story is set to the second half of 19th century in a southern town Baltimore; U.S.

4.2. Summary of The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

The beginning of the Curious Case of Benjamin Button leads us to the hospital where Benjamin was born. His parents had decided to go against the tradition and have their child be born in the hospital; normally children were born in the privacy of homes. As soon as Benjamin was born, he made everybody shocked because of his appearance. He looked like a 70 years old man along with a long white beard and hair and cracked voice. Even his father did not want to admit that Benjamin was his son, the doctors and the nurses were very angry at him; they thought that Mr Button is making fun of them and they insisted on Mr Button to take his son home as soon as possible.

As time flows, little Benjamin, despite he is not little at all, found his entertainment in reading in encyclopaedias, smoking father's cigars and in the conversation with his grandfather, as they are similar in the age. This was not what his father wanted to see, he insisted that Benjamin is a child and not an adult and therefore he will behave as a child, meaning he will attend the kindergarten, he will entertain himself with toys and he will be playing with other children like he was not any different. This naturally was not the kind of fun Benjamin imagined for himself but he wanted to please his father, so he did his best. *"Several small boys were brought to see him, and he spent a stiff-jointed afternoon trying to work up an interest in tops and marbles-he even managed, quite accidentally, to break a kitchen window with a stone from a sling shot, a feat which secretly delighted his father."*

Thereafter Benjamin contrived to break something every day, but he did these things only because they were expected of him, and because he was by nature obliging. ¹³

Soon both the parents and the Baltimore society had grown used to him, yet he was seemed as any other child.

Shortly after his 12th birthday he noticed he feels better and fuller of zest, as well as he would promise that some of his deep wrinkles on the forehead had disappeared. However the thought that he is actually getting younger glimpsed through his mind, he never thought it could be happening for real.

“Of the life of Benjamin Button between his twelfth and twenty-first year I intend to say little. Suffice to record that they were years of normal in growth. When Benjamin was eighteen he was erect as a man of fifty; he had more hair and it was of a dark grey; his step was firm, his voice had lost its cracked quaver and descended to a healthy baritone. So his father sent him up to Connecticut to take examinations for entrance to Yale College. Benjamin passed his examination and became a member of the freshman class.

¹⁴ Unfortunately, Benjamin was soon forced to leave the university because the headmaster had not believed him about the age. He claimed that a man of 18 does not look like a 50 years old man; therefore he called Benjamin a liar.

In 1880, Benjamin was 20 years old and he started working in the business owned by his father, also his father thought of him as of a young man old enough to begin going out socially, his father insisted on taking him to several fashionable dances. Once he meets a beautiful young woman named Hildegarde Moncrief, a daughter of General Moncrief and he immediately falls in love with her. Hildegarde thinks about him as of older brother of Mr Button and Benjamin does not feel the need to tell her the truth since she would not believe him anyway. Hildegarde is very satisfied because she feels that a 50 year old Benjamin will take care of her better that a 20 year old man would. They got married six months later.

The marriage was quite happy until Benjamin began to feel that Hildegarde is not that fun that she used to be when they met in addition to Benjamin was feeling in better physical shape than her. *„And here we come to an unpleasant subject which it will be well to pass over as quickly as possible. There was only one thing that worried Benjamin Button;*

¹³ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. Novels and stories 1920-1922. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 962

¹⁴ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. Novels and stories 1920-1922. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 964

*his wife had ceased to attract him*¹⁵. Hildegarde was now a woman of 35 with a son, Roscoe who was 14 years old. Benjamin who wanted to be present at every fashionable dance in the town she was an old lady, she was still joining him at these dances but without enthusiasm.

In 1898 when the Spanish- American war broke out Benjamin did not hesitate and joined the army, it was the kind of entertainment he hoped for himself. A few years later he must have left the army because the business at home required his attention. Benjamin was very disappointed when he got home and found Hildegarde older and less attractive again since he was feeling great. *"Hildegarde, waving a large silk flag, greeted him on the porch, and even as he kissed her he felt with a sinking of the heart that these three years had taken their toll. She was a woman of forty now, with a faint skirmish line of grey hairs in her head. The sight depressed him.*"¹⁶*"It seemed to him that the blood flowed with new vigour through his veins. It began to be a pleasure to rise in the morning, to walk with an active step along the busy, sunny street, to work untiringly with his shipments of hammers and his cargoes of nails.*"¹⁷ Soon people started to wonder why such a young and handsome man married an old lady. *"Look!" people would remark. "What a pity! A young fellow that age tied to a woman of forty-five. He must be twenty years younger than his wife." They had forgotten--as people inevitably forget--that back in 1880 their mammas and papas had also remarked about this same ill-matched pair.*"¹⁸

Both Benjamin and Hildegarde noticed that Benjamin looks more fresh and younger; Benjamin once observed himself in a mirror and compared his present look with a photograph taken before the war. The result was clearly visible and Benjamin was really not delighted, he thought that once he reached a bodily age equivalent to his age in years, the process would stop but the opposite was happening. The process was continuing. Hildegarde once confronted Benjamin, she accused him that he is growing younger on purpose, that he was doing it because he wanted to and if he will decide not to continue in reverse growing it would simply stop. *"I'm not going to argue with you," she retorted. "But there's a right way of doing things and a wrong way. If you've made up your mind to be*

¹⁵ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. Novels and stories 1920-1922. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 970

¹⁶ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. Novels and stories 1920-1922. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 971

¹⁷ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. Novels and stories 1920-1922. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 970

¹⁸ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. Novels and stories 1920-1922. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 972

different from everybody else, I don't suppose I can stop you, but I really don't think it's very considerate."¹⁹

In 1910 Benjamin turned over the company to his son Roscoe and himself entered as a freshman at Harvard University in Cambridge. He had immediately gained almost a prominent position by playing in a university team of football where he was an outstanding player. It was, of course, caused by his strong masculine body of a mature man. This had made Benjamin a school celebrity. Soon, unsurprisingly, his body started to weaken as he was getting younger and that reflected on his performance in the team. His popularity weakened along with him and he was staying in the team just from the sympathy of coaches. In the end of his studies he was weaker than a regular freshman.

After a not very successful ending at Harvard University Benjamin decided to enter the St. Midas's preparatory school of which he heard his former classmates speak of. He thought he would feel rather happy there since he would fit in with his classmates.

Benjamin had returned home with Harvard diploma in his pocket in 1914 and since he found out Hildegard lives in Italy, he ended up to live with his son Roscoe. Roscoe already started a family and gained a prominent position in Baltimore which he did not want to endanger in no way. Therefore he made Benjamin to call him 'uncle' in front of his guests which was not very comfortable for Benjamin. Roscoe confronted Benjamin about his reverse aging in the same way as Hildegard did few years ago. *"You better--you better"--he paused and his face crimsoned as he sought for words--"you better turn right around and start back the other way. This has gone too far to be a joke. It isn't funny any longer. You—you behave yourself!" Benjamin looked at him, on the verge of tears. "And another thing," continued Roscoe, "when visitors are in the house I want you to call me 'Uncle'—not 'Roscoe,' but 'Uncle,' do you understand? It looks absurd for a boy of fifteen to call me by my first name. Perhaps you'd better call me 'Uncle' all the time, so you'll get used to it."* With a harsh look at his father, Roscoe turned away....²⁰

As little Benjamin turned from a moody teenager to young child, he often daydreamed and remembered of the war he participated in. What a pleasure was it for him when a letter by the army was delivered. It was said that many former officers who had served in the Spanish-American War were being called back into service. Benjamin did

¹⁹ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. *Novels and stories 1920-1922*. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 972

²⁰ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. *Novels and stories 1920-1922*. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 975

not hesitate and hurried into tailor's shop to have his uniform made. Without saying to Roscoe, he left the house and joined the army camp. He was immediately uncovered and Roscoe had to come and get him what made him very angry.

In 1920 Roscoe's first son was born, in that time Benjamin was looking like a ten-year-old and his life was going by. No one would have thought that this little boy is actually a grandfather of a new-born. Five years later, when Benjamin and Roscoe's son were both five years old, Roscoe sent them to the kindergarten. Benjamin was happy he could spend some time with other children while making chains out of coloured paper. Later Roscoe's son moved up in to the first grade but Benjamin stayed in the kindergarten, soon it was hard for him even to make these colourful chains, he cried because he felt endangered by bigger children among him and the world had slowly started to become incomprehensible for him. *"He went back a third year to the kindergarten, but he was too little now to understand what the bright shining strips of paper were for. He cried because the other boys were bigger than he, and he was afraid of them. The teacher talked to him, but though he tried to understand he could not understand at all."*²¹

Benjamin had to be taken out of kindergarten and be taken care of at home by his nurse, Nana, and in a short time she had turned into the centre of his life. Benjamin could only be worried about his milk, sleeping time and whether Nana will let him jump on the bed; which was a lot of fun.

Soon he completely forgot about his previous life; about his participation during the war, troubles with Hildegarde, the early begging of his life, and problems in the university. No bad dreams had teased him during his sleep.

After that, he remembered nothing, not even whether the milk he drank was cold or hot. Only Nana and his crib took place in his world and if he was hungry, he simply cried. Then there was nothing, no memories, no trouble and everything faded to darkness. *"Then it was all dark, and his white crib and the dim faces that moved above him, and the warm sweet aroma of the milk, faded out altogether from his mind."*²²

²¹ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. Novels and stories 1920-1922. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 978

²² FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. Novels and stories 1920-1922. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 979

4.3. The Analysis of The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

4.3.1. The Setting, Narrator and Genre

As for the setting of the short story, it is set in a southern town Baltimore in the second half of 19th century and the first half of a 20th century. During this period also the American Civil War took place and while the main character Benjamin Button is changing so does the political and social situation. Fitzgerald sets the family of Buttons in a city where social status really matters and this way he wants to illustrate the then people chasing the reputation and their obsession with society and image.

There is the first person narrator even though he occurs only in the first paragraphs, then he somehow disappears and became a peripheral narrator. *“As long ago as 1860 it was the proper thing to be born at home. At present, so I am told, the high gods of medicine have decreed that the first cries of the young shall be uttered upon the anesthetic air of a hospital, preferably a fashionable one.”*²³ *“I shall tell you what occurred, and let you judge for yourself.”*²⁴ These represent the two cases where the narrator uses the pronoun *I*. Commenting the first situation where he explains how things are going round nowadays in hospitals, he is trying to imply that he does not really follow these new trendy protocols and therefore we can presume that the narrator may be elderly. In the second case we conclude that the narrator himself witnessed the curious Benjamin Button case and now he is about to describe it to you. He says it with such a tone that he made us to expect something very amazing by hearing the story and that we should brace ourselves before reading it.

The tone of the story is kind of difficult to depict however we can easily say that since the genre is considered to be a fantasy, the tone can be described as a satirical and bittersweet but also poignant. As we can demonstrate on the text, since little Benjamin was born he was facing the society’s denial, rudeness and incomprehension. Right after his mother gave birth to him, the staff in the hospital showed him the disrespect towards him and also towards his father. The doctor was really upset on Mr Button and called his actions outrageous as if he was the one who caused Benjamin’s differences. The nurse was

²³ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. *Novels and stories 1920-1922*. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 954

²⁴ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. *Novels and stories 1920-1922*. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 954

behaving quite the same way as the doctor; she insisted on Mr Button to take his son home as soon as possible so the hospital will not get a bad reputation. Both the doctor and the nurse were denying the fact that Benjamin was born as an old man and they both were thinking that the Button family is making fun of them in a very weird way.

4.3.2. Mr Button's Attitude

The denial of Mr Button is noticeable right from the beginning when he did not want to believe that this old man sitting in the crib is really his son. Right after he admitted this fact, he wanted to hide his son's 'real' age by colouring his hair and cutting his beard, Benjamin was also supposed to wear ridiculous clothes as his father bought it in youth's department whose buying was really stressful. Mr Button was seriously concerned about what people will think when they see the strange child and he struggles to imagine how he will explain the situation.

On the other hand Benjamin's behaviour was rather genuine since the very beginning. He did react to his condition very dispassionately, like it is the most normal thing in the world. Although he seemed much older than his father, Benjamin behaves exactly the way a son should behave towards his father, with respect. He did not object to his father's idea of cutting hair and wearing the ridiculous clothes, although he did add few ironic comments.

At the time Benjamin was at home he had to continue on dyeing his hair; his father actually thought that this will make him looking young like a child. In fact, Mr Button started to think of Benjamin like of normal child who has to behave proper way. Therefore he forced Benjamin into playing with other children, he was buying him toys and for a while he even wanted Benjamin to eat only milk and other mashed food. Unfortunately, not only Benjamin's body was old but also he had a mind of an old man, so toys and playing football were just not the right things for him to do. He rather spent time with his grandfather who was of the similar age, and soon they realized that they are having a great time together smoking cigars and reading encyclopaedias. This was not very acceptable to Benjamin's father since he literally saw his son like a child. The story gained an ironic overtone by several situations, such as when people were saying that the boy looks like his grandfather, other when Mr Button had sent a five years old Benjamin to kindergarten but he was removed because Benjamin kept on falling asleep there.

4.3.3. Benjamin's Struggle for Life

At the time Benjamin was 18 years old he enrolls for Yale but he is thrown out as a dangerous lunatic since nobody believed him he is only 18. Later among the society Benjamin did not really act as a Mr Button's son, people often considered him his older brother and the Buttons did not try to talk them out of it. Citizens soon completely forgot about Benjamin Button's strangeness.

Benjamin met Hildegarde at his age of 20 although he looked like a man of 50. For Hildegarde he was a good match but for her father, General Moncrief, he did not represent the ideal partner for his beloved daughter. Even though Benjamin had his birth certificate printed in the papers to prove his birth origin, it was not convincing for Hildegarde's father who simply had a doubt about Benjamin. One thing that made General Moncrief satisfied with his son-in-law was that Benjamin paid for General's publication of twenty-volume history of the Civil War.

As Benjamin is growing younger he does not need to pretend and hide his age, but it is very interesting how he feels about his aging wife. At first, when they got married he does not find a single unattractiveness on her and he would never said a bad word of her. However since Benjamin is feeling full of life and zest and Hildegarde is the exact opposite, he suddenly starts to sense her tiredness and lethargy as something completely negative and depressing and as something he had never experienced although it was not the truth. Soon Benjamin considered Hildegarde too old to go out with him and he felt almost ashamed when going out together in public. In the end he was relieved when he found out that Hildegarde is no longer living home.

At the time Benjamin was looking younger and younger we witnessed him worrying about his future, he was sort of depressed about the continuing process of the reverse aging. However Benjamin soon reconciled with his obvious fate in some way and carried on in enjoying his young life.

After Benjamin finished the university he looked like a 16-years-old; in that time his son Roscoe was a young man with a family, and we can observe Roscoe's lack of interest towards Benjamin and also his unpleasantness and anger. Roscoe, same as Hildegarde, denies Benjamin's reverse aging and is angry about his actions and he even wants Benjamin to wear fake whiskers. Soon Roscoe wants Benjamin to call him 'uncle' instead

of his name; we can see that Roscoe is really ashamed of Benjamin and he does not want people to know that Benjamin is his actual father.

At this time Benjamin does not actually think of his reverse aging anymore since he owns the mind of a little boy and all the troubles connected with his appearance slowly fade away. The society does not remember the whole story of Benjamin; therefore they do not tend to look at him with disrespect.

4.3.4. Benjamin Button and Society

We can assume that Fitzgerald wanted to show the importance of a human soul in relation to an appearance and its influence on society, or let's say the influence of society on a human being in general. Through the whole story we can observe several moments where the then society played a vital part in Benjamin's behaviour and decisions. In the very beginning of the story we see a Button's family doctor trying to chide Mr. Button for Benjamin's appearance, right from this moment Mr. Button feels the need to hide Benjamin's appearance from Baltimore society because it would be degrading if anybody had seen his 'true' look. From this situation we presume that the then society is not quite tolerant to any abnormality. Mr. Button is so interested in what people would think that he forces Benjamin to colour his hair black and enter the kindergarten which has not really gone well since Benjamin kept on falling asleep there. That was actually one of the 'bitter sweet' humorous moments in the short story. One more comical situation appeared when Mr. Button felt flattered by society's comments that little Benjamin does bear resemblance to his grandfather, which he actually did. The importance of people's opinion is further noticeable when Benjamin got younger in appearance. He had never been telling people the truth that he is a son to Mr. Button, they always presented themselves as brothers. Benjamin did not even tell the truth to his wife since he assures himself that she would not believe him anyway. However Benjamin did try to show the people the truth about him, after he proposed to Hildegard, he had his birth certificate printed in the papers to convince the society that he only looks old but actually is a young man. Nevertheless this gained him no success. In general society's opinion played a vital part in the then life and life of Benjamin because in his whole existence he had to keep on adapting to 'normal' state which often was not easy for him and it meant a lot of problems he had to tackle with.

4.3.5. Family Relations

The relationship between the father, represented by Roger Button, and his son Benjamin may refer to the situation which spread among the after-war generation. The then people were often disgusted by war and there may spring up an inter-generation conflict by which FSF could be inspired when writing the Benjamin Button story. We can easily recognize that the relationship between the Buttons is not quite ideal. But that does not apply to the whole story; we can see that when Benjamin and his father are similar in age, or at least in appearance, they somehow find a way to each other through going to social events together etc. In that time we can say that the relationship was the best. If Benjamin was aging as a normal man, we suppose that the connection between them would never be that good because of the generation gap which would stay the same and never get closer.

4.3.6. Benjamin Button and the Lost Generation

It becomes clear that Fitzgerald saw several similarities between the character of Benjamin Button and the lost generation. Both were somehow unhappy in life; however Benjamin in particular never said anything about discomfort in living. One significant connection definitely stands for their ability to integrate and fit in with the contemporary society which often oppressed soldiers coming home from war. Similarity to the soldiers, also Benjamin had problems in blending with the society. At the beginning it was mostly caused by the approach of his father who insisted on Benjamin's childish behaviour, although Benjamin had a mind of an old man, and then naturally Benjamin could not smoothly blend in with the society. He, like the post-war soldiers, also felt lost misunderstood by the culture. In the middle of the story we can observe that Benjamin feels happier with himself, it is probably caused by many successes in his life. However when the end of a story is coming closer, we can again notice Benjamin's behaviour changing as he is getting younger- not only physically, but also mentally. Once again he is standing only by himself against all the people who do not seem to understand him and his actions. Again he feels alone in the world and nobody appears to even want to sympathize with him, like the lost generation. That is probably where Fitzgerald saw a connection between the lost generation and the character of Benjamin Button and we may presume

that Fitzgerald's feeling of the war, subsequently the lost generation was the motive for writing *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*.

5. The Diamond as Big as the Ritz

5.1. The Publication, Setting and Main Characters

The Diamond as Big as the Ritz is composed as a short story which was first published in the June 1922 issue of *The Smart Set* magazine. It was then included in Fitzgerald's short story collection *Tales of the Jazz Age* from 1922.

Much of the story is set in Montana and it is said that Fitzgerald may have been inspired by the summer he spent near White Sulphur Springs, Montana in 1915. The story is narrated by an unknown storyteller who tells us about a young man John T. Unger who is to attend a school in St. Midas' which is considered „*to be the most expensive and the most exclusive boys' preparatory school in the world*“²⁵. In the story *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*, John T. Unger, a Southern boy at school in Boston, is invited by a wealthy school friend, Percy Washington, to spend the summer with him. The reader experiences John's adventures together with him through the story. Only several characters appear in the story, the main characters are represented by John T. Unger, then Percy Washington, Percy's sisters Jasmine and Kismine. The other very important characters are definitely Mr. Washington, a father to Percy, Jasmine and Kismine. John's parents, in fact his father, only revealed themselves at the very beginning of the story. Mrs Washington, same as the Ungers, has not really showed herself throughout the story.

5.2. Summary of *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*

The beginning of the story leads us to a small town on the Mississippi River called Hades. We observe the Unger family saying goodbye to their son John who is going to attend the preparatory school near Boston. John feels quite sad about his leaving, while he caught the last glimpse of a town he was raised in, nevertheless he left Hades with his head raised and ready for the new destination. The St. Midas preparatory school was considered really a place for the cream of society; therefore John was that lucky that he

²⁵ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. *Novels and stories 1920-1922*. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 914

had the opportunity to meet a lot of powerful men of the country through befriending with their sons. He also met Percy Washington, a young man of a very calm mind, who only found a friend in John. One day Percy invited John to spend the summer at their family residence. John, of course, accepted the offer.

As they were travelling towards Washington's residence, Percy wanted to put John wise to the fact that his father is the richest man on the Earth so far. John was surprised of what Percy said and later he admitted that he did not believe him, nevertheless he answered that it makes him very happy because he likes people with a lot of money. Then John started to list rich people he had visited over the years in St. Midas School, Percy, maybe little bit insecure, and told John that these people have really no property in comparison to his father who owns a diamond as big as the Ritz. *"The richer a fella is, the better I like him." There was a look of passionate frankness upon his dark face. "I visited the Schnlitzer–Murphys last Easter. Vivian Schnlitzer–Murphy had rubies as big as hen's eggs, and sapphires that were like globes with lights inside them--". „"And diamonds" continued John eagerly. "The Schnlitzer–Murphys had diamonds as big as walnuts--". "That's nothing." Percy had leaned forward and dropped his voice to a low whisper. "That's nothing at all. My father has a diamond bigger than the Ritz–Carlton Hotel."*²⁶

Soon they arrived to the residence and John meets the Washington family, Percy's father and his two sisters. He is literally astonished by everything around him. The beautiful cars, the château built of jewels, garden, in general he is amazed by all the luxury because he had never seen or maybe even dreamt of something like that. The palace is full of servants who had been told that slavery is still legal and therefore they carry on with their occupation. We witness several comical situations, such as when a servant gave a shower to John while he was sleeping. John really does not seem to have a single problem with all the luxury and he simply enjoys himself.

Soon Percy reveals to John the secret of his family. The château is built on a gigantic piece of a diamond, hidden just about fifteen metres under the surface. Percy's grandfather, Colonel Fitz-Norman Culpepper Washington, discovered the diamond mountain shortly after the Civil War had ended. He found himself in a bit tricky situation: by owning the diamond, he was the richest man in the world. But if anyone ever

²⁶ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. Novels and stories 1920-1922. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 916

discovered the diamond, it would lose its value, because diamonds would no longer be a rare jewel. So he decided to hide its existence and close the mine. *"It was an amazing predicament. He was, in one sense, the richest man that ever lived—and yet was he worth anything at all? If his secret should transpire there was no telling to what measures the Government might resort in order to prevent a panic, in gold as well as in jewels. They might take over the claim immediately and institute a monopoly."*²⁷ He brought slaves out from his home in Virginia after convincing them that the South had won the Civil War and that slavery was still legal. He also bribed several officers so the diamond mountain would remain hidden. Finally he managed to trick the authorities so this particular part of Montana has never been surveyed and mapped. The United States doesn't know that this area exists at all, and the Washington's plan on keeping it that way. Percy also reveals to John that the only thing his family is afraid of are aeroplanes because they are not capable of hiding the château from above. They prevent revealing facts by having several cannons to shoot the aeroplanes and then by keeping the aviators imprisoned in a hole under the surface (although they are treated and fed very well). Mr Washington took a decisive stand what to do with the prisoners: *"I've told you the situation. I don't want you here. I wish to heaven I'd never seen you. Your own curiosity got you here, and any time that you can think of a way out which protects me and my interests I'll be glad to consider it. But so long as you confine your efforts to digging tunnels—yes, I know about the new one you've started—you won't get very far. This isn't as hard on you as you make it out, with all your howling for the loved ones at home. If you were the type who worried much about the loved ones at home, you'd never have taken up aviation."*²⁸

Soon John had the chance to get to know Kismine, Percy's younger sister, better, since they were going for walks to the woods secretly. They fell in love immediately and made plans that they would run away and get married next summer. Unfortunately Kismine accidentally reveals to John how her father usually treats visitors so they will not spill the secret. John finds out that no visitor had ever made it back home, Mr Washington in fact always gets them murdered before they left. Kismine then told him when and how it is usually done and the reason why they could not be kept like the aviators. *"A dark suspicion was born in John's heart." "Do you mean that they were talking outside, and your*

²⁷ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. *Novels and stories 1920-1922*. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 926

²⁸ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. *Novels and stories 1920-1922*. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 933

father had them--removed?" "Worse than that," she muttered brokenly. "Father took no chances--and Jasmine kept writing them to come, and they had such a good time! " „Stunned with the horror of this revelation, John sat there open-mouthed, feeling the nerves of his body twitter like so many sparrows perched upon his spinal column. „Now, I've told you, and I shouldn't have," she said, calming suddenly and drying her dark blue eyes. "Do you mean to say that your father had them murdered before they left?" "In August usually--or early in September. It's only natural for us to get all the pleasure out of them that we can first." "We can't very well imprison them like those aviators, where they'd be a continual reproach to us every day. And it's always been made easier for Jasmine and me because father had it done sooner than we expected. In that way we avoided any farewell scene--" "So you murdered them! Uh!" cried John. "It was done very nicely. They were drugged while they were asleep--and their families were always told that they died of scarlet fever in Butte." "But--I fail to understand why you kept on inviting them!" "I didn't," burst out Kismine. "I never invited one. Jasmine did. And they always had a very good time. She'd give them the nicest presents toward the last. I shall probably have visitors too--I'll harden up to it. We can't let such an inevitable thing as death stand in the way of enjoying life while we have it."²⁹ When John found out this horrible secret he was naturally very upset with Kismine. He decided he needs to leave as soon as possible and that meant this very night. But Kismine insisted on going with him. Finally they planned to run away together in the night.

John was waken up from his sleep in the middle of the night by a noise coming from outside. Soon he finds Kismine and learns that aeroplanes are occupying the area and are planning to use cannons. After a while first shots were heard and John gets the idea of running away right in this moment. He advised Kismine to take with them few pieces of jewellery- just in case it would be ever needed. Together they left the palace and Kismine's sister Jasmine joined them on the way. They all fell asleep in the woods.

John was again wakening up but this time by a human voice coming from near. He went to find out who is there, and discovered it is Mr Washington talking to the heaven. Two servants were standing next to him carrying a huge piece of diamond. Soon John realized that Mr.Washington is talking to God and that he is trying to bribe him with the diamond. He wants him just to clear up this whole mess and in return he will build God a

²⁹ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. Novels and stories 1920-1922. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 940

giant cathedral out of the biggest diamond the world has ever seen. Nevertheless God declines the offer.

Mr Washington had lost all the hopes so he leads his family, Percy and his wife, into the mountain which is wired to blow. Right after we witnessed a great explosion of the whole complex, however John and the girls are safe in the woods.

After the fireworks are over, the three of them make their way away from the mountain. When they stop to rest for the next night, John asks Kismine to show him the jewels she took as they were escaping. Unfortunately, Kismine went for the wrong drawer and accidentally grabbed only rhinestones. However this does not bother her, as she was bored of diamonds and a life full of luxury which had only seemed to her as a dream. Also she thinks being poor for a change might be an exciting experience since her parents and all their property were blown up and they ended up with no money. *"What a dream it was," Kismine sighed, gazing up at the stars. "How strange it seems to be here with one dress and a penniless fiancé! "Under the stars," she repeated. "I never noticed the stars before. I always thought of them as great big diamonds that belonged to someone. Now they frighten me. They make me feel that it was all a dream, all my youth." "It was a dream," said John quietly. "Everybody's youth is a dream, a form of chemical madness." "How pleasant then to be insane!"*³⁰The three of them make plans to go live in Hades together, where Kismine looks forward to working as a washerwoman. Then they all fall asleep for the night and the situation is quite calm and peaceful since they all became reconciled with their fate.

5.3.The Analysis of The Diamond as Big as the Ritz

5.3.1. The Setting, Narrator and Genre

As for the setting of the short story, the reader is firstly lead to a small town called Hades. What we got to know about Hades is that it is a typical town where all the people know each other, women are gossiping in their free time and there is no information which they would have missed out. It was not very typical for a young man as John T. Unger to be sent to an exclusive preparatory school and we can observe that he is hardly

³⁰ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. Novels and stories 1920-1922. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 953

leaving his hometown. The reader must notice the comment which is repeated many times throughout the story. It is repeatedly referred to hot weather in Hades which must be annoying for Hades' people. In comparison with the Washington's palace where everything is crystal cool because of diamonds, we may feel this as an allegory for a Hell represented by Hades (the name Hades also refers to a God of the underworld in the Greek mythology; similar setting we meet also in *The Great Gatsby's* valley of ashes) and icy Heaven represented by Washington's palace. As we know, Americans are heavy believers and Fitzgerald probably intended the reader to get this idea. However the people living in the palace and Hades do not typically belong to the place where they occur and we may have the feeling that peaceful inhabitants of Hades, which is considered the Hell, should probably rather belong to the heavenly palace and the other way around, and after all this is quite a paradox. The rest of the story is set in the Washington's palace and the surrounding five square kilometres which have never been mapped. This area can easily be seen as the Biblical Garden of Eden, especially in contrast with Hades.

In the role of the narrator we can notice an interesting thing. We cannot say that John himself narrates the story; however the story is narrated from his point of view. We experience John's adventure with him; we get to hear his thoughts and the perspective through his eyes. The story would have definitely ended up differently if it was narrated from a Percy's or Kismine's point of view, since they are somehow used to all the luxury but for John it is very special, and he does not feel this is the normality in life. Also, in a few moments we notice that the narrator's point of view has changed from John's to unknown storytellers. For example in the situation when John and Percy had arrived to the final train station, we can detect that the village is no longer described from John's aspect because in that case, we presume, there would occur more emotionally denoted expressions. *"The Montana sunset lay between two mountains like a gigantic bruise from which dark arteries spread themselves over a poisoned sky. An immense distance under the sky crouched the village of Fish, minute, dismal, and forgotten."*³¹

The Diamond as Big as the Ritz can be definitely considered a fantasy story, since we do not know about any existence of a gigantic diamond mountain in the middle of nowhere. Yet- it is a work of a greatly imaginative mind of Fitzgerald's. The short story can be also looked at as a social satire which satirizes the character of Americans and that is an

³¹ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. *Novels and stories 1920-1922*. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p.916

obsession with wealth and luxury- in our case it is represented by the gigantic diamond. But there also occurs the irony of the whole situation- by owning the diamond the Washington's are the richest people living but they must live in a fear of revealing their secret and if the diamond mountain would be exposed, their great property- the diamond- would no longer be a unique article and that would have meant an end to Washington's supremacy. But everything comes with a price and for Washington's it meant that they had to minimize the risk of revealing the diamond by having killed some of their friends and for the original founder of Washington's property, Fitz- Norman Culpepper Washington, even to have killed his own brother. We can notice that hyperbole is spreading throughout the story, by that Fitzgerald may have wanted to show the absurdity of obsession with wealth which can often consume people. We can have the feeling that it is also the case of the Washington's, since they were not facing the reality of the world anymore and they only have been living in the so called vacuum or a bubble of their palace. The right example of their exaggerated actions is probably tight with the story of how the palace was built. They had invited many artists, architects but none of them was capable of building the palace that magnificent the Washington's had imagined it. Only one person was able to make their dream come true, and that was a movie decorator, he was the only one who was used to spending unlimited amount of money. The palace itself is therefore a symbol of wealth and of exaggerated behaviour of its owners.

One more thing to add to express the satire of the story definitely stands for the very title of the short story. By comparing the diamond to a huge Ritz hotel, it connects the two worlds together- the fantasy world with the real one in which Fitzgerald's generation had lived back in the 1920s. It can be considered a straight link due to which it is easier to recognize to what Fitzgerald was referring to. Then the name of the short story itself was very satirical.

In the time we hear the story of spreading the Washington's influence all around the world- with the help of unique diamond article- we got to know that the Washington founder had visited several presidents, kings, princes and also sultans to offer them his merchandise. This is often referred to the expansion of the United States across the continent. We also get to know that Mr. Washington should be a straight descendent of George Washington. Mr. Washington's behaviour to manipulate and hurt others for his own financial gain is then a dig at the American tendency to do the same in its early expansion.

We also detect that the story can be seen as a coming of age. We can observe John having a hard time leaving hometown with a mind of a child. Throughout the story John experienced many twists of fate, also first love and maybe he also learned a few lessons for life. He has grown up over the stay at Washington's and then he is coming home with a fiancé and plans to make money and live comfortable life together. John has become a man.

5.3.2. Wealth as the Main Theme

We can say that the theme of 'wealth' occurs throughout the story and that, in fact, it stands for one of the main thoughts which Fitzgerald probably wanted to point out. In this story, America is seen as a country obsessed with wealth to a garish, destructive and shameful degree which had totally consumed the Washington family. Wealth has replaced religion and people occupying the Washington palace worship at the altar of diamonds and gold as they have forgot about 'real' religion and their mind had become somehow twisted. Terrible things are done in the name of wealth, such as murders and imprisonment, however these are not seen as something terrible but something normal. It is thought that these actions are natural consequences of success.

5.3.2.1. John's Change of Attitude throughout the Story

The main protagonist John has a clear opinion of rich people. Since he had attended the exclusive preparatory school, he has been visiting his schoolmates over the summers in their residence. He thought that what he had seen in their homes was real wealth however it was before Percy invited him to his home. We can observe a very interesting moment on the train as they were travelling towards the Washington residence. John confessed that what he really likes are rich people and he made a comment that the richer the person is, the more he likes him. From this we can surely say that John feels comfortable in the company of rich people, Percy included. We can feel that right after Percy revealed that his father is by far the richest man on Earth, John doubts this statement and later he confessed that he did not believe Percy at first. *"My father," he said, "is by far the richest man in the world." "Oh," said John, politely. He could think of no answer to make to this confidence. He considered "That's very nice," but it sounded hollow*

and was on the point of saying, "Really?" but refrained since it would seem to question Percy's statement. And such an astounding statement could scarcely be questioned.³² John's thinking has turned over as soon as he had the chance to see the car which picked them up from the train station. Immediately he believed John's words and he remained fascinated with Washington's property. Throughout the story we can notice that John had been enjoying himself surrounded by all the luxury, on the other hand he still felt respect towards the Washington's. For example, he repeatedly let his host win a golf match. John's thinking has turned over again right after Kismine revealed him the secret treatment of guests. He felt disgusted and was afraid and he had the reason to react so. He immediately started to reproach Kismine for even telling him and for letting him fall for her although she knew he would never make it back home alive. In an accumulated fear he felt, John had said a thing that made Kismine very sad although it may seem little bit childish, with a bitter sweet humour. John accused her of having an affair with more or less a dead man. *"I've heard about enough of this. If you haven't anymore pride and decency than to have an affair with a fellow that you know isn't much better than a corpse, I don't want to have any more to do with you!" "You're not a corpse!" she protested in horror. "You're not a corpse! I won't have you saying that I kissed a corpse!"*³³ After this accident John's behaviour towards Washington's wealth has changed and we may have the feeling that suddenly he feels antipathy to all the luxury. After they decided to leave the palace and run away together, he took care of both Kismine and Jasmine. They are on a run together and after John witnessed how Mr. Washington is trying to bribe God, he may feel pity for him because everything he had ever cared of is suddenly ruined. John still relied on the jewels Kismine took from her jewel box but as soon as they find out these were only rhinestones, John feels depressed to some extent, however this feeling did not last long. They all make plans of their future living back in Hades which had all of a sudden seemed as a nice place to live, even though the group was used to a different level of living. We can see that John has arisen from a dream he had been living for the past few weeks and that his attitude has changed from 'loving rich people' to 'having optimistic expectation of living in Hades'.

³² FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. Novels and stories 1920-1922. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 915

³³ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. Novels and stories 1920-1922. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 940

5.3.2.2. The Issue of the Washington Family

The other interesting question the reader can ask while reading the short story is definitely whether the Washington's are morally corrupt because they are wealthy, or whether they get rich because they were morally corrupt. This kind of question may seem rhetorical because we can only debate with no exact answer given. If we observe the Washington clan from the beginning, that means from Fitz-Norman Culpepper Washington, we can say that even this ancestor inclined to be morally unbalanced. We know that he travelled half the world to offer diamonds to various powerful men in order to get money and an influence abroad. His descendants only supported the business with diamonds and they also did not fear to resort for radical moves. At first Washington even had to have his own brother killed because his favourite activity was spending time by drinking alcohol and then nobody could ensure that the diamond mountain would remain a secret. The other Washington's had similar problems. Random people, especially aviators, discovered the sacred area from time to time. Mr. Washington had them imprisoned and let them live in a glass prison under the surface. A different destiny was waiting for guests. As Kismine revealed the secret to John, we know that no guest had ever made it back home. Mr. Washington had them murdered before they left, we can ask why they did not keep them imprisoned like the aviators. Kismine clarifies that guest could not be treated the same because they would have been a non-stop reminder for them. We can only debate whether the wealth was the reason for all these moves or whether it was a different reason. Imagine that a middle class man has come to find such a fairy-tale treasure under the surface and no-one else knows about it, we can believe that all his following steps were led either by his greedy, eager, and selfish character or maybe by his fierce effort to provide luxurious life for next generations. Either way, the Washington's we are meeting in *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz* are more or less morally corrupt although we notice a brighter side in Kismine and Jasmine, who have reconciled with their future destiny and youth, only saw as a beautiful dream. In contrast with the rest of the family, including Mr and Mrs Washington and Percy, who rather chose to die along with Washington's little kingdom and their supremacy in the world.

5.3.3. The Washington's and Society

The relationship between the Washington family and the society living ‚outside‘ is quite interesting since the family and all their servants staying in their estate are actually living in a bubble consisting of these five square kilometres of land.

Diamonds are a natural resource but everything connected with them and the family did not seem to be natural anymore. The family has become a sort of prisoner in their own estate and the only connection to the rest of the ‚natural‘ world were visits of guests. However, the way of treating them was, once again, not natural or normal at all. The interesting thing is that the children were no longer consternated with the treatment of their visitors. They have become used to it and they think that everything comes with a prize and the prize in their case means killing their visitors. We may have the feeling that the children did not even see their guests as living creatures but only as their toys brought for their pleasure. We witnessed a curious situation of Kismine explaining to John that he cannot be mad at her because of the way of treating their guest, because after all we cannot let us be sad about something as inevitable as death. It is something inescapable and if they have the chance to spend joyful time with their guests before their death, they will use the opportunity. She probably wanted to justify this behaviour although both John and the reader must feel that it is not justifiable.

The other fact that shows us the remote distance prevailing between the outside world and the estate is that the black servants had been living in the isolated area for so long that their language has transformed from English to unintelligible gibberish. The area of Washington residence is, as we already know, hidden between the mountains and the journey there is quite adventurous. All this is considered a precaution so nobody would ever find the estate. The boys travelled to the residence by train. This train stays in a village called Fish only a few times in a year and for local inhabitants it is always a great show. *„Six times or so a year the Transcontinental Express, through some inconceivable jurisdiction, stopped at the village of Fish, and when this occurred a figure or so would disembark, mount into a buggy that always appeared from out of the dusk, and drive off toward the bruised sunset. The observation of this pointless and preposterous phenomenon had become a sort of cult among the men of Fish. To observe, that was all; there remained in them none of the vital quality of illusion which would make them wonder or speculate,*

else a religion might have grown up around these mysterious visitations. ³⁴ Then the boys were taken by a buggy and after that they could have been finally taken by a luxurious car because it was already safe and sure that nobody was following them. This all shows that the Washington's wanted to remain in secret and were willing to do anything for it.

We assume that the Washington's have quite hostile attitude towards the outside society, just from the beginning we know that the palace is hidden in the middle of nowhere, later we hear the story of Mr. Washington's effort to bribe all the offices so the mountain will stay undiscovered. He even had a model village built and changed the watercourse of the near river to confuse the geodesists; all this sounds like an impossible mission but in a world of unlimited options it could be quite well realizable.

In the end of the story we witnessed again a clear proof of Washington's unsociability. After the estate was discovered and it was clear that the Washington's could never live the same life like before, they had rather chosen an option that no-one, not even John and the girls, had expected. While reading this passage, the reader probably expects that the family will have to give up on their former way of life. But they made a very surprising choice; they decided rather to die along with their little 'kingdom' instead of being exposed to the public. Probably because that would have meant for them that they must answer for their actions which have not always been humanitarian and civilised. They probably feared that the society would not be merciful to them same as they were not merciful to other people and it would be already too late to change their decision.

5.3.4. The Question of Freedom

Concerning freedom, we notice several different motives throughout the story. Firstly we can take a look at John and his attitude towards freedom. When John is arriving to the Washington palace he probably has no concern about his own freedom, but as we read further, John has witnessed several situations - he got to know that the servant are descendants of the first black slaves brought altogether with Mr. Washington. In fact he told them that slavery is still legal (that the South had won the Civil war) and therefore they had no idea that they no longer have to stay at the Washington's. Later John got to meet all the prisoners kept in a glass cage under the surface; we observe them trying to

³⁴ FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. *Novels and stories 1920-1922*. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0, p. 916

convince Mr. Washington to let them out. However Mr. Washington took a resolute stand. But as soon as John found out that he is more or less a dead man after Kismine told him the secret, he suddenly feels endangered and that his freedom was taken from him. He wanted to gain it back by fleeing which he had finally managed. In the end of the story he feels free again and we assume that he learnt a lesson from all this adventure.

The other question of freedom concerns the whole Washington family. It is clear that their freedom is quite limited by the border of their estate. They have been living isolated for a long time and they had become prisoners in their own home. We could call their palace a golden cage as well. The only freedom for their children is attending school but also this has a fly in the ointment. However they are potentially free in the outside world, they could not talk about anything concerning their family or their property. This is apparent in the case of Percy who had been a very shy, taciturn boy who did not make many friends apart from John. The freedom for them was then only a physical matter but not a real freedom of mind and soul.

The freedom also concerns the people occupying the Washington's estate- servants and prisoners. A very no humanitarian treatment was given to both of these groups. Servants, as we already know, were descendants of the first slaves who came with Fitz-Norman Culpepper Washington. But after the civil war ended and the slavery was abolished, he never told them the truth, he lied about forbidding slavery so the servants stayed and worked for him further ahead. Owing to the isolation, their language had transformed so nobody but the community understand them and Mr Washington had them re-learn the English language. The other group of prisoners consisted more or less of aviators or random people who accidentally discovered the palace. They had to be imprisoned and their chances of ever getting back home were very low. Their freedom was taken from them violently and their only hope was that Mr. Washington would choose them to work for him (for example an Italian was to teach the children Italian language and he made it to flee). Mr. Washington even offered the prisoners to kidnap their families and transport them to the palace, and there they all could live together in very nice conditions. However he never agreed on releasing them no matter how much prisoners were begging him.

5.3.5. The Diamond As Big as the Ritz and FSF

As we know, the short story was published in 1922 in a short story collection *Tales of the Jazz Age*. The Roaring twenties were just rolling and the society was starting to learn a consumer way of living, people were earning more money, then spending the money and the market prospered. The cultural movement was also blooming. These were probably the motives why Fitzgerald wrote the Diamond as Big as the Ritz. In the story he captured the society's thinking through hyperbolic illustration of wealth and through absurd behaviour of main characters. By mentioning the hotel Ritz he made it all seem less fantastic and added the touch to reality.

The main motives to write this short story were probably the period and all the changes in society which had come after the war. He presumably chose children as main protagonists because he was partly inspired by one summer he had spent as a teenager in Montana- where the story is set.

6. The Great Gatsby

6.1. The Publication, Setting and Main Characters

The Great Gatsby is considered Fitzgerald's best work, it was published in 1925 and the first year after publishing was not very successful. The novel explores themes of decadence, idealism, resistance to change and excess, creating a portrait of the Jazz Age that has been described as a cautionary tale regarding the American Dream.

The story is set to West Egg on Long Island (New York City) in the year 1922. The Egg is inhabited mostly by rich men whose spectacular residences are their showpiece. However few bungalows are to be found here too, they are quite cheaper to live in and one of these was rented by our main character and there his experience of life had begun. The story leads us to the after-war society in the 1920s which are known as the Roaring Twenties. This title expresses the mood of the story quite aptly since we observe massive parties in Gatsby's house all along with the cultural movement and blooming of jazz; it was also Fitzgerald who firstly named this era the Jazz Age. The society started to untie its manners; women bobbed their hair and shortened their skirts. The atmosphere of the age had untied.

The story is narrated from the point of view of a young man named Nick Carraway who went to a war and then ended up living in a house next to Gatsby. Nick narrates a story how he met Gatsby and how they spend time bonding together. Gatsby is a man whose parties are well known all over New York but nobody actually knows anything about him. Near Nick's place his cousin Daisy Buchanan and her husband Tom live; they have a daughter, however she remained only in a supporting role. The Buchannan's often spend time with Daisy's friend from childhood Jordan Baker who is a famous golfer. We also meet a mistress of Tom Buchanan named Myrtle Wilson, a wife to George Wilson, a passive car repairman, who has no idea about his wife's affair.

6.2. The Summary of the Great Gatsby

The story begins with an opening part where we got to know that a father of our narrator- Nick Carraway- once gave him some advice to never criticise others because not everybody in the world had the same advantages as he did. Nick was following the advice and that brought him in some interesting experience including the one with mysterious Gatsby.

After Nick came back from war, he decided to stay in New York; he rented a small house in the West Egg having no idea who is living next door. Once he visited his cousin Daisy for dinner, they are having a good time, the mood is lax. Nick meets miss Jordan Baker and Daisy makes jokes that Nick and Jordan will eventually make a couple. Later at dinner Nick reveals that he does not know a single person from his neighbourhood which has surprised Jordan. She mentioned Gatsby's name and that immediately caught Daisy attention, even though she asked who this Gatsby is, no-one had answered her. When Daisy was alone with Nick she confessed to him that her marriage is not that happy as she imagined it. We also found out that Tom has a mistress since she called him twice during the dinnertime. After Nick arrived back home, he firstly get to see Mr Gatsby; he was standing at the shore and watching remote green light shining at the end of a dock. Nick was thinking to call to him but before he made the move, Gatsby was gone.

The other day Tom and Nick travelled to the city; they were going through a place called 'valley of ashes', where Wilson's garage was situated. There we meet the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg, an old advertisement which remained forgotten by the owner. His eyes expressed a sort of supervision over the valley,, *The eyes of Doctor T. J.*

*Eckleburg are blue and gigantic—their retinas are one yard high. They look out of no face but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a non-existent nose. But his eyes, dimmed a little by many painless days under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground*³⁵ Tom insisted on stopping by at the garage but he only wanted Nick to meet his mistress. Myrtle was a woman of middle thirties not that pretty in face but somehow attractive, at least for Tom. They secretly arranged a meeting in town on the afternoon. They all went to an apartment of Tom where the situation had degenerated to a boisterous party. The party ended up with a fight between Tom and Myrtle; Tom had the feeling that Myrtle does not have the right to utter Daisy's name and Tom resorted to giving Myrtle a slap.

Nick had been observing parties at Gatsby's all over the summer and once also he had been invited to the party. He was astonished by the magnificence of such an event, hundreds of people came, most of them did not get the invitation as Nick did, people just came to Gatsby's and never asked him for permission. Massive parties ended in the mornings, thousands of champagne glasses were drunk up, and people were dancing all over the house. This is how it went at Gatsby's. Nick met Jordan Baker there and they spent the rest of the night together, he gets to hear all the tales that have been saying about Gatsby. That he was a soldier, that he is a cousin to some emperor, that he is a spy and murderer. Nobody actually knows a single thing about this mysterious Gatsby. „*The two girls and Jordan leaned together confidentially. 'Somebody told me they thought he killed a man once.'* A thrill passed over all of us. *The three Mr Mumbles bent forward and listened eagerly. 'I don't think it's so much THAT,' argued Lucille sceptically; 'it's more that he was a German spy during the war.'* One of the men nodded in confirmation. *'I heard that from a man who knew all about him, grew up with him in Germany,' he assured us positively. 'Oh, no,' said the first girl, 'it couldn't be that, because he was in the American army during the war.'* As our credulity switched back to her she leaned forward with enthusiasm. *'You look at him sometimes when he thinks nobody's looking at him. I'll bet he killed a man.'*³⁶ Fortuitously Nick gets to meet Mr Gatsby, as they were talking about both

³⁵FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. London : David Campbell, 1991. ISBN 1-85715-019-8, p. 25

³⁶FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. London : David Campbell, 1991. ISBN 1-85715-019-8, p. 46

being in a war, this very night and they arranged a meeting for the next day in order to try his new hydroplane. Nick is very surprised by Gatsby's appearance, he imagined him as an old man but Mr Gatsby was slightly over his 30s and very good looking.

If Nick is not at Gatsby's party, he lives quite serene life of 'eat-work-sleep' routine, he spends his time studying the papers, sitting around the library, and roaming in the city. One afternoon he and Gatsby went to the city to have lunch, Gatsby reveals him the truth about him and his past; he studied at Oxford and all the money he has, he inherited. We assume that Gatsby is a man of great importance. While having lunch Nick meets Tom and he intended to introduce them but as soon as Gatsby noticed Tom, he disappeared. Nick got to know that Miss Baker has a message for him from Mr. Gatsby, soon they meet for tea and Jordan tells him that Gatsby wants him to invite Daisy over for a cup of tea. His intention was clear, Gatsby wanted to meet Daisy via Nick. Jordan told Nick the story of Jay Gatsby; he and Daisy used to date back in 1917, and it was a great love. But then Jay had to leave for war and meanwhile Daisy-still in love with Gatsby- married to Tom Buchanan. Jay Gatsby then moved to West Egg so he will be close to her, he was throwing all the parties in hope that Daisy would come one day, however that never happened. Nick was very surprised by what he heard and also impressed that after all this time (it was five years since Gatsby moved to West Egg) he only asked for a moment with Daisy over tea. Nick arranged the meeting with Daisy and Gatsby did come by 'accidentally'. Gatsby was very nervous, he had Nick's lawn cut, filled the house with fresh flowers. Anyway the meeting went fine even though the atmosphere was tense at first. After a while Nick rather decided that the two needed to be alone and went to wait outside. After he came back, a sudden change of both Gatsby and Daisy was clear, they were laughing and obviously having a good time. Jay invited them to his house where we cannot notice the cheerful mood filling the whole room; we witnessed an emotional scene when Gatsby is throwing his beautiful luxurious shirts of all colours possible – symbolizing wealth- around the room and as a result Daisy burst into tears mixed of happiness and sadness together saying that she has never in her life seen such beautiful shirts. Later Gatsby reveals to Nick, Daisy and readers that the green light he was repeatedly observing on the other side of the bay, is a light of Daisy's dock- that close he had been to her, knowing that she is only few minutes from him however she never had the faintest idea her one-time lover is so near here.

Soon we get to know the real story of Jay Gatsby; in fact his name is James Gatz. He was born to poor people but at his age of 17 he met a sailor Dan Cody and Jay left with him on the yacht to sail around Europe. This experience had made a man from James; it provided him a skill to deal with people and also the modified version of his name. Jay Gatsby suited him better than James Gatz, he decided.

In a few weeks Gatsby again hosted an incredible party, this time also the Buchannan's came. Daisy was impressed by all the famous people who also visit Gatsby's events; Tom on the other hand seemed a bit frustrated that it is Gatsby who amuses his wife and not him. Nevertheless Tom found himself an entertainment soon in a company of other women. As the Buchannan's left the party, their presence left an uncomfortable feeling in Gatsby who was disappointed that he and Daisy are no longer the couple they used to be. Gatsby planned the whole scenario of their life together and now he was disappointed that the past cannot be repeated.

Gatsby stopped throwing parties for the rest of the summer and meanwhile he was meeting with Daisy in the privacy of his empty house. After a while, Gatsby, Nick and Jordan were invited over to Buchannan's for lunch, the mood was tense since Gatsby expected that Daisy will soon reveal Tom about her affair with Gatsby. In a fidgetiness of a situation they all went to the city and rented a room in Plaza Hotel where we witnessed a really tense, explosive atmosphere. Tom confronted Gatsby about his affair with Daisy and Gatsby used the opportunity and pushed Daisy into telling her husband that she never loved him and the only man was always Gatsby. Nevertheless, Daisy, under the pressure of both of her lovers, confessed that once in past she loved both Gatsby and Tom. That information heated up Gatsby's insistence even more and he and Tom got into a harsh argument over Daisy. Gatsby realized he went overboard by forcing her. Gatsby and Daisy left the hotel in Gatsby's car, the other group took the other and everyone was heading back home.

A terrible accident happened on the way home, Gatsby's car run over Myrtle Wilson who unexpectedly ran into the road. A minute after, Tom's car was passing by and after Tom and the rest of group found out what happened they were horrified, unfortunately for Gatsby, an eye-witness saw it was Gatsby's car which caused the accident. Later Gatsby revealed to Nick that it was Daisy driving, nevertheless Gatsby insisted that he will say it was him driving so Daisy remains safe.

Wilson was totally dragged down, the other day he found out that it was Gatsby's car which struck Myrtle, and without anybody knowing he made the way over to Gatsby's. Jay was very upset that day; he was waiting for Daisy to call but nothing whatsoever. Gatsby stayed home with a clear plan: to have a first and also the last swim of the year, since the summer was almost over and autumn was coming it was his last chance. The next thing we know is that two shots were heard, one for Gatsby, the other for Wilson himself. Wilson, with a fixed idea in his head, found Jay swimming in the pool and since Wilson thought it was him who killed his beloved wife, he did not hesitate and killed Gatsby with one bullet. After this he found release from his misery in shooting himself too.

What came after was evident. Nick tried to contact the most people he could have in order to come to the funeral. Nobody showed up except for his father who has told Nick about Jay's childhood and we got to know that he was a very special child with moral principles. We observe the end of a great man who amused hundreds of people, yet no one was that moral to come to the funeral. Not even Daisy showed up, she did not even call back to Nick and soon after Nick found out that Daisy and Tom took off the city and their house was empty leaving their mess behind.

Few months later Nick met Tom in the city and Nick immediately confronted Tom about what he had said to Wilson and we got to know that it was Tom who told George. Tom even pointed out that Gatsby was a bad person anyway and he deserved this kind of ending. In the end, Nick realizes that Tom and Daisy were heartless and callous people who only care about themselves.

Standing on Gatsby's lawn and looking at the green light, Nick concludes that nostalgia just ends up forcing us constantly back into the past. Nick wonders over Gatsby's hope of the future hidden behind the green light, a future which is unfortunately more and more unreachable with every other year of life. Fitzgerald ends the story with a touching line which elicits in reader mixed feelings of hope for future, but also a certain worry from failure experienced.

6.3. The Great Gatsby Analysis

6.3.1. The Genre, Setting, and Characters

If we consider the genre to be a 'literary fiction', Fitzgerald is definitely laying more emphasis on the fluent development of characters more than on the story to be pacy and full of turning points. The literature is more appealing on the readers to make their own opinion and then maybe be ready for discussion. Fitzgerald uses phrases not much inclining to be symbolic but rather he explores characters' souls and minds through many dialogs and narrating of a Nick who witnessed others' reactions. Nick represents an interesting narrator anyway, since he jumps over from dialogs, then to bare observation and then to his personal thought and reflection.

The story is set to a time of Roaring Twenties to the West Egg, New York. The era itself tells us a lot about probable mood of the story and our expectations are lived up adequately if the reader has a slightest notion about history and knows what to look for in the story. We observe massive parties where hundreds of people are coming without invitation. But nobody bothers. Women shorten their hair and skirts and become more independent, at least they think so. The marriage institution was still popular but also on the decline in some sorts of women.

Fitzgerald set the story to New York, on the Long Island which he had divided into two parts: West Egg and East Egg; these were actually names for real peninsulas Great Neck and Port Washington which had been really inhabited by wealthy people. Same as Nick Carraway, also Fitzgerald himself used to live in a small bungalow hidden between two enormous residences similar to Gatsby's one. We got to know that the East Egg is a bit more elite and wealthier and richer people live here than the West Egg. In spite of all Gatsby's money, he lives in the West Egg; he did not make the transformation to the more exclusive society. Daisy lives in East Egg and that is where the gap between her and Gatsby has its roots; not only are they separated by the bay, but also by the social class. Another class distinction is apparent between the Eggs and the suburbs called 'the valley of ashes'; this area may seem like hell, especially since the story is going on in a very hot summer (and we are witnesses to several situations when everybody complains about such a heat). We feel that the valley of ashes is something as a 'cemetery' of unfulfilled dreams. The Wilson family is a victim of such an ambition, they moved here to accomplish their dream

of successful car-repair shop, but their American Dream had not been fulfilled (in contrast with Gatsby who was also a poor man but with luck and diligence he made his dream come true).

6.3.2. Symbols and imagery

In the valley of ashes the mood is tense throughout the story, and with rising unrest it seems like the temperature is rising too. The dominant feature of the valley of ashes is a forgotten advertisement of an oculist from Queens, the eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg framed with glasses are looking down on the valley and ,controls' everybody's actions. Although the story does not deal with religious motives at all, we notice that Wilson is considering them a tool of God's constant supervision as he said to Myrtle when she was clearly lying to him about her ,innocent visits' in the city. Wilson said that God sees everything while taking a look outside the window from where the advertisement was easily visible. The association is clear, God is omnipresent.

The green light outside Daisy's house has concerned Gatsby since the very beginning of the story, later we got to know that it belongs to his beloved girl from youth. In no time we are informed that Daisy, unfortunately, married a different man and the green light suddenly gains a symbolic meaning. Gatsby had tried so hard to meet Daisy again (therefore all these magnificent parties), but he never got closer than to observe the light on the other side of the bay. Fitzgerald also made a very important choice of colour. We all know that the green symbolizes a movement forward on traffic lights and the same meaning it must have had also for Gatsby (by the way, the installation of traffic lights in the U.S. began in the 1910s). It was like the green light was telling him to come closer and try. Gatsby was so close to his dream and he could only hardly imagine not fulfilling it.

6.3.3. Wealth and Society

In the case of *The Great Gatsby*, we can say for sure that the amount of money and level of wealth defines the social class you belong to. In the story there are representatives from different classes. Beginning with the ,area' distinction, we meet Daisy and Tom Buchanan's who belong to the elite upper class and live on the East Egg, which is considered the wealthier one. Jay Gatsby, as we learn through the story, used to be poor

but with his strong mind he made himself respectable and rich. However he only lives on the West Egg, which is, as we know, considered slightly less exclusive than the East Egg. Then we meet the narrator Nick Carraway who is not that moneyed although he is a cousin to Daisy. There is a visible difference between their living standards although they are one family. Nick lives in a small bungalow on the West Egg which is still pretty good standard. George Wilson and his wife Myrtle live in a suburb of New York in a place called the valley of ashes. This 'nickname' is pretty matching to the reality. It is a dark place full of ashy workers.

The issue of education is also very important in the story. We are assuming that from Gatsby's avoiding answers whenever someone asks him about Oxford. Gatsby claims that he studied the University of Oxford, but the reality is that he maybe did study there but he did not take a degree because he did not finish the study. He reveals that with hesitation in the very end of the story and then he is accused of being a liar. We see that the manners of character are starting with their education which naturally comes out of the social class. Daisy and Tom behave very well, they use high vocabulary and their behaviour is very gentle and effortless. About Gatsby we get to know that he learnt the 'wealthy' manners in his late teens while sailing the yacht with mentor. By this we notice that this is one of the differences between him and Daisy; Daisy was born rich but Jay Gatsby was not (and there probably also the distinction between West and East Egg is rooted). George and Myrtle Wilson are people coming from lower class, they are not high educated, which is visible not only from the place they live (the valley of ashes) and their occupation but also from the way of expression. They do not tend to use high elevated vocabulary and their actions are scatter-brained and this all is intensified with the heat. Nick studied a university successfully and his position in society is respectable. He uses high vocabulary words and his manners are polite. We see that characters' manners fit the social class they come from and they do not tend to deviate from it.

Gatsby's story of life is preceded by amount of money he had at the time. At the beginning he was a poor young man and it was unthinkable to marry Daisy with such an income; however his life was the happiest then. Nevertheless it had not lasted long because Jay joined the army. Meanwhile Daisy married another man, a man from a wealthy family who enchanted her for a moment. It disappointed Gatsby and his further actions were motivated by his desire to get Daisy back. He earned the money and then just waited. For Gatsby it was a hard time knowing that Daisy belongs to someone else. Gatsby

saw the money as a solution to his problem. However we learnt that it was not as easy as that. Once Gatsby had won Daisy back, he pushed her to leave her husband. But Daisy hesitated and the situation culminated tragically for Myrtle. Gatsby's plan 'get money-get Daisy' did not work out well. Nevertheless he did not lose the hope that everything will end up well, he was hoping till the very end of his life that Daisy will come to her senses and come to him. We notice that in Gatsby's case, money had not meant happiness, but Gatsby certainly thought that money will make him happy because it would enable him to get Daisy back and that was all he cared about.

Daisy was born to a wealthy family and since her childhood she was probably told that one day she will marry someone adequate to the standard. Nevertheless Daisy fell for a young man who was simply not wealthy enough. After Gatsby left for war, Daisy married Tom Buchanan. Tom was very nice young man coming from the good family and at first Daisy was enchanted by him. Later, unfortunately, she learnt that Tom likes other women too and she had to ignore it in order to save their marriage. As soon as she heard the name of Gatsby, Daisy got excited that it could be Her Gatsby. No matter how she tried hard not to fall for him again, she did, and the old love blossomed again. However she probably never really thought that it is possible for her to leave Tom with Jay, because if she would, she could have done it million times. But she did not. We may have the feeling that this solution was kind of acceptable for her (but it was not for Gatsby) and maybe it was to some extent motivated by affairs of Tom. When Daisy had the chance to tell Tom about leaving him, she did not make the use of it. She was too afraid of making important decisions that she never made one. Not even to Daisy the wealthy standard brought her happiness, she feels unhappy in marriage and the only pleasure comes and leaves with Gatsby's presence.

George and Myrtle Wilson belong to lower social class, they live together in valley of ashes and in the very beginning we learn that Myrtle is a mistress to Tom. That implies a simple fact; probably Myrtle is unhappy in marriage too. She goes to the city to become a different person, suddenly she behaves more politely and her manners seem to be higher (at least she is trying to). In the city she looks for a different lifestyle which she would like to live. Her husband George is, surprisingly, more or less happy in the marriage, and as we read further in the story, we may have the feeling that it is caused by his lower intellect. Myrtle later reveals that the marriage is not what she imagined for herself and she is pretty irritated by the fact that George did not even get married in his own suit but in a

borrowed one. It seems like George, swamped with work, did not even notice that Myrtle was in the city too often, he was not really a sample husband. Before the accident George braced up and confronted Myrtle, he wanted to leave the city, Myrtle naturally did not. After Myrtle's death, George was sure about Myrtle's affair even though he did not know who her lover was. We observe his sadness from Myrtle's death but also from Myrtle's affair.

In conclusion, no matter to which social class each character belonged, everybody was unhappy with their life and love. We observe Gatsby drowning in sadness while hoping that he will get Daisy back and then again when she did not make the choice for him over Tom. We observe Daisy unhappy with Tom and in love with Gatsby, but that is not enough for her to leave her husband, obviously. And finally, also the Wilsons are not happy with their marriage. Myrtle and Toms' solution is clear, Wilson lives in his own world without any idea what is going on with Myrtle. And then there is Gatsby, who tried so hard to make his dream come true, but in the end, it seems like he was fighting for something that was never meant to belong to him. Gatsby's hopes, however, never died, till the very end of his life.

Conclusion

The main task of this thesis was to focus on the themes of wealth, youth, and social interaction of main characters in Fitzgerald's short stories *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz* and in novel *The Great Gatsby*. The issue of selfishness is also to be found throughout these three works of Fitzgerald.

As for the first work analysed, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, the author mainly focuses on the theme of youth and its loss, which had caused the main character lot of problems. Benjamin was clearly handicapped by his appearance of an old man and his life was more or less determined by his physical shape. We observe society's intolerant behaviour towards any difference from the very beginning of the story. After all, the lost generation itself felt misunderstood by society, and that is what Fitzgerald was probably inspired by. Although Benjamin was a 'loser' at the beginning, as his life flows, he learnt to deal with his abnormality and he felt that comfortable with his position that we observe selfishness consuming him (it is mostly noticeable in his relationship with his wife Hildegard which is changing significantly throughout the story). The theme of wealth is not covered that much in this particular short story in contrast with the other two works, although Fitzgerald does mention Button's financial prosperity.

In *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*, Fitzgerald inclines to the topic of wealth and being rich much more significantly. Fitzgerald often uses hyperbole and we may say that whole text is hyperbolic and dealing with fantastic elements. The main character of John T. Unger changes his attitude towards wealth during the story and along with it also his personality changes. John went to Washington's as a boy and left as a young man with clear vision of his future. He had become a man over the summer. The theme of wealth is represented by the Washington family and their spectacular estate in this case, and Fitzgerald chose a very unexpected ending for the family. Instead of being revealed to the public, they rather chose to die along with their estate. Fitzgerald also focused on family relations in the story, although he chose a rather untypical family, he clearly expressed the need of being part of some higher society. It is interesting that Fitzgerald separated the family into two groups - one chose to die and the other chose to tackle with their destiny and fight for life even if it means being poor. Fitzgerald may have wanted to show the normality in contrast with John's family which was rather typical, and at the end when the group decided to live in

Hades, Fitzgerald intended to imply that John, Kismine and Jasmine will learn and adapt too.

In the third work of Fitzgerald *The Great Gatsby* the theme of wealth seems to be principal. Firstly, the atmosphere of the era itself is quite flourishing and intense (given financial prosperity and cultural blooming), secondly the story is set into the New York high society and it is naturally expected that wealth will pervade throughout the story. It is interesting that each character feels different about his/her wealth. Gatsby senses it as a condition under which he can access Daisy and Daisy feels totally comfortable with her life and we may have a feeling that she has become shallow over the years. In the end, money did get Gatsby to Daisy but his dream failed to be fulfilled anyway. We can again notice a motive of selfishness, this time in Gatsby's behaviour.

After all, the motives of wealth and social interaction were found in all three works of Fitzgerald, and we can notice some similarity among the works. The first one covers the most the theme of loss of youth and family and interpersonal relations which were inspired by the after-war generation. The theme of wealth is repressed here. The second short story also deals with loss of youth represented by character of John T. Unger, and again we observe issue of social interaction between the Washington's and their guests which never ended well. The theme of wealth is a very strong motive in this particular work and hyperbolic expressions pervade throughout the story. In the third work analysed *The Great Gatsby*, same as in the work preceding; the issue of wealth and being rich is very important since the story is set in 'Roaring Twenties'. We also observe the main character trying to interact with society via massive parties.

F.S. Fitzgerald in his works focuses mostly on the character's feelings, thoughts, hopes, and behaviour and by that Fitzgerald managed to portray characters' personalities excellently. In his works the plot usually recedes to the background and the emphasis is laid on fluent progress of the story. Two out of three works analysed are considered a fantasy, that is *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz* and *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*. Fitzgerald chose themes rather unreal, particularly in *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz* also actions of main characters are exaggerated but since the reader senses the hyperbole, the behaviour of characters seems less shocking. *The Great Gatsby* is a work of realism, therefore the most fantastic point of the story are massive parties held in Gatsby's house and the unbelievable importance of Gatsby himself in public.

Fitzgerald in his works focuses on motives of wealth, family and interpersonal relationships, and also loss of youth. At least one motive is covered in every work analysed in the thesis. FSF was affected by war which is noticeable in his piece *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* where the main character represents motive of both lost youth and social interaction which was the main life issue of soldiers came back from war. If we consider Benjamin Button a representative of such a soldier, we notice that the public felt no pity and sympathy for him, and the same destiny waited for soldiers in society. Lost youth is a motive again motivated by soldiers, and in FSF's work it is covered in *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*. Young men went to war with particular visions, they had to fight for life, and then they came back home, mature and grown-up, but their ideals remained on the battleground. A comparable story Fitzgerald depicted via the character of John T. Unger. In FSF's, works we also notice that an important role is played by society, its opinion and reaction. Furthermore, the author deals with an issue of isolation which is more or less observable in all analysed works, although the motive is most noticeable in *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*, where the isolation is multiplied by actual physical separation from the rest of the world. In other two works only social isolation is to be found, since the character of Benjamin Button is disadvantaged by his condition and Gatsby does not seem to have any interest in getting to know his guests. Fitzgerald also highlights significance of the family origin, since it closely relates to the class distinction which is a strong subject matter in his works. We have the chance to see two different relationships; one is that two boys can become friends even though their social statuses differ a lot, and the other concerns Gatsby and Daisy who did not have the chance of being together because of diverse social class they belonged to. Fitzgerald may have wanted to imply that being rich does not mean being inaccessible, but being poor sometimes means inability to achieve your goals, as in Gatsby's case. Pieces of American dream can be found in all three works; however not even in one the dream is fulfilled completely. If we revise FSF's works, we notice that although Benjamin Button succeeded in prosperous business, finishing the university, getting yourself a wife, and having a son, and for him his life definitely seemed like an American dream for a while, his life had a bitter ending and everything he achieved in his life faded away from him along with his existence. In *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*, the motive of American dream appears again, this time in form of the Washington's estate; their American dream was fulfilled but for how long? We observed their dream blow up into pieces along with them, although it seems like John, Kismine, and Jasmine

have a clear vision of their own American dream which is waiting for them. Finally, in *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald again used the idea of American dream. In Gatsby's case the dream had been fulfilled partly. In the way of his only real wish an unexpected incident appeared, and Gatsby's dream ended up bitterly along with his life. Fitzgerald did grant a fulfilled dream to none of his characters even though he wrote these works in the time of both financial and cultural prosperity, and we can only debate whether Fitzgerald saw the Great Depression coming (which meant an end to flourishing years) and therefore he chose bitter endings for his characters, or did his internal feeling and depressive life full of alcohol not let him to grant a happy ending to his fictional individualities.

Bibliography

Primary literature

FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. *Novels and stories 1920-1922*. New York: Literary Classics, 2000. ISBN 978-1-883011-84-0

FITZGERALD, Francis Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. London : David Campbell, 1991. ISBN 1-85715-019-8

Secondary literature

HILSKÝ M., ZELENKA J. *Od Poea k postmodernismu :proměny americké prózy*. Vyd. 1. Praha: H & H, 1993. ISBN 80-207-0459-0

PROCHÁZKA a kol., *Lectures on American Literature*. Praha, Karolinum 2002 ISBN 978-8-02-461996-5

BRYER, J.R., PRIGORY, R., STERN, M.R., *F. Scott Fitzgerald in the twenty-first century*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003. ISBN 978-0817356620

COWLEY, M., *Exile's Return. A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s*. New York, The Viking Press, 1968. ISBN 978-0140187762

MAGNUM, BRYANT, *A Fortune Yet: Money and Art in the Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*. Garland Reference Library, 1991. ISBN 0815300832

MINTER, D., *The Jazz Age and the Lost Generation Revisited*. Bercovitch

The Cambridge History of American Literature vol.6, Prose Writing 1910-1950. Cambridge University Press, 2005. ISBN 0-521-49731-0

PETRY, ALICE HALL, *Fitzgerald's Craft of Short Fiction*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1989. ISBN 978-0817305475

Internet sources

Roaring Twenties [online]. last revision on 5th of June 2013 [cit. 2013-06-23].

<<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1564.html>>

The Roaring Twenties [online]. last revision on 20th of June 2013 [cit. 2013-06-23]

<<http://www.history.com/topics/roaring-twenties>>

"The Roaring Twenties" - "The 1920's" [online]. last revision on 23th of October 2010 [cit. 2013-06-23]

<http://library.thinkquest.org/C005846/The_1920/the1920.htm>

Roaring Twenties [online]. last revision on 23th of June 2013 [cit. 2013-06-24]

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roaring_Twenties>

Invention: Radio [online]. last revision on 23th of June 2013 [cit. 2013-06-24]

<<http://www.angelfire.com/co/pscst/radio.html>>